

The Desimone Newsletter 2009

The year 2009 has been a very busy year for us. Michael turned age 6 in January, Matt and Ryan turned age 5 in October, and Alissa turned age 3 in October. Some of the highlights this year have been: a summer trip to Massachusetts to see my brother, two trips to Sesame Place, and Halloween. Our trip to Gloucester, Massachusetts had terrific weather which was a relief to us. Previously the weather had been mostly rainy, so we got very lucky. We were able to visit the beach and go on a couple of boat rides with my brother at the helm. Sesame Place was also a lot of fun. The weather cooperated so that we had sunny days to enjoy for both outings. But we did have one moment of weather-related excitement. It was about 6:00pm during our first visit to Sesame Place and Michael teased to go on the rope activity. This activity was designed high off of the ground and there were several tunnels and steep inclines to navigate through. We managed to get through it but during the last part of the climb I noticed it was getting darker and darker outside. For a moment I thought to myself, "I hope it doesn't rain while we're climbing around in this maze of rope tunnels." We finished up and collected all of the children and we were walking back to the car. About ten steps from the car this tremendous wind came upon us and we knew a storm of vast proportion was about to hit. Luckily Joe's niece Sharon and her boyfriend Tony were there with us. They quickly helped us to get the kids inside the minivan. Our trips to Sesame Place would not have been possible without their help. The children are quite a handful these days. We hurriedly sped away to the restaurant nearby and waited for a table. The rain came pouring down just as we got inside the restaurant! We all said, "Phew!" Fall and the arrival of the new school year came quickly.



Michael started first grade and he is doing a great job. Matt and Ryan started pre-school in separate classes for the first time and have enjoyed cultivating their newly found independence from each other. I still get some adorable moments to cherish though. When I ask Matt and Ryan to hold hands to keep them from running in the parking lot they still do. Alissa is starting to test the waters in terms of right and wrong, but she still entertains me with a few surprises. Just recently, she announced that her baby doll is her new sister. ☺

The school year continued to move along quickly and Halloween was soon upon us. Matt and Ryan dressed up in Toy Story costumes; Matt was Woody and Ryan was Buzz Lightyear. Alissa dressed up as Cinderella and Michael wore a Red Power Ranger costume. The excitement for the kids was tremendous. I bought their Halloween costumes in September and they asked to wear them frequently up until Halloween. On Halloween night we got our trick-or-treating done in the neighborhood just before the sky opened up and we got buckets of rain coming down. One more time we lucked out on the rain and once again we all said, "Phew!"

The next story I saved for last. One Sunday morning last spring, we were all at church and little did we know that something unusual was about to happen. We were gathering up the children just before the end of the church service. Every one was still singing the last song and the announcements/final prayer were about to follow. Ryan snuck around behind me while I was helping Matthew put on his jacket. All of a sudden I heard a very loud alarm. Ryan had pulled the fire alarm. Ugh! The church service came to a very sudden halt and everyone was looking around wondering what was happening. I managed to gain eye contact with someone on the pulpit and we exchanged an "all knowing" smile that one of my children had pulled the fire alarm. Meanwhile Ryan had burst into tears because he was embarrassed with all of the unwelcome attention. Just the week before Joe had told Ryan not to touch that fire alarm. But when the moment came the following week Ryan couldn't resist the temptation to pull that very inviting alarm. Not one of Ryan's best choices, but certainly it is one we can laugh about today. Ryan, like all of us, has made some poor choices along the way. Every day we learn something new. Every choice we make has the power to improve the quality of our lives or to diminish it. Once we make a choice we usually need to accept the consequences of that choice. I've also learned that the past can help us if we learn from it; however, it can also hurt us if we don't move on from it. The future is full of the freedom to choose whatever "we" want or we can choose what "God" wants. He wants the very best for us so it makes sense to choose what God wants for us. Sometimes we learn this from reading the Bible, from praying, from a friend, or from a family member, etc.





So how do we choose what God wants if everything seems contrary to what we want as humans? Well, it isn't easy. But I remind myself constantly that God wants only the best for me and that following Him with blind faith is part of the journey. "Yet, Oh Lord, You are our Father: we are the clay, and You our Potter, and we are all the work of Your hand." (Isaiah 64, vs. 8). To better understand this verse it is important to understand the process of pottery making. The potter must mold the clay by centering and applying just the right amount of pressure on to it when it is on the spinning wheel. If he pushes too hard on the clay it will collapse into an unattractive mound. When the potter has finally created the shape he desires he must then put the piece in to the kiln (oven) to heat it to an extreme temperature and set it in this shape. He does this to preserve the beauty of his creation. After it cools off he must prepare the piece by checking it for any bumps or imperfections. He refines it by using sandpaper or a paring knife. The entire surface is then sponged to remove any remaining dust. The piece is now ready to be glazed with the color of the potter's choosing. After it has been fully prepared it is placed back in to the kiln at an even higher temperature to finish the job. Once the second heating process is complete the potter can admire the beauty of his work. We may not like the "molding" and "refining" process, but God is in "control." God knows "everything." God is "all powerful." If we pray daily for His will to be done then it will be. It's very hard to remember this when we struggle. Usually, people prefer the path of least resistance. To survive, we must find and continually strengthen our faith. We rarely grow in good times. It's the intense heat of the struggle that makes us more beautiful, more pure, and more Christ-like.

The analogy for faith I use is this: Many times we are hanging on by only a thread. God is holding the other end of that thread. He is holding it and telling us to hang on even though the thread looks like it will break. We might yell out that we can reach over to the cliff nearby and save ourselves. And He will probably respond by saying that the thread won't break and to hang on. The hardest part is hanging on to that tiny thread. Every day I remind myself to keep praying for God's will and for the faith to hang on to that tiny piece of thread. The most valuable thing I have learned so far is that God doesn't control our choices. He wants the best for us. Therefore, I try to choose what God wants. He may know what choices we will make, but ultimately the choices we make are our own. One of the most important choices we make every day is what kind of attitude we want to have. Charles R. Swindoll says it well, "The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company, a church, or a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past. We cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you. We are in charge of our attitudes."

In closing, God has chosen all of us to be His. What an awesome blessing this is! I hope the brief poem I wrote below helps you to contemplate how choice has impacted and will impact your journey in life.

"What Will You Choose Today?"

There are so many choices to make in this life. And sometimes the choices we make cause us great strife.

Every day is a new day.
So is this the day to keep the past at bay?

Only we can decide what the future holds.
Will we choose what God so desires us to uphold?

- Today, will you choose a good attitude?
- Today, will you choose to forgive someone?
- Today, will you choose to help someone even if that person is your enemy?

Every choice has power. Every "good" choice makes evil cower.

What Will You Choose Today?

Have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Love,
Jodi, Joe, Michael,
Matthew, Ryan, and
Alissa ☺



Embrace
the Spirit!

