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Introduction

The great Swiss thinker Karl Barth will long be remembered for his many volumes of careful and complicated theology. Late in his life, when Barth was asked for a simple summary of his theology, he allegedly smiled and responded, “Jesus loves me. This I know. For the Bible tells me so.”

The deepest truths of the Christian faith shine their brightest when they’re presented plainly and simply. Jesus uses mustard seeds, shepherds and housewives, and the simple faith of children as models for life in the kingdom of God.

This sequel to *5-Minute Messages for Children* attempts to follow Jesus’ example by presenting life in the kingdom of God in the most simple and active ways. Rather than requiring children to study the truths of the faith, these messages lead children (and eavesdropping adults) to experience and apply those truths to their lives.



Why Children’s Messages?

Churches and other faith communities that regularly include children’s messages in their worship and teaching hours have found that this brief time spent at eye level with God’s little ones brings immense rewards:

- **Children learn and grow!** Children don’t always learn the same way adults learn. Children’s messages can teach important truths in ways kids understand.
- **Children are affirmed.** By setting aside five or six minutes to speak to our children, we let them know they’re valued. Every children’s message says implicitly, “You know, you kids are pretty important. We think you’re great!”
- **The gospel takes on new meaning.** Children’s messages challenge us to reshape and re-present the “old, old story” in a new package. Even adults will be refreshed.



Tips for Giving Children’s Messages

Be Creative. The messages in this book aren’t meant to be read. They invite creative innovation. Let them serve as catalysts for your own ideas. Don’t be afraid to try new things. The children will forgive your failures and applaud your successes.

Prepare Well. Gather any necessary supplies beforehand and place them within easy reach. Mentally preview the message so you’ll be able to anticipate children’s responses—they may not always give you the answers you expect!

Get Down. Sit on the floor and look the children in the eye. Children’s messages delivered by a

big, standing adult can make children feel like they're being talked down to.

Speak Up. Use a microphone so the whole congregation can hear you.

Use Your Bible. Read the text for each message from your Bible. Encourage children and parents in your congregation to look up the text in their own Bibles at home.

Have Fun. You're sharing the good news! If you're enthusiastic with the children, the rest of the congregation will share in the excitement.

God bless you and your congregation as you embark on your adventure.



3. Umbrella

Theme: God's protection

Bible Text: Let me live in your Holy Tent forever. Let me find safety in the shelter of your wings (Psalm 61:4).

Preparation: You'll need two or three umbrellas. A sound-effects album with recorded rain and thunder would be a nice added touch.

The Message:

If you've brought a sound-effects album, play it as children come up for the message. How many of you remembered your umbrellas the last time it rained? Let children respond. It seems that whenever I go outside, I always forget to take an umbrella. And then if it rains, I get wet. I brought a few umbrellas today to help us think about shelter and protection. Who'd like to put up an umbrella? Pass out the umbrellas.

Let's all get under an umbrella. *Give kids time to huddle under an umbrella.*

Umbrellas are so small and simple. You can put an umbrella in your car or briefcase; you can carry an umbrella to school or out to play. Then if it's raining, you stay nice and dry. Umbrellas come in all shapes and sizes—big ones you take to the beach to stay out of the sun or little ones you carry with you in case it rains.

Read the text. Psalm 61 compares God's care and protection to being under a tent. An umbrella is kind of like a tent you can take with you. No matter how hard it rains, we're warm and safe under God's umbrella. Wherever we go, we know we're protected by the umbrella of God's loving care.

Think of God's love as an umbrella, sheltering you from the storms around you. He'll always keep you safe. *Collect umbrellas.*



4. Baby Pictures

Theme: God's lifelong love

Bible Text: Lord, you are my hope. Lord, I have trusted you since I was young. I have depended on you since I was born; you helped me even on the day of my birth. I will always praise you (Psalm 71:5-6).

Preparation: After getting permission from some children in your congregation, ask their parents to bring one of their baby pictures to church. Bring one of your baby pictures as well. You'll also need two or three hand mirrors.

The Message:

I'm always surprised at how you can recognize people by looking at their baby pictures. I've asked some of the kids here today if it would be all right to show you their baby pictures and to see if you can guess who they are.

I'll show the picture, and you see if you can guess who it is. *Show three or four pictures, including your own. See if kids can guess.*

It's fun to look at our baby pictures and to remember what we were like when we were small. It might also be fun to look in the mirror and see how much you've grown. *Return pictures to their owners and pass around the hand mirrors.*

They didn't have cameras in Bible days, but one Bible writer remembered the time when he was young. Listen. *Read the text.*

When this writer remembers how God has been with him since he was a little baby, he's filled with praise. God has let you grow from little babies into wonderful kids. In just a few years you'll grow into teenagers and then adults. All along the way, God will be with you to love and care for you. We praise God for who you are and for who you will be!



5. Tears

Theme: God's comfort

Bible Text: The Lord God will wipe away every tear from every face (Isaiah 25:8a).

Preparation: You'll need an eyedropper and a small bowl of salt water.

The Message:

Do you ever cry? What makes you cry? When do you cry? *Let children respond.* I know I cry. Sometimes I cry at a sad movie or when I'm leaving someone I love. I also cry if I hurt myself or if someone hurts my feelings.

People cry for many different reasons. If we get something in our eye, tears wash it away. If we're hurt or sad, tears help ease the pain. If we miss something or someone, sometimes crying helps us feel better.

Jesus cried when he was sad, and he comforted his friends when they were sad. Tears are good for us, and we can cry when we're sad because we know God will take away our tears.

Listen to what the Bible says. *Read the text.* When the people of Israel were far from their homes, they cried because they missed their country and their families. But God promised that they'd soon go home. Then they'd be happy again. God would wipe the tears away.

God wants us to be happy. That's why he sent Jesus to die on the cross for us. But God also knows there are things that make us sad. When we're sad, tears can help ease the pain. Don't be afraid to cry. Even Jesus cried. But remember, God will always be there to wipe the tears away.

I would like to give each one of you a tear today. Not a real tear, but a reminder that God will wipe your tears away.

As the children leave, place a saltwater "tear" on each child's cheek with the eyedropper.