

# Meeting Jesus

## Children

### Foundation

#### Bible passage : Mark 9.33-37 & 10.13-16

In both of these incidents Jesus not only welcomed children but told his disciples to do likewise, and used children to illustrate the true nature of saving faith. Both incidents also show the disciples in a bad light; the Bible tells things as they are and doesn't try to hide the failings of those who would be important people in the early church.

In the first incident the disciples had been arguing on the road to Capernaum about which of them was the greatest! In response Jesus told them that to be first they must be servant of all. These were not empty words because later Jesus would say "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mk 10.44-45). Jesus' life, and death, demonstrated what He was teaching others.

To illustrate the point Jesus took a child, presumably one of the family whose house they were in, and put the child in the middle of the group. He then told them that to receive one such child in His name is to receive Him, and indeed to receive the Father. He was speaking to those He had appointed to be leaders. Some would become famous with churches, schools, cities and more named after them. But they would show their true faith not by exalting themselves but by receiving children.

Sadly there are Christian leaders who see themselves above such things. But even leaders with important and busy lives must never think of themselves as above the example of their Master.



*From the Jesus film which is based on the Gospel of Luke. Luke does not mention the incident being in a house.*

The second incident took place much further south, and some time later. Jesus had been teaching, had drawn crowds (10.1) and then went indoors. But people were bringing their children in to the house in the hope that Jesus would touch them. The disciples may have just been concerned that Jesus needed rest, but the impression from what follows is that they just didn't think someone as important as Jesus would want to be bothered with children.

Jesus rebuked the disciples again, and told them to let the children go to Him. But then he added that to such belongs the kingdom of God. He went on to say that to receive the kingdom we must receive it like a child. This would have been quite shocking because the disciples, like many today, would imagine that we receive the kingdom by what we do. But saving faith is about accepting Jesus and what He has done, and so trusting in Him, not in ourselves. It is not that children are pure and spotless, they are not, but they have a simple trust in their parents, dependent on them.

**"Let the children come to me..."**



**Jesus taught His disciples to welcome children in humility and also to learn about faith from their simple trust.**