

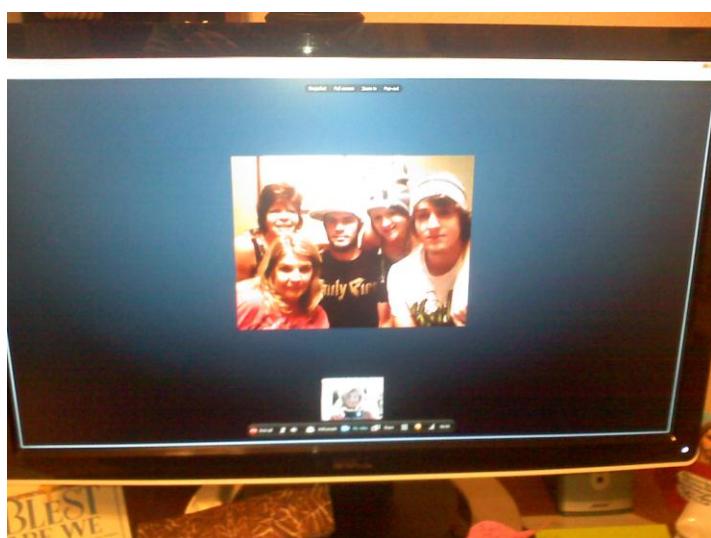
The Strong Challenge - Faith Sharing via SKYPE

by Donna Curtiss, Las Cruces, New Mexico

Our family and a few friends have discovered a wonderful use of Skype - doing a unique bible study. It is entitled the *Strong Challenge*. It is bringing thousands of people in Cincinnati (that's where my family is) and beyond together via the internet. My three sisters and their children and a few of their friends have made the commitment to meet once a week on Skype.

It is an interesting study on a number of levels. One, there are so many faiths involved in this challenge - over 60 churches are sharing in this event. While everyone is registered with a particular small group, it is estimated that there are 50,000 teammates participating. It is a six week commitment, for 20 minutes per day, five days a week experimenting with challenges designed to open us up to our God who spiritually strengthens us. The challenges aren't necessarily religious tasks; they are relationship builders. The philosophy behind this study is that the more we encounter God, the more our relationship with Him grows.

The daily challenges are divided into five categories: play, pray, study, train, and serve. Play and rest remind us that being strong is simply about receiving God's love. These activities help us see the strength that comes from rest, play and ultimately, from God. *Prayer* challenges are designed to connect us with God on a real, intimate, everyday basis. *Study* grows our understanding of God and our ability to love other people. *Training* challenges us to engage God in fresh ways that break our daily routines thereby waking us up to God's truth. *Serve* challenges us to reflect on what it means to submit ourselves to helping others. All of these disciplines help us better understand Jesus and how we are called to discipleship.



Another discipline is keeping an online journal via the internet. Responses are private unless you choose to share them. To share them, we simply click "make public" and "done." Otherwise our journal entries are private/personal and cannot be viewed even by the webmaster.

It is a very exciting and new small group venture for us. It is a six week commitment and we will keep you posted on how it is going!

Donna Curtiss is an active member of Immaculate Heart Cathedral Parish and a long time SCC member