

Where have all the children gone?



And they brought young children to Him, that He should touch them: and His disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, He was much displeased, and said unto them, suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them.

Mark 10:13-16

A FOOTNOTE ON CHILDREN

Children are, by nature, ill-mannered. There are two rules for children:

1. No begging at the table.
2. No jumping up on furniture.

Childhood is too short to have it marred by unruly behavior.

A useful aid in the encouragement of proper deportment is the rolled-up newspaper. When struck, it makes a loud sound, which frightens the child without injuring it.

**Your child is
unique—are you
treating him
that way?**

Learning from Children

There they are, reminders of ourselves in playgrounds and Sunday school rooms, in shopping malls and on the street. They are the children we used to be and still are.

What can we learn from them? How can they teach us?

1. **Listen to them.** Listen to the noises they make. Listen to their laughter, to their songs, to their taunts and chants and games.

2. **Watch them.** Watch them hop and skip and jump and move without inhibition. There's music in a child's motions. They dance to a tune we can no longer hear.

3. **Imitate them.** If we are aware of children, we can learn to become like them. We can learn about their openness and honesty, about their lack of fear, their spontaneity. They can teach us to embrace life as they do.

4. **Play with them.** People who work with disturbed children are often amazed at their remarkable ability to bounce back, to put the pain behind them, even if it's just for a moment of skipping in the schoolyard.

5. **Forgive like them.** Children are forgiving. They are willing to let bygones be bygones and to get on with the rest of their lives. They are resilient and flexible. Even damaged children laugh and play with their friends. And all but the most wounded accept trust and friendship over and over in ways that we grownups reject.

When do we stop being children and start acting like adults? When do we lose that ability to let go and to allow our enemies to become our friends? Do we stop at age 13, or 15, or 17? Is that when we begin to become rigid and set in our ways? Is that when we learn to hold grudges and to get revenge on people who have wronged us?

6. **See through their eyes.** It always seems to be children who notice a rainbow first, or a fuzzy caterpillar, or a dewdrop on a leaf in the grass. Children see life and embrace it. They celebrate it, learn from it, and rejoice in it.

Perhaps it is children and not adults who are our real teachers. Listen to them. Watch them. You might be surprised at what you learn. □

*A Baby is God's Opinion
that the world should go on"*

A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE A small child in his attic room was frightened at night by a thunderstorm. After being assured by his mother that God would take care of him, he replied, "Well, you come up here and stay with God. I want to come down and sleep with daddy."