

Mixed fruit wonder

by [Darlan Duckworth](#)

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I can't imagine going to the beach without Waffle House.

When I was growing up, the first stop along the way to the Alabama Gulf Coast for our annual summer vacation was the Waffle House in Hattiesburg. Any connoisseur of their scattered, smothered, covered hash brown goodness knows that saying, "I went to Waffle House," is insufficient. You have to name which Waffle House by location, sometimes even identifying it by the street to distinguish it from another one a few miles down the road. Every Waffle House was alike in so many ways, but each one was a unique experience.

For me, the Waffle House in Hattiesburg stands out even though we only ate there, at most, twice each year. Being there meant we were out of town and on our way to the waterside. Being there meant extra syrup for the waffle and looser rules for us kids because vacation seemed to officially begin then.

It's funny how small details from our childhoods can form the most vivid memories. One such memory for me came back recently when I was eating at the Waffle House in West Point. I had asked them to hold the toast on my "order over medium plate, steamed." They did, but I did not ask them to hold the jelly, too. Right in the center of the plate was a plastic container of mixed fruit jelly. It was one of those containers where you peel back the "lid" to reveal about two teaspoons worth of jello-like sugar. Sitting in one Waffle House, I remembered the other Waffle House that signaled the start of a beach vacation. I would get so excited to see what kind of jelly they would give me to go with the toast. Grape was my first choice, but mixed fruit was the one I thought was so cool. I wondered how many "fruits" were in that little plastic rectangle and how they could fit so many into such a small space. I wondered if grape and strawberry, which came in their own containers, were part of the mixed fruit. Unable to read the fine print of ingredients, I had no idea real fruit wasn't on the list.

This is the kind of wonder we have as children. This is the kind of wonder we adults so often leave to children.

As we so often cast aside small packets of jelly, we can easily become dismissive of the small things that are trying to reveal deep truths about God to us.

“When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?” (Psalm 8:3-4). Psalm 8 abounds with the wonders of creation and a God who delights in us, though we are small in comparison to his greatness. He surrounds us everyday with signs of his presence, sometimes in the most common of objects and interactions, if we will simply pay attention.

This past month, my church’s worship series has focused on ministry with youth and children, and we’ve enjoyed hearing more from those youth and children as they help lead worship in prayer, music, the sacraments, and scripture. Though some of them are small in stature, they are great with insight. Sometimes in God’s smallest containers are the richest mixed fruits.

Let’s rediscover the wonder of children by honoring their presence among us. Let’s allow our memories of simple awe to be reawakened. Let’s give thanks for the “[small hours, little wonders, twists and turns of fate.](#)”

*Originally posted at [Duckworth's blog](#)*