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He Said/ She Said: Church talk

She Said:

Kids not only say the darndest things. At church, they also do the darndest things.

At our church, the first Sunday of each month is when we serve the Lord's Supper. Since Mark is a deacon and I'm in the choir, that leaves Luke and Garrett adrift on that Sunday.

ALISON WINGFIELD

They're just 11 years old, however, and since they're often dangerous when left alone together, we don't let them sit by themselves in worship those Sundays. Instead, they sit with a true saint in our church, Janice Jernberg, who was their first-grade Sunday School teacher and is the model of church etiquette and propriety.

She is definitely good for them, but I'm not sure how good they are for her.

She rightly encourages them not to talk or draw during the Lord's Supper. And she encourages them to follow along in the order of service by marking the hymn numbers and participating in the readings.

In the in-between times, however, they resort to their usual practice of drawing fighter jets, falling bombs, swords, knives, bows and arrows and other weapons of mass destruction. The more we sing or preach about peace and goodwill toward all humanity, the more they draw weapons, it seems.

We recently heard a report from another adult who sits near this spectacle on the first Sunday of each month. Our boys have added their own twist to a part of the service on Lord's Supper Sundays.

On these Sundays, the congregations passes the peace, an ancient church practice of turning to the person on either side of you and saying, "Peace to you," to which that person responds, "And also with you."

Luke and Garrett, we now learn, don't follow proper form in this practice. Instead, they turn to each other, hold up the two-finger peace sign of the 1960s and mumble, "Peace, man."

You've got to start somewhere.

He Said:

What seems to make Luke and Garrett such a lethal combination in worship is the fact that there's two of them. I see other single children acting much better, and I want to believe that either Luke or Garrett individually would behave better in church without the enticement the other brings.



MARK WINGFIELD

And they are getting older, nearing the age when they'll leave my pew and sit with the youth group up front. They've got to make a lot of progress in the next year if that transition is to go smoothly, however. I'm not sure the church is ready for the Wingfield twins to be sitting front and center without adult supervision.

Last Sunday proves the point beautifully—or horribly, perhaps.

I had to sit on the platform to give the welcome to guests and introduce our guest preacher for the day, Albert Reyes of Hispanic Baptist Theological School. In the rush of the morning, it had not occurred to me that Luke and Garrett would be left by themselves during worship.

This situation was compounded when Alison had to rush our family dog to the veterinary emergency room just before Sunday School started. But that's another column in itself.

So in the bustle of the moment, I told the boys to sit with Deo, our single friend from Burundi who attends my Sunday School class.

About midway through the sermon, I thought to look over to my far left and check up on Luke and Garrett. Because of the angle at which I was sitting on the platform, it was not easy to do this without being obvious.

I immediately saw mouths flapping, arms flailing and heads bobbing. I also saw people sitting behind and in front of the boys staring angrily at them but apparently too polite to bop them on the head. The boys were oblivious to anyone else around them.

I pondered. I stared. I stewed. I glared. They never looked my way to catch the evil eye, because they were too busy jabbering.

I considered stepping down from the platform and walking halfway back in the sanctuary to pluck the boys from their misbehavior. I imagined the scene that would create. I weighed the options.

Just as I was a single impulse away from stepping out, the boys settled back into their seats to draw more weapons of mass destruction. Surely we can make it another 10 minutes to the invitation hymn, I thought.

And we did. Never have I been so glad for a sermon to end—especially an excellent sermon.

We had our own call to repentance at the front of the church as soon as the service ended.

[See previous He Said/ She Said column here.](#)

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