



Ministry with Children

THIS MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER ADDRESSES TOPICS OF CONCERN FOR THOSE ENGAGED IN MINISTRY FOR CHILDREN.

"...for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs."



Bullying

What's Love Got to Do with It?

Jesus makes the call to love quite clear in the Greatest Commandment. "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind", and Jesus goes on to tell the Pharisees to "love your neighbor as yourself". Seems simple enough, yet we continue to see examples of how it is not quite so simple for so many — even our children.

Recently, the media has been filled with stories of children committing suicide in response to bullying. Bullying goes against the teachings of Jesus Christ, the General Rules of the Methodist Church, and the Golden Rule that is recognized in religions the world over. Today, it is likely that all children experience bullying in one or more ways — as victim, as silent bystander, as victimizer, or as a disciple.

At First United Methodist Church in Oak Ridge, Tennessee, a group of young girls who have been in a covenant discipleship group with one another for three years found a way to be true disciples. One of the members of their group became the target of a bully. These girls came together to pray with and for her, and to help her find ways to deal with this situation. As a result, the bullying has subsided and the girls are looking at ways to approach the local schools about making changes in anti-bullying policies.

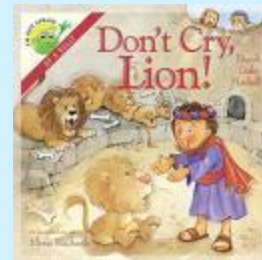
Reacting to the situation early on may have been one piece of facing this bullying situation, but if we look deeper, we see that this would not have been possible without covenant relationship that included forgiveness, prayer for one another, learning about the mission of church, a commitment to loving God and neighbor, and holding one another accountable. One child found the strength and the voice to face her fears because she knew God and her neighbors "had her back".

Building healthy relationships is vital to making disciples. Targets of bullying are not the only ones who need support. Children who bully and children who stand by quietly need love and relationship, too. Let us be proactive in showing our children what it means to love one another, and to live as "people worthy of the call" we received from God.

November 2010

How are we building relationships with children?

Reading and Resources

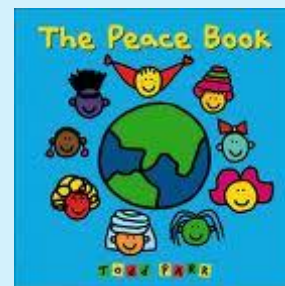


Don't Cry, Lion!

by Dandi Daley Mackall

Daniel teaches Little Lion how feeling safe is just a prayer away, and an angel even lends a helping hand!

Available from Amazon.com.



The Peace Book

by Todd Parr

Peace is... "making new friends, listening to different kinds of music, and helping your neighbor."

Available at www.amazon.com.



Resources for Building Safe Spaces and Relationships

A few ideas Melanie

There are some strategies that we can use to encourage and support healthy environments and relationships for children in the nursery, preschool, Sunday school, and in other areas of ministry with children.

- [Part 3 of an article](#) from UM Portal on bullying with specific questions for members of the congregation
- [Booklet on Abuse and Bullying](#) from the General Board of Church and Society with practical helps
- An adult's [reflection](#) on his childhood experience with bullying
- [Moozie](#) is devoted to helping pre-k and kindergarten children discover the universal benefits of kind behavior and kind acts
- [Booklist](#) from the Santa Clara County Library
- Develop a "Safe Space" Covenant based on the General Rules of the Methodist Church and make it part of your Safe Sanctuaries Guidelines
- Help children build healthy relationships through covenant discipleship groups

Melanie C. Gordon serves at the General Board of Discipleship in the Leadership Ministries Division as Director of Ministry with Younger Children.

This e-newsletter is produced at the GBOD and is made possible by generous giving to the UMC World Service Fund.

© 2010 by the General Board of Discipleship. Permission is granted to copy or reprint this newsletter for use in local congregations and annual conferences.

For any other use, please contact mgordon@gbod.org.



Related Links

[GBOD Ministry with Children](#)

[Ministry with Children Blog](#)

[GBGM Serving for Children](#)

Related Resources

[Teach Peace Now](#) provides information, activities, and book titles that promote the importance of teaching and living a life of peace

[Kids Against Bullying](#) is an interactive site with videos, activities, and resources for elementary children

Feedback?

I would enjoy hearing from you! Are there topics that you would like for me to address? Please email me at mgordon@GBOD.org.

Not Subscribed?

Not subscribed to Ministry With Children? [Subscribe now](#) and receive this newsletter monthly!

[Forward to a Friend](#) 

