

Te wairua o te tamaiti - The emotional, spiritual being of the child. Daniel shows whakaute for a beautiful manu.

As we were enjoying the swings one morning, we made a sad discovery. A bird was lying on the bark, and it was dead. We gathered around it, and wondered what could have happened to it. Many ideas came forward, and the storm the night before had Daniel wondering if it had crashed and banged its head. As I came away for a moment to chat to whānau, Daniel stayed close to the bird, completely absorbed in this unfortunate event. Gently, he covered the bird in bark, and then gathered rocks, one by one, to place in a circle around it. I suggested we could find a place in the garden to bury it, so the bird could return to Papatūānuku, and Daniel was happy to do this. With karakia and aroha we returned the bird to Papatūānuku. Whakaute encompasses a way of showing respect and to care for something, and Daniel showed huge amounts of empathy and care for the bird and this process of saying farewell.



My thoughts on Daniel's learning through ngā āhuatanga o te tamaiti: ways of being.

Daniel's whakaute for the dead bird showed me just how in touch with his wairua he is. His ways of being as he gently surrounded the bird with his friends, contributing to the ideas of how it got hurt, making sure no-one stood on it by accident were so respectful. We celebrated its life, as Daniel expressed with his hands how he also has seen birds splashing in our pond. As we buried the bird, he told me, "I got a flower." The ceremony was cloaked in whakaute, and Daniel was ready to move on with his day. With such awareness of his own sense of spirituality, Daniel was able to give it meaning and understanding. Making sense of death is full of emotions, but as Daniel connects to his wairua and finds ways to make sense of moments like these, he gains a pathway for understanding this often difficult part of life.

How do we continue to grow Daniel's ways of being?

A connection to his own wairua will give Daniel the calmness to work through the big feelings that come with difficult situations throughout his life. His very gentle whakaute showed me this way of being resonates deeply with him. We will continue to listen to his contributions, in all of the ways that he knows to communicate with us, so that we can help him to make sense of his world.

Aroha nui, Tanya
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