

EXCERPT



Faith Like a Child *Embracing Our Lives as Children of God*

May 9, 2023 | \$18, 176 pages, paperback | 978-1-5140-0398-5

A well-known challenge of Jesus to his followers is to become like little children. Lacy Finn Borgo considers this invitation to childlike faith and explores seven different ways of welcoming the child within. Offering wisdom from years of experience as a spiritual director, Borgo explores practices to welcome and enliven your childhood self.

Welcoming the Child Within

It's important to know the way to enter when visiting my parents. From the driveway, their house looks like the garage. But if you enter that garage and weave through the cars, tools, and unimaginable array of glass canning jars, up the stairs you'll see a ceramic sign that reads, "Bienvenidos a casa del los Abuelos." In English, the sign—a nod to their Texas roots and love of all things Mexican—reads, "Welcome to the Grandparents' house." If you take these grandparents up on their welcome and enter the door, you might feel like you've come home. For they'll be grandparents to you, as they are to everyone they know. Children and adults far and wide call them "Big Mama" and "Grand." They embody the word welcome.

The word welcome comes to us from the eighth century and means "a wished-for guest." The word itself combines two parts: "to will or desire" and "to come." Woven within the word is an acknowledgment of the will to choose the presence of another. Welcome then requires an intentional action, a literal coming together of those who have been separate.

Welcome can be found throughout Scripture, both in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament. In Genesis, God welcomed—that is, desired and then acted on that desire—the world into existence. Eve welcomed Adam into human intimacy. God welcomed Abraham into friendship. Joshua welcomed a nation into a home. Rahab welcomed strangers into freedom. Ruth welcomed her mother-in-law into family. Samuel welcomed God into speech; Mary welcomed God into her body. And Jesus? Jesus is all welcome. The Gospels tell us that Jesus welcomed women, men, and children into a way of being that birthed new life. The welcome that Jesus continues to offer reweaves all that we once thought separate.

Our welcomes are all connected: how we welcome our childhood selves is connected to how much we welcome the children in front of us, which is connected to how much we welcome the Christ child. And to welcome the Christ child is to welcome humanity itself. Children are the most human among us. They are the most present, most authentic, and most connected with the least effort and intention.

The Incarnation is the foundation for the holy act of becoming human. Jesus' life showed us that each developmental stage can be a place of holy delight. He was a child who did childlike and childish things. In him was the delight, awe, and wonder of discovery. He who knew all things experienced them afresh with a human body. He experienced life as an infant, a toddler, a child, a tween, and an adolescent. He encountered the same fears and worries and existential questions that we do.

As we welcome our own childhood selves, we welcome the humanity of Jesus. And in that welcoming, we find a companion for life. And further, when we welcome our own childhood selves and the Christ child, we will be more able to welcome children in our own lives. The act of welcoming involves a presence filled with acceptance, compassion, and empathy. When we feel with others and accept them, our level of desire for connection deepens. When our childhood memories hold places of fear and rejection, we wall off our childhood selves, and our welcome to children suffers.

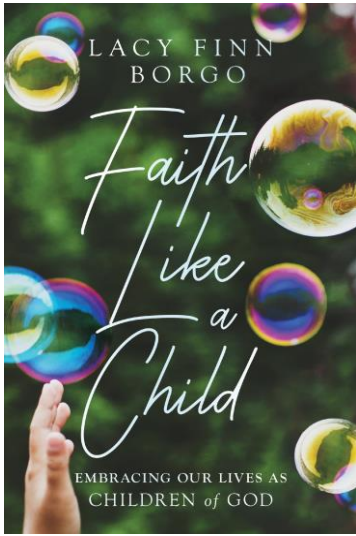


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“Lacy Finn Borgo has thought more deeply and practiced more fully Jesus’ words inviting us to ‘become like little children’ than just about anyone I know. And now with Faith Like a Child she has brought this vast reservoir of wisdom to us. In helping us ‘re-member our childhood selves’ Lacy gently guides us into a more joy-filled life . . . indeed, into a life more like Jesus.”

—Richard J. Foster, founder of Renovaré and author of *Celebration of Discipline* and *Learning Humility*

BECOMING LIKE CHILDREN

Back when my children were very young and my soul was lonely, I gathered a group of women once a month in my home for dinner and a book discussion. Dinner was on my grandmother’s fine china, and the food was Colorado luxurious, plenty of it and hearty for winter, worth lingering over for hours. Some of us found childcare, others brought their littles. I remember a random comment made while chatting at the dining room table.

“When Jesus said, ‘You must become like children to enter the kingdom of God,’ surely he didn’t mean that,” one mother said, pointing to her son—who was picking his nose and wiping it on my couch. We all laughed that kind of laugh that said, “We hear you, sister, and thank God that’s your kid.”

We are made for experiencing God. Our first and most natural inclination as children is to connect with God in deeply uniting yet often ordinary ways. We adults have much to learn. This book will explore what it looks like to re-member our childhood selves, to let the Spirit heal the childhood wounds that have calloused our hearts. We will re-member the natural patterns of our childhood selves that enabled us to live with freedom in God’s wonder-filled presence. We will unpack seven general ways of being that are natural to childhood and suggest healing spiritual practices that can help us grow a whole life with God. We will begin by exploring a shape of spiritual formation that addresses both the wonder we were born with and the wounds that could use some tender care. We will revisit what it looks like to develop a healthy attachment to God and how to cultivate that attachment through play, imagination, creativity, wonder, humor, and simply paying attention.

Each of us must do this essential work, and especially those of us who work or live with children—because children can spot a fake at fifty paces. We can only accompany children where we have gone. If we haven’t re-membered our childhood selves, the distance between ourselves and the children in front of us will grow.

—adapted from the introduction, “Welcoming the Child Within”



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Q & A



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Lacy Finn Borgo teaches and provides spiritual direction to adults and children through Renovaré, Mercy Center Burlingame, and the Companionship Center. She especially loves meeting with children at Haven House, a transitional facility for families without homes. She holds a doctor of ministry degree in leadership and spiritual formation and a certificate in spiritual direction from Portland Seminary. Borgo is also the author of *Spiritual Conversations with Children*.

Wonder, Imagination, and Play Are Still Alive in Us

What might make you most qualified to write a book about a childlike faith?

Lacy Finn Borgo: For my fifty years of either being a child or engaging with them in various contexts, I continue to be deeply curious about their way of being in the world, their spirituality and what Jesus meant when he said, "You must become like children to enter the kingdom of God."

In this book I explore Jesus' instruction through the lens of my own life and experience, theological reflection, and children's spirituality.

Using a quote from the book in your response, what are we made for and how might your book help us remember what we were made for?

Lacy: In my book, I say, "We are made for experiencing God. Our first and most natural inclination as children is to connect with God in deeply uniting yet often ordinary ways. We adults have much to learn."

This book explores what it looks like to re-member [to revisit and revive what has been part of us] our childhood selves, to let the Spirit heal the childhood wounds that have calloused our hearts. We will re-member the natural patterns of our childhood selves that enabled us to live with freedom in God's wonder-filled presence. We will unpack seven general ways of being that are natural to childhood and suggest healing spiritual practices that can help us grow a whole life with God.

We will begin by exploring a shape of spiritual formation that addresses both the wonder we were born with and the wounds that could use some tender care. We will revisit what it looks like to develop a healthy attachment to God and how to cultivate that attachment through play, imagination, creativity, wonder, humor, and simply paying attention."

Share five key lessons you hope readers might learn throughout the pages of your book.

Lacy: We are always God's beloved children, no matter our physical age. Our wounds are redeemable. Wonder, imagination, humor, and play are still alive within us. Whole spirituality is holy spirituality. And finally, we have been created for encounter with God.



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