

## Reading and leaping

We laughed with hope as we witnessed a new generation hearing an ancient truth.

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Last fall, our congregation presented Bibles to some of our elementary school kids. This is a longstanding tradition here, to provide each child of reading age with their very own grown-up Bible.

When we hand out the Bibles, I always call the kids forward and tell them that it is a special gift from their church family, because we think it's important that everyone have a Bible to read for themselves. I remind them that we think the Bible is awfully important, because it tells the story of how God works in the world, and of God's love for us, and it helps us learn how to live together and with God.

Reading the Bible is not something you do by yourself, I tell them, though sometimes you do it when you're alone. This book tells a story that has been passed through the generations, and so it comes to you from people who also think it's really important, and all these people (here, I point to the gathered congregation) are here to help you read it and think about it and figure out what it means for your own life.

Since that presentation, we've invited those kids who received Bibles this year to use those Bibles to read scripture in worship. It's been a gift to watch them nervously approach the pulpit, look out at the congregation, adjust the microphone... and then to hear their young voices proclaim the ancient words of good news. They've done a beautiful job.

One week, one of our young readers shared the words from Psalm 90: "Lord, you have been our help, generation after generation... from forever in the past to forever in the future, you are God." When the reading was finished, he closed his new Bible, tucked it under his arm, and took a flying leap down the stairs from the chancel.

Then he ran down the aisle to where his parents were sitting.

The congregation laughed, of course. They laughed with delight because kids are funny. They laughed with hope because they were witnessing a new generation hear an ancient truth. And they laughed with joy because the word of God ought to always make us leap.