

## *Preaching With Children – Key Points*

It was great to be with you to talk about preaching with children! Here is a summary handout to help recall the key points I tried to make in the session:

### *Key Things Preachers Should Know About Children*

- 1) Children are small
- 2) Children are essential
- 3) Children want reality
- 4) Children ask big questions
- 5) Children have the capacity to delve into these mysteries
- 6) Children possess absorbent minds before they have reasoning minds
- 7) Children are attracted to the beautiful
- 8) Children need order

When child’s physical needs are met = growth

When child’s spiritual needs are met = joy

### *Key Themes in the Scriptural Texts/Themes that Children are Drawn Toward (Based on Observations of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Movement)*

	<i>Core themes for the 3-6 year old child</i>	<i>Core themes of the 6-9 year old child include all of the 3-6 themes, plus...</i>	<i>Core themes of the 9-12 year old child include all of the 3-6 and 6-9 themes, plus...</i>
From Scripture	Incarnation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A few simple messianic prophecy phrases, mostly from Isaiah</li> <li>- Annunciation to Mary</li> <li>- Nativity and Adoration of the Shepherds</li> <li>- Visitation to Elizabeth</li> <li>- Adoration of the Magi</li> <li>- Presentation in the Temple</li> </ul> Kingdom of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parable of the Mustard Seed</li> <li>- Of the Precious Pearl</li> <li>- Of the Leaven</li> <li>- Of the Hidden Treasure</li> <li>- Of the Seed that Grows Mysteriously</li> </ul> Paschal Mystery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parable of the Grain of Wheat</li> <li>- Last Supper</li> <li>- The Discovery of the Empty Tomb</li> </ul> Who Is Jesus? Who are we? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parable of the Good Shepherd</li> <li>- Of the Found Sheep</li> <li>- Psalm 23</li> </ul>	Incarnation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional prophecy phrases, mostly from Isaiah</li> <li>- The Flight into Egypt</li> </ul> Kingdom of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parable of the Good Samaritan</li> <li>- Of the Insistent Friend</li> <li>- Of the Pharisee &amp; the Tax Collector</li> <li>- Of the Sower &amp; the Seed</li> <li>- Of the 10 Bridesmaids</li> <li>- The “Parousia” as the fullness of the Kingdom</li> <li>- The Our Father</li> <li>- Maxims from the “Sermon on the Mount”</li> </ul> Paschal Mystery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Core passages from the Passion Narratives</li> <li>- Core passages from the Resurrection Narratives up to Pentecost</li> </ul> Who Is Jesus? Who are We? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Parable of the True Vine</li> <li>- Of the Found Coin</li> <li>- Of the Forgiving Father</li> <li>- Psalm 8</li> </ul>	Incarnation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional prophecy phrases from the Hebrew Scriptures</li> <li>- The Finding in the Temple</li> </ul> Kingdom of God <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Miracles as signs of the Parousia</li> <li>- Parable of the Wedding Feast</li> <li>- Of the Debtors</li> <li>- Of the Talents</li> <li>- Of the Workers in the Vineyard</li> <li>- Additional Maxims from the “Sermon on the Mount”</li> </ul> Paschal Mystery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Additional passages from the Passion and Resurrection Narratives up to Pentecost</li> </ul> What was the history of Jesus’ people? What were the stories he would have treasured? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Stories of Creation and Sin</li> <li>- Story of Noah and the Flood</li> <li>- Abraham</li> <li>- Moses &amp; the Exodus</li> <li>- The life and struggles of the prophet Jeremiah</li> </ul>
From Liturgical Life	Baptism Eucharist	Reconciliation	Confirmation Psalms and canticles from the Liturgy of the Hours

### *Tips for Preachers*

- Most of your work happens before you get into the pulpit – prepare intentionally
- Choose a text to focus on – if not using lectionary, could tell you which ones resonate best with children at what age. If using lectionary: preference for gospels and then probably the psalms (Old Testament stories best reserved to after the age of 9)
- Do not pick more than one text. Typology doesn't work before age of 9
- Look at text thru children's eyes\* (see below)
- Arrive at single message you could summarize in 30 words or less and that has substance to it
- Consider how to best communicate your message
- Be intentional in your choice to use story or humor because it sticks
- Count your words
- Leave them wondering
- Aim to speak like you talk, without notes
- Avoid "latinates" / avoid cute and diminutive language – give credibility to children ("You already know....")
- Consider your "performance" – where are you going to be in space and at what level? What will distract from the word and focus on you?

### *\*Questions that Can Help Reflect on a Text Through Children's Eyes*

- Are there any ways in which this text highlights God's preference for the small and the weak, doing great things where no one would expect it?
- Are there any characters in this text that, as an adult, I might overlook, but could be important from the eyes of a child? Does anyone say "yes" in this story to being a "servant of the Lord"?
- Does this text address any of the core human mysteries that children are wrestling with? Does it orient us in any way to the reality of relationship? Of life and death? Of time?
- Is there a particularly beautiful turn of phrase or rich language that would pique a child's ear?
- Where does this story fall in the "metanarrative" of scripture? What role does it play in the grand scheme of the history of the Kingdom of God? Does it have resonances with any other episode in this great history?
- If you were to "tag" this text in relation to one of the organizing themes in children's understanding of the history of the Kingdom, what potential links do you see? #Creation? #Servants of God? #Jesus? #Parousia? #Baptism? #Eucharist?

For more information about Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, see: [www.cgsusa.org](http://www.cgsusa.org)

For more information about Ann's upcoming book *Preaching with Children*, see Liturgy Training Publications ([www.ltp.org](http://www.ltp.org)) The book is due out early in 2022.

To regularly hear Ann's preaching, subscribe to her newsletter at [www.anngarrido.com](http://www.anngarrido.com)