

January 2020
DRE Board Report

Dear Board members,

Here's some things that have been happening recently in RE:

This past week, we had a happy crowd of 22 kids in our main RE classroom, our largest group to date. I'm beginning to think more seriously about swapping the main classroom and art/activity room around, to make the larger room the main classroom. It was amazing to be in a mixed-ages crowd, from pre-k to 7th grade (as well as adults), all engaging in something that they wanted to do. Simply amazing!

A 5-year-old child who has been coming since last year, when their family joined our congregation, is generally very quiet and reserved. His preference is to have one parent stay with him, so last week, I got to overhear a conversation between him and his mom in RE. Our Wonder Box had introduced the idea of our 7 Principles being a strong foundation to stand tall on. The mom and child were drawing Jedi knights. With a little bit of prompting from his mom, this child was articulating specific qualities and choices that make the Jedi strong, like wisdom and goodness. The mom was able to frame their discussion around our Principles, planting the seed to discover them more fully later in life. This is a great snapshot of the present emphasis of RE, when our teaching moves from a top-down, teacher-to-child transmission, and instead happens organically during and through activities that might seem like they have nothing to do with church. It allows any teaching we do to flow from things that kids already care about. It empowers families to create and continue meaningful conversations together. It's a beautiful thing to witness!

It's such a joy to see kids who come to RE very shy and uncomfortable be able to blossom and express themselves. Another child - a 9 year old boy - is a good example of this. He has begun attending with an aunt and uncle, whom he spends the weekends with. I don't know his backstory, but could tell when he first came that he's a kid who's been through a lot. He spent his first day in RE playing by himself in a corner. He's now been to RE three times and has completely perked up. He's paying attention to our opening rituals, talking more, and has explored some of the building sets in the activity room. Watching a child being able to find their place like this, as they realize they can trust a process that empowers them, is another amazing thing to witness. We are truly providing a needed haven to members of our community.

And heads up! The RE Committee and I have decided to run Mystery Friends a little differently this year. Instead of having pairs write letters for a month, which became burdensome on parents, we will host a one-day event over Coffee Hour, where inter-generational pairs are creatively matched and discover each other in a fun, guessing game activity. Stay tuned for more details!

With love,
Bethany