



Squeals, Squirming, and Surprises

By Midge Simpson Farr, Preschool/Early Childhood Representative

I attended nine different schools between Kindergarten and 12th grade. My parents rented instead of buying a house. So when mom would find a better house, we would move. Nine times we moved while I was growing up in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania!

When I was a senior in high school, I went to a dance. Don Simpson saw me there and asked me to dance with him. Before the end of the event, he asked for my phone number. We started to date in August, and at Christmas he asked me to marry him. We were married for 50 years before he died.

A Preschool in My Home

What prompted me to work in a preschool setting? I wanted to be a stay-a-home mom and raise my children. I had a friend who was an airline stewardess. She had children and needed someone to watch her children while she worked. She asked me if I would watch them in my home (and occasionally keep them overnight when she was traveling). More people heard about my taking care of children and asked for my services. Don and I prayed about these opportunities. I wanted to teach as well as babysit. Don and I decided to turn our huge basement into smaller rooms that would accommodate the children. More people heard about my efforts. If I had 15 children, the state of South Carolina required a license. With a license in hand, I hired a lady to help in the morning and a young girl to help in the afternoon. From 15 children, our class grew to 45 children in our basement of five rooms.

A Move to South Carolina

I developed asthma problems in Pittsburgh, so Don and I decided to move to Greenville, South Carolina. One of my workers asked if she could fix up her basement and take over the school. Don and I agreed.

After moving to Greenville, we decided not to have a preschool in our home. After a month, I found a preschool I liked and worked with 4-year-old children in the facility. After three years, the assistant director quit, and I was asked to take that position. Two years later, I became the director and served in that position for 13 years.

When the Greenville Church of the Nazarene added a children's wing to the church, our pastor, Rev. Kevin Ulmet, asked me to start a preschool for the church. Don and I prayed about it, and I agreed to start a preschool there. I served as the director of Greenville's Sonshine Center for 23 years before I retired. I love working with the children. You never know what they will say or do! One minute a child is squealing with delight, and the next minute he is howling because another child stepped on his toe!

NIEA and NEW

While I was directing the preschool in Greenville, I heard about Nazarene International Education Association. (This was the precursor of NEW.) I joined NIEA and became a council member for several years. When I was asked to serve on the NEW council, I agreed. I continue to help preschool directors and staff through helpful advice in newsletter articles and personal phone calls. I am willing to help any church or person who wants to start a Christian preschool.

I love the squeals of delight and even the squirming bodies as the preschoolers learn about themselves and their world. I especially love to share with them the love of Jesus and the wonderful stories in the Bible. God has been good to me, and I want to share His love with others.

Midge Simpson Farr lives in Simpsonville, South Carolina. She served as the founder and director of the Greenville Church of the Nazarene's Sonshine Learning Center. She also served for many years on the Board of the Greenville County Early Childhood Association. You may contact Midge at mustangmidge@gmail.com.