

Embracing Ministries

An initiative of the Anglican church of Canberra and Goulburn

Little Treasure!

Story of inclusion



“Participating in the Little Treasures Holiday program, run by Embracing Ministries, has been a rich and wonderful learning experience for my two ‘mainstream’ children.

I was impressed by the 1:1 ratio of carer with children with significant special needs and also the high ratio of leaders to kids overall. My 8 year old son and 5 year old daughter have thoroughly enjoyed the program both last and this year. So much so that when it ended this last time, both of them expressed how sad they were that it was over and my son almost cried because he didn’t want the fun to end.

The interactive Easter Stories, songs and craft helped them to understand well and remember the key events and stories that Christians celebrate at Easter time.

They felt warmly welcomed by the care and expertise of the volunteer staff who went out of their way to connect with each of the kids at their own level.

In and amongst this and all the other fun activities that the program ran, I am thankful for the safe and supportive opportunity it gave my children to have contact with and to develop their understanding and appreciation for others who can’t necessarily walk, talk, or act the same way as them.

After pick up on one of the afternoons I asked my son about some of his highlights from the day and one of them for him was playing with K (a girl in his Little Treasures group who has a beautiful smile but can’t walk) outside with her wheelchair.

As a parent it was also touching to bump into some old friends from my teens who now have a couple of children apart of the program, with special needs.

I am so pleased that this program gave them the opportunity to give their kids the chance to participate in a safe and supportive fun holiday program where they could learn about and celebrate Easter, and to be able to be at the same holiday program as their ‘mainstream’ cousins and my kids. This is no small thing.

Last year I bumped into a relative of their in a doctor’s waiting room and found out that going to church together as a family is no longer an easy thing to do as it is often too loud for one child and the other finds it hard for other reasons.

I am so heartened that Embracing Ministries is helping to bridge the gap that often makes it hard for families with children of special needs to have access to be nurtured with the gospel and stay closely connected with the ongoing life of church communities.”



When most parents think of the juggling act involved in raising a family, they think of coordinating soccer games with ballet practice and grocery shopping.

But if you're a parent of a child who is sick or has special needs, your schedule likely involves doctor's visits, therapy sessions, and waiting for doctors and insurance companies to return your phone calls.

And then there's the exhaustion and endless worry.

Siblings are often overlooked so we would like to share with you how we can offer a little support to siblings and their families.

Story from a Sibling

One 16-year-old brother said, "my brother will never go to college or have his own family - things that we consider to be normal.

Yet who is to say "normal" people are necessarily happy? My brother on the other hand, is. Being a simple-minded kid, simple things make him happy. He likes spaghetti and meat balls, swimming and playing basketball. No one knows exactly what he is thinking, yet the smile on his face while dancing at his party makes me wonder if he is the one who is normal and we aren't.

We make our lives so complicated; we take for granted what we have. Why don't little things make me as happy as they do for my brother? Maybe he was put in our family to teach me something about myself.

I can't tell you how much I love him."

Embracing Ministry supports and nurtures the spiritual life of all people, regardless of their abilities

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Siblings

Siblings of children with special needs have special needs themselves. Their sister or brother with special needs get a bigger share of attention. While having a special needs sibling presents challenges, it also comes with opportunities.

Kids who grow up with a sibling with special health or developmental needs may have more of a chance to develop many good qualities, such as patience, kindness and supportiveness, acceptance of differences, compassion and helpfulness, empathy for others and insight into coping with challenges, dependability and loyalty that may come from standing up for their brother or sister.

What kinds of difficult feelings might a sibling have?

From time to time some siblings may have trouble coping with being the sibling of a child with special needs. They may have many different and even conflicting feelings.

For example, they may feel:

- worried about their sibling
- jealous of the attention their brother/sister receives
- scared that they will lose their sibling
- angry that no one pays attention to them
- resentful of having to explain, support, and/or take care of their brother/sister
- resentful that they are unable to do things or go places because of their sibling

- embarrassed about their sibling's differences
- guilty for negative feelings they have toward their sibling or guilty for not having the same problems.

When parents tune in to the individual needs of each child in the family, they can help ease the difficulties.

If you would like to learn more about support for siblings, please go on the Australian Sibling support Website

<http://siblingsaustralia.org.au/siblings/>

Tutoring and Mentoring!

We now offer support to siblings through our Tutoring program.

Often it is hard for parents to spend time with siblings due to the needs in the family.

We offer a Tutoring Program where we support siblings to do their homework or catch up with work they have missed at school.

This allows for the sibling to have one on one support for one to two hours a week.

Making Connections

We hope to connect families with other families with siblings going through similar situation.

We plan to start a Junior and senior Siblings Group once a month to help connect siblings together starting from July.

If you are interested please contact us on info@embracingministries.org

Or call Andrea 0404256714



WE NEED **YOUR** HELP!

Embracing Ministries needs help to allow our new sibling program to go ahead.

We are looking for Volunteers who can give up 4 hours one Sunday afternoon a month to assist in caring for the children on the program.

Volunteers must have a police check with Anglicare and a Working with Vulnerable People Card

Parent and Carers Retreat

Recharging your batteries once in a while can help you be a better parent, partner, and person.

Caring for a child with special needs child along with all the other demands of work and caring for the rest of the family can be very challenging and exhausting.

Embracing Ministries offers both Christian and non-Christian retreats to help support the family.

Bank Details: Anglican Investment Development Fund (AIDF) BSB 702 389
Acc: 0520 9841

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