



BEING A CHILD OF GOD

A self-guided retreat written by Andrew Morales.

As followers of Christ, we are called by God to live as His Children. This retreat is made to guide you to better understand this role and vocation we have. My hope is that you will come to discover the Father-Child relationship you have with God, and how you can best imitate that child-like faith in your life.

“Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.” (Matthew 18:3)

HOW TO USE OUR SELF-GUIDED RETREATS:

READ
the scripture
prayerfully

MEDITATE
upon the reflections of
our retreat directors

JOURNAL
using the
provided space

GOD, OUR FATHER

Refer to Excerpt A: A portion of Pope Benedict XVI’s announcement to the general audience on January 30th, 2013

Pope Benedict reminds us that God, the Creator of everything, formed each of us uniquely in His image and likeness. Every human, willed individually by God to come into a loving existence, becomes a creation—a child—before the eyes of the Father. We can sometimes forget this! Whenever we search for meaning and purpose in our lives, we get lost in the midst of so many different answers and opinions. But at the very root is this unshakable truth: God is Father and we are His children. We are, in a sense, part of a divine family. If parents who love and dedicate their lives to caring for their children are imperfect (as all humans are), how much more is that loving care of God our Father who is eternally perfect? We have the confidence to know we are cared for and watched after by our Heavenly Father. In life’s difficulties and despairs, we place ourselves before God as His children, remembering that our parent in heaven will hear us and come to us swiftly. Spend some time today to reflect on the ways God has been a Father in our lives.

OUR INHERITANCE IN JESUS CHRIST

Refer to Excerpt B: The Gospel of John, Chapter 1, verses 1, 10, 12-14.

The beginning of the Gospel of John tells us further about what being a child of God means. The eternal Word of God became flesh to reveal His sonship with our Father. His example, from His earthly journey, inspires us to imitate the love and trust Jesus had with His Father. Not only that, but Jesus Christ came to make us adopted sons of God, so that we can grow in closer communion with the Father. If Jesus is our brother, then we are also truly a son/daughter to the Father. Our parent-child relationship and connection with God has been strengthened and solidified by Christ. Our baptism makes us children of Light and assigns to us the mission of discipleship. So being like children becomes a calling, a vocation itself. And this is universal, despite what we think of ourselves otherwise. We can find opportunities for our faith to grow when we speak to God as Father as Jesus did. Just as Jesus approached the Father in every moment of His life, how can you find ways of approaching and conversing with God as His redeemed children?

LIVING AS GOD'S CHILDREN

Refer to Excerpt C: Pieces from Chapters 41 and 42 of the book *The Way*, written by Saint Josemaria Escriva

Becoming like a child is no easy task. Yet, in many ways, it can also be easy to be a child of God. This becomes like a paradox for our lives. We must learn to become totally dependent of God. Children are very dependent on parents and require care and love to grow. Being a child of God means that we must totally place everything we have, everything we are, into God's hands. Our relationship with God requires a child-like trust; this can be scary for us living in a world full of distrust. It is not easy to trust someone we have never seen, but Jesus proved that we can trust in God. He Himself is the image of the invisible God, so we can turn to Jesus to find our Father. When we understand that God never abandons His children, we can approach God with a child's hope. That trustful relationship with our Father often becomes most crucial when we fall. We sometimes think that we are only conditionally loved, but even we can find in God a heart ever burning with love for us. It will always be God's love and grace that we, His children, can turn to.

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Excerpt A: God is our Father because he blessed us and chose us before the creation of the world (cf. Eph 1:3-6),... God is a Father who never abandons his children, a loving Father who supports, helps, welcomes, pardons and saves with a faithfulness that surpasses by far that of men and women, opening onto dimensions of eternity. "For his steadfast love endures for ever", as Psalm 136 [135] repeats in every verse, as in a litany, retracing the history of salvation. The love of God the Father never fails, he does not tire of us; it is a love that gives to the end, even to the sacrifice of his Son. Faith gives us this certainty which becomes a firm rock in the construction of our life: we can face all the moments of difficulty and danger, the experience of the darkness of despair in times of crisis and suffering, sustained by our trust that God does not forsake us and is always close in order to save us and lead us to eternal life.

(http://www.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/audiences/2013/documents/hf_ben-xvi_aud_20130130.html)

Excerpt B: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...He was in the world, and the world came to be through him...to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man's decision but of God. And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son, full of grace and truth.

(<http://www.usccb.org/bible/john/1>)

Excerpt C: Try to know the 'way of spiritual childhood' without forcing yourself to follow this path. Let the holy Spirit work in you...Spiritual childhood is not spiritual foolishness or flabbiness; it is a sane and forceful way which, due to its difficult easiness, the soul must begin and continue, led by the hand of God...Being children you will have no cares: children quickly forget what troubles them and return to their games. With abandonment, therefore, you will not have to worry, since you will rest in the Father... What would become of you if you were not continually more of a child? Don't want to be grown-up. Be a child; and when you stumble, may you be lifted by the hand of your Father-God...Don't let your imperfections and defects, nor even your more serious falls, separate you from God. A weak child, if he is wise, tries to keep near his Father...You are full of weaknesses. Each day you see them more clearly. But don't let them frighten you. He well knows you can't yield more fruit. Your involuntary falls — a child's falls — show your Father-God that he must take more care and your Mother Mary that she must never let you go from her loving hand. Each day as our Lord picks you up from the ground, take advantage of it, embrace him with all your strength and lay your wearied head on his open breast so that you will be carried away by the beating of his most lovable Heart.

(http://www.escrivaworks.org/book/the_way-chapter-41.htm) and
(http://www.escrivaworks.org/book/the_way-chapter-42.htm)