

In chapter 3 of Galatians we read, *“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free person, there is not male and female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”*

Although I am far from being a biblical scholar, in these past several months, I have found myself seeking more and more inspiration and support from the words of the Bible. What words can I find to offer comfort and hope?

When I was thinking about that question in relation to the demonstrations and protests that have led to unrest, curfews, and even violence in our country over the past couple of weeks, I found reassurance from this verse. I also am frequently reflecting on how lucky I am to see children at an early age when they have no prejudices or hateful feelings. They don't come to preschool disgusted by differences or using harmful racial language. They come to our preschool ready to play, learn, and embrace new friends and new experiences.

As educators, we are blessed with an opportunity to nurture this acceptance of others and foster tolerance of differences. Many of our teachers often start the year with amazing lessons on recognizing that although we all have different skin color, wear glasses or have freckles, God has made all of us. His love is not only for those who know how to skip or throw a ball the farthest; His love is not only for those who have curly hair or know all of the shapes. His love reaches across all boundaries and he challenges us to do the same. As faithful followers of God, we teach our children to embrace the qualities that make each of us special and unique. We encourage them to learn from and appreciate others' differences. In order to really live as God wants us to do, we must also treat others as we want to be treated. Our preschool focuses on how to be kind, how to listen, how to help, how to share, and how to work together. Our staff are able to affirm these lessons while emphasizing God's love for us and how He calls on us to take care of others despite our differences.

There are so many resources available to teach children the wonders of diversity. Not only are there stories from the Bible like that of the Good Samaritan, but there are countless authors who write about mindfulness, love of others, and valuing your own special gifts. Two of my favorites are Todd Parr ([It's OK to Be Different](#)) and Carol McCloud ([Have You Filled a Bucket Today?](#)). At our preschool, we not only host events such as the International Festival to celebrate different cultures within our preschool family, but in weekly Spanish class the students learn to appreciate the beauty of another language. Our talented staff design meaningful activities which highlight individual uniqueness while incorporating what makes us all children of God. For example, if you take a white egg, a brown egg or a speckled egg and crack them open they all are the same on the inside no matter the color of the shell. When you eat a red,

green, or yellow apple, they all look and taste a bit different but they also are all still apples.

Let us all continue to work together to help our children grow into tolerant, caring, and respectful individuals who appreciate others for their differences while acknowledging that we are all God's precious creation.

To learn more about becoming part of our incredible preschool family and the opportunities we provide, please visit our website at www.preschoolatstfrancis.com or contact Shelley Freeman at: shelley.freeman@stfrancisraleigh.org.

With Joy,

Heidi Hobler, Director

St. Francis of Assisi Preschool



A smile is still a smile no matter the face!