

FAITH FORMATION

Bless the Child
Gift the Family

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Faith Formation Staff

Amy Kippen
Director
Email:
akippen@
growinfaith.org

Zac Ista
Assistant/
Youth Activities
Email: zista@
growinfaith.org

Broken and.....

By Amy Kippen, Faith Formation Director

My favorite Christian singer is Sara Groves. Her songs have served as some of the best sermons heard again and again, revealing new truths over time. Her words are so real to me; as if she's in my head and my heart. Songs of redemption and confusion, songs of rejoicing and lament, songs of frolic and tradition. I really believe that God gets my attention through her music. Each of us have something that we're passionate about and for me it is music and in particular, the music of Sara Groves. One of her songs has really been on my mind lately. It is titled "What I Thought I Wanted". Sara writes of a man whose fiancé called off the wedding two days before the ceremony. He is broken. Broken and grateful. Grateful that he didn't get what he wanted. She writes of getting to heaven and tracking down Job. She wants to ask him hard questions about what he wanted and what he got instead; about how he managed to be broken by all his losses, yet faithful. In looking over her past she recalls instances where she didn't get what she wanted in life and finds peace in that knowledge. She's broken by unfulfilled dreams. Broken and peaceful. Are you broken and grateful? Are you broken and faithful? Are you broken and peaceful?

I think we're all broken, longing to made whole again. We want it in our time, yet it's God's

timeline we're on.

It's been five months since my mom's death. I'm left broken. Grief is a brokenness that cuts deep. It's as if the ground beneath me is shifting. In order not to fall, I stand frozen most of the time. Emotionally frozen in order that I can remain standing. Then the wave of grief and loss washes over me and I can't stand any more. I've no choice but to succumb to the undertow. I am broken...

Broken and faithful...Though sometimes my anger at God is so great I scream at him through my tears, I love Him more today than yesterday. I don't doubt his love for me and I feel called to teach children about this amazing love. Broken and faithful.

Broken and grateful... My mom was my friend. She was the best listener on the planet. I would not give up our talks over coffee for anything in this world. I can feel her hugs; the kind of hug that makes you feel like all is right with the world, if even for a moment or two. I was her baby girl and I felt cradled by her love. I break from the bittersweet memories. Broken and grateful.

Broken and peaceful...The peace that passes all understanding. Peace so deep down

and through and through that it's who you are. It's fleeting for me at best these days. Broken and peaceful, I'm hopeful that I'll get there.

Broken and grateful is better than broken. Broken and peaceful is better than broken. Broken and faithful is better than broken. With God I get to be all those things with hope for the days ahead.

I am broken...and hopeful....Hope is perhaps God's greatest gift to his children. I cling to it in days like these; hoping that peace will come again, staying longer with each visit. Hope that this heavy longing will lessen with time. Hope that life will once again seem normal.

What hurts have broken you? Have you like me, lost a loved one? Perhaps a marriage, a job, a friend? Is it abuse or addiction? Is it your own health or the health of someone you love? Life is so hard sometimes and we can find ourselves stuck in the brokenness. May you cling to your faith, ask for His peace, and claim the gift of hope in Christ.

What GIFT Means to My Family

By Suzanne Hansen

The GIFT (Growing in Faith Together) program has meant the world to my family! My husband Terry and I have two girls. Emily is 5 and Sofie is 7 and they have known God their whole lives! GIFT has opened our eyes to what being a Christian really is. It is trying our best each and every day to do God's will. GIFT has put purpose in our lives, not added chaos!

It's never an issue for our family that being a Christian is NOT cool! It's quite the opposite. It has become natural for our kids to pray and thank God for every meal, including snacks, whether we're at home or in public. The kids show no embarrassment talking about God's word at the grocery store, school or even the mall. When they have friends over and we are listening to Christian radio, our oldest

daughter Sofie sings all the words to a favorite song while coloring.

On any given day, I can pass by my daughters playing with their Polly Pockets or Barbies and you can bet one or more of the characters will be Ruth, Esther, or Jesus!

If anyone would have foretold that I would be this involved with the Christian education program in my church, I would have adamantly denied it. "Sunday School" was taught by the expert people our congregation had hired and the highly qualified people on the Education Board. I did not feel competent enough to teach God's word. Being a parent was one thing; parents are allowed mistakes, to learn as they go, but teach the Bible...ARE YOU CRAZY?

I love Jesus and he indeed lives in my heart, but I have never been able to quote scripture. I thought, "I am not the person you want teaching anything about God!" I later realized I don't have to be the person with all the answers. I just have to be the person who cares enough to fulfill the promises I made to God and my children at their baptism! I am not the perfect mom, I'm human and I sin like the rest. I lose my temper after a rough day at work and end up saying I'm sorry more times than I care to recall. Through all that life throws our way, the bright spot at the end of that hard week is walking under the steeple and through the doors of Faith Lutheran Church to GIFT!! Our children will be kind, loving, generous adults because GIFT helped us as parents give them the faith foundation they needed!

I will sing to the Lord... featuring original song by Emily Stillwell

When Moses parted the Red Sea saving the Israelites from Pharaoh's Army they sang a song of praise to God!

I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously.
Horse and rider he has thrown into the sea...

When we learned this story recently at GIFT, each Faith Family was charged with writing their own song of praise to

God! Imagine about thirty original praise songs written in just minutes! They were masterpieces to behold! Young and old (er!) working together to create a song. Each Faith Family performed this masterpiece for the large group.

Emily Stillwell, a first grader went home inspired! She set to writing her own praise song and was generous enough to share it

with all of you!

(To the tune of Twinkle Twinkle)

God in heaven is the best

He gave us the Ten Commandments

We love Him and He loves us

Even when we make a fuss

We send prayers to heaven above

And God will surely send His love

Thanks Emily!

Faith Stepping Stone IV and VI

Attention sixth grade parents!

Faith Stepping Stone VI- entrance to confirmation is coming up soon. Return the registration form sent recently reserving your family's spot in one of two sessions.

March 11, 1-4 pm

March 18, 1-4 pm

Attention fourth grade Parents!

Watch for a mailing coming soon about Faith Stepping Stone IV- Holy Communion Instruction. Return your registration form promptly for one of two sessions- March 25, 1-4 pm or March 31, 1-4 pm. This faith milestone will be celebrated on Maundy Thursday, April 5th.

Mark your calendars!

Support the Bible Camp Fund by joining us for supper here at church on Wednesdays during Lent! Satisfaction Guaranteed!

H2H Lenten Serving Schedule

March 7

5:30 service: Exodus
7:00 service: Nehemiah
1st shift meal: Leviticus

2nd shift meal: Haggai
Ruth
Job

March 14

5:30 service: Ecclesiastes
7:00 service: Hosea
1st shift meal: Obadiah

2nd shift meal: Joel
Amos
Zephaniah
Joshua

March 21

5:30 service: Esther
7:00 service: Micah
1st shift meal: Jeremiah
Deuteronomy
Judges
Song of Sol.

March 28

5:30 service: Nahum
Chronicles
Ezekiel
Malachi
Habbakuk
Zechariah
Isaiah

Reminder that 8th and 9th grade summer trip forms were due on February 21st!!! Turn them in now to reserve your spot on the bus to beautiful MT or spectacular Chicago!

YOUTH STOCK SALE

Reminder to return your youth stock sale form soon. Proceeds will help fund confirmation summer trips being planned now!

We're on the web
www.growinfaith.org

MARCH CALENDAR

Sunday GIFT

March 4	GIFT	9:30-10:45	TLC
March 11	GIFT	9:30-10:45	TLC
March 18	GIFT	9:30-10:45	TLC
March 25	GIFT	9:30-10:45	TLC

Wednesday GIFT

March 7	GIFT	5:45-7:00	<u>Fellowship Hall</u>
March 14	GIFT	5:45-7:00	<u>Fellowship Hall</u>
March 21	GIFT	5:45-7:00	<u>Fellowship Hall</u>
March 28	GIFT	5:45-7:00	<u>Fellowship Hall</u>

H2H Confirmation

Confirmation students are required to attend Wednesday evening worship services during Lent. Parents please accompany your child. Worship services are at 5:30 and 7:00. Be sure to sign the attendance sheet. H2H resumes April 11th.

REMINDER: Some events are held in the TLC which is not handicap accessible