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Dear friends

On Friday evening we had the Graduation Ceremony of the Grade R class and today Father Christmas came – the end-of-year business is almost over!

At the Graduation Ceremony all the children are presented with stationery for Grade 1, so that they can start with good tools rather than some else's leftovers. St Kieran's church members donate food for the rest of the year, but in December they give money which goes to giving each little graduant their own Xhosa "first-read" Bible. Here you can see David presenting a child with the Bible. It is an awesome thought that for most of them this Bible will be the first book they own.



Each year we receive toys from the Toy Run, a motorbike event where each biker donates a toy. Often these quite a few need to be washed and repaired, doll's clothes need to be made and 55 gifts need to be wrapped and labelled: the "elf" is kept out of mischief the weekend before! We had a wonderful Father Christmas this year: he sang, danced and joked with the children and made each one feel special, as well as often having the adults in stitches with his antics. What impressed me was the easy and natural way with which he wove prayer into the programme: one of my most precious Phumlani picture ever is the last one on the list, where the kids are thanking God for their presents.

The rule is that the children should wait with unwrapping till everyone has their present, but this year, about halfway through, the temptation was too great. Oh, the joy on their faces, the instant love affairs of girls and their dolls and soft toys, the awe at which the boys looked and tried out their very own cars! I had allocated the two balls I had been allowed to choose from the Toy Run very carefully to two little soccer enthusiasts. Their gifts were at the bottom of the bag, and when they at last received their gifts their joy knew no bounds when they found out that they had *both* been given balls!

Wishing you all much joy over Christmas.

Regards, Eva











