

BOOKS!!!

(KASS UNGER)

As a child there was such joy in finding something in the letterbox (even in a generation when most mail came in the letterbox) and then it was a whole other level of excitement when that mail was actually for me. I am still excited by anything, even bills, that come in my post. What I have learnt about myself during this time of Covid is that I also love sending things. However the book post-out isn't as simple as my love for supporting Australia Post. The last couple of years I have spent a large chunk of the budget set aside for children's ministries on books and mailing them out.

WHY?

Firstly, who doesn't love getting surprises in the mail? Secondly and most importantly, it helps the kids (and their families) know that even though we might not see them (covid, family choices, competing activities, distance, whatever reason) they are not forgotten. They are an important part of our community that we value. Books are also a great way to introduce and teach ideas and concepts. I selected these ones so that the concepts they were teaching align with Community of Christ values and Enduring Principles (EP). This year there were five main books, intentionally chosen for the message they could share with our young readers.

a. *Love Makes a Family* by Sophie Beer (babies and toddlers) teaches that it doesn't matter if you have two mums, two dads, one parent, or are raised by people who didn't birth you, it is still a family because there is love as the foundation. (EP: Worth of All Persons, Unity in Diversity, Blessings of Community).

b. *Be Kind* by Pat Zietlow Miller (preschoolers) has us thinking on ways that we can be kind when a friend is having a bad day and how that kindness can stretch far beyond our situation (EP: Grace and Generosity, Worth of All Persons, Responsible Choices, All are called)

c. *The World Needs More Purple People* by Kristen Bell and Benjamin Hart (junior primary) gives instruction on being curious of others, being silly, working hard at making the world a better place and being uniquely you. These all create a better place for everyone (EP: Worth of All Persons, All Are Called, Unity in Diversity, Blessings of Community)

d. *The Little Wave* by Pip Harry (middle primary and older primary) is the story of three unlikely friends that each have their own struggles (bullying, living with a grieving parent, parental alcohol abuse) making new friendships, working hard, and being brave and trying new things. (EP: Sacredness of Creation, Worth of All Persons, Responsible Choices, Blessings of Community, Unity in Diversity)

e. *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai (Senior primary) is a year in the life of a child refugee having to flee Saigon during the Vietnamese war and her family trying to re-establish themselves in a country where

they have nothing and don't understand the language, culture or even food. (EP: Worth of All Persons, Pursuit of Peace (Shalom), Unity in Diversity, Blessings of Community)

THE PROCESS:

While receiving a book in the mail might seem easy enough it has become quite the process.

1. Weeks are spent researching and reading different books to ensure they align with the developmental range of our children, that they have a storyline that is both engaging, provide the desired concepts and aren't mainstream enough that most kids will already have them.

2. 107 books were ordered and sent to my house.

3. The packages included a handwritten inscription to each child.

4. Only once all members of the same families have been completed do they get delivered to the post box (this time by two little people who are discovering the love of sharing posted joy with other).

Most of the children who received these books also receive the *Kid's Herald* or the *Jnr Kid's Herald* a couple times each month. They originally have been connected to Community of Christ through their congregational attendance, parental or grandparent involvement, their connection to programs such as Tunes4Tots or camping activities like family camps, reunions or kids camps. This is our wider kid network.

SOME RESPONSES:

"Thank you!! I love this book (and so does R haha). So thoughtful."

"Thank you so much for the girls books today!!! They were so super excited when they were delivered today!!! They're actually doing it a bit tough this lockdown so we very much loved the excitement"

"Thank you so much for the Purple People book E just received in the mail recently. She LOVES it and it's such an awesome book ."

"Just thought I would actually convey our thanks for the girls books. They absolutely love them."

"Thanks so much for the gorgeous families book!! He was so excited to get mail with his name on it."

"Thanks so much for posting the kids books! They love them! So kind of you taking the time to write a message in the book for them too."

"F was over the moon with her new book. So kind. Thank you."

"Thank you very much for the lovely surprise."

"Thank you so much! H was thrilled to get a parcel in the post and delighted by the book. Many thanks."

"Thank you so so much for the books" Good timing for us too... Z was so excited to open his post today."

