

Response to Sister Question:

Each issue, we print responses to our Sister Question. The question for November–December was: What tradition keeps your family focused on God during the holidays?

Rosella Wiens Regier of Newton, Kansas wrote the following response to our Sister Question:

It was too hectic during gift opening at our house several Christmases ago. Nobody could hear the thank-you. My husband's hearing aids were driving him nuts. Before one gift was barely open, it was discarded, so another could be torn into. The grandchildren got more and more hyper. There must be a better way, we decided.

The next year we were ready. I put three square flannel blankets on the floor in a heap. "Find your own blanket and your own space. Spread out your blanket and sit on it."

Drake, 2, Claire, 4, and Madeline, 5, sat quietly and expectantly as Grandpa read the Christmas story. I followed with a story about sharing. I gave each child a tiny flier showing families receiving Mennonite Central Committee Christmas bundles.

"The blanket you're sitting on will go to a little baby who needs to be warm and cozy," I said. "And hidden all over our house, there are other treasures for the babies. You get to go on a treasure hunt. Find every item marked with your name."

The children ran around, brought back their treasures, and laid them gently on their blankets.

The next year, there was the same Christmas story, and another "sharing story," about children without toothbrushes.

Their eyes sparkled as they got their instructions: "Today, you're making a health kit to share with another child."

This ritual has become a tradition. We have to find harder hiding places now. The meaning is sinking in. This tradition brings God into Christmas in a tangible way. But still, Harold takes off his hearing aids anyway! ❏



Christmas at the Regier's 2004. Madeline, Claire, and Drake making school kits.

Courtesy photo

Below: Shavana, a village facilitator, demonstrates trellising.

Courtesy photo

Cup of Water

Through the Garden Gate (TTGG), a Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) project, works in Afghan villages to help women become enterprising farmers through training and resources benefiting the local economy. They can provide for their families and see new hope for their future. For more information please contact Brenda Burkholder at <bburkholder@meda.org>, call 717-560-6546, or go to <www.meda.org>. ❏

