

That time I was visited by a traveling team of six-year-old professors

By [Becky Ramsey](#)

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Silly me, I thought I had a lot to show our newest first graders. I thought a short little field trip to my office before Sunday school started might be just the thing to put them at ease, to help them get more comfortable with hanging out with me before I officially rolled out the welcome mat to them during worship, calling their names in front of everyone and giving them cross necklaces and leading the church in the celebration that they were part of our family in the pews.

And why wouldn't they feel comfortable? I planned on doing most of the talking. I'd show them the wind up toys I keep for kids to play with when they visit and the mailbox I hung by my door especially for them to use, to send me notes and crayon drawings, too, if I'm lucky enough. I'd teach them how to find my little hideaway office by themselves and show them where I kept the candy jar for an after-worship treat. I'd teach how to twist the little paddle on my desk to feed my wooden chickens, and I'd show them the photos of each of them that I pinned to my bulletin board so that I could enjoy their faces and send prayers on their behalf.

Show them, teach them. Teach them, show them.

I should've known better by now. Isn't that sort of one of the main points of [Godly Play](#)? That children come to us already knowing valuable, beautiful things about God, and if we listen we might all learn something?

So 14 little bodies walked shyly into my room and instantly transformed into a team of visiting professors, swarming around to examine things, taking mental notes, making commentary and asking questions. I should have handed out clipboards!

"Wow! Is that a real God dress?" said a boy, struck in open-mouthed amazement by an acolyte robe hanging from a hook.

I knew what he meant. "It sure is," I said, as six kids huddled around it, reaching out with single fingers to stroke the cross on the white cotta. "Our acolytes wear these when they lead our church in starting worship."

"I know all about that," added another child. "My sister does it. Sometimes she carries the fire."

"No way!" said another, hands on hips. "Wow."

"Look, there's Jesus!" said a girl, pointing to a picture on my wall, as two of her professor friends looked to the door, as if he might walk in.

"I see the cross!" said another child.

"Yes," I said. "Did you know that this cross was made from a tree that lived a long time next to our church? When it died, they cut it down and made crosses out of it."

"So that people could remember Jesus," said a child. I nodded as two friends wiggled their way over to touch the cross. "It's wood. Like the real one. Cool."

A clump of children by my desk had discovered my wind up toys. "You like my parrot? Watch," I said, winding him up. "Let's see if he'll jump for us." The parrot jumped and then flopped over onto the carpet. The children giggled, and crowded around him, trying to help pick him up, cheering him on.

Some noticed my label maker, which they found particularly fascinating, and everyone seemed to like seeing photos of themselves on my bulletin board, but the most thrilling thing of all? A Jolly Rancher candy on the way out the door.

"I have a question, Miss Becky," a child said as she closed the candy jar. "Why do you have a mirror in your office?"

I was about to launch into an explanation that my office used to have a pass through which was now covered over on the other side by a painting. Since I prefer not to have to stare at a big dark rectangle, I put a mirror there. But before I could get any of that out, a little voice said, "It's for us to look at ourselves so we can see what a good job God did."

Yes! I believe that's it!

I have a new official reason for the mirror in my office: to see what a good job God did in making children who can teach us what it means to come to Christ as a child, full of reverence and awe, ready to find Jesus behind the door or in each other, to pick each other up and cheer each other on, to believe and trust and fling

themselves joyfully into mystery.

Originally posted at [Ramsey's blog](#)