



“It’s Snack Time!”

By Linda Wihl

I end each tutoring session by yelling, “It’s snack time!” And, if allowed by their tutors children come running to the circle to get a snack. It’s a reward for good work—we operate on the “Little Red Hen” principle: do the work earn a snack, don’t no snack. So I get that they’re anxious to be rewarded, it’s hard to contain themselves and I get that they’re only kindergartners. I sit in the circle with them and remind, “Pass the snack to the center until the person next to you has a snack. Then we can all open and eat our snack together.” But this is the hardest part of tutoring— despite having significant deficits at the beginning of the year they learn to read, write and comprehend far easier than they learn to pass a snack. Some will hold onto the snack and not pass it; some even hide the snack and swear they never got it. Some will start eating the minute they see the person next to them has one. Why? They’re not hungry. Cincinnati Public Schools feed our children breakfast, lunch and an afternoon snack. Granted at home in a low income neighborhood the pickings are slim, but not here.

Dr. **Walter Brueggemann**, “one of the most influential Old Testament scholars of the last several decades,” says it’s our economy of scarcity. The free market is built on individualism, competition, convincing folks there is never “enough”. Scarcity creates value, tells us what we want can be purchased, labor and land are commodities etc. What’s the alternative? Brueggemann says an [economics of compassion](#). It is founded on connectedness, welcoming strangers, staying small, recognizing abundance, and believing “I have enough,” “I am enough”. He contrasts the economics of scarcity and the economics of abundance:

	<u>Scarcity</u>	<u>Abundance</u>
Protocol:	production consumption accumulation possession	sharing giving trusting risking
Results:	never makes anyone happy hardness of heart	Beatitudes—peace, mourning, hunger, mercy, purity leads to happiness & open hearts

So what am I asking of you this Lent? When you hear the call, “Live simply so others may simply live,” please don’t take that as just “giving something up.” Listen to the 2nd half. Ask yourself:

Where am I on the journey from greed to giving?
What are the restraints on my giving?
What practical steps can I take forward?

The Ignatian Volunteers get this! They give of time, talent and treasure serving those in need through area nonprofits, being in “kinship” with those they serve and one another, and growing ever closer to God. May you be blessed as you have blessed others! Even though it’s Lent, “It’s snack time!”

Linda Wihl is the Greater Cincinnati IVC Regional Director (or as some of the volunteers call her, “the matchmaker”). As the Executive Director of Making Sense of Language Arts, she is also a service site partner and sponsor. Her favorite title is “grandma!”