



3 - 9 October 2021 Let them come to me

Related Bible reading(s): Mark 10.2-16

Bible study on Mark 10.2-16

This study can be used by a small family/household group, or by an online group, or – sometimes with a little adaptation – by an individual.

See our [Guidelines for a weekly Bible study](#)

Begin with an opening prayer

Lord Jesus, we praise and worship you,
and we look forward to learning more about you
and what you show us about living together as your people.
Help us to respond with our hearts and minds and lives
to your invitation to come and be drawn close to you.

Amen.

Read the passage

Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.

In an online group, you could share parts between those present, or use/adapt this week's Share the Word suggestion: Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to go to Share the Word and scroll down to find the Gospel reading.

Explore and respond to the text

Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.

Bible notes

To most people, this passage in Mark seems difficult. The idea of hell and God's judgement makes us In Mark's Gospel, Jesus frequently appears to be in conflict with various groups and individuals. Often it is people, who – like the Pharisees in this passage – have a clear idea of what God is like and what God wants from people. The problem is that, because they think they know the answer, they stop listening to God. In this case the issue is whether divorce is 'lawful' (v.2). At that time, the belief was that the relationship between God and his creation was fixed by the Law, as given by God through Moses at Sinai. Over time this had been explained and discussed, interpreted and re-interpreted. Yet, Jesus' answer to the Pharisees' question is not what they anticipated. Instead of interpreting (or re-interpreting) the Law, Jesus goes back to creation: what did God want for men and women? The second part (vv.13ff) continues within the domestic context but is about children. Modern understanding of childhood emerged properly only in the 19th century. Traditionally (and it is still true in many places) children, once old enough, worked within the family business. At the same time, because they were children, they had no power, no rights. They were the property of their parents. Children were not important in the power structures. Against this background, Jesus uses children to speak about God. This is radical. Usually God was spoken about in terms of power, might and compassion. In the story, the disciples are vetting Jesus' contacts, and children are unimportant. But Jesus welcomes and receives them. This is not sentimental. It is a statement that no one is unimportant to God. It is also a prick in the pomposity of a society that grades and stratifies. Instead, Jesus challenges those around him not to be self-reliant, or falsely confident about who they are (vv.15-16). Rather, he invites everyone to come to him and to be touched by God.

See also:



The way we live matters

Tim Herbert introduces the readings in this issue, in conversation with Siggy Parratt-Halbert.

Reflection

Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.

In the last few verses of the Gospel passage, Jesus welcomes children who are brought to him despite the disciples' attempts to keep them away. He uses what happened to talk about the kingdom of God belonging to 'such as these'. Does he mean here that it belongs to children, or people whose attitudes are like those of children? And, if the latter, what might those characteristics be? Is the suggestion that our values and inner attitudes are more important than those often regarded as important by society, e.g. age, education, social status? Or is it that, in mentioning first women and then children, Jesus is drawing attention to those so often marginalised in society? Or is it both? And what can we do about it?

Questions for reflection

You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues of sharing.



Click on the image to view a larger version
or use the *Jump menu* to go to *This week's images*.
For artist's details, see [this issue's illustrators](#).

Questions

- Let the children come to me – why does it matter that Jesus said this?
- What does it say about what really matters to God?
- How well do we embody that understanding in our church community life?

A simple activity

Seeing the world the way God does.

You will need: a map of your local area, a map of the world, sticky notes, pens.

- Display the maps on the floor, with plenty of space between so there is room to move around them.
- Invite people to think about who or what matters to God in your local area. Encourage them to think as broadly as possible. Write a few words or draw something on a sticky note to represent whatever comes to mind, and stick it on an appropriate part of the local map.
- Next, invite them to think about who or what matters to God in the world today. Again, write or draw on a sticky note and put it on the world map.
- Use the notes as a prompt to prayer.

Use the Jump to this week's menu *on the right* to go to more activities
in Explore and respond.

Prayer

Adapt to your local context.

A prayer of thanksgiving

Imagine seeing your face in a mirror; then, imagine God smiling at you. Do the same for someone you find it hard to get on with.

Jesus, you just weren't as meek and mild as we might think.
You weren't frightened to speak your mind,
to get people thinking so they could understand better.

We praise you, Lord.

When we are in a spot and struggling to find answers,
you are such a fantastic role model.

We praise you, Lord.

When our hearts are so hard that we almost feel the ice in them,
you melt them, and make us truly human again.

We praise you, Lord.

You call us on to better ways,
to the beauty of a relationship found only in you.

You give us hearts to appreciate you

and each other in so many different ways.

You are a God of abundant riches and blessings.

We praise you, Lord.

Amen.

*Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to find more
prayers,
including up-to-date intercessions.*

A prayer to end the Bible study

Loving Lord, as we leave this place,
knowing that we are valued and loved,
help us to know this so deep in our being
that we live it in our words and actions,
and especially in our openness and welcome to others.
May Jesus' invitation shine through our lives.

Amen.

Go with God 24/7

Encourage everyone to put their faith into action.

Look for opportunities to make others feel welcome and valued
in the community we are in. We may not have the opportunity to
introduce people to Christ, but we always have the opportunity to
be Christ to them!

*Encourage everyone to explore their faith this week with the
ROOTS at home resource .*

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