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Character Education

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Activity 9

My survey results were simultaneously what I expected and didn't expect, here's what they were from highest to lowest: Patience 78%, Compassion 70%, Forgiveness 66%, Kindness 64%, Love 61%, Joy and Faithfulness 52%, and Gratitude 46%. Gratitude was honestly where I personally know I fall short but it still hurt to see. I was also genuinely surprised at how low my score was for love, as I consider myself to be extremely loving. I literally do not hate anyone. After further reading I saw that the ranking for love was an average of all the scores, which, because I didn't have 100% for any of them, there was no way I was going to get 90% in love. Here's what I took away from these results.

Because my score for love shocked me the most, I read what having a 61% meant and the result explanation page said, "Those who score between 60 and 69 percent, especially those close to the top of this range, tend to have a strong faith foundation that is usually apparent to those around them… Remaining God-focused throughout the day seems to be the primary challenge for this group. Those in this range who are serious about growing may need to consider making more time for God and spending less time on other priorities," (para 6). I humbly accepted this criticism. Staying God-centered everyday is something I've actually been working on recently, so it makes sense that people with this score result struggle with that. Even though my score for love is what made me the most upset, that is all the more reason why I need to work on gratitude.

Though, for me, where I struggle with gratitude is not in material stuff but relationship wise. I typically long for deeper friendships and more of them, I envy people's platonic relationships and wish I had ones similar to them, rather than finding contentment in the ones I truly do have. This is something I need to work on and it's good that I have been called out for it. I can't deny all the good that God has blessed me with because it truly is so much and I forget that when I let myself get caught up in longing for 'better' things.

The fruit of the spirit I have decided to teach my students about as a virtue in the classroom is love. Love is so vague though, that I would break it down into different aspects of love during different weeks. For example, one week might be on forgiveness. I believe that unforgiveness is seriously one of the biggest issues in children growing up (especially young women). Unforgiveness leads to a lot of gossip because feelings of anger or hurt are fueling people's mouths. I'm going to get a little controversial for a moment but, the demographic I am going to be in the classroom with are mostly young children of color (African American, Hispanic, Latino etc…). In these communities, especially among women, gossip is a serious sin pattern; gossip outside of and within the family too. To teach forgiveness is to also teach them not to gossip, and I would do both at the same time. I would begin with a simple illustration of boiling an egg and potato. The saying goes: *the same boiling water that hardens the egg softens the potato*. I want to show them that it's not about circumstances, it's about how they choose to react to them.

We'd have open discussions about gossip, how feelings can get hurt and how forgiveness really is the better option to make their hearts feel better. Gossip is so frequently a symptom of something else; insecurity, unforgiveness, anger, envy, etc… The website explains forgiveness

as “The willingness to restore others to their original condition, giving up the right to be angry with them,” (para 1). Forgiveness, to me, is one of the most important aspects of Christianity because Jesus died for us to be forgiven. The only reason we have the ability to live is because we are forgiven. Therefore, who I am not to forgive? Jesus says it best when he said “seventy times seven times” (NIV, Matthew 18:22). Jesus died for us to forgive us because he *loves* us. At the end of the day everything we do boils down to love, which is why that’s the fruit of the spirit I would teach.

References

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