



Wounded Warriors Gift. Totally unbidden but driven by a deep sense of gratitude, I took pictures, then wrote and posted this piece about St. John's 2006 Vacation Bible School's gift to honor Marines wounded in Iraq. As the daughter of a Green Beret who died as a result of his exposure to Agent Orange in Viet Nam, I especially understand the sacrifices made by these brave individuals and their families.

CHILDREN HONOR MARINES' SACRIFICES

The children of St. John's Episcopal Church learned a very special lesson July 12 – 14, 2006 at Vacation Bible School. Instead of creating individual mementos to keep, they worked together on a larger project to give away. The recipients of this specially designed and lovingly crafted gift were Marines from the Wounded Warriors Barracks of Camp Lejeune, NC (<http://www.woundedwarriors.org/>). While the unselfishness of St. John's children may pale in comparison with the sacrifices made by our brave fighting men and women, it was truly a gift from the heart. It was an 8 X 10 photograph of the VBS attendees adorned with hand-drawn images from each child.

As the theme of the week was "Friends of Jesus", the mat around the photograph simulated a friendship quilt. One of the contributing artists, an eight-year-old girl, said "We are decorating a picture frame for Marines wounded in Iraq. It's nice to give something to people who fought for our country and were wounded." The young girl and her friend each drew a flag because it "represents our country". They think the Marines will treasure the gift because it came from American kids.

The children's offering was the brainchild of the church's Vacation Bible School Coordinator, whose husband is an Iraqi War veteran. The Director of Christian Education, whose brother is currently serving in the United States Army, eagerly embraced the project. The gift, which now hangs in the Wounded Warriors Barracks at Camp Lejeune, was presented to the Marines as part of the Vacation Bible School closing Eucharist on Friday, July 14, 2006 at 11:00 a.m. Following the service, the Marines were treated to lunch and a party complete with a DJ, surrounded by their biggest fans.