

## Faith in S.T.A.G.E.S. – Starting Out (0-12yrs old) Mark 10:13-16

Today we start a new sermon series titled – Faith in S.T.A.G.E.S. Over the next 6 weeks we will be talking about what it looks like to grow in faith throughout all the different stages of our lives!

S – Starting out (0-12 yrs old)

T – Teens and Tweens (13-17 yrs old)

A – Adulthood (18-24 yrs old)

G – Growing in Numbers (25-49 yrs old)

E – Empty Nesting (50-64 yrs old)

S – Sunsetting Years (65+ yrs old)

We will address questions like... Are we ever too young for the things of faith? Too old to be growing & contributing? Is any stage exempt? ...

Today we will look at the “Starting Out” stage... It’s true that our Christian faith is confessional! We confess belief... We proclaim certain truths... We live in response... How do children ages 0-12 fit this description of the faith?

Faith is a gift of God! It is something given... to be received... passed down through covenant promises... & displayed through covenant obedience...

Yes, children up to a certain point are incapable of the understanding of & application of the faith... However, the status of God’s people as a people of faith, has always been more about God’s work than our own...

This is why we baptize children & declare them part of the visible Church... This is why we are intentional about connecting our young people to Christ & the Church... They are children of God’s covenantal promise... H.C. #74

When we look at the youngest children in our church what do we see? Nuisance... Distraction... Less importance... OR Priority... Privilege... Future...

In **Mark 10:13-16** – Jesus makes it clear His thoughts about young children...  
- These parents were looking for a blessing (God’s blessing) on their kids!  
- The disciples were looking to try to remove distractions!

But Jesus rebukes His disciples, affirms these parents, & gives His blessing to these children by extending God’s Kingdom to them!

He says, “Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.” Jesus spotlights the faith of a child!

What is it about children that makes them naturally attracted to Jesus?  
What does it mean to have a child-like faith? \_\_\_\_\_

What can we do as adults, as a church, to help our kids “come to Jesus” as they are “Starting Out” (ages 0-12) in the faith?

- VBS
- Baptism – A sign and seal of faith given by God to His people
- Church engagement – bring them, invite them, engage them
- Nursery care... the Cry Room... the back tables
- Sunday School – age-appropriate teaching & learning for kids
- Bible reading at home, daily/weekly devotions – **2 Timothy 3:15**
- A free Bible for every 3<sup>rd</sup> grader here at BRC – **Deuteronomy 11:18-19**
- Sacraments class (providing definition & greater participation in the faith)
- Serving opportunities that can be engaged in together with children
- Giving towards a cause together – Brian, our Compassion child.
- A pastor with candy
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Why did Jesus add the statement “(You) do not hinder them...”? Are there things that we as adults do that can/do hinder children from coming to Jesus?

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What can we do as adults, as a church, to not be guilty of hindering the faith development of the youngest, and most impressionable, among us?

- Change the way we see them... They take priority, not the back seat!
- They need us to lead them to Jesus, not away from Him! - **Proverbs 22:6**
- They need to see in us, & hear from us, what faith is! – **Colossians 3:21**
- We must not get lost in our stages of life & neglect this stage in theirs!

No matter the stage of life we are in, children matter to God, & they need to matter to us as well. There is much that we can do to help, & not hinder, their faith journey... & there’s also much we can learn from their faith too!

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S – \_\_\_\_\_ (65+ yrs old)

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When we look at the youngest children in our church what do we see?

\_\_\_\_\_ ... *OR* \_\_\_\_\_

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