

## Confirmation 2016

In just a little while, right up here on this Chancel stage, one by one, the kids of this year's Confirmation class are going to kneel down for their blessing, for their blessing and their adjectives.

From time immemorial, or at least as long as I can remember, every child confirmed here has had their uniqueness declared and celebrated

with three adjectives, words we believe tell you something about each of these young people that we have grown to love.

Not a single kid here knows how I'm going to describe them; the adjectives are clouded in mystery, shrouded in secrecy, kept in a sealed vault until this moment – well, actually, they're printed right here.

And since every kid here is wondering just what words are they going to be hearing, I thought I'd go ahead and dispel the mystery just a bit, by letting you know some of the adjectives you *won't* be hearing.

*Shy.*

*Retiring.*

*Quiet.*

*Sedate.*

Nor will you be hearing *boring, dull, soporific* – there's an SAT word you won't be hearing – or tedious, uninteresting, or predictable.

Not this class. This class was wonderfully lively, energized, and loquacious – there's a good word -- “full of beans”, as my Virginia grandmother would

have said – and we have loved them. They have peppered us with questions, dazzled us with their thoughts, and cracked us up time and again.

There are many examples I could give, but here's just one little glimpse.

One particular Monday, I thought that the way we could really get to know some of the scripture stories about Jesus is if we acted them out.

And I figured it would work best to come over here to this building, rather than our usual spot in the Len Morgan Youth Barn, so we could use this, up here, as our stage.

I divided up the bunch, gave them each a story to learn, and then we called them up on stage group by group to act out their Jesus story.

And when the time came for the group who was acting out the miracle of the story of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, out through these double doors, very dramatically, came a group of Confirmands all wearing capes. **Capes.**

They had found the leftover costumes from the Christmas pageant still piled back in the Parlor and gotten creative ...

and so in our particular depiction of the Feeding of the Five Thousand, Jesus, all his disciples, and the people who get fed, were all wearing, like, Superman capes.

It totally works, one of the kids explained to me, cause, you know, Jesus was like a superhero. So then everyone with him was a superhero too.

Now fast forward to this past Monday night.

Jamilah George – our Miss G – was talking the kids through the five questions that they have to answer today... the big heavy questions of Christian commitment that they're all going to stand up and say yes to soon.

Flip open your bulletins to page 4 and take a look at the fourth question.

*Will you resist oppression and evil, it asks, will you show love and justice?*

On Monday night, George Wyckoff read that question aloud, and Miss G said “what does that sound like to you?”

And one of the kids says “it sounds like we’re supposed to be Superman. Defend justice and love? stand against evil? – sounds like Superman.”

So, folks, there’s a theme here.

Caped crusaders, superheroes, we got something going here.

I’m going to remember this class as the Superhero class.

And actually – I’m talking to the Confirmands now – I actually want you to think of *yourselves* that way.

I want you to think of yourselves as being capable of amazing powers.

I want you to believe that the world depends on you to defend justice and love.

I want you to think of yourselves as being the ones called to stand against evil.

I want you to feel that cape flapping on your shoulders, and to feel like you are ready to soar.

Because, all of that is true.

I know you, I know each one of you, and you are all gifted with amazing powers indeed: the extraordinary power of compassion that I have seen you ... the exceptional gifts for friendship and acceptance that we have witnessed ... the creativity you have, the optimism you possess, and your keen sense of what is right and true and just. You are gifted with great powers.

And yes, the world DOES depend on you to defend justice and to work for love. What we call that in church life is building the kingdom: building the kingdom of God on earth, and yes, the world is depending on you to do it. We need you to do it.

And yes, you are the ones who are called to stand against evil. This not a perfect world, and not everything is working for good out there – and you're the ones to show the world that the way of goodness, which is to say the way of Christ, is the way to follow.

And you are ready to soar. You are. You are already starting to fly – I am amazed by your confidence and commitment and your maturity – really, seriously, your maturity – and your incredible optimism and strength.

You are called to great things.

Truth is, all of us here are called to great things.

The questions that you'll be saying yes to are questions for all of us— we, too, all of us watching you today, are also called to love passionately, work for justice, and speak for good.

Today we send you soaring into a new life of faith – but know that we are right there with you, doing our best to be superheroes of faith just like you.

Jamilah – Ms. G – will you come to the front now and lead the kids – and all of us – through the questions of commitment....