

## **Friends Testimonial Story – David's UCC - Hebe**

**Faith. Luke 17:6 – “The Lord answered, ‘If you had faith as big as a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, “Pull yourself up by the roots and plant yourself in the sea!” and it would obey you.”**

God's family at David's has been on a journey. A journey to deepen our faith and demonstrate that faith through service in our community and the world. The journey started a little over a year ago with what I, their pastor, called “Growing Closer to God: Lessons for the Soul.” One of these lessons, “Learning to let go and let God,” took place around All Saints Day last year. For one whole week, we practiced being faithful servants to our Lord.

We let go of one thing we thought needed to be done each day, and instead we used that time in service to God in our community. We practiced the small things of faith as a means for working up to the bigger faith works that need to happen in our world. Our focus was to let go and let God so that the meaning and purpose of our lives would become clearer. Our mission is to have our mustard seed of faith, as individuals and as a church, continue growing and flowering as a colorful burst of hope for our lives and the world. Our weekly lesson was to do random acts of kindness, or errands in faith service, for each day. The suggestions for the week are at the end of this article.

This year for All Saints day, for our soul lesson, we spent three Sundays looking at the saints in our lives, present and past, who have been sources of strength to us as we follow Christ. We reflected on the individuals who are/were examples of how to be Christ's servants to our world. The first two Sundays we discerned our own faith journeys, and the ways in which these saints guide us and help us stay strong in our faith. Then we wrote their names down on a tablecloth. The first Sunday, we looked at those individuals still alive, and we wrote their names down. The second Sunday, we thought of those saints who are no longer alive, and we wrote their names down. Also on this Sunday, we looked at our potential to be an example of Christ to others, and then we wrote our own names down.

Christ reached out to those whom others did not. On the first Sunday of November (the third Sunday in our series), our “Saints Cloth” became part of our sacrament of Holy Communion. It is a way to remember all those who made it possible for us to share together on this day, Christ's gift of his life, death and resurrection. To show our commitment to following Christ we had as our faith service for the week the following project: We were to think of a person that we have not been a saint to. It might be a person who may be in need of Christian love. Or, to really stretch our souls, we were encouraged to reach out to someone whom we may have treated in a un-Christ like manner. Then we were to be a saint to that person anonymously through an act of kindness - like sending an unsigned card with an uplifting note, or leaving a small gift on their doorstep. The important thing about our soul lessons is to grow in our faith by actively emulating Christ. We are in service not to receive accolades and glory for ourselves, but to give God the glory.

Outreach ideas from a year ago. These are just suggestions and can be switched around by day.

**Monday:** Think of someone you haven't seen for a while; someone you keep meaning to reach out to but just don't seem to find the time. Pick up the phone and call them. Find out how they are. Your phone call just might be the seed of hope for them that day.

**Tuesday:** Wherever you find yourself today, pay attention to those around you. Is someone doing something thoughtful for another? Does someone seem like they are really down or lonely? It doesn't matter if you know them or not. Go up and compliment them for the thoughtful act. Or complement them on the clothes they are wearing and how nice they look. Or just say to them as you are passing by "Hi, I hope you have a wonderful day."

**Wednesday:** Today you are going to call or see someone (not a family member) who has brought joy to your life. You are going to thank them for their presence in your life. Let them know how important their life is, and how their life brightens your world. Be specific, let them know what it is about them that brings joy and/or hope to you. For example: is it their gentleness of spirit; is it their joyful attitude about life; or is it the way they encourage you with words of support. Let them know what gifts from God they share that helped you.

**Thursday:** Think of someone who you know could use some help with something, or maybe a good meal. Call and offer to take them out sometime for breakfast or lunch. Or better yet, invite them over to your house for a meal. If it's help they need – like maybe a shopping trip, offer to take them with you when you go next. Or maybe they need their leaves raked. Think of the time you could have talking to God while you rake. It's a "win win" for you!

**Friday:** Today we reach out to our loved ones. Have you been taking your significant other, spouse, parents, or children for granted? Today is the day to show and tell them how much their love means to you. Today is a day to show and tell them how much of a blessing they are in your life. Do flowers bring joy to your loved one? Buy them a bouquet! Offer to take over a task they need to do that day so that they can put their feet up and relax with that book they have been wanting to read but just didn't have the time. And don't forget to tell them with words from your heart how important they are in your life.

**Saturday:** Today is about sharing fun and joy. Grab a friend, a loved one, or be bold ask someone you don't know too well, and go do something that will bring you and them joy and make you both laugh. Today is a day to remember that life is meant to be lived! Love life today!

**Sunday:** Today you are going to really draw on your faith. You are going to talk with someone about what it means for you to be a Christian. You pick the person with whom

you will share. It could be another Christian or someone who is not. Either way tell them how having God in your life helps you as a person. How does knowing Christ's teachings and trying to treat others as Christ did, make you a better person? How does knowing that when you die you will join Christ eternally bring you comfort and peace? This is the greatest expectation that God has for us. God expects us to be the farmers who plant the mustard seeds in others hearts. How about it...are you ready to share the good news! Go get planting!

