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Children's story for International Witness Sunday, October 18, 2020

The Kingdom of God is like a Banyan tree

Video link: <https://youtu.be/fjYi7PcnFTY>

Visual: pictures of Banyan trees or any tree

Hi there, my name is Jeanette and I love trees. I can't get enough of them. I like to plant trees and fill my yard with trees whenever I get the chance. Today I have a tree that I'm going to plant. I have a friend who is an arborist. He's like a tree doctor. He taught me a few tips on planting trees. A tree needs good roots. Sometimes we make the mistake of clumping all the roots together when we plant and that makes the tree weak. When the wind blows or when the soil is too wet in the spring, the tree will fall down. The roots need to spread deep and wide into the soil to get the most nutrients, food for the tree, and to make the tree stable and strong as it grows tall.

Sometimes in church we talk about Jesus being the foundation that our church is built on. A foundation is like the root of the church building, but I like to think of the church as a tree. Jesus is the root that sends the love, strength and peace of God flowing to every branch. The church has many branches. In history as the church grew, the branches increased in size and changed in shape. This tree isn't really a good example of that because the branches all kind of look the same, but I know one kind of tree that is a better example.

Banyan trees don't grow in Canada, at least not in the way that they do in warmer parts of the world. Here are some pictures of Banyan trees. They are huge and uneven with branches that are very different from each other. One important lesson we learn from a Banyan tree is that as the branches grow and develop, they immediately send roots down into the soil.

Every branch of the church is deeply connected through Jesus to God's love and strength. We are connected to God here in Canada. Other people in the church are connected to God in India or China or New Zealand. We all rely on each other and we all are gaining strength and love from God to share with each other. We need each other, just like the branches of a banyan tree need each other. We share with each other from the nutrients that we receive in the place where we are planted. God gives different gifts to different parts of the banyan-tree church; together, we are one tree.

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