

Youth Culture Lesson
Finding Teachable Moments in Culture
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Ultimate Gift: Mother Shows Us the Meaning of Sacrifice

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What Happened:

Late last year, Jenni Lake gave birth to a healthy baby boy, just a month shy of her 18th birthday. The Idaho teen knew she probably wouldn't be a mother for long.

Before becoming pregnant, Jenni had been diagnosed with brain cancer. A barrage of aggressive and sickening treatments had helped shrink her tumors; but when the girl learned she was pregnant, doctors gave her a choice: Stick with treatments and terminate the pregnancy, or carry the baby to term and stop the chemotherapy.

Jenni decided to keep her baby, knowing that stopping treatment would endanger her own health. The day after her child was born, doctors told Jenni the cancer had progressed to a point where it was, in fact, untreatable. Just 12 days later, she was dead.

Jenni was apparently at peace with her decision. "I'm done, I did what I was supposed to," she told a nurse. "My baby is going to get here safe." The baby, named Chad, will be raised by the boy's father, Nathan Wittman, and Jenni and Nathan's parents.

Talk About It:

We talk a lot about sacrificing for others, but it's easier said than done. Is there anyone for whom you would risk your life? Who would risk their lives for you?

Imagine being Chad, growing up knowing your mother gave her life for you. How would that knowledge affect you? Would it make you think differently about your life? About your future?

Jenni's sacrifice might remind some people of Jesus' own sacrifice for us—giving His own life for ours. Knowing that you, too, have been given an incredible chance for another life, does that make you want to live differently? To look for opportunities to make that sacrifice worthwhile?

What the Bible Says:

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?" (1 John 3:16-17).

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Rom. 12:1-2).