

MAKE ROOM FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

LUKE 18:15-17

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE - OCTOBER 18, 2026

SCRIPTURE READING

Luke 18:15-17; Mark 10:13-16

ICE BREAKER QUESTION

Who was an adult who made you feel known and loved when you were growing up? What did that person do that has stayed with you?

SERMON RECAP

People were bringing even infants to Jesus so He might touch them. But the disciples rebuked those bringing the children. The people closest to Jesus were getting in the way of children coming to Jesus. Jesus corrected them: "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them." Mark tells us Jesus was indignant, then took the children into His arms and blessed them. He also used this encounter to teach everyone how to receive the kingdom of God: with childlike dependence.

From this encounter, we learned that:

- **Jesus treasures the children brought to Him.** Their smallness and dependence do not make them less welcome. Children matter to Him now.
- **Jesus confronts those who turn children away.** His followers can become obstacles to the very people He wants to welcome. We need Him to examine our priorities.
- **Jesus calls us to receive His kingdom like a child.** We come needing mercy we cannot earn, trusting the Savior who died for our sins and rose again.
- **His heart should shape our church.** We will treasure the children Jesus treasures, remove barriers and lead the next generation to Jesus, and depend on the Savior we want them to know.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does this passage say?

Read Luke 18:15-17 aloud. Let group members share observations before moving into interpretation or application.

- 1) **Children brought to Jesus (v. 15).** Who is being brought to Jesus, and why? What does Luke's mention of "even infants" help you notice about their dependence?

Observation: What does this passage say? (continued)

- 2) **Resistance and welcome (vv. 15-16).** How do the disciples respond? What does Jesus command them to do? What reason does He give for His command?
- 3) **The heart of Jesus.** Read Mark 10:13-16. What additional details does Mark give about Jesus' emotions and actions? What do His words and actions reveal about His welcome?
- 4) **Receiving the kingdom (v. 17).** Notice the words "whoever" and "receive." To whom does Jesus apply this teaching? What warning does He give?

Interpretation: What does this passage mean?

- 1) **Children matter to Jesus.** These children bring no achievements, influence, or impressive knowledge. What does His welcome reveal about whom He values? How might that challenge the way people measure someone's importance?
- 2) **Followers can become barriers.** The text does not tell us the disciples' motives, but Jesus clearly corrects their actions. What makes it sobering that the resistance came from His own followers? Why do good intentions still need to be examined in light of His words?
- 3) **Childlike dependence.** What does it mean to receive God's kingdom like a child? How is dependence different from assuming children are sinless or that faith means never asking questions?
- 4) **Mercy we cannot earn.** Read Luke 18:9-14, the passage immediately before this encounter. How does the tax collector's prayer help us understand childlike faith? How can knowledge, religious experience, or service become substitutes for depending on Jesus?
- 5) **The Savior we all need.** How do Jesus' death and resurrection provide the forgiveness we cannot earn? How should remembering our own need for His mercy shape the way we welcome children and their families?

Leader note: Keep the passage central. Jesus calls us both to welcome children and to receive His kingdom ourselves. Helping children come to Jesus flows from our own dependence on Him.

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

- 1) **Receive His kingdom.** If you are not a Christian, or you are unsure where you stand with God, what questions do you have about trusting Jesus? Who could you talk with this week?

If you are a Christian, where are you tempted to rely on your spiritual accomplishments or ability to control outcomes? What would childlike dependence look like there this week?

- 2) **Treasure the children Jesus treasures.** Keith described a church where children can say, "They know my name. They're glad I came. They listen when I talk." How closely does that describe your own interactions with children and students? What is one way you could help a young person feel known and loved?
- 3) **Remove barriers.** Keith shared that children's classrooms sometimes have to close or combine because there are not enough Serve Team members. What assumptions, fears, or competing priorities can keep us from helping? Which one do you need to bring honestly before Jesus?
- 4) **Walk beside families.** Parents, what is one step you can take to open Scripture, pray, explain the gospel, or model repentance at home? Whatever your stage of life, how could you support a parent or invest in a child or student, including one whose parents do not know Jesus?
- 5) **Take a step together.** What could our group do to help kids and students follow Jesus for a lifetime? Consider exploring kids ministry opportunities, encouraging current volunteers, or supporting a family. What will you do, and when will you take the first step?

LEADER NOTES

- **Choose questions that serve your group.** Leave time for honest reflection, a specific response, and prayer. Invite participation without requiring anyone to share a sensitive personal story.
- **Keep the next step concrete.** Encourage members to review the kids ministry needs shared on Sunday and use the response form to start a conversation with the team. Honor those already serving and help others consider how they can contribute.
- **Care for vulnerable children and families.** If the sermon's application about unborn children comes up, keep the conversation grounded in human dignity and costly, compassionate care for children, mothers, fathers, and families. Speak tenderly to anyone carrying grief or regret and point them to Jesus' mercy.
- **Close in dependent prayer.** Pray for children and students by name, for parents and Serve Team members, and for families who do not yet know Jesus. Ask God to show us barriers we need to remove and give us willingness to respond. We cannot change a child's heart; we depend on Him.

Two next steps to keep in front of your group:

- **Open House** is MBC's new low-pressure orientation for newcomers. It meets Sunday, October 25, at all locations. Invite a friend you've brought to church, or better yet, go with them.
- **Reach One Labs** is a hands-on training on how to get to know people and help them get to know Jesus. It meets Sunday, November 8, and you can register on your location's website.