

## LIGHTING A CANDLE IN THE DARK

**PURPOSE:** To explore the healing power of giving during mild depression.

### LEADER'S NOTES:

You will need to be sensitive to the fact that many—and possibly most—depressions are so dark that giving to others is difficult, if not impossible. Many will at those times have trouble just looking after themselves. Stress that this strategy holds true for mild depressions only or for when depression is only beginning to set in.

### A STORY:

(You can share this story with the group or a story of your own that illustrates the point. Think of a time when the darkness of your depression brightened by doing something for someone else?)

At a time when I was in the middle of a mild depression, I needed to do some shopping. I thought of a friend, someone who couldn't drive, wondering if I could pick something up for her while I was out. This was a small thing, but the thought of being able to do something for someone else lit a spark within me. My feelings brightened somewhat. I felt more energized. This spark lit a candle that kept burning for the rest of the day.

To escape my depression, I decided to continue lighting candles by thinking of things I could do for people or help them with to make their life easier. Although I did not immediately escape the depression, I found that doing things for others helped bring brightness into the dark times. My depression became easier to bear.

### DISCUSSION:

- What has helped you find brightness in the middle of dark times?
- Can you think of some ways to light a candle in the dark?
- Doing things for others is one good way to light a spark within. But there are other things that will help you do that. What other strategies can you employ?

Lighting a candle is the first step to bringing light into darkness.

Read Isaiah 58:10-11

*...if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry  
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,  
then your light will rise in the darkness,  
and your night will become like the noonday.  
The Lord will guide you always;  
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land  
and will strengthen your frame.  
You will be like a well-watered garden,  
like a spring whose waters never fail.*

Isaiah 58:10-11