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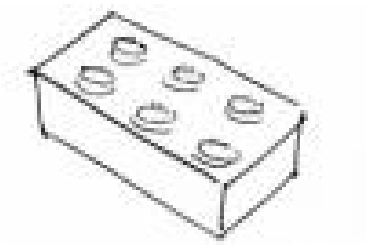
A time to build

Pat Marrin | Oct. 1, 2009 NCR Today



One of the benefits of living next door to small children is that they have taken an interest in the toys we packed away long ago as our own son outgrew them. He is out of college now, so we are talking about ancient bins of plastic Legos and sets of Playmobile people who once inhabited little houses made of foamboard and lots of glue -- "projects" that threatened to take over whole rooms in our house. That first round of playing with him was a rediscovery of my own childhood, and now I get to do it again.

Legos are still a mainstay of child's play at home and in day cares, durable, brightly colored little blocks with connector bumps that secure them together. Even very young children (who first taste their toys) can play with the large beginner sets, learning how to stack them or build simple structures. Five-year-old Quinn and his four-year old friend Mason from across the street can make elaborate space ships and wheeled vehicles that convey Lego people here and there in a world they create as they go. They can do this for hours, and no batteries are required. They are learning as they play, small-scale accomplishments that satisfy deeply, beg for further innovation and creativity. They work together or compete, building something interiorly as they make things with their hands

The daily scriptures (Nehemiah 8:1-4a, 5-6, 7b-12 [1]) tell the story of Israel 's return from exile in Babylon . The desire to rebuild the temple is foremost in their minds. The psalms composed about this period reflect the national grief over the destruction of the Temple in 586 BCE, the longing to return home to reestablish this visible foundation of their covenant with God. After almost 50 years it is though they are dreaming of bricks and sturdy gates, altar stones and door frames, a place called home where they would be safe, back in God's plan and held within the promise of love.

Lego blocks are designed to be put together to make something bigger. Like people. We are meant for community and for purposes only all of us together can accomplish. The desire to build is built into our dreams and our hands.

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Links:
[1] http://www.usccb.org/nab/100109.shtml