

6-MINUTE

MESSAGES *for*

CHILDREN

52 Children's Devotions for
Any Occasion



DONALD HINCHEY

Group

6-Minute Messages for Children

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Contents

Introduction



The Creator: Messages for Knowing God

1. All Clear
2. Weaklings
3. Umbrella
4. Baby Pictures
5. Tears
6. The Lost Is Found!
7. Through Dark Glasses
8. Whose Time Is It?
9. Autumn Leaves (A Back-to-School Talk)
10. We've Got a Friend in High Places
11. Why Are You Hiding?
12. The Last Laugh
13. Crutches



The Christian: Messages for Following Jesus

14. Leftovers
15. Can You Write With Your Mouth?
16. Faith Like a Mustard Seed
17. Christian Yo-Yos
18. Telephone Prayer
19. If Jesus Came to Your House
20. The "Follow Me" Obstacle Course
21. The Pearl
22. Sand Living
23. A Good Story
24. Fishers of People: A Mime
25. Lights of the World
26. Keys to the Kingdom
27. A Bag Full of Goodies
28. The Fort
29. The Good Sheep Dog

30. Make the Weak Hands Strong
31. Move Up Higher
32. The Greatest Job in the World
33. The Leap of Faith



The Church: Messages for Life Together

34. Intertwined
35. An Interview With a Foot
36. The Church Band
37. Keep It Up
38. What Do You Do With This Beautiful Book?
39. Bubbles
40. The Book of Hope
41. What Are the Ten Commandments Like?
42. Our Father Who Art in Heaven
43. Hallowed Be Thy Name
44. Thy Kingdom Come, Thy Will Be Done
45. Daily Bread
46. Forgive Us Our Trespasses
47. Lead Us Not Into Temptation
48. The Kingdom, Power, and Glory Wave
49. Where Does All The Money Go?
50. Caution: Stewards at Work
51. Back to Back (A Children's Message for a Wedding)
52. Love Is Like a Flowing Stream (A Children's Message for a Wedding)



Introduction

The great Swiss thinker Karl Barth will long be remembered for his many volumes of careful and complicated theology. Late in his life, when Barth was asked for a simple summary of his theology, he allegedly smiled and responded, “Jesus loves me. This I know. For the Bible tells me so.”

The deepest truths of the Christian faith shine their brightest when they’re presented plainly and simply. Jesus uses mustard seeds, shepherds and housewives, and the simple faith of children as models for life in the kingdom of God.

This sequel to *5-Minute Messages for Children* attempts to follow Jesus’ example by presenting life in the kingdom of God in the most simple and active ways. Rather than requiring children to study the truths of the faith, these messages lead children (and eavesdropping adults) to experience and apply those truths to their lives.



Why Children’s Messages?

Churches and other faith communities that regularly include children’s messages in their worship and teaching hours have found that this brief time spent at eye level with God’s little ones brings immense rewards:

- **Children learn and grow!** Children don’t always learn the same way adults learn. Children’s messages can teach important truths in ways kids understand.
- **Children are affirmed.** By setting aside five or six minutes to speak to our children, we let them know they’re valued. Every children’s message says implicitly, “You know, you kids are pretty important. We think you’re great!”
- **The gospel takes on new meaning.** Children’s messages challenge us to reshape and re-present the “old, old story” in a new package. Even adults will be refreshed.



Tips for Giving Children’s Messages

Be Creative. The messages in this book aren’t meant to be read. They invite creative innovation. Let them serve as catalysts for your own ideas. Don’t be afraid to try new things. The children will forgive your failures and applaud your successes.

Prepare Well. Gather any necessary supplies beforehand and place them within easy reach. Mentally preview the message so you’ll be able to anticipate children’s responses—they may not always give you the answers you expect!

Get Down. Sit on the floor and look the children in the eye. Children’s messages delivered by a

big, standing adult can make children feel like they're being talked down to.

Speak Up. Use a microphone so the whole congregation can hear you.

Use Your Bible. Read the text for each message from your Bible. Encourage children and parents in your congregation to look up the text in their own Bibles at home.

Have Fun. You're sharing the good news! If you're enthusiastic with the children, the rest of the congregation will share in the excitement.

God bless you and your congregation as you embark on your adventure.



1. All Clear

Theme: Forgiveness

Bible Text: [The Lord says,] “I, I am the One who forgives all your sins, for my sake; I will not remember your sins” (Isaiah 43:25).

Preparation: You’ll need five to seven hand-held calculators.

The Message:

Does anyone recognize this little machine? *Hold up a calculator and allow kids to respond.* That’s right, this is a calculator. The calculator is a fantastic invention. You can use a calculator to add and subtract without counting on your fingers. Some friends have lent me their calculators for our message today. Does anyone here know how to work a calculator?

Several of the older children will hold up their hands. Invite them to take a calculator. Keep one for yourself and complete the following addition problems with the children.

Let’s see if we can do some addition with these calculators. If you don’t have a calculator, look on with a friend. *Pause while kids scoot together.* Let’s add $3 + 3 + 4 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7$. *Say the numbers slowly so kids can enter them as you speak.* What did you get? 32! That’s what I got, too. Isn’t this great?

How about $2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 6 + 7 + 8$? What did you get this time? 35! Me too. Calculators make adding so simple.

Now let’s add $7 + 9 + 4 + 6$. What did you get? *Kids will probably say “26.”* You got 26? Oh my, I must have added wrong. I got 25. Here, I’ll just push the “clear” button. Now I’ll add it again. Yep. You’re right. It is 26.

That little clear button is one of my favorite things about calculators. If you make a mistake, it just clears the screen and you can start all over again.

Read the text. The Bible says that God is the one who forgives all our sins. After we’re forgiven, God won’t even remember our sins. It’s like God has a clear button for each one of us, and with just a touch of his finger, all our sins are gone forever.

Of course, we know it wasn’t that simple. God sent his son Jesus to die for us, and that cost him a great deal. But because of Jesus’ death and resurrection, all our sins are forgiven. God has wiped them away—just like I cleared my mistake on this calculator. We can start all over and never have to worry about the sins of the past.

Please return the calculators. Thank you for helping me today.



2. Weaklings

Theme: God's grace

Bible Text: But he said to me, "My grace is enough for you. When you are weak, my power is made perfect in you" (2 Corinthians 12:9a).

Preparation: You'll need a barbell or another object too heavy for a small child to move. Before the service, place the barbell in the center of the space where the children gather.

The Message:

Hmm! Someone has left this barbell right in our way. I do wish people wouldn't leave things laying around on the floor! *Choose a small, young child.* (Name of child), would you please move this barbell for us?

No matter how much the child tugs or pushes, he or she won't be able to move the object. After several tries, ask the child to come sit beside you.

Why can't (name) move this barbell? *Let children respond. Most will say the child is too small.* That's right. Children aren't strong enough to move heavy barbells. I shouldn't have asked (name) to move something that was too heavy. Let's all give (name) a big hand for trying to move the barbell!

We all try to do things that are too hard for us. No matter how hard we try to be good, we still do wrong things sometimes. But listen to what the Bible says about our weakness. *Read the text.* When we're too weak to be good on our own, God's power can help us. *Move the barbell.* God sent Jesus to take away our sins. Jesus moved the sin we were too weak to move, and he can help us become strong.



3. Umbrella

Theme: God's protection

Bible Text: Let me live in your Holy Tent forever. Let me find safety in the shelter of your wings (Psalm 61:4).

Preparation: You'll need two or three umbrellas. A sound-effects album with recorded rain and thunder would be a nice added touch.

The Message:

If you've brought a sound-effects album, play it as children come up for the message. How many of you remembered your umbrellas the last time it rained? Let children respond. It seems that whenever I go outside, I always forget to take an umbrella. And then if it rains, I get wet. I brought a few umbrellas today to help us think about shelter and protection. Who'd like to put up an umbrella? Pass out the umbrellas.

Let's all get under an umbrella. *Give kids time to huddle under an umbrella.*

Umbrellas are so small and simple. You can put an umbrella in your car or briefcase; you can carry an umbrella to school or out to play. Then if it's raining, you stay nice and dry. Umbrellas come in all shapes and sizes—big ones you take to the beach to stay out of the sun or little ones you carry with you in case it rains.

Read the text. Psalm 61 compares God's care and protection to being under a tent. An umbrella is kind of like a tent you can take with you. No matter how hard it rains, we're warm and safe under God's umbrella. Wherever we go, we know we're protected by the umbrella of God's loving care.

Think of God's love as an umbrella, sheltering you from the storms around you. He'll always keep you safe. *Collect umbrellas.*