

WEEK FOUR
YOUTH SUNDAY SCHOOL
JESUS CONNECTION: CHILDLIKE FAITH
LEADER GUIDE

I have calmed and quieted my soul like a weaned child with its mother; my soul is like a weaned child.

- Psalm 131:2

ICEBREAKER:

- What is a kid's show that you liked as a preschooler, but you cannot stand? [NOTE: Dave hates the show Caillou, with a passion!]
- What is it about these shows that attract kids but repel others?
- Are there any preschool aged shows that you still like?

OPENING PRAYER: Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

ART EXPRESSION: Invite the students to get a blank piece of paper and crayons, markers, or colored pencils.

READ: Mark 10:13 & 16

One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them... Then Jesus took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

SAY: Imagine yourself as a small child, coming to Jesus. Consider the sights, the sounds. Who is with you? What do you want to tell Jesus? What does he want to say to you? Now color a picture of your experience with Jesus, putting yourself in the mind of a child.

SHARE: Have each person share their picture, describing key details. What were the essential elements for your picture? How did you see Jesus, how did he see you?

DISCUSS:

- How did that exercise shape the way you see Jesus?
- How is a three-year old's understanding of Jesus different from a youth or adult?

READ: Mark 10: 13-16

13 One day some parents brought their children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But the disciples scolded the parents for bothering him.

14 When Jesus saw what was happening, he was angry with his disciples. He said to them, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. 15 I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it." 16 Then he took the children in his arms and placed his hands on their heads and blessed them.

DISCUSS:

- Why are the disciples scolding the parents?
 - What do you think was their reason for keeping kids away from Jesus?
 - How do you think the parents felt when they were scolded by the disciples?
 - How do you think the kids felt that were being turned away from seeing Jesus?
- Why did this make Jesus angry with the disciples?
 - NOTE: One translation of this story says that Jesus was indignant, or extremely angry, the only time this word was used about Jesus.
 - Why would the disciples' action lead to such a strong response?

- Was his anger justifiable? Why or why not.
- Why was it important that Jesus spent time with the children? What does that say about the character of God?
- What do you think it means to “receive the Kingdom of God like a child?” How might a child receive the Kingdom differently than an adult?

QUOTE: Dave Guzik

Children are examples of how we must enter the kingdom with a **childlike** faith, not with a **childish** faith. We must come to God with a faith that trusts God just like a little child trusts his father – and leave all the problems up to daddy... Children receive (or willingly accept things) and don’t feel they have to earn everything they get. Children are in a place where often all they can do is receive. They don’t refuse gifts out of self-sufficient pride. So, we must receive the kingdom of God as a little child – because we surely will by no means enter it by what we do or earn.¹

DISCUSS:

- Why are children more easily able to accept things from others (and God) than adults?
 - What causes this shift in people?
 - How does self-sufficient pride keep us from accepting gifts from God?
- What is the difference between childlike faith and childish faith?

READ: Matthew 18: 1-6

18 About that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?”
 2 Jesus called a little child to him and put the child among them. 3 Then he said, “I tell you the truth, unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven. 4 So anyone who becomes as humble as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.
 5 “And anyone who welcomes a little child like this on my behalf[a] is welcoming me. 6 But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.

DISCUSS:

- Why do the disciples ask Jesus who is the greatest?
 - Is this a child-like or a childish question? Why?
- Jesus uses a child as an object lesson saying, “Unless you turn from your sins and become like little children, you will never get into the Kingdom of Heaven.” [note: Kingdom of God and Kingdom of heaven are the same thing. They refer to God’s rule over the universe and God’s rule in our hearts.²]
 - What is he trying to teach them?
 - What might he mean by becoming like little children?
- Jesus flips the script and says that true greatness is found in humility,
 - How is a child, unlike an adult, an example of humility?
 - How is humility greatness?
 - If humility is greatness, then why is it difficult to be truly great? (Or why is it so hard to be humble).
 - Can you think of examples of people who are great, yet humble?

READ: Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don’t concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for its mother’s milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. O Israel, put your hope in the Lord— now and always.

¹ Guzik, David. blueletterbible.org/Comm/guzik_david/StudyGuide2017-Mar/Mar-10.cfm?a=967014

² See <https://www.gotquestions.org/kingdom-of-God.html>

DISCUSS:

- What does this psalm say about greatness versus humility?
- How does it speak to child-like faith, instead of childish faith?
- How can putting our hope in the Lord, now and always, be an example of childlike humility?

CLOSING THOUGHT**QUOTE: Mike Yaconelli**

Childlike faith is not for people who need a little help; it is for people who are desperate, who are at the end of their rope... We come to faith because we are exhausted, weakened, ready to give up. If we want to experience childlike faith, we must be willing to admit our helplessness. Childlike faith is for ordinary people like you and me who know our flaws only too well.³

CLOSING PRAYER: Psalm 131

Lord, my heart is not proud; my eyes are not haughty. I don't concern myself with matters too great or too awesome for me to grasp. Instead, I have calmed and quieted myself, like a weaned child who no longer cries for their mother's milk. Yes, like a weaned child is my soul within me. Put your hope in the Lord— now and always. Amen.

³ Yaconelli, Michael. *Dangerous Wonder*, pg. 166