

What Every Child Wants to Hear



A couple of weeks ago I taught a group of 5-8 year olds about the [Baptism of Jesus](#).

In the days leading up to the lesson I contemplated [Matthew 3:13-17](#) and asked myself how the event might be viewed from a child's perspective. What is it about this part of God's Word that "makes sense" to a child? What is it about the baptism of Jesus that helps a child relate to God?

And then it struck me. It was not just "God's Word" in a general sense that was impacting. It was, quite literally, God's words. Words spoken directly from heaven and in relation to his son. Words of approval. Words of affirmation for a good choice made.

Words from a proud father claiming a son as his own and expressing love for him. These are the words every child wants to hear.

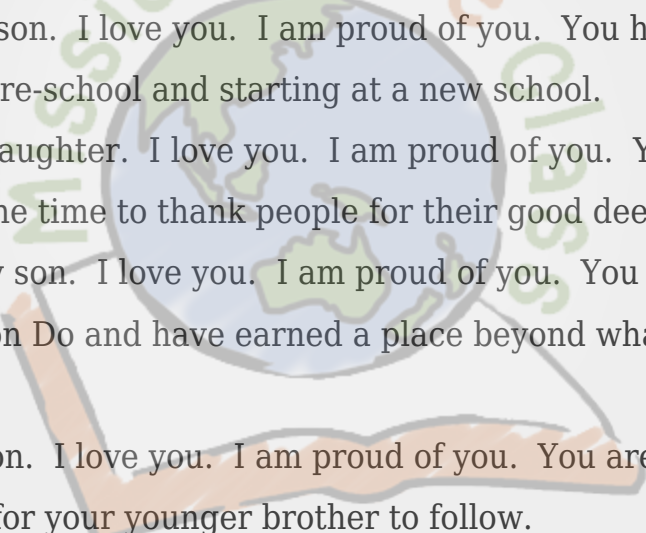
Unlike the crowds flocking to hear John's preaching, Jesus was not baptised because he had done something wrong. Jesus was baptised because he wanted to do everything that was right. God responded immediately...

And a voice spoke from heaven. The voice said, "This is my Son and I

love him. I am very pleased with him.” Matthew 3:17 (ICB)

As for the children in my class, they related perfectly to Jesus at that moment. They understood how much this declaration must have meant to Jesus.

After we talked about how proud God was of Jesus I took the lesson to the next level. The children were not aware that I had previously collected words of affirmation from their own parents. You could have heard a pin drop as, one by one, I read these messages aloud to the class. Tears came to my eyes as I watched the way the children hung on each word.

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- Ezekiel, you are my son. I love you. I am proud of you. You have been very brave about leaving your pre-school and starting at a new school.
 - Mylah, you are my daughter. I love you. I am proud of you. You are always so kind to people and take the time to thank people for their good deeds.
 - Gurshan, you are my son. I love you. I am proud of you. You have practiced faithfully in Tae Kwon Do and have earned a place beyond what is usual for your age group.
 - Caleb, you are my son. I love you. I am proud of you. You are a good big brother and set an example for your younger brother to follow.

I use the term “God’s Word” quite often because I believe the Bible to be inspired by God. In sharing lessons from the Bible I am imparting truths from God. However, in the story of the [the Baptism of Jesus](#), the literal words spoken by God were the ones most profoundly impacting on each child.

Just like the children, don’t we also crave these words from our father? Through Christ, I want to make God proud. I want him to say, “Mary, you are my daughter. I love you. I am very pleased with you.”

This is what every child wants to hear.

QUOTATION ABOVE FROM THE [INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BIBLE \(ICB\)](#)
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