

INCENSE

Carol's friends began to wonder, "What is she doing? Where does Carol go every day?" They would see her at one moment and then she would be gone almost like magic. - Where?

Sensei also began to wonder, "What is Carol doing?"

Every day, Carol came to the temple and stood before the altar. At first Sensei thought that maybe she had forgotten something from the Sunday before. But Carol never seemed to have anything when she left the temple. She just went in and in another minute she went out.

Sometimes Carol came in the mornings. Sometimes she came in the afternoons and after school. Day after day went by and Sensei would hear little footsteps going through the temple door again.

One day Sensei happened to be sitting in quiet meditation before the altar. He was so surprised to see the little girl come before the altar with the most loving and happy presence. It was very quiet in there. Sensei did not move. He did not want to frighten her.

Carol walked before the altar and took a pinch of incense and put it in the incense burner.

Sensei wondered, "Does that small girl have matches too?" But Carol did not mind that the incense was not burning. She just put her hands together in Gassho; three little steps backwards from the burner, and she bowed happily.

"Good morning Buddha!" said Carol very softly. Then she went out to play again. After that, Sensei was always very happy to see Carol and to hear the quick little footsteps. He knew there was one small girl who remembered the beloved Buddha every day. How he wished that all little boys, girls, the entire Sangha, would stop even for one minute to stand before the altar.

* Review the significance of offering of incense.

* Review the proper way of offering of incense.

* Encourage students to observe a short service in front of family altar in the morning and evening.

- Recitation of Three Treasurers, Golden Chain, Six Paramitas, Eightfold Path, Shinshu Pledge, etc.