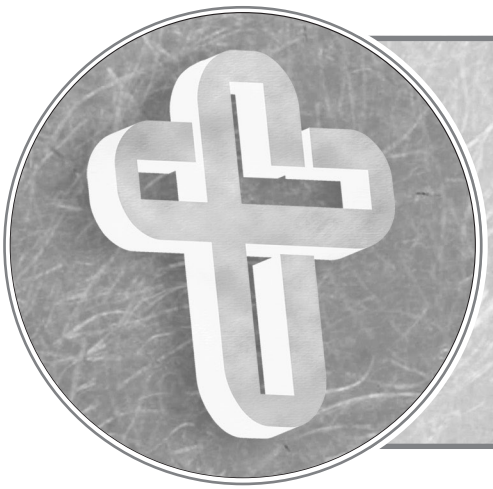


CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
AUGUST 30 2025

trust like a child

Scripture Story: Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 55; 56.
Key Text: Mark 10:13, 14.

PREPARING TO TEACH

I. SYNOPSIS

This week's lesson targets a brief encounter between Jesus and His disciples, and a host of parents and children. It was customary to bring a child to a rabbi for a prayer of blessing, but the disciples believed the activity was a waste of time and behavior not suitable for their Rabbi. Ellen White states: "But the Saviour's disciples thought His work too important to be interrupted in this way. . . . They thought these children too young to be benefited by a visit to Jesus, and concluded that He would be displeased at their presence" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 511). But Jesus redirected those wrong-headed ideas into a beautiful teaching moment for children, parents, and all those who would claim to be followers of Christ.

At least four salient truths emerge in this week's lesson: (1) You are never "too young" to learn about the love of Jesus and His matchless character. (2) Children can teach us and lead us to a closer walk with Christ by their simplicity, trust, and dependence on God. (3) Those who obstruct a child or another seeker's access to God stir up the Lord's indignation like nothing else. (4) Jesus loved to be in the presence of children. This passage is rich with opportunities to call youth to "rejuvenile" their faith in a season of life when their sense of self-reliance is so strong.

II. TARGET

The students will:

- Examine the qualities of children as they relate to discipleship. *(Know)*
- Experience the affirmation of God's love for children. *(Feel)*
- Choose to relate to Christ with simplicity, trust, and joy. *(Respond)*

III. EXPLORE

The Experience of Salvation, Seventh-day Adventist Fundamental Beliefs, no. 10: "In infinite love and mercy God made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that in Him we might be made the righteousness of God. Led by the Holy Spirit we sense our need, acknowledge our sinfulness, repent of our transgressions, and exercise faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, Substitute and Example. This saving faith comes through the divine power of the Word and is the gift of God's grace. Through Christ we are justified, adopted as God's sons and daughters, and delivered from the lordship of sin. Through the Spirit we are born again and sanctified; the Spirit renews our minds, writes God's law of love in our hearts, and we are given the power to live a holy life. Abiding in Him we become partakers of the divine nature and have the assurance of salvation now and in the judgment. (Gen. 3:15; Isa. 45:22; 53; Jer. 31:31-34; Ezek. 33:11; 36:25-27; Hab. 2:4; Mark 9:23, 24; John 3:3-8, 16; 16:8; Rom. 3:21-26; 5:6-10; 8:1-4, 14-17; 10:17; 12:2; 2 Cor. 5:17-21; Gal. 1:4; 3:13, 14, 26; 4:4-7; Eph. 2:4-10; Col. 1:13,

14; Titus 3:3-7; Heb. 8:7-12; 1 Peter 1:23; 2:21, 22; 2 Peter 1:3, 4; Rev. 13:8.)"

TEACHING

I. GETTING STARTED

Activity

Refer the students to the What Do You Think? *section of their lesson. After they have completed it, discuss their responses.*

Getting students to discuss self-reliance and dependence is valuable due to the season of life they are in. The paradox of this lesson is that the way to real maturity is easier to achieve with a childlike spirit than it is with a grown-up approach to faith. Invite the students to share their list of qualities with the rest of the class. As they respond, you might note the trends and similarities of the responses as they share.

Illustration

Share this illustration in your own words:

When the stress of work gets to be too much, an increasing number of executives are escaping from the cares of this world in less conventional ways. Instead of simply retreating to the beach, to the mountains, or a golf outing, many adults are, well, acting like children.

The simplicity of having fun is catching the corporate world by storm.

Who do you think is more passionate? The adult who wants to play like a child or the child who wants to act like an adult? Adults tend to be able to reflect on their experience as a child while children can only imagine what the world of adulthood is like. What a stirring image of how faith is supposed to be simple. How does your relationship with God get more complicated as you get older? *You get so used to doing everything on your own that faith can get swallowed up in self-reliance.*

II. TEACHING THE STORY

Bridge to the Story

Share the following in your own words:

We don't have to look long or far to find examples of how the simplicity of childhood mirrors the journey of faith. In the story of Jesus blessing the children there is a beautiful scene of Jesus covered with kids and loving every minute of it! But a teaching moment also emerges in which the disciples learn a valuable truth or two about their Rabbi.

Out of the Story for Teachers

After you read the Into the Story *section with your students, use the following in your own words to process it with them.*

- Compare the three perspectives of the same event and note how the stories are different and how they are similar.
- Why do you think people were bringing their children to Jesus? What are some attributes of Jesus that endear Him to parents?
- How did the disciples respond to this attention? Why do you think they responded the way they did?
- Mark's Gospel says that Jesus became "indignant" when the disciples rebuked the people. What does this say to you about how Jesus related to common people?
- How does a child receive the kingdom of heaven differently than someone who is older?
- What are some attributes of children and their approach to faith that adults tend to struggle with?
- Why do you think this story is in the Bible? What is the message God has in it for you today?

Extra Questions for Teachers:

- What specific issues do young adults face that require self-reliance? How do you achieve the skill of self-sufficiency without losing your childlike dependence on God? Think of specific scenarios in which this might be challenging. *Developing healthiness, learning to make wise decisions on your own, working to pay for things your parents used to pay for.*
- What does it look like to be childlike and spiritually mature at the same time? *Ask for examples from people they know, and even examples of people in Scripture that demonstrate this trait.*

Use the following as other teachable passages that relate to today's story: Mark 5; Luke 7:11-17; John 6:1-14; Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 9:14-29.

Tips for Top-Notch Teaching

RABBI 101

Powerful Paradox

The Master Teacher often used the tool of paradox—the idea that something sounds impossible or seemingly contradictory initially, but the more you think about it the more it might be true. *The first shall be last and the greatest is the one who serves. To find something you have to lose something, and the way in is out. You will never be more mature than when you are acting like a child.* There are these truths that simply get you to think. In fact, the only way they will ever make sense is by seriously thinking about them. Scan through the words of Christ in red and you will discover the upside-down kingdom Jesus teaches about.

Sharing Context and Background

Use the following information to shed more light on the story for your students. Share it in your own words.

The story of Jesus blessing the children rests in a broader context of a discussion on "who is the greatest?" It is important to keep in mind that the notions the disciples held about "the kingdom" and "the Messiah" shaped the way they thought about themselves. In short, they were thinking far too often about themselves. So, before the children even showed up to be blessed by Jesus, the Savior was already dealing with an ongoing discussion of discipleship greatness. Notice the setting in Matthew 18:1-6:

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, 'Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' And He called a child to Himself and set him before them, and said, 'Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one such child in My name receives Me; but whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to stumble, it would be better for him to have a heavy millstone hung around his neck, and to be drowned in the depth of the sea' " (NASB).

The stories of the lost sheep and blind Bartimaeus show the way Jesus singles out the one or the little people that tend to be ignored or pushed aside, even overlooked. When the parents brought their children to be blessed by Jesus, He had the perfect illustration to awaken humility instead of self-exultation.

But even more, the "indignation" (the idea of spitting darts) referred to only in Mark is another example of the kind of thing that upsets the Son of God. What makes God happy is childlike faith. What makes Him angry is when people get in the way and overlook this quality.

Teaching From . . .

Refer your students to the other sections of their lesson.

- **Key Text**
  Invite the students to share the key text with the class if they have committed it to memory.
- **Flashlight**
  Read the Flashlight *statement, pointing out that most of the time it is from the commentary on this week's story found in the book* The Desire of Ages. *Ask what relationship they see between the statement and what they have just discussed from* Out of the Story.
- **Punch Lines**
  Point out to your students the verses listed in their lesson that relate to this week's story. Have them share the verse that speaks most directly to them and allow them to explain why they chose it.
- **Further Insight**
  Ask them how the quote in Further Insight *conveys the point of the story in this lesson.*

III. CLOSING

Activity

Close with an activity and debrief it in your own words.

Divide into groups of two or three and, drawing stick figures on a piece of paper, show the major stages of growth from infancy to adulthood. *Say:* Break the stages of life up into five seasons. Indicate general ages for each season. Describe some of the things that tend to happen to children/young people during the different seasons or stages of life. Invite the students to share out loud or with other groups their stages to see how they are similar and how they might be different. *Ask:* "What stage do you see the most transformation? Why?" Furthermore, *ask:* "What stage or season do you think it is likely that people move from a child-like faith to a more self-reliant approach to faith."

Summary

Share the following thoughts in your own words:

The episode of blessing the children is more than just a cute story about how Jesus loved children. Jesus taught His disciples about humility and dependence using the simple behavior of children. The way Jesus reacts conveys a powerful truth as well: Don't overlook or underestimate the value of a child. Don't get in the way of a little one having contact with Christ. Don't in any way discourage or distract them. Perhaps one of the greatest achievements we will ever accomplish is making Jesus accessible to little children instead of getting in the way. If the youth in the church were to take this seriously, the children today would be disciples of today *and* tomorrow in ways we have never seen.



Remind the students about the reading plan that will take them through the inspired commentary of the Bible, the Conflict of the Ages series. The reading that goes with this lesson is *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*),* chapters 55; 56.

*A special adaptation, *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at www.cornerstoneconnections.net.

CORNERSTONECONNECTIONS
AUGUST302025

STUDENT LESSON

Scripture Story: Mark 10:13-16; Matthew 19:13-15; Luke 18:15-17.
Commentary: *The Desire of Ages* (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 55; 56.

trust like a child



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flashlight

"It is still true that children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received. The little children may be Christians, having an experience in accordance with their years" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 515).

keytext

"People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'"

(Mark 10:13, 14, NIV)

what do you think?

Which do you think is more difficult: For a child to feel self-reliant or an adult to become dependent?

Make a list of three qualities of a child that adults should never outgrow:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Which of these qualities would you desire the most? Why?

_____

_____

In what way can believers in Christ be childlike but not childish? Explain the difference.

_____

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did you know?

It seems as if humans are rarely happy with their age. Kids want to grow and be "big people," and grown-ups envy the energy and life of youth. Have you ever noticed that the root of the word "juvenile," which means youth, comes from the same word that we get the word "rejuvenate"? The noun form is "rejuvenescence," which conveys the notion of renewing youth. The oldest record of this term goes all the way back to the early 1600s. But long before such words were invented, Jesus valued the concept of "becoming like a child."

INTO THE STORY

"People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.' And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them."

(Mark 10:13-16, NIV)

"Then some children were brought to Him so that He might lay His hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, 'Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' After laying His hands on them, He departed from there."

(Matthew 19:13-15, NASB)

"And they were bringing even their babies to Him so that He would touch them, but when the disciples saw it, they began rebuking them. But Jesus called for them, saying, 'Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child will not enter it at all.'"

(Luke 18:15-17, NASB)



OUT OF THE STORY

Compare the three perspectives of the same event and note how the stories are different and how they are similar.

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Why do you think people were bringing their children to Jesus? What are some attributes of Jesus that endear Him to parents?

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How did the disciples respond to this attention? Why do you think they responded the way they did?

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Mark's Gospel says that Jesus became "indignant" when the disciples rebuked the people. What does this say to you about how Jesus related to common people?

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How does a child receive the kingdom of heaven differently than someone who is older? What are some attributes of children and their approach to faith that adults tend to struggle with?

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Why do you think this story is in the Bible? What is the message God has in it for you today?

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_____

punch lines

"And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward" **(Matthew 10:42, NIV).**

"Don't let anyone think less of you because you are young. Be an example to all believers in what you say, in the way you live, in your love, your faith, and your purity" **(1 Timothy 4:12, NLT).**

"At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, 'Who, then, is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?'

"He called a little child to him, and placed the child among them. And he said: 'Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven'" **(Matthew 18:1-3, NIV).**

"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" **(Matthew 18:4, NASB).**

"Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it" **(Proverbs 22:6, NASB).**

further insight

"In the children who were brought in contact with Him, Jesus saw the men and women who should be heirs of His grace and subjects of His kingdom, and some of whom would become martyrs for His sake."

—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 512

Sabbath

Read John 1:10-13.

Read and respond to the voting question in the *What Do You Think?* section of this week's lesson. As you reflect on the many encounters between Jesus and people, think about the way such people received the Savior. Did those who came to Christ in simplicity, humility, and with utter dependence on His mercy fall away or struggle? Consider how people such as Nicodemus and the rich young ruler were confounded by the nature of Christ's kingdom while the "childlike" seemed to "get it." In today's Bible reading it says: "He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God" (NLT). What would be different about your life if you started each day by "believing" and "receiving" Christ as a child would?

_____

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Sunday

Read Hebrews 11:6.

Read the *Into the Story* section and use the questions in the *Out of the Story* section to guide your study. The three perspectives on the story of Jesus blessing the children are very similar. What phrase or portion of this passage speaks personally to you today? What do you think is the central message God has for you in this story?

_____

_____

_____

Monday

Read Mark 10:13-15.

I see two lessons that emerge from our *Key Text*: (1) Don't get in the way of a child coming to Jesus, and (2) the way to His kingdom is with a childlike spirit. What other lessons emerge? Think of a child in your sphere of influence that you can pray for and perhaps help get to know Christ better.

_____

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_____

Tuesday

Read Mark 9:37.

Read the quote from *The Desire of Ages* in the *Flashlight* section and think of an adult you know who truly believes that children are "most susceptible" to the kingdom of God. Think of Sabbath School teachers, youth leaders, and people who celebrate the wonder of childhood. What words would you use to describe their leadership and their impact in your church?

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Wednesday

The *Punch Lines* in this week's lesson underscore the value of children and youth in Scripture. Read through each passage and note the verse that is speaking to you today. What stories from the Bible illustrate these verses? Place names or events from Scripture that convey the childlike qualities Christ is calling for in His followers. For example: when David decided to attack Goliath, it was not because he felt grown-up but because he trusted that his God was big. His childlike trust in God is what compelled such grown-up courage.

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Thursday

Read 1 Timothy 4:12.

Take time to intentionally observe children today. Watch the way they learn, play, interact, and relate to the people around them. Consider how they deal with problems or challenges that seem too big for them. Think of three children in your church and write them a note of encouragement, affirming a quality about them that is inspiring. Be as specific as you can with your note of affirmation. You can decide whether you share these words anonymously or not, but make a clear path to Jesus for the children you know and maybe you will discover what Jesus meant by the phrase "the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14, NIV).

Friday

Read Psalm 125:1.

Reflect on an event or experience in your life when you had to depend on someone else with complete and simple trust. What are some of the emotions you felt? How does childlike trust make you a mature believer in Christ?

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_____

this week's reading*

The Desire of Ages (or *Humble Hero*), chapters 55; 56.

*A special adaptation of *The Desire of Ages*, entitled *Humble Hero*, has been created just for you by the Ellen G. White Estate and Pacific Press® Publishing Association. Get more info about it at: www.cornerstoneconnections.net. By following this plan you will read at least one book of the Conflict of the Ages series each year.