

You be you — Christian ed at home

Adapted from an article by JOELLE BRUMMIT-YALE in the Presbyterian Outlook



Scripture: Mark 6:1-13

Materials for optional “Me board”: blank paper, crayons or markers, old magazines or newspapers, scissors and glue

Developing a sense of self is an important part of growing up. But it’s not always easy and it doesn’t happen quickly! Over time, children begin to understand who they are and who they aren’t. They come to know what is important to them, even if their beliefs are different from those around them. Those moments when they are up against peer pressure are difficult. As parents, we want our children to face these situations with confidence, knowing who and whose they are.

Jesus’ charge to his disciples gives us the opportunity to talk about these very challenges. As Jesus arrives home to Nazareth, his ministry is questioned by the townspeople. He uses this moment to explain to his disciples that they too may face rejection. However, they should remain steadfast in their purpose.

Introduce

Begin the time with your children by asking each person to share something they like that most others do not.

- For example, you might share that you like being outdoors when the weather is particularly hot, even though many people would rather stay indoors.

After each of you has shared, ask the group to name something they don't like that others tend to like.

- Note that we are all made differently. We have different likes and dislikes. We have different talents and skills. These make us who we are.
- No one interest is better than another. They're simply different!

Prepare

Prepare to read aloud Mark 6:1-13. Share with your children that this story takes place after a very busy period in Jesus' ministry.

- He and his disciples have traveled around teaching and healing people.
- Many have gathered to hear what Jesus has to say and to experience his healing ministry.
- Now Jesus and his disciples return to his hometown of Nazareth.

Read

Read the Scripture aloud in two "chunks" — pausing after each to discuss the story with your children.

First read verses 1-6.

- After reading, ask your children to describe how the townspeople who heard Jesus teaching in the synagogue reacted to his teaching. Is this the same or different than how those hearing him teach in other towns responded?
- Does their reaction fit how you would expect people to act when Jesus speaks?
- Note that the community that Jesus grew up in cannot believe he speaks with the same type of wisdom and authority as the other teachers in the synagogue.
- The Jesus they knew was not trained to teach people about the Scriptures, something that was required to serve in this role in that time period. He cannot possibly be believed or trusted, so they are offended by his teaching.
- This is very different than the reception he has in other towns. People flock to him to learn from him and to be healed.
- Jesus is amazed that the people he knew for so long do not trust him.

Continue reading verses 7-13. Tell your children that Jesus is giving the disciples directions for what they should do when they leave Nazareth.

- Ask them to share what Jesus tells the disciples to do.
- Note that he tells them to travel in pairs, healing and teaching people they encounter.
- Each pair is to go empty handed, with no food or money.

- They should stay anywhere they are welcome, but if they come to place where people do not want them to be, they should move on.
- Encourage your children to wonder why Jesus would give these unusual directions. Why shouldn't they take any supplies with them? And more importantly, why should they leave places where people do not want to hear their message?

Wonder

Finally, connect Jesus' and the disciples' experiences to your children's lives.

- Share that both of these stories show people experiencing rejection.
- Jesus is very sure about who he is. He is God's beloved son and he has been called to share God's good news with the world.
- He gives his disciples the ability to do the same on God's behalf. However, the task isn't easy. Jesus faces pushback from the very community that raised him. And the disciples will likely experience the same.
- Jesus' advice to them is not to change who they are or to force others to be like them. He tells them to be who they are and to move on.

Do

You can help your children see the connection to their own lives in a few different ways. Choose one (or more) that best fit your children's life experiences and their ages:

- 1) Role play situations where someone would be faced with either rejection or pushback because of their beliefs or their differences. Choose experiences that your child might face in her own life. After completing each role play, discuss the experience. What did it feel like to be different than others? What did it feel like to have others reject or question your beliefs? How can you react when this happens? What can you draw from the Scripture reading that can help you in these moments?
- 2) Discuss real-life experiences where your child has experienced rejection because of who she is. Reflect on how she reacted in those moments. Discuss how that response made her feel. Talk about what would have happened if she had reacted differently.
- 3) Have your child create a "me board." Gather blank paper, crayons or markers, old magazines or newspapers, scissors and glue. Ask the child to write his name in the middle of the paper. Then, have him cut out pictures from the magazines that represent parts of his personality. Encourage him to choose images that reflect who he is. Ask him to glue these images

around his name. Alternately, your child can draw his own pictures or write words in the space around his name. When the piece is completed, discuss how each of the images or words makes your child the person he is.



JOELLE BRUMMIT-YALE is the director of children's and youth ministries at Chapel in the Pines Presbyterian in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. When not at the church, she can usually be found at home with her son and husband caring for their many animals and developing their family homestead.

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