

*From the Top of the Yardstick* by Donnette Alfelt, Illustrations by Brittany Kuhl, Paperback, 67 pp.

This friendly little book is like a conversation between a favorite aunt and her teenage niece or nephew over a plate of cookies at the kitchen table.

While advice is not always welcomed by young folks, this book is phrased in "I" statements, meaning that Mrs. Alfelt talks about her own memories and experiences and what she learned from them. She addresses life's difficult times, mistakes, habits, fears, sex, and being cool—all with the perspective of how the Lord and angels are standing nearby, ready to help and guide. She sees life as a school that prepares us for heaven and calls this school the *University of the Natural World*, which we are all invited to attend.

Her words of wisdom come from a calm and accepting place, rather than from a fear of danger and gloom, even when discussing tougher life-issues. Her deep spiritual faith shines throughout this loving monologue and has the feeling of forgiveness for human error and support for learning and growth.

Her experience with teens shows in the tone and examples she uses. She hits exactly the right level of understanding for this stage of development and uses teen-approved language, without pretension.

This book is written for teens, but I believe parents will benefit from hearing the subtle approach she favors. Teachers too, especially new ones, will benefit from her understanding of the state of teens' minds.

This is a small spiral-bound handbook with an attractive layout. The illustrations by recent Academy Girls School graduate Brittany Kuhl, class of 2006, are simple and appealing,