

Let them come to me

Mark 10.2-16

When the Pharisees test Jesus on his knowledge of the law, he asks if they know why that law was given. He refers all the way back to God's creation of a perfect world, to highlight how we fall short of that perfection in our relationships. When the disciples apply their own judgement to who can come to him, Jesus again reminds them of how God's kingdom works.

Now read **Mark 10.2-16** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Have you noticed how often Jesus answers a question with another question? He wants his followers to think about relationships as God does. He stresses the importance of taking a different point of view by saying that children – who had no status at all in society – are better able to understand God. What question might you ask Jesus about this?



'Let the children come to me.' **Ask yourself:** Why does it matter that Jesus said this?

LISTEN

Why do people – of any age – fall out and argue? Often it is because we each pull in our own direction, rather than sharing what we have and what we can do. Listen to the song 'On giants' shoulders'. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlpoLqGYv1Y> It speaks of how even a giant can be helped by a small child. Each one of us, of any age or size, has value, which is best revealed when we work together. How can we be more understanding and accepting of each other?



PHOTOS

Get out those old family photo albums of previous generations. Before the days of camera phones and easy access to photography, some families only had photos that were taken at a studio, with painted backgrounds, showing a 'perfect' family. Do the styles and settings of your old pictures say anything about how the role of children in family and society has changed in your lifetime?

HIDE!

What can children do better than adults? Until about 150 years ago in Britain, children were sent up chimneys to clean them, because they were small enough to do the job. Play a game of all-age hide and seek. Why are adults easier to find – it may not be only because of their physical size, but also their lack of imagination!

Blessings



The writer Max Lucado describes a Brazilian tradition where each morning a child asks a parent for a blessing before they go out. It gave him new insight into the importance and power of blessing each other. Adults and children alike need to receive blessing. Lucado offers 31 days of blessings on his website (<https://maxlucado.com/31-days-of-blessing/>). Download and print some or all of these out and cut them up. Within a household you could share them out. Each day, use one of the blessings to bless someone around you.



Remember

Jesus invited children to come to him and he gave them a hug. Not all relationships go so well. When faced with loss, by death or a family breakup, the long-term effect on all involved can be overlooked. In Thame, Oxfordshire, there is a public Youth Memorial, to remember young people who have died. It is alongside the town's war memorial for soldiers. Research online what other commemorative monuments there are to children, either individuals or those who were involved in a historic event. Consider if there is a fair balance of remembrance for all ages.

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

One day, Jesus and his disciples were on a journey. But wherever they went, people seemed to follow them, crowding around to hear Jesus talk. There were some Pharisees in the crowd that day. They wanted to test Jesus, so they asked him a difficult question: 'Is it lawful for a man and woman to divorce?' Jesus was quite clear. He reminded them, 'In the beginning God created man and woman. He created them to be together and to be married for all of their lives. That was God's plan; that is how he would like it to be.'

In the crowd, there were also lots of small children. People were bringing them to Jesus and asking him to bless them. The disciples were not happy – they thought it was a waste of Jesus' time. They tried to stop the people bringing the children. This made Jesus really cross. 'No, don't push these children away! Let them come to me,' he said. 'You must not keep them away. These children are at the centre of God's kingdom.'



'You need to be more like them; to have complete faith and trust in me, just as they do.' Then Jesus gathered the children up in his arms and he blessed them.

Mark 10.2-16

Did you know?

- To be blessed means to receive and be assured of God's favour.
- God's kingdom is not a physical place, but it describes when people recognise God is in charge.

Mark 10.2-16 (NRSV)

Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?' He answered them, 'What did Moses command you?' They said, 'Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her.' But Jesus said to them, 'Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female." "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.'

Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. He said to them, 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.'

People were bringing little children to him in order that he might touch them; and the disciples spoke sternly to them. But when Jesus saw this, he was indignant and said to them, 'Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.' And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them.