



look carefully for good things

Children's Story

Year B, Proper 28

Title: Look carefully for good things
Author: Dolores Lohrenz
Church: Fort Garry Mennonite Fellowship, Winnipeg, MB
Text: Mark 13:1-8, especially 5
Theme: Watch carefully so others won't fool you about God's good news
Needed: There could be picnic blankets to sit on

Gathering Activity:

Wearing a detective costume, including a magnifying glass, invite the children forward to help look for something very important. The first important thing you will find is the picnic blanket, in their usual children's story place, as a place to gather. Wonder together why there is a picnic blanket today. As you settle into a comfortable listening position, remind them of this important and holy chance to gather with other children in worship and remember that Jesus is with us. Spend a moment together imagining yourselves on the lap of Jesus. Open your Bible to Mark 13:5 and explain that, in today's passage, we have some important words of warning from Jesus. Consider reading the text from the Good News Bible, where the translation is slightly less severe and reads 'Jesus said to them, "Watch out, and don't let anyone fool you."' That warning to watch out is the reason for your detective costume and is important in today's story.

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Story:

What a beautiful day! Even before Kali opened her eyes in the morning she could hear her Mother singing. Through the window she saw the bright yellow sun shining between the branches of the huge climbing tree in her back yard. It was going to be a great day for the family picnic. She ran barefoot into the kitchen where her Mom was packing her favourite outdoor foods (could be itemized by the children) and her Dad was setting the table for breakfast. They were all excited about seeing Grandma and Grandpa, the aunts and uncles, and all of their cousins. It wasn't long before breakfast was done, the van was packed, and they were on their way to the park.

They had driven only a short distance when the sky began to turn grey and clouds gathered in front of them. The clouds moved faster and faster and turned darker and darker until they seemed to be almost over their heads. Mom and Dad had stopped singing and were beginning to talk about turning around and going home. By now the sky looked almost black. Around them they could see bolts of lightening and hear thunder rumbling in the distance. Mom turned around and said she didn't know what to do. Should they go home or keep going? Three year old Kali didn't understand why the weather seemed so stormy and angry, but she kept watching the sky carefully out of her window from her car seat. Suddenly she said excitedly, "Look Mom, two puffy white clouds. The stormy clouds were fooling us! We won't have to go home".

Kali's careful watching for a good sign encouraged the family to keep going. As they did, more and more soft white clouds peeked through the storm, chasing the storm clouds further and further away, until the sky was almost clear of clouds. As they neared the park they saw the beginnings of a beautiful rainbow

that gracefully arched its way across the sky. What a beautiful day for a picnic! Kali's family was so glad she had watched so carefully and the stormy clouds hadn't fooled her.

Prayer:

We thank you, Jesus, for warning us to watch out when weather and people try to fool us. We thank you that good things often follow after the bad. Help us to watch for signs of good news and to remember that, even when the sky doesn't clear up for our picnics, we can still trust you and your love. Amen.

Wondering questions:

- I wonder how Kali felt when her Mom didn't know what to do.
- I wonder if people sometimes fool us like those storm clouds fooled Kali's family.
- I wonder how Kali's family felt when they could have their picnic after all.
- I wonder what good signs Jesus wants us to watch out for carefully.