

ARTICLE FOR COUNTRY GAZETTE

August 4, 2004

By Rev. Carol Mariano

Orting United Methodist Church

It's summer. Have you noticed all the children around—in the skateboard park, on the trail, in the river, walking around town, mowing lawns. Summer is a wonderful time to be with children, to talk with them and answer their questions.

When we think of the Bible's approach to children, many can quote the Proverb that says "spare the rod, spoil the child," but how many know the Old Testament scriptures that talk about children positively? Here are some:

If you return to the Lord, your children will find compassion. *2 Chronicles 30*

When children ask the meaning of things, tell them. *Joshua 4*

Tell them what you have seen and heard. *Deuteronomy 4*

Teach your children when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down and when you rise. *Deuteronomy 11*

Do not hide your belief in God's faithfulness from your children. *Psalms 78*

God will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers. *Malachi 4*

In the fear of the Lord one has strong confidence and our children will have a refuge. *Proverbs 26*

Children should be taken seriously, not belittled. Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, for to such as these belongs the Kingdom of Heaven." I love to hear children who know how to sing about God and ask questions about Jesus, who try to help and give generously to others. They must have good parents, I say to myself. But no matter how good parents are, they can't do it alone.

At the Orting United Methodist Church we will soon be having our summer Vacation Bible School August 23-27. Many adults and much hard work go into planning a week of activities and learning about the life and times of Jesus. We wear costumes such as Jesus might have worn. We do crafts he might have done. We hear from the story teller things Jesus said as he taught. We learn about Hebrew customs and festivals in family groups in tents. There is something for everybody, with a lot of interaction between children, youth and adults. We do this because we care about kids and we want them to know about faith. We want to share with them what we have seen and heard and experienced of the living Christ and the love of God.

So, let the children come.