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*“Train children in the right way, and when old they will not stray.” –Proverbs 22:6*

In the Lutheran tradition, we baptize infants, because we believe that the sacraments are entirely a work of the Holy Spirit, Who gives new life into the faith of an entire community. It means being born again – not physically – but, spiritually. Parents make specific promises to bring them to worship and raise them in the community, to give them a bible and teach them what it says, to guide them in prayers and serving others, and (unique to the Lutheran church) teach them the 10 commandments, Apostle’s Creed, and Lord’s Prayer as Luther wrote in the Small Catechism.

That is a lot to put on parents! So, the church also asks for sponsors to promise to nurture kids in the faith. We go a step farther and promise, as a congregation, to support and pray for the one being baptized. That promise of *support* is a bit ambiguous. And any time you have ambiguous statements, things get messy. In our current time and place, with many people being overextended, that can translate into expecting others to fulfill responsibilities and not looking to ourselves and asking ourselves what we can do to foster faith in one another.

There are no easy black/white answers when it comes to fulfilling ambiguous responsibilities. I can’t tell you how to care for one another. I have no idea what the Holy Spirit is leading each of you to do. Of course, there are people like Jeff Riotto, Laura Dec, Ilona Oosterwyk, and others who show up to teach Sunday School (and have for years) even though they don’t have kids in the Sunday School classes. That isn’t going to be everyone’s calling, but I want to stress that *everyone is called and equipped by the Holy Spirit to do ministry*.

Everyone from the youngest child to the oldest adult has something to offer. I have learned more from teaching Sunday School and leading bible studies than from any sermon I have ever heard. And I have heard some great ones! This is mainly due to the fact that Sunday School and bible study are about curiosity and worship is about reverencing God. Both of these aspects of *church* are crucial to a healthy spirituality regardless of one’s age or maturity. Worship isn’t meant to be about learning, but it is a requirement to be a part of any church, because it keeps God at the center of our community.

Over the summer, many of us travel and so it is the time that we go down to one service on Sunday mornings and we take a break from Sunday School. Having one service is a great opportunity to interact with people that you might not see when we have a full schedule. When you are in town, take advantage of the joint worship. Bring your kids and your grandkids, while they aren't so busy with school.

Parents, I know that your busy lives often result in you having to choose between Sunday School or worship during the school year, but in summer, when we have no SS, you could spend that time in worship. It is an opportunity to honor the promises you made, when you baptized your child.

For the rest of us, when we are blessed with kids in worship, it is our opportunity to show their parents that they are welcome. I hear from people all the time how much they love seeing and *hearing* kids in worship. I agree and am happy to know that, but the people that really need to know that are the parents. Let them know that you are glad they are here. Support them (no criticism!) in their efforts to raise their kids in the church.

Church is one of the last places, in our society, that is intergenerational. That is a tremendous gift that I hope we will all enjoy this summer.