

## The Tea Party

*Children bring vitality and seniors bring wisdom and grace.*

The presence of children enriches our lives. One time I took six little girls, ages five and six, to the Senior Citizens' Lodge for a Tea Party.

I also took a variety of coffee spoons, butter knives and fruit forks so we could talk about their special use. We looked at luncheon clothes, and talked about table etiquette. Did any of them say a table grace at home?

I had to ask the children to explain the Mad Hatters Tea Party story to me. They all tried to tell the details at once.

With all this preparation we were ready to move to the tea table that was set up for us. Each youngster had a senior lady as a table partner, and they had to spend a little time having dinner conversation while they got to know each other.

I noticed the kids eyeing the tea-biscuits and counting the jam tarts even before we put napkins on our lap and said grace. Since there were only so many tarts, little hands were quick to reach for one. But they were reminded this wasn't proper etiquette. First you took a biscuit that was passed. Then you waited for the butter and jelly. Later, the tarts were passed. Meanwhile you had dinner conversation, asking your partner what they remembered about tea parties.

A few of the ladies reminded their partners not to leave their tea spoons in the china cup. They belonged on the saucer.

At the conclusion the proper courtesies were extended before the youngsters escorted their new friends back to their rooms.

All of us walked with a lighter step that afternoon. Children and seniors belong together. One brings the gift of wisdom and grace, the other the gift of curiosity and vitality. We each need to remember and celebrate God's gift.