

**Reflection for Children's Sunday**  
**November 14, 2021**

**How Precious are the Children?**  
**Psalm 17: 8-9; Matthew 18:1-5 (International Bible for Children)**

This morning, I would like to invite the children present with us this Sunday to join me here at the front. I asked a favour from them earlier to help me share a story with everyone today.

When I was a little child, one of my favourite games to play with my siblings and playmates was hide and seek. It had always been fun finding unusual places in the house to hide; (*slide*) for example inside the closet, behind doors, even in big boxes. We also play outdoors, and we especially loved it on those nights when the moon is bright, but it is still hard to see and seek those who are hiding. Some of us climb and hide up in the trees, although I can not climb trees myself, so that is a disadvantage for me. Many hide in the back alleys, under the benches, behind tall bushes and fences. It was so much fun. And when it is time to come inside, our parents would yell out our names, we listen to them and are happy to say to the other children, "Let's do it again tomorrow!" That was such a joyful childhood memory for me. I know that you (children) love playing hide and seek, too. What is your favourite place to hide in?

In our story with the title "*The Village with No Children*" from the Whole People of God curriculum that we use in Sunday School, I wonder if the kids played hide and

seek. Did they have so much fun hiding and decided not to come back to their homes afterwards? Let us listen to find out.

Once upon a time there was a village where the children were not liked very much (*slide*). Oh, they were fed and had a place to sleep and clothes to wear – at least, most of them did – but for the most part, they were considered a nuisance or children who are annoying and just causing trouble. They were told to be quiet, and sit still, and not get their clothes dirty, and not be silly, and not ask questions, and speak only when spoken to. There were no story times, cookies or treats, or long walks in the woods or in the park, no hugs, or “I-love-yous.” In spite of this, they were expected to be perfectly polite and obedient and cheerful all the time. As you might expect, the children were not very happy at all.

One day a visitor came to the village. He was a singer and he loved children. (*slide*). They sang and played together all day long. It was so much fun. When it was time for the singer to leave they didn't want to let him go. They had a meeting and told him all their problems. After hearing all about it, the singer said, “Hmmm, why don't you just disappear for a while?” They huddled together and the singer told them how to disappear (*slide*). (*Whisper to the children for them to go and hide from view when you nod your head.*) Sure enough, the next day the children disappeared (*nod for them to hide*) and the villagers awoke to find no children in the village at all! The people were worried and upset, of course, and they looked and looked, but couldn't find the children anywhere!

As the day wore on, the people in the village began to realize how different things were without the children. The villagers suddenly realized how precious their children were. They all gathered together to say a prayer. “Dear God,” they cried, “Please, let our children return to us. We miss them so much. We had no idea they were feeling so badly. We promise to love them and appreciate them and learn from them and spend time with them and make sure they never feel unwanted again. Please keep them safe and bring them back to us.” Somehow the children heard the prayers of the villagers, and they did return (*motion for the children to come out of hiding*). There was great joy in the village that day! Everyone felt like singing, and so they sang one of the songs that the Singer had taught them.

In the story that we just heard, the children disappeared for a while. What if in reality, children like you would disappear in the world? What would happen to us grown-ups? I asked our Sunday School families, especially the parents, how different things would be without children? Sarah Allin shared her thoughts saying that (*slide*), “Without kids, the world will be quieter and probably calmer but also, darker, lonelier and boring.”

To the other adults who are with us today, I put a piece of paper and marker on random pews where you might be seated. We would like to know what your thoughts would be of how different our world can be without children? You may answer with one or two words if possible. When you are ready you may raise it up so the kids and myself could go around to read what you have written and collect them as well.

Thank you, children, for helping me.

In our scripture reading from the book of Psalms chapter 17 in verse 8, it says,

*Keep me as the apple of your eye;*

*hide me in the shadow of your wings.*

“Apple of your eye” is a phrase that originated from the Bible and we use it to mean that we cherish someone above all others. They are someone we love greatly. The apple of our eye is a person we protect and shield from danger and abuse. We deeply care about them and we look for ways to favor and bless them. The children have always been the apple of Jesus' eyes. They are important to Jesus. (slide) In Matthew 18: 1-5, the little ones are the greatest in God's realm according to him, and unless we become humble like them, we can never belong in God's presence. What a wonderful world it is to see that all the children are treated well and cared for. That all of us consider them as the apple of our eyes, loved and protected at all times.

Sadly, the truth is, in our community, our country and around the world; children experience abuse and neglect from adults for centuries up to the present time. The mistreatment that they had to endure damages their whole being and immensely affects their development as they grow up and become adults themselves. Many of them make wrong choices in life, for once they were lonely, abused, and neglected children. Some have never experienced love and care from the people who had raised them, so they are not capable of giving those to others as well, even to their offsprings later on.

We have the responsibility to continue to recognize and pay attention to the call to “hide children in the shadow of God’s wings”, keep them safe, nurture them lovingly, and support them with their various needs.

Our children deserve “*story times, cookies and treats, long walks and happy conversations, a lot of hugs, and “I-love-yous.”*” May we find time to sing and play with them. They are precious, the villages and the world will be:

*(Thoughts the congregation had written down)*

- Not as much fun, not any fun
- The best thing that ever happened to me was having children
- Without children, it would be lonely, the world would be dying
- Sad and boring
- Quieter
- Lonely
- Without hope or future

without them.

### Works Cited

The Whole People of God: Sunday School Curriculum, Worship Resources. *The Village With No Children*. November 2021