

EfM Experience by Wendy Gilbert

“First years, this way,” bellowed Hagrid as he led the 11-year-olds to the boats.

And off we went to EfM last September, just like new students at Hogwarts -- a bit unsure about what we'd be learning or how, but all the same quite eager to begin our studies.

Our book bags were full of crisp new texts and even though it was entirely unnecessary as everyone is welcome to embrace a version of The Bible they were most comfortable with, I purchased the:

Fully Revised Fourth Edition

The New Oxford Annotated Bible

New Revised Standard Version

With Apocrypha

College Edition

An Ecumenical Study Bible.

Not just because it was the recommended version, Hermione would understand, but because I remember my Dad's copy in his study. Perhaps the fully revised Third edition?

After hearing and reading a great deal about what EfM is not, it was comforting to take a seat around the table and participate in what our mentors referred to as Monday Night Church.

We breathed, we prayed, we snacked and week by week, we learned and we read. We read a lot and then we read some more.

As the weeks went by, I found myself paying more attention to the Old Testament readings in church. An odd word, name or place didn't seem so strange any more. Things I'd just sort of skipped over, began to take on a deeper meaning. I caught myself nodding affirmatively as I made connections and remembered the rest of the story. Themes of compassion, homecoming, restoration and many others knit together over time.

Class time with my fellow EfM'rs became the perfect way to begin each week.

Even a global pandemic (these can seem like dark times my friends) didn't stop us. Now we Zoom together!

From a Second Year to a future First Year, I'd love for you to join us.

You'll be glad you stepped into the boat. Don't worry -- I believe Jesus will calm the sea.

