

Calvary United Methodist Church  
June 5, 2011  
Youth Sunday

Children's Sermon

Luke 2:41-52



How many of you did something for your Mother on Mothers Day? How many of you will be doing something for your Father on Fathers Day? So most of you thank your parents on this one day, but how many other days in the year do you really thank your parents for all they do for you?

What about the other people in your lives who do things for you -people like teachers, grandparents, neighbors? How many of you have done anything in the past week to thank them?

What would it be like if you didn't have a ride home from church today? Or what if you got home but there wasn't any food for lunch. Or if you needed to change clothes but there wasn't any clean clothes? What if you were told that you couldn't live in your house anymore and that you had to find your own place to stay? What if you teacher or day care provider just didn't bother to show up tomorrow to teach you? This wouldn't be fun would it?

I'm guessing most of you don't realize how much you parents do for you. Your parents, grandparents, and anyone else you live with take care of you and make sure that you are happy and safe at all times, which isn't that easy of a job. God gave parents the job of taking care of their children. He even gave Mary and Joseph the job of taking care of his own son Jesus. But they, like all parents, went through some difficulties with raising Jesus.

Luke 2:41-52 is about Jesus as a little boy and just one problem that his parents had.

*When he was twelve years old, Jesus and his family celebrated Passover in Jerusalem. They went every year. When the festival was over, his parents and neighbors left for home. It never occurred to anyone that Jesus would stay behind in the city. Eve-*

*ryone traveled together and looked out for each other. The next morning, someone noticed that Jesus was missing. A quick survey of the group confirmed it; he was not with them. The whole company rushed back to Jerusalem. It took three days to find him. Where was he? In church! In the temple, listening to the teachers and asking great questions.*

*His family was not amused. "What were you thinking?" they asked him. "We've been worried sick about you."*

*"Why didn't you know where I would be?" he replied. "This is my Father's house. This is where I belong." That didn't help much. They all returned home. As the years passed, it became clear that Jesus was most at home in his Father's house.*



Jesus' parents were afraid that they lost him, and they went through a lot to try to find him. They were frustrated with themselves for losing him and were willing to do anything to find him again. But, when they finally found him and asked him to not disappear like that ever again, Jesus listened to them and did as they asked no matter how much he didn't want to. Just like Jesus, you should respect your parents and do as they tell you.



You should also thank them on occasion just for being the amazing parents that they are. I brought in Hershey Kisses as a reminder to you to show your love and thankfulness to your parents each and every day. For the rest of the day today I want you to give a Kiss to anyone who is helping you, whether it is your parents making lunch for you, your sister helping you with your homework, or your grandparents driving you somewhere...they should get a Kiss.



You can eat maybe one or two Kisses, but the rest are for sharing because I am giving them to you as a way to help you show your love and thankfulness to the people closest to you.



One of the points of our lives that we are reminded of how much we need to say “thank you” is at the point of graduation. We’d like to invite our graduates up to the platform. Just come on up either side if you would. The hope is that we have enough bags of kisses for the graduates to be able to give some out too. We’ll see how that works out.



Great to see everybody this morning. Welcome, welcome, welcome! Good to have you here.

These young people are just now learning, and some of them already knew, just how much their parents have done for them over time, and that little piece of paper that they may already have gotten or are about to get is called a diploma.



Do you know what the word “diploma” means? A diploma is actually a sign that something has been completed. In fact, I was able to pull out my high school diploma from like 1633 and it says on there “from the York Suburban High School, which by the way is still in existence, York Suburban High School certifies that S. Ronald Parks (that’s me) has completed the course of study.....blah, blah, blah, blah, blah.....and is therefore afforded this diploma as a sign that he is done and it is awarded in York, PA on June 6, 1974.” Yes, they had paper in 1974.



The diploma is a sign that the studies are completed and, like people who have finished the running of a race, the race is over. All these young people who are getting diplomas or have already gotten diplomas are realizing that one part of their lives is really finished. When one part of your life comes to an end, it’s a great time to stop and say “thank you very much.” because right after a part of your life finishes, another part of your life just gets started.



So I thought that we would give these young people a degree of a different kind. Some of you may be familiar with the idea of a G.E.D. How many of you know what the initials G.E.D. stand for?

# GRATITUDE EXPRESSED DAILY



It is actually a General Equivalency Diploma and it literally means that, even if you didn't go to classes like all of these people did, you can still be estimated as knowing certain things if you studied certain courses.

I think, since we're talking about starting a new aspect of life, it should be called a "Gratitude Expressed Daily" certificate or diploma. So, what I've done is create this diploma that we are going to give to people. It says on them that the "kingdom of God, the department of discipleship, is proud to award this certificate of awareness and commitment to each of these people because we all need to be reminded all the time that the purpose of our lives is to give thanks daily - for our gratitude to be expressed daily. So, there are a couple of scripture passages that we put on the document.

*If you, as imperfect as you are, give good gifts to others, how much more will your heavenly Father, whose love is perfect, give good gifts to those who ask him.*

*Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with thankful hearts. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, praising God the Father for everything, in every circumstance of life.*

And these young people are about to begin or have already begun some kind of new circumstances of life. At the very bottom of the certificate it says "this is presented by your brothers and sisters of Calvary United Methodist Church on Sunday, June 5, 2011 in celebration of your graduation and" (something very important) "we are always praying for you."

So whether you this old (high school grads), or whether you are as old and wise as these young people (college grads), or whether you're really old like people who graduated in 1974, we all have to be reminded to say "thank you very much" for all the things that everyone does for us.



Now, do we have enough bags of kisses? OK, because that is really important. It would be tragic to have these guys up here and not give them the goods.

Now, you do remember what you are supposed to do? Right? What are you supposed to do? Give the kisses to people who help us as a way of saying “thank you very much.” That is exactly right.

So what we want to do is congratulate these young people for their achievement and we all know how we do that here in church.....applause!

An we want to say thank you to all of you guys for handing out the kisses all day long. Thanks for sharing in our time this morning.



MESSAGE

Skit presented by the Youth

Youth Sunday Skit Disclaimer  
Today's skit has been brought to you by the Youth of Calvary United Methodist Church.

Another Disclaimer  
The views and opinions represented in this skit are purely the views and opinions of the Calvary Youth, . . .

Disclaimer (continued)  
and in no way represent the views and opinions of Calvary at a whole or of any other entity.

Yet Another Disclaimer  
All characters in this skit are purely fictional, any resemblance to any actual Calvary Church Staff person . . .

And Still More Disclaimer  
is purely unintentional on the part of the Calvary Youth.



**Scene I - Agent recruits his young assistant**

Music plays, Little Katie lights a candle, and sits up front.

Agent: Psst, Psst, Hey I need you.

Katie: Me???

Agent: Yeah. You see, I'm new here and I need an assistant, someone who has been here for a while.

Katie: To assist with what?

Agent: Well, you see. I'm an Agent. You people seem to be doing stuff around here, without ehh ..... proper representation.

Katie: Representation?

Agent: Hey, kid. I like what you were doing up there. But, how old are you? I mean, we got child labor laws in this state. And working with fire, for a kid, that has to be some sorta code violation. You see, if you had an agent, you would be taken care of.

Katie: I don't know.

Agent: Sure kid, just come with me, you see, you are not the only one I can help.

## **Scene II - The Choir Director**

Choir comes on and sings *Hallelujah*. Katie approaches.

Director: Hey Katie, what's up?

Katie: Do you ever fell like you need representation?

Director: I'm not sure what you mean, but I don't think so.

Katie: OK then, never mind.

Agent: Never mind, you never mind. I'll take over from here. Listen, your choir is really good. How much are ya pullin' in here.

Director: What?

Agent: How much are you pullin' in, ya know, how much are ya getting paid? Here, write it down.

Director: (Director writes amount down.) It's just a small stipend.

Agent: Get outa here. I can get you 10 times that. Your choir is great. You should see what they pay at the Catholic Church down the road. I'm setting up a meeting with the Pastor, be there tomorrow, 9:00 sharp.

### **Scene III - The Lead Usher**

Ushers come forward with plates. Pastor makes his way out. Plates collected, head usher walks off to the side.

Agent: Hey, you guys, sure took in a lot of cash. What is your cut?

Head Usher: You're not suggesting we should take money from the offering plate?

Agent: Oh, no, no, no, of course not. But this ushering is a big job, right? (Agent takes a bulletin from a parishioner sitting near the front.) Can I see that a minute? Look here. I mean you get your name in the bulletin, sure, but where, buried on the back page. The back page. You kiddin' me? I think I can get you on the front page. Be at my meeting with the Pastor tomorrow, 9 sharp.

### **Scene IV - The AV Leader**

Music plays as acolyte puts candles out.

Agent: Hey you, AV guy. Great show, great show. How many hours you got in putting all these powerpoints together?

AV leader: I never really added them up.

Agent: It seems to me, you should be rewarded .... but how .... I know, your family should sit right up front. In a reserved

space .... saved for the family .... with a sign for the family of the guy who really puts this show together. I'm gonna work this out for ya. We got a meeting tomorrow with the Pastor. It is at 9:00, just be sure you are there, sharp.

## Scene V - The Meeting

Agent: It's about time. I called this meeting for 9:00 sharp.

Pastor: What is this about?

Agent: Well, it is about all these volunteers. I think they deserve a better deal. No more free labor kids as acolytes. For the choir director, a big pay raise. The ushers, names up front on the bulletin, and the AV department gets it's own seating area.

Pastor: I am somewhat taken aback, not sure I can meet all those demands.

Agent: What, you threatening a lock out???

Pastor: No, No ....

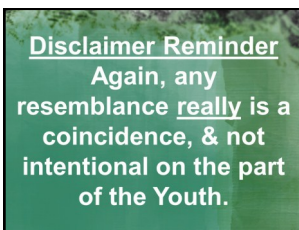
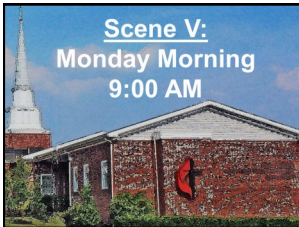
Agent: You looking for a work stoppage???

Pastor: No, is this how all of you feel?

Lead Usher: I really never thought about it, but I guess it would be nice to have our names on the front of the bulletin.

Choir Director: And I could use the extra money. I am sure it would be appreciated by the family to have special seating, and using kids as acolytes, exposing them to fire, a bit dangerous, don't you think?

All: Yeah, yeah, after all we do around here .... we should have a better deal.





Katie: Hey, hey, wait a minute. This isn't right. Yesterday we were all happy helping out around here, then .... he came along. The Bible tells us to honor God with our prayers and our deeds. We don't do this for what we get out of it. We do it because it is right.

Pastor: I couldn't have said it any better Katie. I know the sacrifices our volunteers make are not always appreciated, but Jesus was performing miracles and saving humanity, and you know how much he was appreciated in his day.

AV Leader: Well, I think I have heard enough. I am getting back to serving the Lord, and forget the recognition. Besides, this is ridiculous, who ever heard of a Methodist reserving special seating on Sunday.

All join in .... Yeah, you get out of here.

Agent: I guess that is it for me. No business to be had here. Maybe I will try that Catholic Church down the road.

Reflections

1 Corinthians 12

Courtney Keefer

Have you ever wondered why so many people give so much of their time to the church? I mean, really, when I look at everything that goes on around here it really is awesome. But what do events like "soup and study", making peanut butter egg's, or putting together a friendship break all have in common? Well I guess the answer to that is obvious... Food! That always seems to motivate us here at Calvary.

But really, the idea of getting an agent so you can get more personal reward for what you do at the church does seem ridiculous. Have you ever stopped and thought about "what you do I get out of it." I guess that there are "less than ideal motives for helping out" things

like notoriety or recognition, special treatment... but when the youth were thinking about our skit this week, we all agreed that we didn't see a lot of that at Calvary.

We see people motivated by a desire to help others, a desire to use their talents and labors to glorify God. What we see every day is people who help out simply because they want to serve the Lord.

In Corinthians, the scripture says...



*“God’s various gifts are handed out everywhere; but they all originate in God’s spirit”*

*“God’s ministries are carried out everywhere, but they all originate in God’s spirit”*

*“God’s various expressions of power are in action everywhere, but God himself is behind it all.”*

*“Each person is given something to do that shows who God is: Everyone gets in on it, and everyone benefits.”*

Our point with the skit, in case it wasn't obvious, is that we see everyone work hard to show the face of God here at Calvary. We really appreciate all that everyone does here to make our church a great place to worship.



Courtney Keefer named 70+ ministries that Calvary Church is involved in. As she named each ministry, she asked the members of the congregation to stand if they were a part of that ministry. By the time all were named almost everyone in the congregation were standing.

Her closing remark - “Thanks for all you do!”