

Baines, Curry, and DeGoede families shared their faith at a local Harvest Festival

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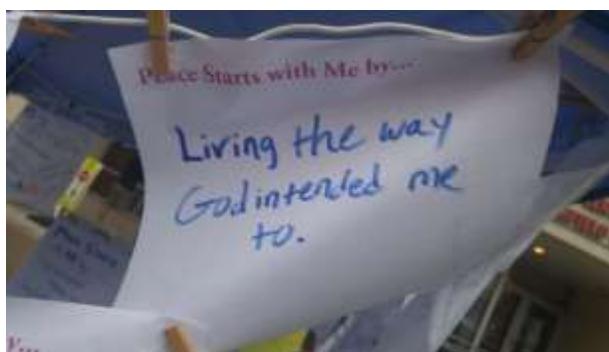


On October 6, the Baines, Curry, and DeGoede trinity of families, aka BCD Trinity, shared their faith at Bloomfield, New Jersey's annual local Harvest Festival. The BCD Trinity requested a booth to share promotional materials about Women's Federation for World Peace, The Marriage Course, and the upcoming Peace Begins with Me Rally with True Mother in Nassau, New York. While the parents talked to festival-goers about the upcoming rally and shared about FFWPU and their faith, the young DeGoede and Curry children, ages 4, 5, and 7, enthusiastically passed out Peace Begins with Me cards to all the passersby they could.

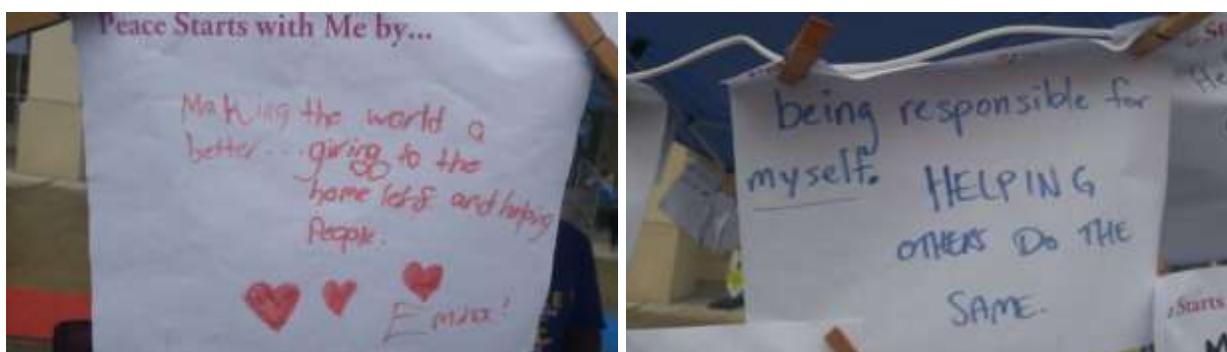
Along with handing out materials, the Trinity also prepared a large poster with "Peace Begins with Me by..." at the top for adults to write out an action to practice peace in their lives. In addition, there was a little table with markers and crayons and "Peace Begins with Me by..." papers for kids to draw and write their own answers. However, this wasn't just an outreach or witnessing effort by local Unificationists. It was also an opportunity for parents and children to spend time together and grow as a family. Mari Curry and Crescentia DeGoede explain more.



"As a trinity, we wanted to challenge ourselves in terms of sharing our faith," said Crescentia. "All of us wanted to make sure... True Mother has the best reception possible... For our families, we all have a connection to True Mother, we're all excited about her vision, so sharing about that made sense for us." While the Saturday outreach may have been partly inspired by the upcoming [Peace Starts With Me](#) rally with True Mother in November, the motivation behind the families' outing goes much deeper and further back. "For our couple, and later on as our family, we were always committed to the idea of how to serve the church and True Parents together," said Mari. "We realized that we didn't want to sacrifice our family for the church but we wanted to sacrifice with our family... [For this event,] we never once thought we would do this as adults. We were going to try and find a way to make our children fit in." So, the Trinity brought all five of their young children ages 1 ½, 2, 4, 5, and 7 with the older ones passing out info cards about the rally with Mother. Indeed, despite the day's drizzling rain, it proved near impossible for festival-goers to resist the charm of a young child singing out "Peace Begins with Me, November 12th, come see True Mother!" and eagerly thrusting a promo card into their hands.



Having a festival booth was the first time any of the families had done outreach together in this public a manner and there were several challenges along the way. Ultimately though, the experience was both surprising and rewarding. One surprise came how easily and instinctively many of the young children responded to "Peace Begins with Me by..." One girl wrote "Peace Begins with Me by great families" and then drew a picture of her own family. Others talked about taking care of their siblings. One even wrote, very practically, "Peace Begins with Me by not kicking anyone at all." Another surprise was meeting a woman who had actually heard about the rally already from the radio. "[She] listened to Christian radio," said Crescentia, "and they had made an announcement about [the] rally and the 5,000 voice choir and joining the choir. I could see her connecting the dots of 'maybe I should really look into this now it's being told to me again'...and I could see how inspired she was." At the end of the day, everyone was tired but happy, especially the Curry and DeGoede children who were so proud of their efforts both to help their parents and support True Mother.



Both Mari and Crescentia underlined how important teamwork was to successfully pull off Saturday's activities. Each family in their trinity contributed different elements such as reserving the booth or creating an activity for young children passing by. By working as a trinity, the three families felt empowered to proclaim True Mother in a way that might have been daunting for one family alone. They also emphasized that their children were excited to support Mother played another important role. "At the end of the day," said Crescentia, "if your kids are miserable, you're going to be miserable." Mari said that she and her husband took care to have their children choose how they wanted to support True Mother. Since they chose to help with the booth and handing out cards, the kids were both willing and happy and full of energy throughout the day. The kids were also given time to participate in some of the festival attractions such as pony rides and a bounce house, so the entire day was a fun adventure for them.



For anyone interested in combining family time with outreach, Crescentia suggests that parents first think about what their children not only can do but also what they would be happy to do. In addition, parents can consider what they are really inspired and passionate about and then think of ways to share that inspiration with others as a family. Having a booth at the Harvest Festival was not just an isolated event for the families. It was also another way to build a Blessed Family culture of loving Heavenly Parent together. Both the Currys and DeGoedes have included their children in prayer and Hoon Dok Hae, since they were two or three years old. Mari said that they always invite their children to be co-creators in practicing their faith as a family. Even though it may take longer to do something, their children feel a sense of ownership in how they relate with God and True Parents and are a part of creating the Blessed Family culture.