

Sitting in the darkness awaiting the light

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I work with children and teens who are hurting or in trouble. Many of my teens are sent to me by school principals or angry parents because they got into a fight at school, got caught drinking or taking drugs, or because they were disrespectful. These teens often come to me feeling pretty "beat up." Many times they are embarrassed or angry or are so sick of talking about their problem that they don't feel like talking at all.

I often start our One-on-One Holy Listening session by saying, "I know your world feels very dark right now. Let's just sit in the darkness and when you are ready, light this candle and let its light reach into your soul and start to heal some of the darkness." We sit and sit and after a while, a teen will light the candle. For many of them it is the first "light" they have felt for a long time. Often they cry when they light the candle. Sometimes they start to talk and sometimes, we just sit there in that light. When life is dark, light is what heals us. These candles of hope symbolically bring God's light into some very dark and frightened worlds.

Sitting with these teens I am reminded of the scripture: *The light shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it.* (John 1:5)