

KIDS THESE DAYS!

I. [Mark 10:13-16](#) [Matthew 18:1-6](#)

A. It's been a hot and humid summer thus far but if you head out walking, you'll run into kids everywhere. Kids on BMX bikes, skateboards, and scooters are cruising in packs. Then there's the Pokemon Go craze and whole groups of kids are moving in swarms up and down the streets. You may also see a kid or two fishing or shooting hoops but it's the summer of youth here in the Port...

B. On our evening walks we often encounter kids and most of them know Mrs. Bush. She's the one they know and love and they often run up to her to collect a hug and tell them what they've been up to. But then we also run into a few who as they get into junior high and high school, they make less eye contact and sometimes hardly speak. Perhaps it's no longer cool to say hi when morphing into adolescence. Fortunately no kids have run away from us yelling '*stranger danger!*'

C. So what about here at church--isn't it great to hear some baby chatter and noises again as of late?! It was the common sound in our early years. We're talking about ways of making our nursery better and more accommodating. So what about babies, children, and youth. [Proverbs 14:4](#) (NASB) says: "*Where no oxen are, the manger is clean, but much increase comes by the strength of the ox.*" The NLT puts it this way: "*Without oxen a stable stays clean, but you need a strong ox for a large harvest.*" (While Solomon really was talking about the benefit of farmers having oxen, the same is true for a church having babies, children, and youth.) So what does Jesus think?

D. [Mark 10:13-16](#) (ESV) speaks volumes in four short verses: "*And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."* And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them." (cf Parallel verses [Matthew.19:13-15](#) & [Luke 18:15-17](#))

E. [Matthew 18:1-6](#) is yet another encounter with Jesus and a child.

1) V1 "*At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"* (This wouldn't be the last time they'd asked Him about this.)

2) V2-4 "*And calling to Him a child, He put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."*

(It's hard to be humble when you want to be the top dog! And if you're truly humble, are you even thinking about clawing your way to the top?)

3) V5-6 "*Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.*" (When it comes to Jesus' love for children, these two passages aren't exclusive. You can find parallel verses in the gospels and several cases where Jesus healed children, delivered them from demons, and even raised them from the dead. And Jesus, as always, sets an example for us. Let's pray that His attitude of love towards children wears off on us--in our homes, the Church and our Community!)

F. What are the Kingdom-like virtues of a child that Jesus is alluding to? Being open, trusting, teachable, receptive, dependent, unpretentious, eager to help others.

G. How do we foster and pursue Christlikeness with children we encounter? How do we alter and reshape our attitudes? How can we best respond when the neighbor kids run stops signs on their bikes or pee in their yards? When a pack of kids roll past way-too-close on the street or sidewalk? When students come to our doors selling coupon booklets, candy bars, or candles we don't need? When there's a car wash fundraiser? When a baby starts to cry in church? When neighbor kids would come to church if they only had a ride? When the need for more Sunday School classes emerges? When another church in town is having Bible School but they're short on helpers? When a family in your neighborhood is struggling and the children seem neglected and in need?

H. Most of all, how do we share the Good News with them and emulate its truth and love? What child or group of kids is coming to your mind right now? Do they know about Jesus and how He died for them? Jesus rebuked religious leaders, drove out the moneychangers, and sharply scolded His own disciples but when it came to kids He took them in His arms and blessed them even while rebuking the rebukers! Bottom line: You cannot be Christlike without loving children! And you love children best by telling them about the One who loves them most!

I. This probably begins with your children or grandchildren. Are there any good Scriptures for parents and grandparents? Here's a couple from Deuteronomy: [Deuteronomy 6:4-9](#) (NLT) "*Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. And you must*

commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates." **Deuteronomy 4:7-9 (NLT) Moses to Israel about God's faithfulness:** "For what great nation has a god as near to them as the Lord our God is near to us whenever we call on Him? And what great nation has decrees and regulations as righteous and fair as this body of instructions that I am giving you today? But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren." (Words underlined, mine.)

J. Here's Good News for your son or daughter or grandchild or the neighbor kid: 'The laws that God gave Moses for Israel were all broken. They were broken not only by Israel but by everyone from all nations, including us. God was angry but still loved us. Then Jesus came. He was God's own Son. He kept the laws everyone else broke. He lived a perfect life. He was without sin. Then He was arrested, tried, nailed to a cross where He bled and died. He was buried. Why? God put our sins on Him and He paid the penalty for them. And in believing in Him, His perfect record of no sin is put upon us. God raised Jesus from the dead. Those of us who believe in Jesus will also rise from the dead someday. My child, I want you to know this so much I'm going to tell it to you over and over again. I want you to come to know Jesus at an early age. There is nothing more important in our lives than this. This is more important than anything else in our family or even the whole world. This is why we pray, read the Bible, and go to church on Sundays. We hope you'll do the same with your kids someday. Now let's pray about this together...'

* Close with Prayer...

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Mark 10:13-16 (ESV)

13 And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. **14** But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. **15** Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." **16** And He took them in His arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them.

Matthew 18:1-6 (ESV)

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" **2** And calling to Him a child, He put him in the midst of them **3** and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **4** Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. **5** "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, **6** but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him to have a great millstone fastened around his neck and to be drowned in the depth of the sea.

Proverbs 14:4 (NASB)

4 Where no oxen are, the manger is clean, but much increase comes by the strength of the ox.

Proverbs 14:4 (NLT)

4 Without oxen a stable stays clean, but you need a strong ox for a large harvest.

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NLT)

4 "Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. **5** And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. **6** And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. **7** Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. **8** Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. **9** Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Deuteronomy 4:7-9 (NLT)

7 For what great nation has a god as near to them as the Lord our God is near to us whenever we call on Him? **8** And what great nation has decrees and regulations as righteous and fair as this body of instructions that I am giving you today? **9** "But watch out! Be careful never to forget what you yourself have seen. Do not let these memories escape from your mind as long as you live! And be sure to pass them on to your children and grandchildren.

Film Clips & Other Links

Jesus Movie - Unless You Become Like Little Children...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNIAiDrWwdY>

"Children" - A Poem by John Piper

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1kUFnt9_c

"Jesus Loves the Little Children of the World"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4CBtA1A-cR8>

"Jesus Loves the Little Children of the World" (Medley by Reev Robledo)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfXHFaC3hvM>

Why Jesus Blessed the Little Children - John MacArthur (Full Sermon)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6szji6mgtPs>

Why Children Matter (Eph. 5:1; Zeph. 3:17) - Doug Wilson (Full Sermon)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsKFb6lcF6E>

Catechism For Young Children - Adapted from the Westminster Shorter Catechism

http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/cat_for_young_children.html

Bonus Stuff

Psalm 127:3-5 (ESV)

3 Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. **4** Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. **5** Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Psalm 8:1-2 (NLT)

1 O Lord, our Lord, Your majestic name fills the earth! Your glory is higher than the heavens. **2** You have taught children and infants to tell of Your strength, silencing Your enemies and all who oppose You.

Proverbs 22:6 (ESV)

6 Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.

Deuteronomy 11:18-21 (NLT)

18 So commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these words of mine. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. **19** Teach them to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. **20** Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, **21** so that as long as the sky remains above the earth, you and your children may flourish in the land the Lord swore to give your ancestors.

Ephesians 6:1-4 (ESV)

6 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), **3** "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." **4** Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Colossians 3:20-21 (ESV)

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. **21** Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Matthew 19:13-15 (ESV)

13 Then children were brought to Him that he might lay His hands on them and pray. The disciples rebuked the people, **14** but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven." **15** And He laid His hands on them and went away.

Luke 18:15-17 (ESV)

15 Now they were bringing even infants to Him that he might touch them. And when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. **16** But Jesus called them to Him, saying, "Let the children come to Me, and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. **17** Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."

Mark 9:33-37 (ESV)

33 And they came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What were you discussing on the way?" **34** But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. **35** And He sat down and called the twelve. And He said to them, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." **36** And He took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, **37** "Whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."

Luke 9:46-48 (ESV)

46 An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. **47** But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by His side **48** and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great."

Quote by Cornelius Plantinga

"We know the excitement of getting a present--we love to unwrap it to see what is inside. So it is with our children they are gifts we unwrap for years as we discover the unique characters God has made them."

Quote by Charles H. Spurgeon

"You may speak but a word to a child, and in that child there may be slumbering a noble heart which shall stir the Christian Church in years to come."

Quote by Wayne Mack

"Becoming mature Christians will require the sovereign work of God. Only God can save and sanctify. Still, God uses men and means. Certainly we as parents must seek to bring our children to Jesus Christ for salvation. But salvation is not the end of the journey. It is only the beginning. The destination toward which we are headed with our children is nothing less than maturity in Christ."

Quote by Randy Alcorn

"Your children should love the Lord, work hard, and experience the joy of trusting God. More important than leaving your children an inheritance is leaving them a spiritual heritage."

Quote by John Piper

"The happiest and holiest children in the world are the children whose fathers succeed in winning both their tender affection and their reverential and loving fear. And they are the children who will come to understand most easily the mystery of the fatherhood of God."

Quote by R. Kent Hughes

"Men are never manlier than when they are tender with their children--whether holding a baby in their arms, loving their grade-schooler, or hugging their teenager or adult children."

Quote by John Flavel

"If you neglect to instruct (your children) in the way of holiness, will the devil neglect to instruct them in the way of wickedness? No; if you will not teach them to pray, he will to curse, swear, and lie; if ground be uncultivated, weeds will spring."

Quote by Charles Swindoll

"You want to mess up the minds of your children? Here's how--guaranteed! Rear them in a legalistic, tight context of external religion, where performance is more important than reality. Fake your faith. Sneak around and pretend your spirituality. Train your children to do the same. Embrace a long list of do's and don'ts publicly but hypocritically practice them privately... yet never own up to the fact that its hypocrisy. Act one way but live another. And you can count on it--emotional and spiritual damage will occur."

Quote by R.C. Ryle

"Children are very quick observers; very quick in seeing through some kinds of hypocrisy, very quick in finding out what you really think and feel, very quick in adopting all your ways and opinions. You will often discover that, as the father is, so is the son."

Quote by Henry Ward Beecher

"Children are unpredictable. You never know what inconsistency they are going to catch you in next."

Quote by Francois Fenelon

"Children are very nice observers, and will often perceive your slightest defects. In general, those who govern children, forgive nothing in them, but everything in themselves."

Quote by John Calvin

"Children, obey. Why does the apostle use the word obey instead of honor, which has a greater extent of meaning? It is because obedience is the evidence of that honor which children owe to their parents, and is therefore more earnestly enforced."

Quote by Jerry Falwell

"If you think the sound of your children making noise troubles you, look out when they're deadly silent because that's when real trouble is brewing."

Quote by Jerry Falwell

"You tell your children to clean their room, not because you cannot stand it any longer, or because you said to. Love teaches them that possessions are gifts from God that should be gratefully received and taken care of."

Quote by Rick Warren

"There are illegitimate parents, but I don't believe there are any illegitimate children."

Quote by Fyodor Dostoevsky

"The soul is healed by being with children."