The disciples approached Jesus and said, "Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven?" He called a child over, placed it in their midst, and said, "Amen, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will not enter the Kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. And whoever receives one child such as this in my name receives me. "See that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that their angels in heaven always look upon the face of my heavenly Father. What is your opinion? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine in the hills and go in search of the stray? And if he finds it, amen, I say to you, he rejoices more over it than over the ninety-nine that did not stray. In just the same way, it is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these little ones be lost."

Our Scripture Reflection

Soon after the birth of her brother, four-year-old Sachi began to ask her parents to leave her alone with the new baby. Worried that she might feel jealous and want to hit and shake the newborn, her parents said no. But the little girl’s pleas to be left alone with her brother became more urgent, and since she treated the baby lovingly and gently, her parents decided to allow it.
Delighted, Sachi went into the baby’s room and closed the door, but it opened slightly, allowing her curious parents to peek in and listen. They watched as their daughter put her face close to her baby brother’s and whisper, “Baby, tell me what God feels like. I’m starting to forget.” (Dan Millman, Chicken Soup For the Soul, Health Communications, Inc., Deerfield Beach, FL: 1993). The innocence of this little four-year-old-girl is disarming, particularly to adults grown crusty and cynical with age. When Jesus recommended that his disciples emulate the little child that he set in their midst, he reminded them of the innocence that they had long since outgrown. Indeed, their innocence had been replaced by ambition as to who was most important among them. By offering the example of the child and by calling them to be the servant of all, Jesus challenged them to rethink their attitude toward him, toward God and toward one another. Those who would rank first among them as leader must become the least among them.

**Food for your Journey**

One day, a father went to visit his son's preschool on a special parental-visitation day. He was surprised to learn that only a handful of other dads had come to be with their children that day. During circle time, the teacher asked each of the children to tell the class something about their fathers.

"My daddy is a lawyer," piped up one little boy. "He makes a lot of money and we live in a big house."

Another student announced, "My father is very smart. He teaches at the college and a lot of important people know him."

Finally it was time for a boy whose father was sitting beside him to say something special about his dad. The boy could say nothing that approached the boastings of the doctor's or professor's children. He looked up at his father, then he looked around the circle of his friends, and just smiled. He proudly proclaimed: "My dad ... my dad is here!"

**A Prayer from the Heart**

Dear God, Purge and cleanse my heart of all arrogance, haughtiness and self-concern. Make me humble, Lord. As I grow in humility, may I strive each day to turn my life over to You completely. Amen