

Sandra Stogsdill Brown
“Adult Moment” for Blessing of the Backpacks
Theme: God Is Always With Us
Texts: Exodus 2:1-10, Psalm 139:7-10, John 14:15-19
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God Is Always With Us. We’re in God’s hands, no matter what. This is the common message of our scriptures today, and it’s a message we cannot hear too much. I think that’s why there are so many bookmarks and inspirational posters that feature a poem called “Footprints in the Sand.” Surely you are familiar with that poem. The author talks about having a dream that she was walking along the beach with the Lord, and as they walked, she could see all these scenes from her life flashing before her eyes. Sometimes there were two sets of footprints, and sometimes there was only one. She was bothered to realize that at the very lowest moments in her life, that was when there was only one set of footprints.

So she says, “You promised me Lord, that if I followed you, you would walk with me always. But I have noticed that during the most trying periods of my life there has only been one set of footprints in the sand. Why, when I needed you most, have you not been there for me?” The Lord replied, “The years when you have seen only one set of footprints, my child, is when I carried you.”

I saw a little comic strip I saw a few years ago that shows Jesus walking alongside a person on the beach, and Jesus says, “When you only saw one set of footprints, my child, that is when I carried you.” In the next frame, Jesus is pointing, and saying, “That long groove over there is where I dragged you for a while.” And in the third frame, Jesus says, “One time I hid you in that little sandhole while I got a hotdog.”

I love that image of Jesus never giving up on us, even if he has to drag us for a while. I’m sure Jesus has probably had to drag me a time or two.

I hope everyone here can recall a time when you experienced God's presence. Perhaps it was out in nature, watching an especially magnificent sunset over the lake, or a horse, running across the pasture for the sheer joy of it. Or maybe it was during a terrible time in your life, maybe a divorce or a job loss or being diagnosed with a disease, and even in the midst of this awful thing, you had this deep sense of peace and assurance that you were not alone, and things would be OK. Or perhaps it was when you hurt someone you loved, and you were scared to even look them in the eye after what you had done, but they came to you and said, "It's OK. I forgive you."

Careful readers will notice that God is not even mentioned in the story of baby Moses. And yet we sense of the presence of God all the way through. Moses' mother, placing him in a basket and letting him go. Moses' sister, watching over the basket. Pharaoh's daughter, who's supposed to be the enemy, responding to his cries and picking him up.

As we focus in a special way on the gift of children in today's service, let it serve as a reminder that one of God's favorite ways to show that God is always with us is through other people. We're here not just to receive comfort and reassurance for ourselves that God is with us, but to BE that comfort and reassurance for others who walk through life feeling like theirs is the only set of footprints. Remembering that this is the Year of the Neighbor, let's leave this place today mindful that wherever we go, God may be seeking to remind someone through US that God is always with them.