

What Bothers Jesus?



What bothers Jesus? His earliest disciples thought they knew.

"Some people brought their children to Jesus so that he could bless them by placing his hands on them. But his disciples told the people to stop bothering him.

When Jesus saw this, he became angry and said, "Let the children come to me! Don't try to stop them. People who are like these little children belong to the kingdom of God. I promise you that you cannot get into God's kingdom, unless you accept it the way a child does."

Then Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them by placing his hands on them."
Mark 10:13-16 Contemporary English Version (CEV)

The disciples thought that these children would bother Jesus but it seems very clear that the disciples themselves, the adults in this situation, were the real bother. In fact, their judgement on children led to one of the few times in Scripture when Jesus was recorded as being angry. The New International Version uses the word "indignant".

So why is Jesus not bothered by children? After all, children are wiggly and curious and lacking in inhibition. If we are honest, we have to say they are often inconvenient to have around. They slow us down, exhaust us and generally cause havoc in what we like to call our "perfectly organised lives".

Children force us to reorganise our priorities. Schedules are worked around nap times and curfews. Holidays are planned based on how "child friendly" the activities and accommodations are. Having a couple of children enrolled in sporting activities or music lessons means a couple's once-spontaneous social life becomes a series of intricately planned and often postponed events.

And if that was not enough, they don't seem to really care when we are doing the "important stuff" at church. They are obviously not impressed by long sermons or deep discussions about spiritual matters. They don't seem to worry about the things we worry about. They choose action over contemplation almost every time.

If children are such a bother then why was Jesus indignant that the disciples would turn them away? Jesus points out that the disciples were turning away the very examples they needed to learn how to enter the kingdom of God. Ultimately, the disciples were the ones missing out.

Children in our communities, families and churches inspire us to act more like adults than we sometimes feel like acting. The inconvenience they bring produces patience. Examining priorities helps us maintain focus. And practising an active faith makes us useful. To keep children safe we plan better. To secure their future we work harder. To help them engage we adapt and change.

Most of all, like the disciples, we adults are sometimes satisfied with walking alongside and talking about Jesus. Children on the other hand want to touch him and be embraced by him.

May we learn from the example of the young ones among us. This does not bother him at all.

[Click here for for help in teaching the Bible lesson: *Jesus Blesses the Children*.](#)

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