



## TESTIMONIAL

by Karen, mother of Freddie

**M**y husband and I enjoy attending our home church services, and have romanticized the experience of going to church as a family. Our desire is for our family to worship together as we each grow in our relationships with the Lord. But the reality is different because it is difficult for our 15 year old son with special needs to sit still or focus for extended lengths of time. Consequently, our son Freddie is often dependent on us to help him remain engaged throughout the services, and we split our attentions between supporting Freddie's needs and listening to the service. We gladly support him but have often wondered if Freddie is developing spiritually.

When we heard about the RS ministry, we were grateful and excited. What we had hoped we could expect was an opportunity for Freddie to be able to worship more independently, so that he could develop his own unique spirituality and relationship with God. To our great joy, this has come to fruition through the RS ministry. The modified structure of the RS service has enabled Freddie, as well as his six year old sister Jennifer, to have many opportunities to interact in a meaningful way throughout the service. He has enjoyed singing with his peers in the front of the church, leading the congregation in prayer and bible readings, and has participated in the bible lesson skits. These opportunities have gained his attention and maintained his interest so that he is no longer dependent on our support to help him remain focused throughout the service. The relaxed structure of the RS service has allowed Freddie to feel free to be himself. As a result, he is more responsive during the service, and more open to receive the messages of God's love. He is very eager to attend each service and often surprises us with his initiatives to participate, even though occasionally he doesn't realize what he has just volunteered to do! One of the unanticipated benefits to our family is how Freddie's RS experiences have helped him to become more involved during our home church service. Freddie now participates more during our service, and is much more interested in being there.

The RS ministry has given our entire family another opportunity to enhance our spiritual growth. It has been a gift to us, and a prayer answered that we no longer wonder if Freddie is developing spiritually. It is joy to watch him grow in this way, and become a fuller participant in his community. We are so grateful that churches are reaching out to their communities to provide such a meaningful opportunity for people of all abilities to worship together.



*Freddie has an opportunity to develop his own unique spirituality and relationship with God. His mom and dad, Karen and Chuck, and his sister, Jennifer, are by his side.*