

# woman woman with Janey Lee Grace

W2W has been running for just over a year - having been inspired by the Activate Conference in 2006. It was at the conference that we first heard Janey Lee Grace speak and we all rushed home to do our laundry with eco balls and recycle everything that stood still long enough!

A year on and Winchester was voted the second best place in the UK to live but was in the bottom third of cities in terms of its environmental performance. Was this an opportunity for W2W to address this topical issue? Would Janey Lee Grace have a free date within the next three months? Would people come? Well, working on the principle of 'nothing ventured nothing gained', we phoned Janey and were amazed that she could do the first date we asked for! Thank you God! The venue we wanted was also free. Thank you God, again. So, on Friday 29th Febr 2008, around 250 women who weren't out proposing to eligible bachelors, gathered at The Vineyard Centre in Winchester to learn "How to be Environmentally-Friendly and Normal"! They came from as far afield as Dorset and Southampton as well as all over Winchester (Janey had advertised the event on her website).

Welcomed by a glass of wine or fruit punch and refreshments, people were then able to browse a selection of stands offering products as diverse as natural cosmetics, FairTrade gifts, organic cotton clothes, recycling bins and organic vegetables. Janey then spoke for around an hour - firstly being interviewed (at very short notice, by yours truly!) about herself and her faith and then going on to give hot tips for a more natural lifestyle. Janey was spot on in her style and approach and struck the perfect balance between humour and serious information as well as answering questions.

There was then time to browse the stands again and take advantage of the many freebies that were being handed out as well as getting a signed copy of Janey's book (with free soap pods, of course!) The evening rounded off at around 10.30pm with dozens of requests for a repeat event and loads of positive feedback from people. Janey has since emailed to say how many enthusiastic comments she has also had on her website following the event!

As with all our events, any money raised was donated to charity. This time round we supported Five Talents, a Christian run micro-financing charity which aims to help people in developing countries set up their own businesses to become self-

sufficient. The charity was also there on the night and had a stand where lots of people showed a real interest in their work. Once again, we are so amazed by God's goodness to us and so thankful for His many blessings on this work. Around half of the women at the event were non-Christians or unchurched and this was the first event where we had directly spoken about the Christian faith. We also launched our Spring Programme where we outlined the aims of W2W, including our Christian motivation for caring for others. We really feel God blessed the evening with His peace and love. Several stand holders said it was one of the best events they had ever been to and how amazed they were by the loving, friendly atmosphere and attitude of everyone. Others who brought along non-Christian friends have also said how touched they were by the caring friendliness of people. I suppose what I'm trying to say is that if God is at the centre of what you are doing and why you are doing it, people will be affected and touched by Him because that's how He works!

We are now looking forward to seeing how our new initiative of mini W2W events works. We have put together a programme of small in-home events hosted by Christians (scrap-booking workshops, and a "How to sell on Ebay" evening amongst others). People then decide which events are of interest to them and their friends and contact the host to say they are coming. We hope these smaller gatherings will encourage conversations and friendships to develop more deeply and will encourage women to invite others to the bigger termly events. Our next biggie is a "Pimms and Parasols" evening in June when we will enjoy a glorious summer's evening (there's confidence for you!) at a local village hall and garden to learn all about outdoor living and entertaining...

So watch this space!

JANET JONES

