

Who are God's hands and feet?

Children's Story

Year B, Proper 21

Title: Who are God's hands and feet?
Author: Karen Suderman
Church: St. Jacobs Mennonite Church, St. Jacobs, ON
Text: Mark 9:38-50 (especially 38-41)
Theme: If you are not against God you are for God

Wondering questions:

- I wonder why some people go so far away to share God's love.
- I wonder how many feet and hands God has.
- I wonder how God wants to use my hands and feet.
- I wonder how we will see and hear God's love being spread today.

Gathering Activity:

Invite the children to make a little trip to the front of the church for a children's story. Welcome them warmly as they arrive and encourage them to settle into an attitude of holy wondering and learning with you. Explain that the child in today's story, Alex, made a much longer trip than they did when they came up for the story. After his long trip, Alex learned what Jesus was talking about in Mark 9. Read verses 38-41 to the children and wonder briefly about what that could mean before moving on to the story.

Story:

Alex had butterflies in his stomach. This would be his first day of school in the country of Somalia, on the big continent of Africa. It was an international school for children from other countries. He had just moved half way around the world with his parents and his sister to work for Mennonite Central Committee. They were there to bring supplies to help the people fix their fishing boats so they could earn a living. Mom said working for Mennonite Central Committee gave them the chance to be God's hands and feet in Somalia.

This Children's Story is part of a larger story archive available as a resource to teachers, ministers, and others of Mennonite Church Canada ©2009. Posted by permission of the author. Edited by Elsie Rempel, director of Christian Education and Nurture for Mennonite Church Canada

When Alex got to school, he met other North American children who had come to Somalia with their parents. Alex was happy to meet so many people who were working with MCC as God's hands and feet. When Alex did math with a girl named Sally, she said that her Mom was a doctor and her Dad was a nurse. They were working together with others in an organization called World Vision.

At recess, Alex played soccer with a boy named Darrin. Darrin said that his mom was teaching in a school in the next village. Darrin told Alex that their family worked for the Christian Children's Fund. As they were lining up to go back into school, Alex told Sally and Darrin that his family was God's hands and feet because they worked for MCC. Sally and Darrin said that they were God's hands and feet, too. Alex felt confused. How could all of these different families be God's hands and feet if they were not working for MCC?

Alex's mom met him outside of the school that afternoon and they walked home together. The whole walk home was silent. Alex had his hands shoved into his pockets and his eyebrows pulled together. Alex's mom studied his face. "Are you alright?" she asked. Alex sighed, "Yeah, I guess I'm alright. I'm just thinking really hard." They kept on walking in silence. After a while, Alex asked, "Mom, can I ask you something?"

"Absolutely!" she replied. "You said that, because we are working for MCC, we are God's hands and feet, right? But my new friends at school said they were God's hands and feet, too, but they are not working with MCC. How can they be God's hands and feet?"

Alex's mom stopped on the path. Smiling, she said, "Come, sit down with me, and I will try to answer your question." Alex sat beside her under the shade of a tree. She leaned against

the trunk and looked down at Alex. "Working for MCC is not the only way that you can be God's hands and feet. The organizations that other parents are working for also help people. They also spread God's love by sharing and helping. That is what it means to be God's hands and feet. As long as we do what Jesus would do, it does not matter if we are working for MCC or another organization. As long as people don't block God's love, they can be God's hands and feet."

Alex felt better, though he did start wondering how many hands and feet God has. He was just beginning to imagine what kind of a picture he could draw about that when he thought of another question. "Mom, you said that spreading God's love makes us God's hand and feet. That means we can do it wherever we are, and not just in Somalia, right?" Alex's mom smiled down at him, "You are right Alex. No matter where we find ourselves, we can be God's hands and feet by sharing God's love. Many people work to spread God's love in many ways, all over the world. Soon, I hope we will have Somali friends who will share God's love with us, too. Does this make sense?"

Alex nodded, "Thanks Mom." With that they stood up and continued walking home.

Prayer:

Thank you God, for your great big love. We are excited that we can be your hands and feet and can spread your love by helping those who need it. Help us understand that there are many people all around the world who spread your love in different ways. Help us understand that we can all work together and be your hands and feet. Amen.