

Sermon suggestion

Looking for a sermon to share in your church? Here's a sample sermon you can use that takes approximately 20 minutes.

CHILDREN OF GOD

"I felt I was nothing. I didn't matter. Nobody cared to know my name."

These are the powerful words that Richmond shares in his inspirational tale about the transformational difference of sponsorship. Growing up in the slums of Uganda, Richmond lost his father at a young age and was forced to beg on the street for food. He believed he didn't matter. He believed that no one even cared to know his name.

Imagine that for a moment. How would you feel if no-one cared to know your name?

But there is a Father in Heaven who knows all of our names, who planned all our days before the beginning of time. And God had big plans for Richmond. This child, who would often go for days without food,

was sponsored through Compassion and today runs a ministry that equips pastors across Africa.

So how did he get there? Let's explore a passage in Matthew 18 which shows God's heart for children and why it should matter to us that 385 million of God's children struggle every day to find enough food and clean water to survive.

[Read Matthew 18:1-14]

What an incredible picture of God's heart for children. He calls them the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven and tells His disciples (you and me) that we must become like them, welcome them and not look down on them. We must watch out for them and woe betide anyone who causes them to sin!

Throughout scripture, we see that God has a special place in His heart for children and loves the worship that rises from their hearts.

Psalm 8:2 says, "From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise."

Matthew 21:15-16 states, "The children were shouting in the temple area,

'Hosanna to the Son of David.' The chief priests and teachers of the law were indignant! 'Do you hear what these children are saying?' 'Yes,' replied Jesus, 'Have you never read *'From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise.'*"

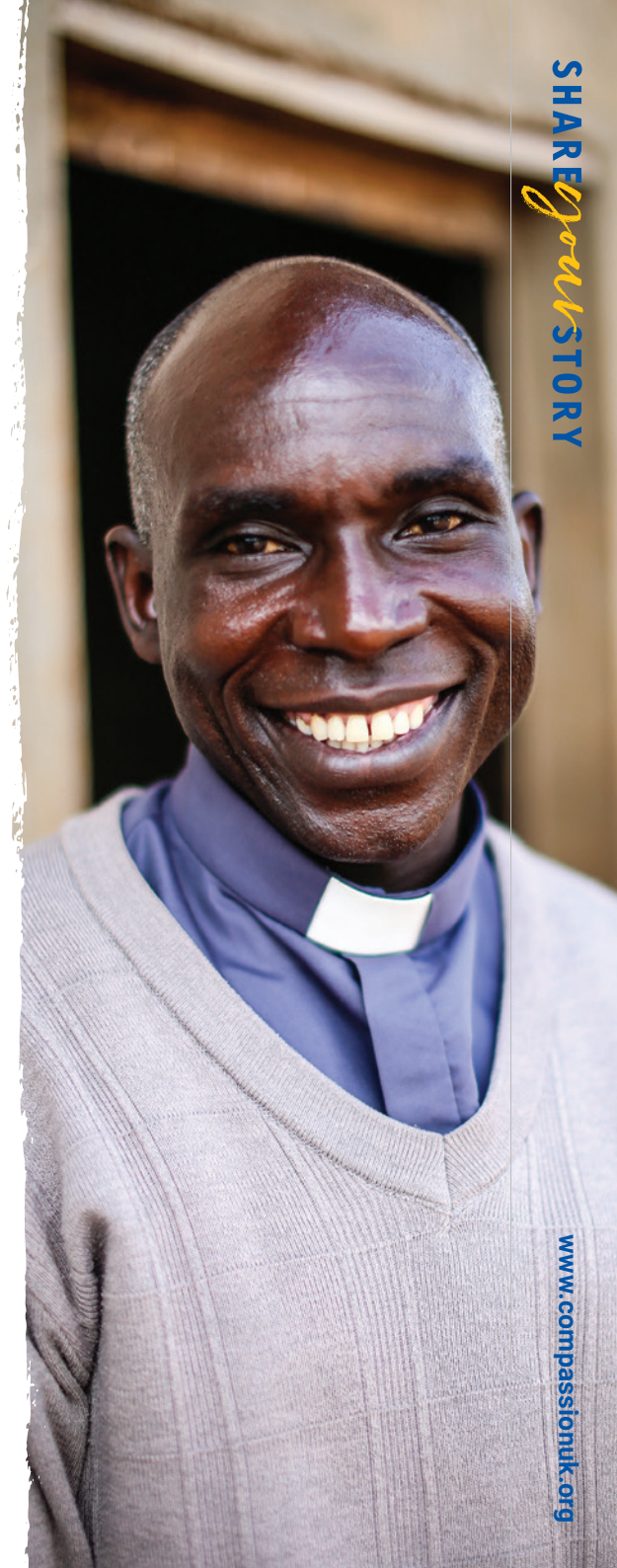
When it comes to children we have to understand two things:

1. Children are precious to God and He cares for them very much.

Some scriptural examples are:

- In Mark 5:41, Jesus raises a little girl back to life.
- A boy is set free from the power of the devil in Luke 9:42.
- Jesus rebuked His disciples when they tried to stop the children coming to Him in Matthew 19:14, showing that all children belong to God. The Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these!

There are nearly two million children in Compassion projects around the world and every one of them is loved by God. But His heart breaks for those that are still trapped in poverty, suffering through all that extreme poverty brings.



2. Children have great potential in God

- In 1 Samuel 2:18, Samuel is shown to be 'a boy wearing a linen ephod' yet he serves in the temple and becomes Israel's judge. His story shows how children have the ability to hear from God.
- David defeats Goliath while still a shepherd boy and goes on to become king. Even as a child, he shows that children can show great courage and leadership (1 Samuel 17:34-37).
- Josiah became king at just eight years old and leads people back into covenant with God in 2 Chronicles 34.

Who knows what God will do with the precious lives of each child in the world?

Many Compassion graduates have gone on to become influencers in their families, communities and even their nations.

They've become lawyers, doctors, teachers, politicians, engineers, pastors, evangelists and great mums and dads!

As Stacia Tauscher reminds us,

"We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he/she is someone today."

Let's return to Matthew 18.

As the disciples argue about who is the greatest in the Kingdom, Jesus tells them that they must become like a child if they want to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

The qualities that Jesus looks for are:

1. Being teachable

Children tend to be less opinionated than adults, as the disciples demonstrated in their arguments about matters of the Kingdom. Instead, children are teachable and open to instruction with a thirst for learning. In Compassion projects across the world, children are taught important life skills, including income generation skills, good hygiene habits and the power of the Gospel in their lives thanks to the godly influence of staff and the church.

2. Being humble

The disciples were fighting amongst themselves for position and recognition. To children, position is meaningless. Instead children are quick to realise their needs and ask for the help that is necessary to grow.

Both humility and teachability speak of faith and trust, which is what Jesus looks for – an acknowledgement that we need God in every area of our lives.

Earlier I spoke about a remarkable young man called Richmond Wandera. His life is a living testimony to the transformational power of sponsorship and the love of Jesus. I want to show you how he was given a new hope thanks to the local church and Compassion sponsorship. *(Show Richmond's Story, which can be found on your USB - approx. 5 mins)*

We all have a story to share and a name that is worth knowing. Today, I want to encourage you to join me in investing in the next generation and releasing a child from poverty in Jesus' name.

[Share your sponsorship story]

For just £28 a month, or 92p a day, you can personally give a child in a developing country the opportunity to go to school, receive nutritious food, have regular medical check-ups and be part of a loving church community where they get to hear about the love of Jesus.

Just think how many more children like Richmond there are in the world, waiting for the chance to step into a future of hope and purpose. If you'd like to sponsor a child, please come and chat to me at *[where you will be located after the service].*

To close, share God's heart and your heart for the children in the prayer and use the below prayer if you're not sure what to say.

Father, thank you for the lessons we can learn from children. Forgive us when we have seen them as less than important rather than a blessing. Help us to change from self-dependence to trusting in you with all our hearts and not leaning on our own understanding. Help us to love the children that you have placed in our care and empower them to be all that you want them to be.

In Jesus' Name – Amen!

Notes
