

THE MONTH OF JOY

CONNECTING THE CONTINENTS



Hungarian brothers

“He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: ‘I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.’”

Matthew 18:2-3

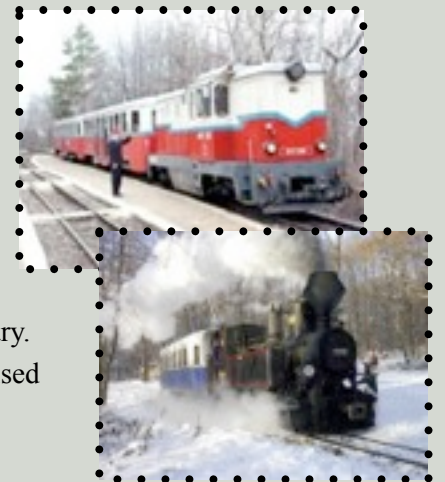
Children’s Railway in Budapest, Hungary

Budapest, the capital of Hungary, is a beautiful city. Like most European cities, is filled with many interesting sights and beautiful places. But one place you won’t find everywhere is their Children’s Railway. Located just west of the city, this 11 mile railway runs through the nearby forests and hills.

It is often called "the greatest child toy of the world," but this is more than just a toy. Children aged 10 to 14 control the traffic and commercial services provided, but strictly according to regulations of any other railway line of the State Railways of Hungary. The engines are driven by adult engineers, and children on duty are continuously supervised by adult railway employees. Apart from that, children joyfully do their jobs, operate the switches and signals, print tickets and keep passengers informed, *all on their own!*

Jesus himself said that children have an important place in God’s Kingdom. In Budapest, Hungary, children are learning they can contribute in some big ways. Did you ever think that children could run a railroad? What other “adult jobs” do you think that children could do? And, why did Jesus say that everyone who enters Heaven will need a childlike humility? Read on to learn from the Hungarian Women’s Ministry Leader, Virag Szabad.

(For more information, visit <http://www.gyermekvasut.com/english.html>).



THE MONTH OF JOY

Devotional - “Like Little Children”

Have you ever noticed how children can be so joyful? How easily they trust other people and follow instructions? How they think differently than adults?

The church in Budapest, Hungary was planted in 1993 by five disciples from Boston. Now, there are 132 church members, with over 50 children. Certainly, the adults have the responsibility to take care of and teach the children. However, there are many things that the children can teach the adults as well!

In Matthew 18:1-5, Jesus teaches us that in order for us to see the Kingdom of Heaven we must become like little children.

To understand a little better what that means, let's look an excerpt from the book *Like Little Children* (recently published by DPI), where Virag Szabad describes her son Robi at the age of four:

“He liked to draw, but even more, to color. One time he took a scrap of paper that had a circle on it sliced into eight pieces like a cake. He took his pencils and got to work. He picked beautiful colors and made a real spectacle from the black and white drawing.

- *What is this? A rainbow or a cake?* I asked naively.
- *Neither. It is ‘Thought,’* he answered.
- *What?!* – I was blinking and was hoping he didn't hear my chin hitting the ground!
- *Thought! It is as colorful as a thought.*

I was totally amazed. I was feeling all kinds of things and my thoughts couldn't stop them: *Why would a 4 year old draw a thought? How did he think of it at all? Is this good? Normal? Should I be happy or do I have to take him to the doctor? If he was an adult with the gift of poetry, that would*

be fine. But he is but a child! Thank God, I have a psychologist friend who also has a child. I called her right away to tell her about it and to get her opinion. After listening to me she calmed me down and told me that Robi's behavior was totally normal.

What? This is normal?

Yes. Children express themselves in pictures. Their imagination is not limited by “knowledge.” Later, as they get to know the world and become logical, they lose this ability and they have to learn it again as they read poetry or see artwork at school.

So, we are born with this ability. This is normal. As children without the “infection” of the world, we can see God and all the things he created purely, with all their splendor. We don't have the glasses of pride, selfishness, deceit or disappointment to distort our view of the One who never changes. If we open our eyes, if we let the long forgotten child come out of the depth of our souls, we can see the world and our lives differently and, best of all, we can get to know God better.”

For more about Virag's book, visit: <http://www.dpibooks.org>



The Szabad Family

Learning the Language:

English » Hungarian
I love you » Szeretlek

DISCUSSION:

What were some of the qualities of children Jesus was thinking about in Matthew 18:1-5?

Parents: What qualities would you like to learn from your children? Why?

Children: What do you like about being a child? Why?

ACTIVITY:

For families with younger children: Get out a large sheet of paper and create a drawing/painting together as a family, where the kids direct the work.

For families with older children: Do a “reverse hour” – where the kids can be the parents and the parents be the kids. Have some fun with it!

PLEASE PRAY:

...for the Budapest Church:

- Converting families
- Reviving the Campus Ministry
- Seeing some teens get baptized