

# WHEN CANDLES TALK

**Instruction:** This program requires an attractive box with a lid; a candleholder; book of matches; a new grey, green, pink, red and blue candle; a broken candle; and a very used white candle. Also this program is most effective done in semi-darkness and a flashlight may be needed for the "candle voices" to read their parts. Small candles may be used for the closing circle at the program's end.

**PROGRAM:** ~ **NARRATOR:** This is a story shared one evening at a TOPS chapter that I visited. It was told by a member whose Mother told it to her granddaughters on lonely evenings when the world didn't look like a very bright and happy place. She had a beautiful box of magic candles in the attic, which she brought out at such times. These candles talked! Of course, the little girls were doubtful at first. Then Grandma brought out the first candle ~ a beautiful grey one ~ and set it up proudly in the candleholder and struck a match to light it. Suddenly, the candle spoke!

**GREY CANDLE:** Oh please, don't light me! I don't want to be lit. I'd rather be left alone. Put me back in the box, away in a corner somewhere so I can be by myself. Truly, I just want to be left alone and not bothered.

**NARRATOR:** The little girls were speechless. Not only did the candle talk, but it had a very definite opinion! Grandma saw the puzzled look on the girls' faces as she carefully returned the grey candle to the box. Grandma then said, "Girls, did you know that there are many people in the world just like the grey candle? They don't want to be bothered. They are completely unconcerned about the needs of others or they just don't care." Grandma asked the girls if they would like to hear another candle. They nodded excitedly, and Grandma reached into the pretty box and brought out a dull green candle, placed it in the holder, struck a match, and prepared to light it. Just as she reached the wick, the candle spoke!

**GREEN CANDLE:** Oh, please, whatever you do, don't light me! Light one of the others. They will shine much brighter than I will. Please pick another one.

**NARRATOR:** Grandma explained to the girls that there are people like the green candle. When asked to serve, they always come back with "Oh, don't ask me to do that, somebody else can do it better than I can." They feel almost no responsibility. Grandma replaced the green candle and brought out a pretty pink one from her box. Placing it in the holder, she brought the flame from the match to the wick. The candle drew back quickly.

**PINK CANDLE:** Because, you see, it would ruin me if I were burned. I was not made to be lit - just to be admired. If you put a match to me, I would be a mess. My tallow would run and I would be a frightful sight. So, please, don't light me!

**NARRATOR:** We have all seen people like the pink candle - people who don't want to be soiled. They are perfectly satisfied to sit primly by but are nowhere around when there's work to be done. The little girls were beginning to wonder if there was a single candle in Grandma's box that was willing to be lit. Grandma, sensing their feelings, brought out the broken candle, and one of the little girls asked, "What happened to you?"

**BROKEN CANDLE:** Oh, I had bad luck. When the weather was warm, I warped a little, and when someone tried to straighten me out, she broke me. I am just as miserable as can be. I don't know what to do. I'm just in no shape at all.

**NARRATOR:** I'll bet you recognize some common girpes in listening to this candles' woes. All of us know people who keep giving one excuse after another. Grandma gave a sad little smile and replaced the broken candle as she picked up a bright red one and placed it in the holder. The girl's eyes sparkled as they said "Oh, Grandma, this is the candle we want to light. Please, red candle, let us light you tonight.!"

**RED CANDLE:** Wait a minute, ladies. What's the big occasion?

**NARRATOR:** Grandma looked at the red candle as she struck the match and said, "Oh, there's no special occasion. We just thought your light would be really pretty tonight.

**RED CANDLE:** My, my, my, What a pitiful waste that would be if you were to light me tonight when no one else but you three were here to appreciate my beauty. Can't you see I was made to shine at some big party or special occasion?

**NARRATOR:** Do you know people who only offer this kind of service - when there is a chance to shine above all others and receive more recognition? Unless there is glory attached, there is no need to call on the red candle. As Grandma replaced the red candle and took out the pale blue one, the girls wondered if this candle would say "no" like all the others. This candle was slow to speak.

**BLUE CANDLE:** Well, I'm not sure about all this. You have already asked all those other candles before you got around to asking me. I would have been glad to help if you had asked me first!

**NARRATOR:** You must have seen this type many times, I'm sorry to say. The type that will not be part of anything if there is the faintest hint of a rumor that she or he wasn't the first choice. Let's hope there aren't too many of these people around. Replacing the blue candle in the box, Grandma brought out the very last candle - a worn, stubby, somewhat shabby white one and placed it in the holder.

**WHITE CANDLE:** Please, light me!

**NARRATOR:** This is hard to believe. The girls asked in unison. "What did it say?"

**WHITE CANDLE:** Please light me! I shall shine as brightly as any candle you ever saw. Candle are made to be lit. So, please use me. This is my whole reason for being. Don't worry about using me up. I am here to serve well and light your dark moments. This is my purpose.

**NARRATOR:** At last Grandma lit a candle and the room filled with a lovely soft glow. This is the dedicated, unselfish service she and the girls had been looking for. Is this the kind of service you offer? Looking back at the other candles in the box, do we see ourselves lying there in the darkness? Are some of us like the grey candle? We don't want to be bothered. Are we like the green candle, always putting the job off on someone else "who can do it better" before we even try. Perhaps some see themselves in the pink candle, refusing to help because we might get our hands dirty. Then there are the broken candles - full of excuses about why they can't help. Maybe there is a red candle or two in the group - those who only volunteer when there is something special in it for them. Or some might see themselves in the blue candle, refusing to serve because they are not picked first. Let's hope most of us are like the white candle, ready and willing to serve whenever and wherever needed to the best of our abilities. Let us hope that all the members of our chapters are striving to be like the white candles, shining whatever light they can to help every other member along the difficult road that lies ahead. Our chapters will only glow as brightly as every member allows it to. If most refuse to be it and are

kept in the dark box, we will have trouble finding our way, and the few white candles that remain will be burned up too quickly, leaving darkness. So, share the load of service and keep the light glowing brightly, not only in your heart but in your chapter for all the world to see how proud you are to take your part in TOPS!

(Members should gather in a circle and join hands, lighting small candles if desired)

**NARRATOR:** You take my hand and I'll take yours and we'll start out today, for a helping hand is what we need to help us on the way. The road to goal is a lonely road, we need someone to care. So reach out, my friend, and take my hand, then we're almost there.