

Every Perfect Gift



The Gift of Wonder

I was the kind of child who asked a lot of questions. The world fascinated me, I was filled with wonder. As a consequence to my inquisitive nature, I learned a lot.

Many kids are like this, asking questions about the world around them, testing the relationships they have experienced. Not only do children ask questions, but they expect answers, and they expect answers that are true. Until children learn to find other sources for information, answers are all they have.

The loss of the innocence of childhood brings an end to asking questions, for some. We become awkward, second guessing our understanding. “Maybe I should know the answer, already?” “I don’t want to be the first to ask.” “They’ll think I’m not paying attention...” We replace the act of wonder with the practice of worry.

Three years ago, our congregation made a special effort to include children in the annual pledge campaign, offering each child the opportunity to have a conversation about their giving and their hopes for the church. We learned two important things: Children are generous – we had 100% participation from the kids, each one of them turned in a pledge card. (And, the treasurers will be happy to know that we had 100% redemption rate on the pledges, as well!) The second thing we learned, was that the kids had lots of suggestions for ministries, ways to volunteer, ideas about church. Filled out in crayon or pencil, each pledge card was a touching, deeply theological, beautiful expression of generosity and hope – of love.

When Jesus suggests that we must receive the wonder of the world and the work we are given to do as children, I think the example above is exactly why. We must get back in touch with our sense of wonder, of possibility, of love. These are the basic skills God needs from us to work in God’s vineyard. | tens.org

J. Davey Gerhard is the Executive Director of TENS, and a member of Holy Innocents Episcopal Church in San Francisco, California



QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

How do you reacquaint yourself with your sense of wonder when you realize you might have lost it through the trials of life experience?

How does feeling hopeful impact your generosity?

