

## **R U Kidding? Become Like a Child?** *Matthew 18:1-9*

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I think of Oliver, three-years old, awake with the sun, eager to take on the day. Fully present in life, fully expressing joy, not afraid to tell someone they hurt him. Loves to come up with plans and dreams that have no bounds. And his love, it's not conditional, it knows no limits. He's all in. When he loves you, he loves you.

Over the course of this new sermon series, we're going to ask you to become like a child. We'll discuss some of these things you might have learned in kindergarten.

1. Share everything.
2. Play fair.
3. Don't hit people.
4. Put things back where you found them.
5. CLEAN UP YOUR OWN MESS.
6. Don't take things that aren't yours.
7. Say you're SORRY when you HURT somebody.
8. Wash your hands before you eat.
9. Flush.
10. Warm cookies and cold milk are good for you.
11. Live a balanced life - learn some and drink some and draw some and paint some and sing and dance and play and work everyday some.
12. Take a nap every afternoon.
13. When you go out into the world, watch out for traffic, hold hands, and stick together.
14. Be aware of wonder. Remember the little seed in the Styrofoam cup: The roots go down and the plant goes up and nobody really knows how or why, but we are all like that.
15. Goldfish and hamster and white mice and even the little seed in the Styrofoam cup - they all die. So do we.
16. And then remember the Dick-and-Jane books and the first word you learned - the biggest word of all - LOOK."

And as with most things in life, we'll learn how going back to basics can help us develop good habits and healthy relationships. But we'll also be

asking the question, are you kidding? You want me to....?! Are you kidding? We don't do things like that, we're adults. Well humor me for a moment.

I'm going to do something very dangerous for a sermon, I'm going to I invite you to close your eyes, take in a deep breath, and as you breathe gently out and in, I want you to imagine yourself as a child again. ...It makes you smile, doesn't it?

You can open your eyes, nudge your neighbor if they've fallen asleep. When you imagined yourself as a child, what were you doing? Were you playing? Sitting or standing? Were you shy? Were you surrounded by friends? Were you laughing?

Children are innocent, they're trusting. A child believes without complication. A child has not had time to allow the preconceived notions of the world to form the decision-making process. A child receives with joy, forgetting themselves with light-hearted abandonment. A child is humble. A child is content in the little things. A child has the faith to move mountains. A child is awed by majestic splendor. A child takes to heart God's Word in all its simplicity and wants to hear the stories over and over again.

Kids are

- **Curiosity.** ...
- Social Skills. ...basic
- **Resilience.** ...
- **Integrity.** ...
- **Resourcefulness.** ...
- **Creativity.** ...
- **Empathy.** ...
- **Assertiveness.**
- Humility
- Confidence

A little kid doesn't care what brand of clothing you are wearing, what degrees you have, your job title or placement. Kids don't see you for the achievements or failures you've experienced. Yet they know if you love them? What? Are you kidding?

Back to basics.

I'm convinced there's an argument for everything we needed to know, we learned in kindergarten. These basics can take us far. That's bc we all stem from having the same feelings, emotions, and needs. It's why songs, movies, tv characters, stick with us.

Just listen to some of our popular tv show theme songs.

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Barney, loves you and you love me, we're a happy family, with a great big hug and a kiss from me to you, won't you say you love me too.

Mr. Roger's, has always wanted to live in a neighborhood with you. So let's make the most of this beautiful day, since we're together, I might as well say, won't you please, please, won't you please, oh won't you be, my neighbor...

It don't stop with kid shows,

Friends, "I'll be there for you."

Three's Company, even invites you to knock on their door,

Golden Girls, Thanks you for being a friend.

Cheers, is where everybody knows your name,

We want love. We want to be accepted without anyone looking at clothing labels, job titles, or home size. We want people to love freely as kids do. And we want to be able to love freely too.

Yesterday I saw one of our teens at Fareway. She was working, so I was brief. And when she turned around she said, Love you, Marti. Out loud in public. Why? It's not that I'm the best pastor ever. It's not. It's bc Every time we close a youth group gathering, I tell them I love them. Sometimes I yell it at them as they're running toward the door. But I say it to them as a group. But I also say it to them individually. To some it might mean nothing. To others, it might mean the world.

Now you don't have to go around telling everyone you meet you love them. You can, that would be awesome. But saying and showing actions of love are pretty powerful.

As summer was starting I listened to someone tell me why they went to the church they did. It wasn't bc it was the biggest in town. It wasn't for the sermon or the music, all of which are lovely. It was bc the pastor gave that person a hug as they left each week. It's the only hug that person receives in a week. It's why if you've noticed, I've started giving more hugs. I want you to know beyond any inkling of doubt that you are loved. God loves you. And I'm not kidding.