

~Family Fellowship

"Beautiful Light through Brokenness"

We purposefully broke very cheap mugs so that we could really take a look at the shattered pieces which completely describes us in this world. We sorted them and tried to put some pieces together which completely describes our Heavenly Father. After hot glue-ing our broken cups we saw that they can still be used. Candles were set ablaze and beautiful light came streaming out of the cracks. They truly are the coolest (and most meaningful) candle holders ever!

"Fill Up My Cup"

We continued to learn our brokenness as we discovered that an unbroken beautiful wine glass can be filled from an everlasting source of water (in this case a plastic water pitcher) and how it overflows. The water flowed perfectly through the sides of this wine glass, but it was surprising to see that it didn't spill a lot of water onto our broken cups. When we substituted one of our broken cups for the unbroken wine glass we saw that the everlasting source of water was being used to fill up the other broken cups very well. It made sense. He works in our brokenness to reach others and encourage their hearts. All of us need our cups filled no matter how cracked, broken, or delicate. He can. He is able. He can do what He says He will do!

"What We Can Learn from a Paper Towel"

Take a look next time when you and your little ones wipe up some type of wet liquid on the floor. As the paper towel sets into the liquid you can see the absorption spreading. It reminds me of how we show a little bit of love to someone and it can spread and spread and spread to others.

"Sunshine Moments"

During January of 2013 there were only a couple of days of sunshine and blue skies. It was the worst January we experienced in four years living in Tianjin. I had to shake things up a bit before my spirits went down along with the gray in the skies. So, I dug deep and felt the need for discovering moments of SONshine because I wasn't getting ordinary sunshine. It is pretty amazing what a change of perspective can bring. In this case, it was a sense of freshness to see moments in a whole new way. It has been healing to see His Son shining in our daily moments. There is a nice big butcher paper sun in our hallway which displays our "Sunshine Moments". Thanks to our sweet friend who specifically gave that to us before she left for the States!

"Pralk"

Ah, yes, I have benefited from many "pralks". These are times when I pray and walk a friend or family member. Those pralks are precious! Specifically, for family fellowship we will walk to a specific place like a local park and stop along different random places to have some moments of focus. For example, we stop at a bench to sing a praise song. A fun place to stop is at our favorite Chinese red bridge where each one of us thinks of one person to pray for.

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"Phillipians Wall"

There is always room for positive thoughts in our family. We have specifically muraled one wall in our apartment which is titled, "Our Thoughts". We painted the words lovely, noble, praiseworthy, right, excellent, pure, and admirable on this wall. To wrap up our dinner time together we pass around heart shaped post-it notes and write something "lovely" that happened in our day. After reading them aloud we ask, "What do we do with it?" The kids love to respond with, "Stick it!" Over time our Phillipians wall has filled in nicely with amazing thoughts. It helps us to look back on what the last few months have brought forth. Love, love, love this wall!

"Connected to the Vine"

John 15 has been a favorite part of His loving words for our family. We have taken the vine to a different level. We have made it a place where we connect with the vine through prayer. Plain old green paper turns into beautiful leaves we've made that represent the concerns we want to lift up to Him. We color and cut out paper to make unique flowers that represent answers to our prayers. Green giftwrap ribbon from gifts that we have opened curls up nicely to make tendrils. It's really nice to see flowers start blooming throughout the vine.

"Getting Dressed for the Day"

Colossians 3:12-14 tells us how to clothe ourselves. So we've traced our bodies onto big pieces of butcher paper. Then we made articles of clothing to cover our traced bodies. We came up with pants of kindness, belt of forgiveness, shirt of compassion, hat of gentleness, panties of patience, shoes of humility, and a necklace with a heart to emphasize the love that binds it all together. It's our unique way to get dressed for the day! Since this sweet activity we have been able to refer to it as we literally get ready for the day. We ask, "Do we have our shirts of compassion on today?" These kind of questions really help us to think beyond putting on our pieces of clothing. I love learning along with my girls!

"Skits"

Our best skits during our family fellowship are the spontaneous ones. Some that are planned are nice but the spontaneous ones really get us thinking quick on our feet. We love to see a parent team up with a child and entertain in a meaningful way.

"Leading by Example"

As my husband and I lead our fellowship time our girls have started to develop an interest in leading at times also. Just this last week my heart was so blessed and encouraged by what they put together; special songs, a meaningful message, deep and concrete connection. It's so nice to see them work together to provide a fun fellowship time for our family.