



THE PARK WITH ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE

ROCK CHURCH AND ACADEMY PARK - SAN DIEGO, CA

By Tim Jachlewski Jr., ASLA - President, In-Site Landscape Architecture, Inc. PHOTOS COURTESY OF SHANA SILER



A few years ago, Tim Jachlewski, Landscape Architect and President of In-Site Landscape Architecture, Inc. felt a call to “get involved” in the design of the Rock Church and Academy Park, but the project was already in design by a team of consultants. Later on, after his son enrolled in the Rock Academy for Kindergarten, Tim came up with a new vision for the project. As a pro bono service project, Tim provided a new site master plan, computer renderings, construction documents and construction support services. Yale Hooper, (Tim’s business partner at the time from Van Dyke Landscape Architects) also prepared the irrigation plans pro bono as a service to the Church.



At the point of the pro-bono re-design, the original plans (by others) were completed and approved by the City and the 216,000 square foot building was already in construction. The new site construction documents were re-processed and re-approved by the City of San Diego in a 2 week period, just in time for the site work to continue without a delay in schedule!

A Virtual Walk Through

Since the project is located in the historic redevelopment area known as Liberty Station, the site could not have any traditional “religious” icons (such as a cross) on the exterior visible to the public. The redesign of the park includes a virtual “walk through the Bible” from creation to salvation using the landscape as a symbolic media. The growing 14,000-person Church congregation and K-12 Academy heavily use the park for recreation, sports, recess, P.E., special events, festivals, outdoor dining, education, and prayer.

Landscape Imagery

- Seven stone seatwalls and lush plantings symbolize the 7 days of creation.
- Thorn plantings symbolize our sin.
- The artificial turf field symbolizes the great flood and the water of baptism.
- An Olive tree is a literal symbol from the Genesis account when the dove returned to Noah with a freshly plucked olive leaf.
- A rainbow on the ground plane is a sign to Noah and all generations that God would be faithful to His covenant
- Three dwarf Italian Cypress trees symbolize Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Israel).
- Twelve sections of pavement symbolize the twelve tribes of Israel and the twelve disciples of Jesus.
- Papyrus plants symbolize Moses; he was placed in a Papyrus basket as an infant.
- Ten concrete steps symbolize God’s law, the Ten Commandments.
- Red Bougainvillea symbolizes the sinless blood of Jesus.
- Three Date Palms symbolize the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the three crosses at Jesus’ crucifixion, and the three days before the resurrection.
- Plantings of Lamb’s Ear, the ‘Lamb of God’, the perfect, final sacrifice.
- A narrow pathway and children’s playground symbolize the narrow path that leads to eternal life and Heaven.



Top: Artificial turf saves water and supports the heavy use of the 14,000 person congregation and K-12 Academy.

Middle: The rainbow is a sign to Noah and all generations that God would be faithful to His covenant.

Bottom: The “Promised Land Playground” is designed to promote physical fitness.

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