

the
Hope
JAR

WANDA E.
BRUNSTETTER

Ezekiel's Favorite Johnnycake

Ingredients:

1 cup cornmeal

1 cup flour

¼ cup sugar

4 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon salt

1 cup milk

1 egg, beaten

¼ cup vegetable oil or

melted shortening

Grease 8-inch square baking pan. In bowl, mix cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add milk, egg, and oil to dry ingredients, stirring only enough to blend. Spread in baking pan and bake at 400 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. Serve warm or cold with butter.

Mary Ruth's Tasty Scalloped Potatoes and Pork Chops

Ingredients:

5 cups peeled and thinly sliced raw potatoes

1 cup chopped onions

Salt and pepper to taste

1 (16 ounce) can cream of mushroom soup

½ cup sour cream

6 pork loin chops (1 inch thick)

Chopped fresh parsley

In greased 9x13-inch baking pan, layer half the potatoes and onion. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Repeat layer. Combine soup and sour cream and pour over potato mixture. Cover and bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes. Meanwhile in skillet, brown pork chops on both sides. Place pork chops on top of casserole. Cover and return to oven for 45 minutes or until pork chops are tender. Uncover during last 15 minutes of baking. Sprinkle with parsley and serve. Yields 6 servings.

Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever wondered what it would be like to set your modern, worldly things aside and live on an Amish farm for several months with no electricity or modern conveniences? What would be the one thing you'd have the hardest time giving up?
2. If you had been Michelle, would you have been honest with the Lapps right from the start? If you had decided to pretend you were their granddaughter, would you have been able to deceive them for as long as Michelle did without breaking down?
3. Mary Ruth and Willis Lapp were deeply grieved when their only daughter, Rhoda, left home when she was eighteen and never made contact with them again. If you had an adult child old enough to make their own decisions, and he or she left home without word of their whereabouts, how would you cope with the situation? Would you try your best to find them?
4. Have you ever lost a loved one quickly, as Sara did, and barely had time to deal with their illness before they were gone? How did you get through the ordeal? Were there any verses of scripture that helped you along the way?
5. Do you think Willis and Mary Ruth Lapp wanted so badly for their granddaughter to truly be coming home to them that they threw caution to the wind and approached the first person at the bus station who they thought was their granddaughter? Should they have asked more specific questions to make sure it really was Sara?

6. Michelle deceived everyone she met while living in Strasburg. If you had been any of them (the Lapps, Brad, Ezekiel, Ivan, Lenore) would you have been able to forgive her when you found out what she did?
7. Michelle's interest was piqued when she discovered some old jars that contained prayers, sayings, and Bible quotes. It was because of these notes that she began thinking about someone other than herself. Have you ever found a note in an unusual place and didn't know who had written it or why? Did it make any kind of an impact on your life?
8. If you were the real Sara, how would you have felt after discovering that someone had been pretending to be you?
9. At one point Michelle convinced herself it was okay to deceive the Lapps because she had grown fond of them and didn't want to hurt them. Is there ever a time when it's all right to keep the truth from someone, for fear of them getting hurt?
10. Ezekiel had also been living a lie, keeping the truth from his parents about the truck he'd bought. Why do you think some Amish young people want to have modern things or take part in some activities that English young people might do?
11. How do you think Amish parents should deal with their young people who try out worldly things? Should they look the other way, hoping their children will become dissatisfied with what the world has to offer? Or should Amish parents forbid their children to experience what English young people do?

12. When Ezekiel was attacked by a group of bullies outside a restaurant, he chose not to fight back. He had been taught from an early age that Matthew 5:39 says if someone hits us on the right cheek, we are supposed to turn our left cheek to him as well. How do you interpret this verse? How would most people react if they were picked on by bullies, the way Ezekiel was?
13. Would the unkind greeting Ezekiel got in Harrisburg outside the restaurant where Michelle worked give you the impression that's how the English world really is? Does it make sense that, following the incident, Ezekiel became a bit more hesitant in his decision to become English?
14. Did you learn anything new while reading this story in regards to the Lancaster County Amish? In what way is their life different from any other Amish community in America?
15. Were there any verses of scripture, prayers, or sayings that Michelle found on the slips of paper inside the old jars that spoke to you or touched your heart in some way? What was your favorite quote?