

Confirmation Message 2015

Alida Ward

In just a few moments, Jamilah, or, as the kids all know her, Ms. G, is going to have all our CONfirmands stand up, and she will be asking them five questions, five pretty heavy questions, that they have spent a good bit of time pondering.

And when you hear these five questions, you're going to think, whoa -- those are pretty deep.

Those CONfirmation classes that the kids went to on Monday nights must have pretty heavy-duty, serious, theological, intense.

Well, some of that is true.

Theological, absolutely. Cause 'theology' actually just means talking about God, and we did that.

But serious? Well, not always.

As evidence, I give you the night of March 9th.

The topic that night was The Church.

Heavy topic. Oh yeah. The stuff of many a PhD thesis and a war or two.

We dealt with it by using ice cream.

Actually, just one bowl of ice cream.

One bowl of ice cream which Peter Schwinn ended up wearing.

Sorry, Peter, still feel bad about that.

Here's how I taught the kids about The Church.

Using six willing, perhaps foolish, volunteers,

I created one living organism.

Taylor was the eyes -- she was the only one without a blindfold.

Maddy Markham was the ears, Henry was the right arm, Gilly was the left arm, Peter, down on his hands and knees, was the legs, and Reid Brown was the mouth.

(Brief pause while the Brown family enjoys that particular casting choice)

These six noble volunteers, all blindfolded except Taylor -- the Eyes --, had to move as one body across the floor of the Barn, and then feed a bowl of ice cream into the Mouth, with Henry, blindfolded, but under direction from the eyes, lifting the spoon in Reid's general direction.

It went reasonably well, except for the afore-mentioned spill onto the legs of the body, aka Peter.

(I have pictures which I'll be more than happy to show you later. They're a little blurry, because I was laughing so hard it hurt.)

So, anyway, After we unblindfolded everyone, and cleaned Peter as best we could, I asked the kids:

why on earth, on a night when we are supposed to be talking about what a CHURCH is,

would I make six people try to walk together across a room as one body and do a crazy task together as one body.

The kids didn't miss a beat.

Because that's what church is, one of them said.

And someone else said, yeah, church is a bunch of people working together.

It's like we're one body, someone said, each of us has to do something to make it all go forward.

But we're not all the same, someone else said, everybody has a different thing they're good at.

There you go, I said. YOU got it. Just like the Apostle Paul said.

And I read to them from Romans 12:

"we, who are many, are one body in Christ....

we are members, one of another ...

and we each have different gifts according to the grace given to us."

That's church. That's you. I mean ALL of you.

Each person sitting here today is as essential to the whole body as the next person.

Each one of you does something well different from the person next to you.

The Confirmands figured that out while trying to shove ice cream into Reid's mouth.

You've figured that out by the way you let the Spirit lead you into your life in this church --

some of you teach Church School,

some of you get up here and read scripture,

some of you will lead a summer service,

some of you signed up to be on the prayer chain,

some of you are making sure we have punch for the reception,

some of you are in the shelters of Bridgeport every week.

Each of you has gifts according to the grace given you, and together we are one body.

After Jamilah asks our Confirmands those big questions,

and after they pledge their readiness to be part of this body of Christ, this church,

each Confirmand will come up here individually to be blessed and welcomed.

And as they do , we will as always honor a long-standing tradition in this church:

we will describe each young person with three adjectives,

and we will name the gift that we think they are bringing into this church.

The truth is, every last one of these amazing young people brings a whole lot more than one gift --

they are rich in talent, in enthusiasm, in joy, and in faith.

So naming one gift hardly does them justice --
but it will give you a sense of how much more amazing this particular body of Christ
on this particular hill
in this particular town
is about to become.

We just might need to work on our blindfolded ice cream eating.

Okay, Jamilah -- time to bring on those questions!