Families experienced Jesus’ love this summer at *Family Retreats*!

Read more about Cody’s week at *Retreat* inside!
When Tiffany, a single mom, and her daughter Macie, who has cerebral palsy came to their first Family Retreat, they wondered if they’d fit in. Macie has little control over her limbs, must be fed through a tube, and cannot speak. Instead this bright teenager eagerly communicates through her ‘yes’ and ‘no’ cards. Macie’s disability is a complicated condition, and Tiffany arrived not knowing what to expect…

During that week, Tiffany met another special-needs mom whose little girl had a tilt wheelchair. “Wow,” Tiffany said with a hint of envy, “it sure would be easy to wash Macie’s hair in that fancy chair.” The other mom laughed, “Say no more!” She then happily lifted her child out of the special wheelchair, and placed Macie in it—she then washed Macie’s hair as a “welcome to Family Retreat” gift to Tiffany and her daughter!

Now, Tiffany and Macie love welcoming new mothers and fathers of kids with disabilities. This mom-and-daughter duo are indispensable as they pass on their many blessings at Family Retreat. They are famous for spreading Christ’s love to weary moms and dads.

Although Family Retreat is a life-line for these weary families, many are not able to attend because of finances. They are waiting for a scholarship—someone who will say, “Here’s my gift; welcome to Family Retreat!” Would you be that Gospel-patron who will make it possible for families like Tiffany and Macie to attend? Thank you for being famous when it comes to spreading Christ’s love to weary moms and dads at Family Retreat!

On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable…

1 CORINTHIANS 12:22
Caring for a child with a disability in a country like El Salvador can often lead to feelings of isolation and hopelessness. The day to day realities of disability are often overwhelming. Medical and economic challenges can weigh down on parents and caretakers. But at International Family Retreat, families find Jesus’ love, hope and acceptance! Meet Angie, who was diagnosed with Leukemia at just 6-months-old. Doctors said she only had 1 year to live, but today, she is 9-years-old! Angie recently came to Retreat with her grandmother, who is primary caretaker, because Angie’s mom works long days to provide for them. Angie and her grandma experienced true spiritual renewal, community, and the joy of Jesus at International Family Retreat!

YOU GAVE THE
JOY of JESUS
TO FAMILIES
at International Family Retreat

You sent Jesus’ love to Angie and her grandmother in El Salvador!

At International Family Retreat, families get to spend time doing various activities. One of everyone’s favorites is worshipping together. Look at Angie’s joy as she sings with her STM (Short-Term Missionary)!

There’s nothing more precious than seeing a little girl’s joy overflow! You gave Angie (who has Leukemia) and other kids with disabilities brand-new experiences at International Family Retreat – like horseback riding!

This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord’s people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.

2 CORINTHIANS 9:12
God is using you to pour out His love to families living with disability. One such family is the Hintz family who recently came to a Family Retreat in Northern California. Rich and Joanne came with their sons, Jeremy and Cody (who has Down syndrome). It's normal for parents to feel overwhelmed and alone when taking care of a child with a disability. It's hard work and many people simply don't understand what life with disability really entails. Parents are often at their limit when they arrive at Family Retreat in need of Jesus’ love and hope.

“We were so broken before we came, but now we have hope. It’s the first step in getting help. Your family's life will be changed, and you'll never be the same!” Joanne told us. The entire family developed deep connections and friendships during the week with other families and their volunteer Short-Term-Missionaries (STMs). Husband Rich added, “Family Retreat is love. It's a beautiful place with beautiful people.”

Thank you for transforming the lives of families dealing with disability through your prayers and by providing scholarships! You’re investing in kingdom ministry and in families living with disability who need the hope of Jesus!

Parents Rich and Joanne shared with us that “Family Retreat is like having another family.” They love that there is something fun for every family member who attends Retreat!
We gratefully acknowledge contributions given in memory or in honor of loved ones to further ministry in the disability community. To give a gift in memory of a loved one or in honor of a special occasion, visit joniandfriends.org/donate or contact Joni and Friends at 818.707.5664.
Joni’s Christmas Cards are Here!

Share the Joy of Jesus’ Birth with Friends and Family this Holiday Season

Cradle to the Cross
“A Savior is Born!” Inscribed with red foil detail on the cards exterior, this beautiful artwork by Joni captures Mary holding baby Jesus in the stable on the first Christmas night. “As the artwork flows into the hills that lead ‘to Mt. Calvary, I pray that you will see how the cradle leads to the cross. Take a moment to reflect on how Jesus’ birth must be celebrated in the context of His death and resurrection. For only then does His Advent into our dark world have meaning.” ~Joni

Peace on Earth
The artwork on this card by Joni captures the starry wonder and mystery of that glorious night of Jesus’ birth. Inscribed on the front in silver foil detail is the phrase, “Peace on Earth.” “As I painted, I wondered what a lonely traveler on the winding little road to Bethlehem might have seen. What did he think of that brilliant star, piercing the darkness directly above a stable where shepherds were gathering? Did he hurry up the road to be part of the celebration? I yearned to paint a scene that conveyed a beautiful starlit night where ‘all was calm, all was bright.” ~Joni

Featured Topics

Coping with Grief and Loss
Although we will all encounter loss and grief at some point, we aren’t meant to walk through it alone. God is near in the midst of pain and sadness, and the prayers and presence of a friend can help provide comfort.

Invisible Disabilities: Fibromyalgia
Not all disabilities are visible. While on the outside someone may look as if everything is fine, a disability can sometimes be hiding. And for someone living with an invisible disability such as chronic pain or illness, this challenge may leave them feeling misunderstood or unseen.

Who Am I? Rediscovering Your Identity After Loss
When someone is talented and works hard, it can be easy for them to begin finding identity in their abilities or success. But what happens when all of that is stripped away?

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Joni’s Christmas Cards are Here!

Share the Joy of Jesus’ Birth with Friends and Family this Holiday Season

Cradle to the Cross

**Interior Message:**

*From the Cradle to the Cross, Jesus is Lord of All.*
*May the Good News of His Birth bring you Hope and Joy this Christmas Season!* 
*Merry Christmas!*

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Peace on Earth

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