

Word One Bible Study

I Won't be a Child Forever

by Mark Barz

Text: 1 John 3:1-7 for the Third Sunday of Easter, Lectionary Series B

OBJECTIVE

Participants will affirm and rejoice at their present identity as a child of God and long for what is yet to come.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Bibles

Pictures of youth

"When I'm Sixty-Four" (on CD or iPod)

Parents with a newborn baby

GROUP GUIDELINES

Divide the larger group into smaller groups of 3-4 people. The leader will be the person born closest to the Alamo—which happens to be in San Antonio.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

1. Ask each youth to bring in a closed envelope a picture of him/her when she/he was a year old or less.
2. Collect these without the youth showing them to each other. In the large group, each person choose an envelope (not his/her own), open it and guess who the child/youth is.
3. Play The Beatles' "When I'm Sixty-Four." (You'll find it on *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*.)
4. Have you ever wondered what you're going to look like when you're the same age as your parents? Will you have wrinkles, gray hair, a receding hairline? Will you still have pimples?
5. Did you ever have a grandmother or a great aunt come up to you, squeal in delight, tweak your cheek, and say, "Why, I haven't seen you in ages. My how you've grown!" How did that make you feel?
6. What are three things you can do now that you couldn't do ten years ago?

LOOKING AT GOD'S WORD

Have one person in each group read today's Scripture verses. Discuss the following questions:

1. Is being a child a privilege or a burden? Do you like being called a child. . .when you're a teenager or a young adult? What does this imply about you?
2. What about being a child of God? Read Mark 10:13-16, Galatians 4:6-7, and Romans 8:15-17. How do these verses help you see your identity from a new perspective?
3. Why doesn't the world know who/what we are? Should we expect the world to recognize us?
4. Who else didn't the world recognize and receive? (John 1:10, 11)
5. Read Mark 13:32-37 and 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18. When will Christ appear/return? How will this appearing be like Easter morning? How will it be different?
6. Read 1 Corinthians 13:10-12 and 1 Corinthians 15:50-54. What will we be like when Christ appears?
7. Read Revelation 21:1-4 and 21:22-23 and 22:4,5. How will this new relationship be different than the one we now have by faith?

REINFORCING WHAT HAS BEEN LEARNED

1. What did you first receive for physical nourishment when you were a newborn? What do you eat and drink now? How does this parallel your spiritual development?
2. Read 1 Peter 2:23. What should the baby Christian crave? Read Hebrews 5:12-14. What does the maturing Christian need? Where are you on this continuum of spiritual growth and development? Still a newborn... Maybe a toddler... A young child... A maturing adolescent... Almost a full-grown adult
3. Read 2 Peter 3:18. Ask participants to discuss their response to these questions: How have I grown in faith since my Baptism? In the last year? Since the beginning of Lent? Because of Easter?

4. Ask each youth to write three descriptive sentences to complete the statement: "This is what I pray my involvement with Christ's Church will be in. . ."

five years:

ten years:

fifty years:

CLOSING

Ask one of the newest sets of parents in the congregation to bring their child to the study for the last five to ten minutes. Let the young people admire this little one. Remind them of the child's Baptism into Christ. Then sing for the baby "I Am Jesus' Little Lamb" (Lutheran Worship #517; The Lutheran Hymnal #648; Lutheran Service Book #740).

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