



Children's Story

Cycle C, Proper 4

Title:	Surprised by Respect/ a trusting stranger
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Text:	Luke 7: 1-10
Theme:	God works in strangers, too.

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Surprised by Respect

a trusting stranger

Gathering Activity:

Warmly invite the children to come for the children's time especially if they like stories about surprises. Once they are ready to listen with their hearts, open your Bible to Luke 7 and say, "Today's story comes from ideas in Luke, chapter 7, where Jesus got a very good surprise." Show children the place in the Bible.

Story

What do your parents tell you about strangers? Would you let a stranger into your house without checking with your parents?

Because we want to keep our children safe from those few strangers who are mean and nasty, parents and teachers teach children things like:

- Don't talk to strangers,
- Don't invite them into your house unless your parents say it is okay.
- If a stranger calls on the phone, and you are home alone, let them leave a message on the answering machine, or say something like, "My mother can't come to the phone right now. Can I take a message?"

We teach you these things because we just don't know if we can trust people until we know them. Even though most strangers are good people, we teach children to be very careful around strangers so that they won't get hurt.

In today's Bible story, Jesus had been teaching his followers to trust God. Then a stranger, whom they didn't trust because he was a stranger, showed Jesus that he trusted God more than his followers did. They learned a lesson from the stranger that day.

There is a family with three children that had a similar surprise a few years ago, before there were cell phones. This family was getting ready to move to a new city far away, so their friends were having a goodbye party for them in a park. There were lots of them, and the children were playing on the play structures while the grown-ups were visiting.

When it was time for them to drive to one of their homes for a barbeque, the children piled into some of the bigger vans. It was good to see them having so much fun together. Parents counted heads, and everyone drove off. What nobody noticed was that this family's five year old daughter, Eva, had been left behind. Eva had been playing with other children in the sandbox and hadn't noticed the others leave.

When the rest of the group spilled out of the cars at their friend's house they noticed Eva was missing! What should they do? This is what they did. A car full of dads drove back to

the park to look for her. The mom called the police to report a missing child and then went to her house to wait in case someone would bring her home. And everybody prayed.

Back at the park, Eva had noticed she was alone and wondered what she should do. A kind stranger noticed she was looking lost and helped her. He asked her, and she told him her name and phone number. He called her phone number and her mom answered. She was so surprised and pleased by this stranger's help. He seemed like an angel to her. She told him that Eva's dad was on his way back to the park with some friends. She was proud of her daughter for remembering her phone number, too.

After the phone call, the man bought Eva an ice cream cone and helped her wait for the careful of dads. Soon the dads showed up at the park, calling Eva's name as they rushed out of the car. The stranger heard it and waved to them. Soon Eva was back with her dad, who hugged her tightly as he thanked the man for protecting and helping his little girl. He said he would never forget the lesson this stranger had taught him. He would never forget to double check for all his children when they left a place again. As they drove back to the party to celebrate her safety, he also thanked God for the goodness in this stranger.

Prayer

Thank you, Jesus, that there are good strangers and that you sometimes help us through them. Amen.