
Setting the Stage for God

A Pocket Guide to Everyday Faith

By Holly A. Clark

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Keeping God on Stage

When someone asks, “Where did you get your faith? Where did you get *Setting the Stage for God: A Pocket Guide to Everyday Faith* where you are? How did you get where you are?” I don't think they would ask this if they didn't see something special, something they would like to have themselves.

Setting the Stage for God is about looking back on the times when you invited God to come into your life.

I certainly know that to be true in my life. Growing up as a Catholic, my first inkling or memory that God was watching me—maybe even admiring his handiwork - was a time when I played around in the church pews while my mom cleaned the floors. A childhood of God-given peace is such a *Setting the Stage for God: A Pocket Guide to Everyday Faith* gift, and my parents helped to facilitate that peace by getting me baptized. My mom and dad put me, my brother, and my two sisters through the rituals, the chapel hats, the stand-up, the sit-down, and the knelling routine. It was simply the Sunday program, and we all did what was the norm for Catholics.

Were we Holy? No, just growing in faith.

Now that we are older, my brother resents the rituals we went through. He felt emotionally scarred by a particular nun in Catholic school. One of my sisters turned Baptist and then non-denominational. Similar stories of resentment, confusion, and anger is common among Catholics, I assume. As for me, I don't think I thought that much about my denomination. At this point in time, I believe God prefers for me to remain a Catholic. I am happy being a Catholic. It feels comfortable to me. I actually see the Catholic church as a huge family beyond belief. Maybe that's why I cry in church so much and I get so overwhelmed by the crowd—the visible as well as the invisible. There is a strong connection I feel with the people around me during the sign of peace and also such a strong feeling of intimacy when I receive the host at communion.

I attended a Catholic grade school as well as a Catholic high school. You would think I knew God. You would think I was very aware of what it meant to be a Catholic, comforted in the knowledge of knowing I was a member of God's family. I do not remember even thinking about God helping me through my daily ups and downs. It wasn't until my first divorce in 1979 that I found myself asking for His help. I left because of abuse. Consequently, I was setting the stage for God's grand entrance. When I made up my mind to leave, I know God was with me. He kept me stable, as I drove 300 miles to safety. I know now He was happy to be there with me, comforting me, giving me strength, courage, and keeping me calm. I would like to say that I at least thanked Him before I dismissed Him from my life.

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