

The Gift of Friends

Earthly friends are God's gifts to me.
 I need them. I appreciate them.
 How often God loves me through them!
 He uses their arms to hug me,
 their hands to help me.
 He encourages me with their
 strength and support,
 gives me advice and ideas
 through their minds and mouths.
 How blessed am I to have friends
 who faithfully serve the Lord
 in such practical, everyday ways?
 Thank you, Lord, for supplying me with friends.
 Thank you for being my best Friend.

Taken from *You Make a Difference* by Alma Kern
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Company's Coming! *What Now?*

Family members give joy when they visit, some when they come and some when they leave. Technically, you marry your spouse and not the whole family, but in reality it's a package deal.

Holidays and special events often require interaction with in-laws. Whether you love them and enjoy time with them or prefer they stay as far away as possible, it is inevitable that you will have to interact with them at least occasionally.

As a couple, talk honestly about your feelings. Share the behaviors you like or dislike about your spouse's family. "Leaving and cleaving" is a process for both you and your parents. Decide together the boundaries that will keep tension to a minimum. These boundaries will probably change over time as your relationships change.

Above all, remember Jesus' command to *Love your neighbor as yourself* (Matthew 22:39b). Your families are your neighbors. Give them the honor and respect you want them to give you.

Dear Father, inspire in us a love and respect for our entire family as You love us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Mustard Seed: *With This Ring* written by Rev. Wes and Des. Sonja Baumeister
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YWR Tania Canjura, LWML President Jan Wendorf, YWR Tonya Covin-Newson

Spotlight on Tania and Tonya

At the age of twelve, **Tania Canjura** discovered a whole new world when she and her parents, Gloria and Rev. Hector Canjura [see Summer 2009 *LWQ*, page 26], moved from Guatemala to the United States, where her father accepted a call in Chicago. Finding it initially very difficult to adapt to a new culture and learn English, Tania says she thanks God for sending someone like her friend Laura at Redeemer Lutheran School who helped her learn the ropes.

Tania continued her education at a Lutheran high school and Concordia University Chicago — "It fit my personality" — and now works for a bank and conducts seminars in Chicago-area public schools. A Young Women's Representative from the **Northern**

Illinois District, Tania likes reading, going for walks with her dog, traveling, and volunteering at the Lutheran school where her mother works.

"Being in Lutheran schools all my life and growing up in a Lutheran family has taught me to share the love of God with others, to always have Jesus in my heart, and to trust in the Lord for He is the foundation of my life."

It's clear that native-born Chicagoan **Tonya Covin-Newson** gladly follows in the footsteps of many mentors. As both the oldest child and grandchild in her family, Tonya describes herself as an "outgoing, spunky, and down-to-earth woman" who has a passion to become a preschool teacher. Among her mentors, she credits her grandmother, the members of Ebenezer Lutheran Church, and LWML women Jewel Sims and Erlean Hamm.

Tonya says that being a YWR from the **Northern Illinois District** to the Portland LWML Convention was "a heartfelt experience, an outpouring of God's love shared among a wide diversity of women. I especially admire our LWML President Jan Wendorf. She carried herself as a remarkable woman with grace and intelligence. I can say I'm proud to follow in her shoes as a representative of the LWML."

For more information, check out *Impressions*, the newsletter for Young Women, at lwml.org.

