

Two Ways of Checking In

from Bob Dorroh, Unitarian Church of Baton Rouge, LA

Editors note: These are two descriptions of the same life experience, one impersonal and one personal. As a facilitator, you may want to use an opening question, such as "Please share something of personal significance." to encourage more personal check ins, instead of something like "Please tell us what's been going on in your life since our last meeting."

Impersonal Check In:

On November 14, my wife and I took two of our grandsons, Zachary and Nicholas, to see "The Crucible", a play by Arthur Miller. The play was in Gonzales and was very good. We drove out Highland Road to its intersection with Airline Highway and had dinner at a restaurant named "On the Half-Shell". It is a good restaurant, which used to have a branch at the south end of Bluebonnet. They specialize in oyster dishes and have a huge variety of them on their menu. My favorite is "Oysters Casino".

We then drove to Gonzales on Airline Highway, rather than on the I-10. When we got to Gonzales, we had a hard time finding the theater, which they spell "theatre", in British style. I must have driven across Railroad Avenue four times.

When I bought the tickets to the play, I assumed the best seats were in the balcony, since they were the most expensive. We were the only people sitting there, and the seats were very cramped and uncomfortable. The play lasted until 10:30, and we had a long drive home. Our grandsons live way out on O'Neal Lane, and we had to get up early and go to church early the next morning, so we were tired all day Sunday.

The play was interesting. It was supposedly about the Salem Witch Trials, but really about McCarthyism. There was supposed to be "brief nudity" in the play, but I wasn't paying close enough attention, so I missed it. There was a concession stand at the theater, and both boys got some candy. Zach had read the play in a class, so he already knew the story.

Personal Check In:

Recently, my wife and I took our two Baton Rouge grandsons, Nick age 14 and Zach age 16, to see "The Crucible" at the Ascension Community Theater. It was excellent, and there were two reasons why this was meaningful to me.

Even though the two boys are sometimes off-putting and cool, we have been consistently surprised by how much they appreciate serious theater. They pay close attention and make insightful comments. Some time ago, we took them to see "The Tempest", and Nick mentioned that in the final scene, Caliban was carrying a gun, something I had missed. Zach had read "The Crucible" in a class, and I know from having quizzed him about "Julius Caesar" that they do a very good job of this sort of thing at Baton Rouge High.

I had seen the movie and had thought it was about the Salem Witch Trials. The play made it very obvious that it was about McCarthyism and anti-communist witch hunts, blacklisting, etc. This was occurring while I was in high school and college, so the evening involved a trip down memory lane for me.

