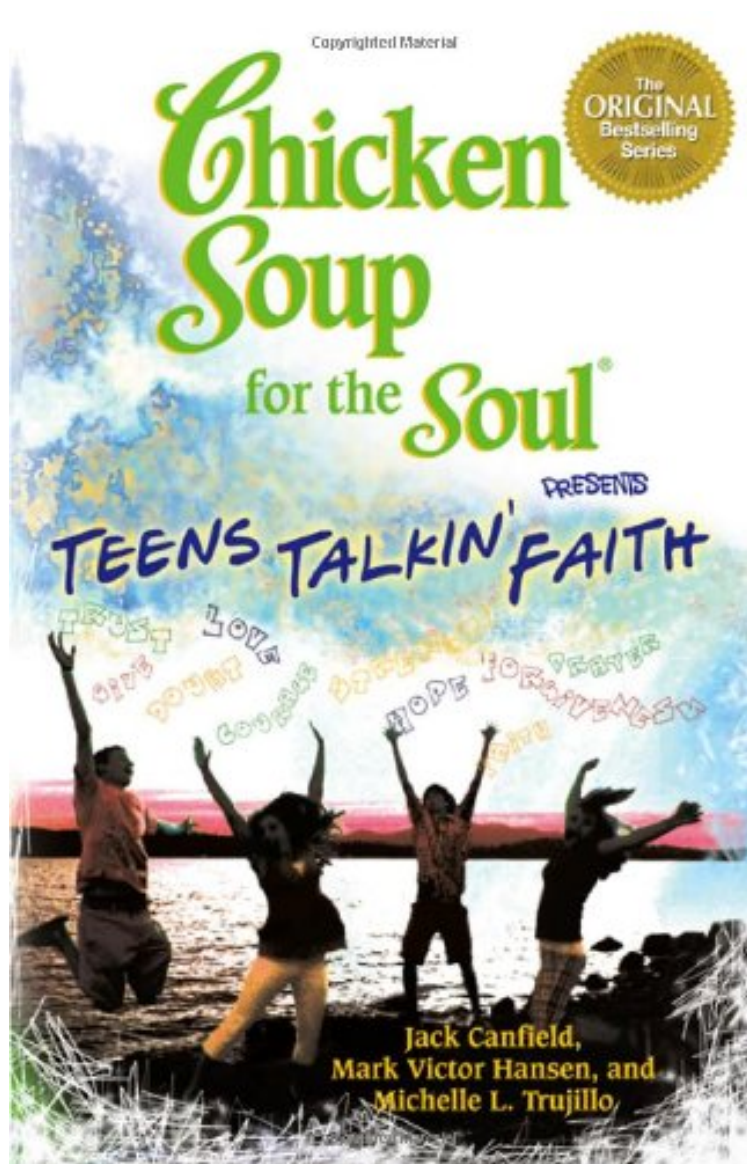


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Chicken Soup for the Soul Presents Teens Talkin' Faith

Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Michelle L. Trujillo
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Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Michelle L. Trujillo : Chicken Soup for the Soul Presents Teens Talkin' Faith before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chicken Soup for the Soul Presents Teens Talkin' Faith:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Easy Reading - short storiesBy S.J.This book isn't just for teens, nor are all of the stories written by teens. Many (possibly all) of the stories have been previously published in other books in the series. Should appeal to a broad audience and doesn't need to be read straight through.0 of 0 people found the

following review helpful. Teens Talkin' Faith Strengthens Our TeenagersBy Susan L. NeufferTeens Talkin' Faith provides an inspiring combination of wise words from a caring adult wrapped around the real-life experiences told by teens. The uniting theme is that teens are not alone in their struggles. God is with them. Also, reading the personal struggles of other teens cracks the media made myth that every other teen has a perfect life. Not only are readers strengthened by realizing that they are not alone, they also gain a larger perspective on their personal challenges. Teens Talkin' Faith covers topics common to the teenage experience. Woven through the stories is the underlying message of companionship, resilience, and hope that comes from faith in God.4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. InspirationalBy Judy C. WilliamsIt would be beneficial if this book could be in the hands of every teen and parent in the country. To read how teens relate spiritually to their circumstances was enlightening. Their real voices touched me as did the guidance and life experience offered by Mrs. T as she shared tangible ways for teens to help themselves in times of trouble. As a grandparent, I was so inspired by Michelle's book that I bought extra copies to share with friends who may want to give the book to their grandchildren or who choose to better understand what their teen or pre teen grandchild may be going through.

Chicken Soup for the Soul cocreators Jack Canfield and Mark Victor Hansen have teamed up with Michelle L. Trujillo, best known to teens as Mrs. T, to offer you a collection of passages from teenagers across the nation that will lead you on a spiritual journey. From trial and tragedy to triumph and joy, teen contributors share personal, heartfelt testimonies about how God has given them strength and courage to deal with the tough times and love and comfort when they have felt alone. Teens also share with you what it means to accept God's grace and rely on His guidance. At the end of each chapter, Mrs. T shares stories and encouragement, while inviting you to continue or establish a promising relationship with God. Regardless of your religion, this book will be a light upon your path. Teens Talkin' Faith is a gift from Chicken Soup for the Soul, Mrs. T, and teens just like you. It is a gift of faith, love, and hope that can make a difference in your life.

About the AuthorJack Canfield is a sought-after national speaker and author and the co-creator of the New York Times and USA Today bestselling Chicken Soup for the Soul series.Mark Victor Hansen is a sought-after national speaker and author and the co-creator of the New York Times and USA Today bestselling Chicken Soup for the Soul series.Michelle L. Trujillo is a former Teacher of the Year recipient and an inspirational speaker. Michelle has designed site-based peer education curricula and facilitated Student Assistance Programs. She also enjoys working with children with disabilities as a Certified Adapted Physical Educator and Ability Awareness Trainer.Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.Just for starters, let's talk about faith . . . At fifteen, Brandy was presumably a lot like you or some of your friends. She was a star athlete and incredibly social. Brandy hung with the 'in' crowd and didn't have many worries. Her world revolved around school, friends, sports, and occasional parties. It was after one such party that Brandy's world was shattered. On the way home from this party, the truck she was riding in was hit by another vehicle and rolled three times. Ironically, out of the five people involved in the accident, Brandy was the only one badly injured and the only one not drinking that night. Brandy was left unconscious in the cab of the pickup while the others escaped to safety. Unaware that the truck would ignite, her friends were more concerned about staying out of trouble than rescuing Brandy. They either left the scene or scurried about trying to hide all evidence of their underage drinking. While they were scattering beer cans, Brandy was burning. More than 75 percent of Brandy's body and most of her face were burned before a brave young man pulled her free from the hot flames. She lost her soft, smooth skin and her pretty hair. She lost her right ear, a finger on her right hand, and her entire left arm. Brandy lost her spot on the all-star softball team and her 'normal' teen life of flirting with guys and hanging with friends. In an instant, Brandy's life as a teenager changed. For many teens, appearance is extremely important. Acceptance is paramount. How teens look, dress, or what they are involved in can often determine their sense of belonging among their peers. Think about yourself. Are your looks important to you? Do you play any sports or a musical instrument? Are you involved in any clubs or after-school activities? Considering your life, can you imagine stepping into Brandy's shoes? Picture yourself so badly disfigured that you are no longer recognizable. Contemplate the changes you would have to make in your day-to-day activities if you lost one of your arms. Suppose you were the one left in that burning truck. Could you survive the pain, isolation, and extreme change? Would you even want to? When I heard about Brandy, my initial response was to whisper to God, 'Why . . . why did this have to happen? How can one girl go through so much?' But Brandy is able to see beyond my prevailing questions. Her faith has made her strong. A few years after her accident, Brandy and I became friends. The first time we spoke, she told me that she thanked God for her life today. She also astounded me with her wisdom when she said, 'I don't blame God. Really, if I blame anyone, I blame myself because I was there. I chose to go to the party. I knew that the driver of the truck I was riding in had been drinking, and I chose to put myself in that situation.' However, Brandy understands that placing blame on herself, God, or the others involved in the accident has no benefit. So, instead, she acknowledges with gratefulness that she has evolved as a person and that her life has significant purpose. Yet that realization is not one that she came to readily. It was a slow awakening. Five months after the accident and two days before her sixteenth birthday, Brandy was released

from the hospital. Once home, she wanted to hang with friends and be a 'regular' teen again. Although Brandy physically looked like a different person, inside she was still the same. This was very painful for Brandy because even her friends felt awkward initially. Like so many other people, they stared. So, when she went out with friends, she made decisions to drink and to be sexually promiscuous. Brandy struggled with the reasons why she made these choices, especially after all she had been through. Yet, she tested herself and her faith because she wanted to be 'in.' She wanted to be accepted. Eventually, Brandy came to realize that many of the decisions she made after the accident were an attempt to prove to herself and her friends that nothing had changed and that she was still the same person. However, each time she participated in risky behavior, she knew it wasn't right. Slowly, Brandy grasped the notion that she didn't want to be the person she was before her accident. She realized that she used to be snobby, sometimes even rude to people. Her relationship with her mother was tense and argumentative. They didn't get along or do much together. At the time, Brandy felt that appearance was important and faith was insignificant. But Brandy grew to care more about people. She began to appreciate her mom, and they became closer than ever. She also came to understand that looks, in fact, don't matter. Instead, she learned that it is who you are inside that truly counts. Brandy began to cherish her relationships and value her faith. As she looked back, Brandy realized the constants in her life were her family, close friends, and faith. Furthermore, she began to see that her faith, a treasure she often overlooked, was the strength that pulled her through. From the very beginning, when Brandy arrived by care flight at the hospital with her skin melted and charred, her mom asked her, 'Is God with you?' Although she was really 'out of it' and couldn't talk, Brandy nodded her head, 'Yes, God is here.' And even before that, as she lay in the midst of flames, a young man named Jimmy attempted to pull her free, but she was stuck in the cab of the truck. He tried and tried until he didn't think he could pull anymore, but God was there. In a final effort, with a silent prayer for help, Jimmy says that Brandy floated out of that truck as light as a feather. And following her recovery, Brandy knows that God was with her when she made poor decisions by helping her ultimately to choose the right paths. Brandy believes that if you ask God for help, He will help you. Through right or wrong, trial or suffering, He is there. Throughout this book, you will find God's presence. Within these pages, as teens share their confusion and doubts, struggles and fears, triumphs and hopes, they will also share their faith. Regardless of where you reside spiritually at this point in your life, I pray that when you read this book, you allow God to embrace your heart. Teens Talkin' Faith will lead you to discover unconditional love and help you to find peace in your life. It is a journey of faith toward God that will lead you to this discovery. If you are already strong in your spiritual or religious convictions, then you may know what I am talking about. Perhaps you have experienced the feeling of peace that enters your life when you turn to God for guidance or solace. Likely, you have felt the joy that fills your heart when you focus on the Lord. You don't need drugs, alcohol, or sex to find happiness as a teenager. You can find it in God. However, I'm sure that you know there is always room for spiritual growth. On the other hand, if faith has never been a part of your life, then I am very excited to share the glory of God with you. My message in this book is enthusiastically simple. God cares! You can flee to Him for comfort. You can rely on Him for unconditional love. I want you to know that God is available and waiting for you to call on Him. He is there to guide, support, and, as He did for Brandy, provide courage and strength. His patience is plentiful, and His forgiveness is given freely. As a teen, you may experience small traumas in your life or painful tragedies like Brandy's. You may feel, sometimes, that you are all alone. But you are not. God is always there. Often, it is just a matter of opening your heart to His presence. When you invite God into your life, His spirit will fill your heart. He is not a God who reigns from heaven demanding perfection and punishing anything less. Instead, He is someone with whom you can have a relationship. He is a God who loves you completely, with all of your faults and insecurities. You can talk to Him every day, every moment, because He always has time. God also inspired an awesome book that you can turn to for guidance and direction. It is the Bible, and it was written for you to foster your relationship with Him and help you to live a life full of joy and hope. You might be thinking, Yeah, that sounds great, but how do I know God is really there? The answer is faith. What is faith? Faith is believing without actually seeing. It is relying on your heart instead of your head. Faith is letting go of the tough stuff in your life and turning it over to God, looking to Him for guidance and direction. Amazingly, faith is knowing in the depths of your soul that you are God's child and that He will take care of you. Many teen contributors expressed that their faith grew by writing for this book. I hope that by reading this book your faith will grow, too. Like Brandy, you may experience trials or hardships in your life, but faith can help you to persevere. Brandy said that after her accident, she never wanted to give up. 'I got a second chance,' she said. 'I am not going to sit here and waste what God has given me. I kind of feel like it was meant to be this way, like I am here for a reason.' Her faith touched my life. Her wisdom opened my eyes. People often assume that you must be an adult to be wise. But after meeting Brandy and so many other teenagers, I know this isn't always the case. Wisdom can be born from experience. The teens who have written for this book share their experiences, doubts, wisdom, and faith with you. I hope that you consider them your friends. Appreciate their experiences and take from each something that you can apply to your life. Find love, faith, and hope on these pages. Find the Lord! Mrs. T . . . I believe God loves the whole me . . . When everything shifts in the maelstrom of my life, God is there, never-changing. My faith is very important to me because it is one of the only things that can never be taken from me. God is sticking with me, no

matter how isolated or unpopular I get. Faith in God gives me mor...