

[Matthew 18:1-14](#)

Whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. Matthew 18:5

Picture this: Joseph and Mary live together without being married. When Mary becomes pregnant, she aborts the baby because it's unplanned. Later she becomes pregnant again and has a baby named Jesus. After a brief maternity leave, Mary goes back to her full-time job and puts Jesus in daycare. Meanwhile, Joseph is so eager to make money for a bigger house that he leaves for work before Jesus wakes up and returns after Jesus is in bed.

When Jesus reaches school age, Mary and Joseph send him to Caesar Public School, where no religion is permitted except emperor worship. Still, they want their boy to have a taste of the religion they grew up with. So each Sabbath, while Joseph plays golf, Mary drops Jesus at Sabbath school to hear something about God for a few minutes. Joseph and Mary don't want to force religion on him. They let Jesus decide for himself whether to revere the emperor of Rome or the God of heaven.

Of course Joseph and Mary didn't really treat the Son of God this way. But many parents are treating Jesus this way right now. Why do I say they are treating Jesus this way? "Whoever welcomes a little child in my name welcomes

me

," says Jesus. If we abort, neglect, mistreat, or miseducate a child, Jesus takes it personally. By the same token, if we welcome, nurture, encourage, and instruct a child, we are doing it for Christ himself. This is the fiercest warning and the mightiest encouragement to treat every child right.

PRAYER--Lord Jesus, forgive our sins against children. Teach us to love them and to seek their wellbeing. Help us do for them what we would do for you. Amen.