

Meditation 3.18.20: Children-Luke 18:16-17

[Jesus said] "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter into it." Luke 18:16-17

This is a stressful time, and we may wonder how to help our children cope with this never-before-seen crisis. The CDC has offered some guidelines, and I would like to add some thoughts about their spiritual lives.

CDC recommendations for talking to children:

- Remain calm and reassuring. Your children will react to what you say and how you say it. They will pick up their cues from you.
- Make yourself available to listen and to talk. Children need to know they can come to you and you will fully listen and address questions or concerns.
- Avoid language that might blame others and lead to stigma. The virus can make anyone sick.
- Pay attention to what children see or hear on the media. Information that is graphic or in too much volume can lead to anxiety.
- Provide information that is honest and accurate. Offer it in age appropriate language. Let kids know that everything they hear or are told may not be correct.
- Teach children everyday actions to reduce the spread of germs.

I would encourage you to invite your child's spirituality to the forefront. Children can have a very rich spiritual life. Introduce them to prayer (teach them a short prayer they can memorize, but also let them know they can just talk to Jesus like they're talking to another person.) Perhaps set up a prayer corner/retreat area for them. You might ask them to draw a picture of Jesus and frame it for their corner, provide or make a cross that they can pick up and hold, add a Children's Bible for them to look through (the more pictures, the better). Get creative here, using symbolism that connects with your child.

Jesus knew that children approach God without pretense and with honesty. In fact, he invited us to follow their example. You might spend time with them in their prayer corner, but also let them know that they can go there alone when they want to. Ritual is meaningful to a child. They may want to call and talk to a spiritual mentor, like a Sunday School teacher or grandparent. Also, if they want to talk with a pastor, I would consider it an honor to share conversation with them. Let them know that phone calls are welcome.

My song for today is one we all can sing: "Jesus Love Me, This I Know."

May the Lord bless you and keep you.

Pastor Laura