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Fifth grade Sunday school at St James focuses on developing and enriching a habit of prayerfulness. This year every child partnered with an adult parishioner to be “prayer partners.” The couples were thoughtfully matched on the basis of our teachers’ knowledge of the interests and personalities of child and adult.

Thumb Prayer Beads



As a tool for prayer, and in preparation for meeting their partner, our fifth graders created “thumb” prayer bead sets – a set for their partner and one for themselves.

Our beads came from another partnership, this time with the St. James Thrift Shop, which generously donated necklaces and bracelets from which we harvested plenty of colorful beads for the project. After studying Anglican prayer sets, our children opted for a prayer bead set with a cross, an invitational bead, and ten week beads with small spacer beads in between each. For the children it was all about designing their own version of prayer beads

and having ownership of their creations.

We used an online video, “Making Protestant Prayer Beads” to help us understand the jewelry-making aspect of beading. Teachers assisted the children with finishing their projects using a crimping tool, and soon lovely sets of prayer beads were complete.

After crafting their sets of prayer beads, the fifth graders also wrote their own prayers to be used with the beads.

Intentionally Meeting Prayer Partners

To introduce the adult partners to their 5th grader, we planned a “Meet and Greet” in the fifth-grade classroom during the Church School hour. The children developed ice breaker games and questions so that the partners could learn more about one another. While enjoying refreshments, the partners agreed to pray with and for each other throughout the week. The highlight of the meeting was when the children presented their partner with a mesh bag containing a beautiful set of prayer beads, designed and made especially for them!

Building On-Going Relationships



In order that the relationships could continue, even if the partners did not see each other on Sunday or during the week, we set up plastic drawer “mailboxes” for each set of partners. We encourage both partners to leave notes, drawings, or small gifts for their partner. Adult partners are invited to participate in special fifth-grade activities throughout the remainder of the Church School year.

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Feedback from the partners and the children’s parents have been encouraging. Watching the partners interact so effortlessly with each other has been wonderful to witness. We expect that these partnerships will grow and flourish throughout the school year. Our hope is that they will continue for some time to come, helping strengthen our prayer lives and intergenerational ties here at St James!

Nancy Stamey Eubanks is the Director of Christian Education at St. James Episcopal Church in Marietta, Georgia. A former public elementary educator, Christian formation, especially of children, is her profession and her joy. Researching and writing each year’s VBS

program, as well as Workshop Rotation lesson plans, for young parishioners are special passions.

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