

Whoever Welcomes One Such Child Public Education Proper 20, Year B

Overview

Focus Text: Mark 9:30-37

“Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.” Scripture Commentary by Rev. Molly Shivers, Pastor, Clover Garden United Methodist Church, Chapel Hill
Grandiose adult visions can inflate until they crowd out any view of the small and the young. Such was the case with Jesus’ disciples in the Gospel of Mark and in this pericope. The disciples just don’t seem to understand who Jesus is and what he has come to bring about on earth. Instead, they are caught up in their limited dreams and visions of what discipleship means.

Pastoral Reflection by the Rev. Molly Shivers

If we take Jesus’ actions of Mark 9: 30 – 37 seriously, we must consider the littlest and the least in any situation that we encounter as people of faith. Who are the littlest and least in public education? Obviously, the children would qualify as the littlest, and they often get the least. Public education is supposed to benefit children primarily, but it seems the adults get so busy arguing that they lose sight of the children. The children are then left on the fringes, out on the margins of the discussion, waiting for the adults to decide who they think is the greatest and the best.

Personal Vignette by Action for Children North Carolina and the UNC Center for Civil Rights Leandro Advocacy Project

In an attempt to ensure every child has access to a sound basic education, parents, students, and school boards from low-wealth counties filed a lawsuit in 1994 against the State of North Carolina and the State Board of Education for failing to provide fair and adequate public education funding. Known as the Leandro decisions, the North Carolina Supreme Court twice ruled (first in 1997, then in 2004) that every child in North Carolina has a constitutional right to “an equal opportunity to receive a sound basic education.

Key Fact

For the 2010-2011 school year there were 1,434,436 students enrolled in the NC public school. The dropout rate for grades 7-12 is 2.6% while the graduation rate is 74.2%.