



Grapevine

Prayer Kids

Tuesday - Kataliya K. (1), Paulo C. (1)
Wednesday - Maggie H. (1), Junior N. (1)
Thursday - Evan R. (1), Kiyara W. (1)
Friday - Aaron A. (2), Luke B. (2)

What are Prayer Kids?

At the start of each day as a part of our morning prayer, we as a staff will pray for the two students listed for each day. We also ask our parents to join us in praying for these students each day. Let's utilize the power of corporate prayer for our students and watch the Lord work in wonderful ways!

Dates to Remember

Apr. 13, 14 - P/T Conf. Half Day,
12:15 dismissal
May 31 - Memorial Day (No School)
June 10 - 8th Grade Graduation
June 11 - Last Day of School

Chess Club

We will continue a Thursday afternoon chess club this Thursday from 3:15 - 4:15 after school. We will be learning together chess strategy and tactics while having fun playing each other.

Principal's Corner

"There's My Dad!"

We made the decision about halfway through our hike, Debbie and Micah would be leaving the trail. We had planned this trek along the 230+ miles of the John Muir Trail for over a year, and now we were going to separate. Isaac and I would continue while my wife and youngest head back to civilization, but we were not quite sure how this was to be done.

Our mid-point resupply was at Muir Trail Ranch, a backcountry resort on the South Fork San Joaquin River. We had hoped there would be a landline phone so we could call someone to pick up Debbie and Micah, but the only form of communication available was a satellite internet connection with a laptop. We could pay \$10 for 15 minutes to email home.

As we talked with the people there, we realized that getting Debbie and Micah off the trail was going to be more complicated than we expected.

It was a 5 mile hike from the resort to Florence Lake. From there they would need to catch a ferry to the other side of the lake and get to a campground that could be driven to. There was no guarantee of phone service there, either.

The only option seemed to be for us to spend the \$10 and send an email to Debbie's mom. We told her that Debbie and Micah were coming home early. We asked her to arrange for someone to meet them at the Florence Lake campground the next day when they got off the ferry. We sent the email and hoped for the best.

That evening as we sorted our resupply and rearranged our packs for going our separate ways, we wondered aloud how this would turn out. Debbie was scared about being alone on the trail with her 9 year old. She had no food other than some snacks for lunch. She and Micah would be going in one direction while Isaac and I would leave in another. She would have no map, but was told that the trail to Florence Lake was well marked and well traveled. Isaac and I would have no way of knowing if, or how, Debbie and Micah made it home until we met her sister and brother-in-law at our next resupply a week later.

I helped Debbie pack as we prepared to leave the next morning. Her fear and anxiety were growing as the time came for her to leave. She would be alone on an unfamiliar trail, heading to a lake she had never been to, hoping to catch a ferry she had only just heard about, all while reassuring her youngest son that everything would be alright.

What if her mother had not received the message? And what if no one was there waiting for them? How would she get home? She had no car there and almost no food with her.

I walked them out to where their trail turned toward the lake. They were scared and near

tears, more than just apprehensive about how the day would unfold. We prayed for God's protection and I watched them head down the trail, wondering who, or if anyone, would meet them when they reached the campground on the other side of the lake.

As Debbie and Micah hiked down the trail it turned out to be not as clear and well marked as they had been told. There were unmarked forks in the trail. How was she to know which way to go? Fortunately, she knew of two men who were also headed to Florence Lake. They had camped next to us that night and left earlier that morning. Their footprints could clearly be seen often enough that Debbie could see the way to go when there was a fork in the trail.

They reached the lake a bit before noon and radioed for the ferry (there was a radio hut) and waited. The next ferry was due to arrive at 1:00 p.m. More and more hikers trickled in to wait for the ferry. Debbie found herself chatting with an older couple as they waited. She told her story and the couple offered to give her a ride down the mountain if there was no one to meet her on the other side. This eased her growing sense of anxiety. As 1:00 p.m. approached Debbie spotted the ferry in the distance. She realized that the hikers waiting would not all fit in the small boat. She made sure she and her boy were first in line!

Her worry grew as they boarded the small boat and made their way across the lake. As they approached the other side of the lake, questions ran through her mind. Did her parents get the message? Was someone going to be there? Was she really on her own? How were they going to get home? She did her best to hide her apprehension from Micah as the boat got closer and closer to the other shore.

Meanwhile, Debbie's mom had received the email the day before (she had been religiously checking for our GSP email messages throughout our hike) and quickly put a plan into action. She called around the Madera area to find a hotel that would allow a dog (she wanted to surprise Debbie and Micah and bring our dog). She reserved a 2nd night and an extra room for the next day after realizing it would take all day to go to Florence Lake and back from Madera. Debbie's mom drove the long trip to Florence Lake, the last 20 miles on a narrow one lane road. They were there waiting for Debbie and Micah when the ferry came in.

As the ferry approached the lakeshore Debbie kept scanning the shoreline, hoping to recognize someone. As she was looking she noticed a man with a dog standing on a rock close to the shore. He looked familiar. The realization hit her, and without hesitation she yelled,

"There's my Dad! . . . and my dog!"

Relief flooded her soul as she noticed her mother standing further up the bank. Her parents were there. She was not on her own. She had a way home. She was safe.

One of the many ways our God describes himself to us is as a father, as a parent. There are times when that is an imperfect metaphor for him, but there are also times when God as a heavenly parent fits so wonderfully and so perfectly. It doesn't matter much how old or self-sufficient you are, it is a great comfort to know that a good father, and a good mother, will be there waiting for you, ready to take you home.

"How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" 1 John 3:1

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." John 14:1-3

God bless,

Rick Nelson
530-588-4730
rick.nelson@myuja.org