

How many of you would like to see more children and young families here at Christ Church?

Why is that do you think?

In today's gospel reading we are given a charge...Jesus says:

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.

And also: "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love"

We are a congregation that is well equipped to share that kind of love with the next generation.

It is a wonderful place, full of good people who love God and give so much of themselves to others.

One of our primary strengths is the way we embody the love of Christ for the world.

So how can we extend that love to a new generation, how can we nurture the spirituality of young people in our community?

in a few minutes I'll share with you the Godly Play story of Ruth, the story of a woman who shows us the power of God's love pouring down through the generations,

On Sunday May 31st we'll begin our Godly Play program, today we began offering two hours of childcare from 10-12 and the BC has committed to extending that childcare invitation for the next two years.

There are many, many ways for each one of us to participate in welcoming children and families into our church, that focusing on welcoming this next generation is something each one of us can do in our unique way...

You can learn to tell a Godly Play story, or serve as a doorkeeper, the person who greets, sits quietly, assists with the thanksgiving feast and sends the children out into the world,

you can spend a few hours a quarter supporting the story tellers as they learn new stories by giving three hours of your time to help them practice,

You can be the person who makes sure there are crackers and cups and napkins for the thanksgiving feast each Sunday.

You can invite your neighbors, friends and families to come to church with you.

You could stock and replenish the wicker basket we keep in the back of the church for kids who come to church with soft toys, board books, small tablets and crayons.

You could a small note to include in the basket or to give to families before they leave thanking them for coming and letting them know how much we'd like to see them again.

You can all make it a habit of your daily prayer life to pray that God will send us young people who we can support in their Christian growth and who can challenge our growth in new and unexpected ways.

You could volunteer at the Family Center once a month or once a quarter to support the Life Skills classes for parents or the art and music therapy classes for their children.

On this Mothers Day, I pray that you'll all consider all the ways that you have have been loved and nurtured and find a way to love these small others as we have been loved.

Story:

A bit about Godly Play:

Children have an innate sense of the presence of God. The Godly Play approach helps them to explore their faith through story, to gain religious language and to enhance their spiritual experience through wonder and play. Based on Montessori principles and developed using a spiral curriculum, the Godly Play method serves children through early, middle and late childhood and beyond.

Today's story is a connecting story, the Story of Ruth is placed in the classroom under the stories of the Exodus and the Ten Best Ways, and above the story of King David. Ruth's story connects the people wandering in the wilderness with the prosperous promised land kingdom of King David.

"After the people of God passed over the Jordan river into the promised land, they filled up the land. Some of them lived in Bethlehem.

Many years passed by and then there came a time when the rains did not come. Without the rain the crops didn't grow, without crops there was no wheat to grind and without wheat to grind there was no bread. The people were hungry.

Some of the people decided to pass back over the Jordan to the land of Moab where there was food. Naomi, her husband and their two sons were among those who went.

In Moab they had food, and they were happy. Then a sad thing happened, Naomi's husband died.

After a time her two sons married two Moabite women. Their names were Orpah and Ruth.

Then another sad thing happened, both of Naomi's sons died. She didn't know what to do.

Orpah decided to go back home to her mother's house. But Ruth said to Naomi...

I will go where you go, I will live where you live, your people will be my people and your God will be my God.

Ruth and Naomi went back over the Jordan and they found a small place to live in Bethlehem.

After the harvest, they went into the wheat fields to glean the wheat that was left over. They were allowed to do this because they were widows.

One of the fields was owned by a man named Boaz, he liked how hard Ruth worked and he appreciated how well she took care of Naomi.

After a time, Ruth and Boaz were married and they had a son. Finally Naomi had a grandson to hold on her lap. When that boy grew up, he had a son named Jesse. Jesse had many sons, one of his sons was the great King David.

So Ruth is the great grandmother of King David.”

I wonder what you like best? I wonder what is the most important? I wonder what part is about you or where you see yourself in the story? I wonder if there is a part of the story we can leave out and still have all of the story we need?