

Children's sermon: April 26, 2009

**"Bouncing back"**

Look at Fred ----- a beeeeoootiful, strong-looking baseball.  
Almost from the time he could walk (or roll) ... Fred's parents wanted him to be a baseball player. They played catch with him ... he wore baseball clothes all the time ... they got him on a baseball team as soon as he was old enough. And ----- Fred became very good at baseball.

As time marched on ... something started to happen. Fred wasn't enjoying baseball. He started to like other things ----- art, music, just hanging out. He wasn't doing as well in the ball-games ... and some of the other kids started to make fun of him. Even his parents didn't seem very happy with his performance.  
Fred began to look different. He had holes ... holes of doubt ... holes of low self-esteem.

Things got a bit tougher when Fred was in junior high. He skipped baseball practice ... he longed to do different things ... but he got no support from those around him. He wondered to himself:  
**WHY DOESN'T ANYONE UNDERSTAND ME???**

This is how Fred began to look ----- really small.  
He felt small. He felt unimportant. He was confused.  
After a while ----- he was just "crushed" ... "smashed" ... look at him now!!

His parents were worried. Then his mom told him ----- "Fred ... you are going on the church youth retreat this weekend."

**NO, I'M NOT.  
YES, YOU ARE.**

Well ----- Fred went. And ... he was not happy about it.

What does an All Saints youth retreat look like??? ----- like this:  
**A BIG COLORFUL BUCKET WITH A PUMP IN IT!!**

Fred hops into the bucket.  
Hey, kids ... gather around the bucket with me. Now ----- we all need to pump.  
This is a pump of goodness ... self-esteem ... and, most of all --- **GOD'S LOVE.**  
Can you hear it? .... it's God's spirit at work.

This is what happens when you go on a youth retreat ... with kids who love you for the person you are!@! **YOU JUST NEED TO BE TRUE TO YOURSELF.**

Well ... as you can see ... Fred and the kids are coming back from their weekend.  
I wonder how Fred is doing????  
Let's look inside the retreat bucket and see how he looks. His color is back ... he no longer has holes, or is crushed ... he no longer looks like a baseball. And there is one thing Fred has now ... that he hasn't had in a long time ...

**WATCH ... *he bounces!!***  
He bounces high ... he looks good ... he's happy ... life is fun ...  
Amazing what a youth retreat can do ... amazing how good it feels to be true to who you are ...  
amazing how good it feels, when God's spirit is in you.

And for you, my friends???? .... your very own ball ... with lots of bounce and spirit.