

# Small Group Questions

Small groups and individuals can use these questions to engage the content of Sunday sermons.



April 16 – May 21, 2023

## Children: God's Great Love

God loves children with a parent's passion. We see Jesus encouraging others to value and learn from them. If children are a vital part of God's kingdom, what are our responsibilities as a community to treasure, nurture, influence, teach, and ultimately release them into adulthood?

*"Let the children come to me, and do not stop them, for to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs."*  
– Matthew 19:14

April 16, 2023  
Treasuring Children  
Psalm 139:13-17  
Psalm 127:3 NIV version

### Connect:

Describe a time when you felt treasured as a child.

### Engage:

Read Psalm 139:13-17

1. David attributes the creation of life to God in poetic and mystical terms. How does your understanding of the science of conception inform your reading of this psalm? How does it impact your view of God's role in creation?
2. List all the explicit and implicit affirmations the psalmist makes about human beings. Would you make these affirmations about yourself? Someone you love? Why or why not?
3. How can we help children integrate a more positive view of themselves?

Psalm 127:3 in the NIV version reads: "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him."

4. How might those struggling with infertility find this verse challenging?
5. How are children a gift from God?
6. How do both of these psalms invite us to treasure children?

### Apply

Every child needs to know they are cherished and loved. Each one is created in God's image and God loves them unconditionally. Every child is a blessing from God.

How might you engage with children more fully and positively? What are your prayers for your children, grandchildren, and the children of our church?

### Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.

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April 23, 2023  
Nurturing Children  
Matthew 18:1-6

### Connect:

What would best describe you as a child: a holy angel or a devilish terror?

### Engage:

Read Matthew 18:1-6

1. Why does Jesus use children as an example of discipleship? What point is he trying to make to those who want to elevate themselves? What can children teach us about faith?
2. Jesus likens welcoming a child to welcoming him. What are the implications this kind of kingdom welcome?
3. Jesus gives a dire warning to those who dismiss, hurt, and cause a child to sin. Adults can cause harm to children and youth through sins of commission and sins of omission. Are there actions or attitudes you regret towards children?
4. If you were teaching a class on how to nurture children, what would you include in your course?
5. How can you be more involved in nurturing children? How can we excel in our care of children as a church?

### Apply

We are called to nurture the spirituality of our children and youth. As we engage with them in their spiritual life, we learn about faith from them just as they learn about faith from us.

Ponder our ministries to children and youth. How can you be more supportive of these ministries?

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April 30, 2023  
Influencing Children  
Psalm 78:5-8  
Ephesians 6:4

### Connect:

Describe the most shocking personal example of hypocrisy you have experienced. (no politics please!)

### Engage:

Modeling faith from generation to generation is a mandate for all God-followers. Nothing derails faith more than individuals or churches that don't walk the talk.

Read Psalm 78:5-8

1. While our lives are quite different from those in the ancient world, the bible is full of examples of the failure of one generation to model and teach the faith to the next generation. Share some biblical examples where this happened.
2. What are the risks of not passing the faith to the next generation?
3. Why do you think this happens today? What are the greatest threats to young people embracing faith?

Read Ephesians 6:4

4. What are the most effective and powerful ways to influence children and youth's faith development? What are the barriers?

### Apply

What we say and how we treat people behind closed doors tremendously influence our children. We are called to be kind, compassionate, and servant-oriented leaders in our homes, classrooms, and church.

If you could sum up the most crucial aspect of faith you wish this youngest generation could embrace, what would it be? How do you suggest we bring this aspect of faith to reality in our church?

### Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.

*NOTE: We skip a week for Youth and Confirmation Sunday on May 7. Pray for our youth this week!*

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*NOTE: We skipped a week for Youth and Confirmation Sunday on May 7.*

**May 14, 2023**  
**Teaching Children**  
**Deuteronomy 6:4-7**

### Connect:

Who or what had the most significant impact on your faith development as a child, youth, or adult?

### Engage:

The Jews pray the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) every morning and evening as a call to listen and respond to the affirmation that Yahweh alone is the one true God. The appropriate response is to love God with our entire being. Moses says this commandment is so important that it must be imprinted on our hearts and taught to our children at every opportunity.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-7

1. Jesus says that loving God with your entire being is the greatest commandment. So how do you express that love of God in your life?
2. Why is it important to teach this commandment to children and youth?
3. How does a child's or youth's developmental level impact how you would model or teach this commandment?
4. Share an experience where this commandment was modeled and taught to you.

### Apply

Teaching our children about faith must be a priority. If we don't prioritize Christian values and faith, who will? Our approach must be developmentally appropriate and tailored to the challenges children and youth face.

Our church had created a developmental approach to faith formation for children and youth. What do you know about the 29:11 initiative at church? Take this week to explore how this program teaches the greatest commandment to our children.

### Pray

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May 21, 2023

Releasing Children

Romans 8:38-39

### Connect:

When you graduated from high school or college, were you looking forward to the freedoms the future afforded or anxious?

### Engage:

Read Romans 9:38-39

1. According to this passage, what can separate us from the love of God?
2. So why do you think we often fail to experience this love?
3. When we witness children growing into adulthood, we often attend to their development with a list of anxieties: jobs, life partners, economic stability, etc. How can we convey the message of these verses when young people face life's inevitable challenges? How can these verses increase our faith that God is always present for our adult children?
4. How can we model for our children the resilience and faith that they need? How can we allow them to fail and grow?
5. What role does prayer play?
6. The church family calls us to care for and nurture people of all ages. We often act as surrogate mothers and fathers, aunts and uncles, to those whose families may not be functional. How can we more fully care for the vulnerable among us?

### Apply

As we nurture, influence, and teach our children, there comes the time when we must release them. In this next phase of life, we serve them in an advisory capacity. Support and prayer become our primary duties.

How is God calling you to release and coach the young people in your life? How can you commit to praying for the families who are "launching" their children in this next season?

### Pray

Share joys and concerns and pray for one another, the church, and the world.