

**AN EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 18:10–14 AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE SALVATION OF CHILDREN IN THE
DIOCESE OF KAMPALA**

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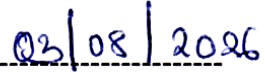
AUGUST, 2026

DECLARATION

I kisakye Rebecca Kataate solemnly declare to the best of my knowledge that this dissertation is my original work except where otherwise acknowledged and has not been submitted in any other University.



Kisakye Rebecca Kataate (M23M05/023)



Date

APPROVAL

This report has been carried out under my Supervision and is now ready for submission.

Shalengyo

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Date

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my family, the Kataates, my beloved Nephews Israel, Ezekiel and Nathan and the entire Church of Uganda.

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ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Meaning
AD	Anno domini
CSB	Christian Standard Bible
ESV	English Standard Version
KJV	King James Version
Matt	Matthew
NA28	Nestle – Alnd Novum Testamentum Graece, 28 th Edition
NIV	New International Version
NKJV	New King James Version
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
UBS5	United Bible Societies' Greek New Testament, 5 th Edition
UCU	Uganda Christian University

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examined Matthew 18:10-14 and its implications for the salvation of children in the Diocese of Kampala. It was prompted by the observation that, although children participate in the church programs, their place within God's saving purpose is not always clearly understood. In some church contexts, salvation is largely associated with adults capable of making a conscious profession of faith, while ministry to children is often limited to Bible stories and moral instruction. Against this background, the research sought to explore the meaning of Matthew 18:10-14 concerning children's salvation, examine contemporary understandings and practices within the Diocese of Kampala, and propose biblically grounded strategies for strengthening children's discipleship and spiritual formation.

The study employed a qualitative exegetical theological and field research design. Matthew 18:10-14 was analyzed through grammatical- historical literature, lexical and theological analysis. Field research involved forty-five respondents purposively selected from three Church of Uganda parishes representing three archdeaconries of the Diocese of Kampala. Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires and analysed. The exegetical and field findings were integrated to evaluate the relationship between the biblical text and the contemporary church practice.

The study found that Matthew 18:10-14 present the "little ones" primarily children within the immediate context, as persons valued by God and included within the Father's saving concern. The Shepherd's pursuit of the wandering sheep and the Father's Will that not one of the "little ones" should perish demonstrate God's intentional concern for their salvation. Field findings also showed recognition of the importance of children's discipleship, prayer, mentorship, spiritual guidance and participation in church life. However, inadequate ministry training limited resources, inconsistent discipleship structures and the reduction of children's ministry to moral instruction were identified as major challenges.

The study concludes that Matthew 18:10-14 provides a biblical and theological foundation for recognizing children as genuine participants within God's salvic plan rather than merely future members of the church. The diocese of Kampala should therefore strengthen theological understanding, intentional discipleship, pastoral care, family involvement ministry training, and children's participation in the church.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This study explored the concept of the salvation of children from a biblical and theological perspective, focusing on Matthew 18:10 -14. The passage emphasises the value Jesus places on children and highlights God's concern for their spiritual welfare. In the Diocese of Kampala, there is growing concern about how children are understood and included in the mission of salvation. Accordingly, this research sought to interpret Matthew 18:10–14 exegetically and apply its implications to children's ministry in the Diocese of Kampala.

1.1 Background to the study

The Christian doctrine of salvation has long been the subject of theological reflection and pastoral concern within the Christian tradition. While Scripture affirms that salvation is available to all humanity through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16, Romans 10:9-10), the spiritual status and participation of children in this redemptive plan continues to be debated and interpreted in different ways.¹ Historically, the church has approached the salvation of children through the doctrines of baptism, covenant inclusion and divine grace. However, these theological perspectives have not always been reflected in ministry practices that recognize and affirm children as full participants in God's saving work.²

While all humanity is included in God's salvation plan, the place of children within this divine plan has often been misunderstood or neglected. Jesus' words in Matthew 18:10–14 challenge this perspective by revealing God's special care for "these little ones." The passage offers important insight into God's perspective on children. In this passage, Jesus warns against despising "these little ones" and illustrates through the parable of the lost sheep, the Father's will that not even one child should perish. This presents children not as spiritually insignificant but as valued members of the kingdom of Heaven.³

Within the Diocese of Kampala, Children's Church (Sunday School), baptismal preparation, and confirmation classes form part of the church's discipleship structure for children.

¹ A. Dillen, *Children and Christian Theology* (St Andrews, Scotland: St Andrews Encyclopaedia of Theology, University of St Andrews, 2024).

² J. A. Chiroma and N. H. Chiroma, "Childhood Theology and Implications for Pedagogy," *Theologia Viatorum* 115 (2022).

³ N. Kallis, "A Theology of Children," 1517, October 2, 2021, <https://www.1517.org/articles/a-theology-of-children/>

However, the extent to which these ministries embody the theological emphasis of Matthew 18:10–14 remains uncertain.

In the world where children are often overlooked in spiritual matters, Jesus' words reflect their significance and God's attentive care for them. This passage is part of Matthew's Community Discourse "18:1-35), which addresses humility, forgiveness and the protection of the vulnerable within the church. Verses 10-14 focus on children, cautioning against causing them to stumble and affirming that their angels continually behold the father.

As one commentator notes, "The emphasis of the parable is not merely on the shepherd's search for the lost sheep, but on the joy that follows when it is found. (cf. Matt.18:13). This joy reflects God's own delight in seeking and saving the lost (Luke 15:3-7; 19:10)".⁴ In this context, the passage clearly shows that God values children deeply, and His desire is for their salvation and well-being. The church is therefore called to prioritise the care and protection of children, recognizing their worth and value in God's eyes.

1.2 Literature Review

This section critically reviews scholarly literature relevant to the interpretation of Matthew 18:10–14 and its theological implications for the salvation and full inclusion of the children within the life of the Church. The review engages biblical exegesis, covenant and sacramental theology, early church practice, African ecclesial perspectives, and contemporary pastoral debates concerning children's participation in salvation and church life. It also situates the present study within existing scholarship and identifies gaps that warrant further investigation, particularly within the Anglican context of the Diocese of Kampala.

Scholarly engagement with Matthew 18 consistently identifies the chapter as part of Matthew's community Discourse (Matt 18:1–35), in which Jesus addresses issues of humility, care for the vulnerable, discipline, and reconciliation within the believing community. France argues that Jesus' act of placing a child among the disciples (Matt 18:2) is not merely illustrative but serves as the model that fundamentally redefining greatness in terms of vulnerability, dependence, and humility rather than status or power.⁵

Within this discourse, Matthew 18:10–14 especially the warning against despising "these little ones" and the parable of the lost sheep emphasises God's salvific concern for those who

⁴ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 683.

⁵ R. T. France, 681–683.

are socially and spiritually vulnerable. Luz contends that the expression “these little ones” should not be separated from its literal referent, since the discourse begins with an actual child and maintains that reference throughout.⁶ Keener likewise argues that the parable highlights divine initiative in salvation rather than human capability or moral achievement.⁷

The place of children within the community of faith is further explored in scholarly discussions of covenant theology. A substantial body of theological literature understands children’s salvation within the framework of covenant theology. Within this tradition, baptism is widely understood as the New Testament counterpart to circumcision, an understanding strongly represented in Reformed and Anglican theology. Paul’s argument in Colossians 2:11–12, which explicitly associates circumcision with baptism, has therefore become central to explaining baptism as incorporation into the covenant community rather than merely an individual act.

Wright argues that covenant membership in both the Old and New Testaments is fundamentally communal and familial, rather than being understood solely in individual terms.⁸ In the Old Testament, children were fully incorporated into the covenant people through circumcision and participated in Israel’s religious life. The New Testament, rather than restricting this inclusion, extends and fulfils it through Christ.

Closely related to covenantal inclusion, scholarly discussion has also examined the sacramental question of children’s participation in Holy Communion. Patristic and historical scholarship indicates that early Christian practice was largely inclusive. Jeremias argues that the household-based eucharistic celebrations of the New Testament period would almost certainly have included children, and that there is no explicit textual evidence indicating their exclusion.⁹

Bradshaw further observes that in the early church, particularly within Eastern Christianity, baptism, chrismation, and Eucharist were understood as a unified rite of Christian initiation.¹⁰ This theological unity reinforced the assumption that all baptized persons, irrespective of age, belonged fully to the worshipping and sacramental life of the church.

⁶ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2001), 438–441.

⁷ Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1999), 447–449.

⁸ N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 838–842.

⁹ Joachim Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, trans. Norman Perrin (London: SCM Press, 1966), 252–255.

¹⁰ Paul F. Bradshaw, *Early Christian Worship: A Basic Introduction to Ideas and Practice* (London: SPCK, 1996), 48–51.

The question of children's belonging and participation in the Church has also received attention within African theological scholarship. Lumbala draws parallels between African traditional sacrificial meals and Christian Eucharistic fellowship, emphasising the communal character of participation within the African context.¹¹ Mbiti's seminal analysis of African religious life shows that African communal identity is inherently inclusive, with children regarded as integral members of both religious and social communities.¹² Lumbala, writing on Eucharistic theology in Africa, argues that the Eucharist should be understood as an act of communion with God, with the ancestors in Christ, and with the entire community of believers, thereby challenging practices that fragment the body of Christ along lines of age or social status.¹³ Adeyemo similarly emphasizes the communal character of African Christian identity, where belonging to the community plays a vital role in shaping and expressing faith.¹⁴

Alongside these discussions of communal belonging, contemporary pastoral theology increasingly recognises children as active recipients of God's grace rather than passive subjects awaiting future salvation. Bunge argues that Jesus' welcome of children reflects a theological vision in which children are both vulnerable and spiritually significant, and are capable of expressing faith appropriate to their stage of development.¹⁵ Within evangelical approaches to children's ministry, organizations such as Child Evangelism Fellowship emphasize that children are capable of genuine responses to the gospel and should be intentionally disciplined rather than regarded as "not yet believers." Fowler's stages of faith theory further highlight the developmental nature of spiritual formation, emphasizing the need for age-appropriate catechesis and sustained pastoral care.¹¹

Despite extensive biblical and theological reflection on children, several significant gaps remain. First, much of the existing literature examines children either in abstract theological terms or within predominantly Western ecclesial contexts, with limited engagement with African Anglican settings such as the Diocese of Kampala. Second, debates surrounding children and sacramental participation are often not sufficiently grounded in sustained exegetical engagement with key biblical texts, particularly Matthew 18:10–14.

¹¹ François Lumbala, *Celebrating Jesus Christ in Africa: Liturgy and Inculturation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 78–83.

¹² John S. Mbiti, *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Oxford: Heinemann, 1990), 106–110.

¹³ François Lumbala, 78–83.

¹⁴ Tokunboh Adeyemo, *Salvation in African Tradition* (Nairobi: Evangel Publishing House, 1979), 45–47.

¹⁵ Marcia J. Bunge, *The Child in Christian Thought* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2001), 3–6.

Moreover, there is a notable lack of integrative studies that bring together biblical exegesis, African communal theology, and contemporary pastoral practice within a single coherent framework. The study aims to address these gaps (by grounding its theological claims in a close reading of Matthew 18:10–14 while engaging African ecclesial realities and Anglican sacramental theology).

The literature review demonstrates that Matthew 18:10–14 provides a strong theological foundation for understanding children as valued recipients of God’s salvific concern. Biblical exegesis, covenant theology, early church practice, and African communal perspectives together challenge ecclesial practices that marginalize children from full participation in salvation and sacramental life. While catechesis and spiritual formation remain essential, they should function as means of nurturing spiritual growth rather than as prerequisites for belonging.

Building on these scholarly insights, the present study offers a contextual theological reflection tailored to the Anglican Diocese of Kampala, thereby contributing to both academic discourse and informed pastoral practice.

1.3 Problem Statement

Despite the church’s active engagement in children’s ministries, a significant theological gap remains in understanding the nature of children’s salvation. In the Diocese of Kampala, many church leaders and parents regard salvation as an experience reserved for adults who were capable of conscious confession of faith. As a result, children were frequently marginalized in evangelism and discipleship efforts, with ministry to them often reduced to Bible stories and moral instruction rather than a holistic approach that affirmed their place in God’s saving work.

Matthew 18:10–14 challenged this assumption by presenting a vision of God’s active and intentional pursuit of every lost one, including children. The absence of a coherent exegetical and theological framework for understanding children’s salvation within the Diocese of Kampala reduced the church’s capacity to nurture children’s faith in a manner that was biblically faithful and pastorally responsible. This study therefore offered an exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:10–14 and examined the theological and pastoral implications for children’s salvation within the Anglican context of the Diocese of Kampala.

1.4. General Objective

The study aimed to undertake an exegetical study of Matthew 18:10–14 and to assess its implications for the salvation and spiritual formation of children in the Diocese of Kampala.

1.4.1 Specific Objectives

- i. To analyse the context of Matthew 18:10–14 in relation to children's salvation.
- ii. To conduct an exegetical study of Matthew 18:10–14.
- iii. To examine the theological implications of Matthew 18:10–14 for understanding children's salvation in the Diocese of Kampala.
- iv. To propose practical, biblically grounded applications for strengthening children's salvation and discipleship ministries in the Diocese of Kampala.

1.5 Research Questions

The following questions are used to do this study.

- i. What is the context of Matthew 18:10–14 in relation to children's salvation?
- ii. What is the exegetical meaning of Matthew 18:10–14 in relation to children's salvation?
- iii. What are the theological implications of Matthew 18:10–14 for understanding children's salvation in the Diocese of Kampala?
- iv. What biblically grounded applications can strengthen children's salvation and discipleship ministries in the Diocese of Kampala.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study will benefit clergy, children's Church teachers, Christian educators, parents, and children's ministry leaders by offering a biblical and theological framework for understanding and ministering to children. It will contribute to theological discussions on soteriology and child theology by highlighting children's place within God's salvific concern and their participation in the life of the Church. The study will also contribute to the Ugandan and wider African Church context by drawing greater attention to the spiritual nurture, discipleship, inclusion, and pastoral care of children, including those who are vulnerable or marginalized. Furthermore, the study will help shape policies and programmes for strengthening children's evangelism, discipleship, spiritual formation, and participation in the Diocese of Kampala.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided primarily by Covenant Theology as its central theoretical framework. Covenant Theology understands salvation as a gracious initiative of God, extended to individuals within a covenant community, rather than as a purely individualistic or age dependent experience.¹⁶ Within this framework, children were recognized as legitimate members of God's covenant people who shared in God's promises, care, and redemptive purposes¹⁷. This perspective is deeply rooted in biblical revelation and resonates strongly within the Anglican tradition, particularly in the Diocese of Kampala. Covenant Theology emphasizes that God's saving work is communal and intergenerational, affirming that children are active participants in the covenant community and recipients of God's grace¹⁸.

Within Anglican theology, which holds together Scripture, tradition, and reason (via media), this problem remained especially significant. While Anglican practice affirms children's inclusion in the covenant community through infant baptism, catechesis, and confirmation, ambiguity often remained regarding the theological status of children's salvation and discipleship prior to mature confession of faith. Engaging Matthew 18:10–14, this study emphasized God's active pursuit of the lost including children, and highlighted that none of "these little ones" should perish¹⁹. This biblical passage underscored God's care for children and provided a foundation for understanding their inclusion in salvation beyond age or cognitive capacity.

Biblically, Covenant Theology emphasizes the communal and intergenerational nature of God's relationship with humanity. In the Old Testament, children were fully incorporated into the covenant community through practices such as circumcision and participation in Israel's religious life²⁰. The New Testament maintains this pattern by presenting salvation as grounded in God's sovereign will and grace rather than in human merit, maturity, or intellectual ability²¹. Within this covenantal framework, "the little ones" were understood not merely as marginal or incomplete members of the faith community, but as persons already under God's saving concern.

By integrating Anglican theological insights, this study responded to key concerns within the Diocese of Kampala. It emphasised the value and dignity of children within the Body of

¹⁶ Robertson, O. P. (2003). *The Christ of the Covenants*. P&R Publishing, p. 12

¹⁷ Grudem, W. (2013). *Systematic Theology*. Zondervan, p. 287.

¹⁸ Robertson, O. P. (2003). *The Christ of the Covenants*. P&R Publishing, p. 12.

¹⁹ France, R. T. (2013). *The Gospel of Matthew*. Eerdmans, p. 287

²⁰ Kline, M. G. (2012). *Kingdom Prologue*. Two Age Press, p. 120-122.

²¹ Calvin, J. (2008). *Institutes of the Christian Religion* (Revised ed.). Westminster John Knox Press, p. 155-156

Christ, highlighted the pastoral responsibility toward both baptized and unbaptized children, affirmed discipleship as a process of formation rather than mere moral instruction, and underscored the Church's calling to nurture faith from childhood in continuity with baptismal theology²² [5, p. 25].

The choice of Covenant Theology, coupled with Anglican theological reflection, was particularly appropriate because it provided a coherent lens for interpreting children's salvation without reducing it to future potential or adult confession alone. While affirming the necessity of ongoing nurture, discipleship, and faith formation, this framework enabled the study to uphold the reality of children as present recipients of God's grace within the covenant community. It therefore enabled a critical evaluation of contemporary beliefs and practices in the Diocese of Kampala in light of a biblically and theologically consistent understanding of children's inclusion in salvation.

By employing this integrated framework, the study moved intentionally from biblical exegesis of Matthew 18:10–14 to theological interpretation and finally to pastoral implication. It provided a stable foundation for examining how the Church understands children's salvation and how such understanding shaped evangelism, discipleship, and pastoral care for children within the Anglican context.

1.9 Research Thesis

The study argued that Matthew 18:10–14 revealed God's salvific concern for children and called the Church to an inclusive and intentional approach to their spiritual formation. The Church, therefore, needed to recognize children as recipients of God's grace and actively seek their salvation and restoration when they stray.

1.10 Methodology

This study employed a qualitative research design integrating exegetical analysis and field research to examine Matthew 18:10–14 and its implications for children's salvation within the Diocese of Kampala. The methodology enabled both close textual engagement with the biblical passage and meaningful contextual interaction with contemporary ministry realities within the Diocese of Kampala.

Purposive sampling was used to select 45 respondents from three Anglican parishes representing the three archdeaconries of the Diocese of Kampala. Each parish contributed 15

²² Anglican Church of Uganda (2020). Constitution and Canons, p. 25

participants comprising clergy or ministers, children's ministry leaders, and lay members actively engaged in church life and children's spiritual development.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires to explore participants' perspectives on children's salvation, discipleship, spiritual formation, and ministry practices within the Diocese of Kampala.

1.10.1 Data Analysis

The data obtained from both the exegetical study and the field research were analyzed thematically. The exegetical findings were organized according to major themes emerging from Matthew 18:10–14, while the field data was examined to identify recurring patterns and insights from the respondents.

The exegetical findings were then integrated with the field data to examine areas of convergence, tension, and theological significance between Matthew 18:10–14 and contemporary ministry practices within the Diocese of Kampala.

1.10.2 Validity and Reliability

To enhance the credibility of the study, the researcher employed methodological triangulation through the use of both exegetical analysis and field research. Data obtained from interviews and questionnaires was compared and evaluated alongside the exegetical findings in order to ensure coherence and consistency within the study. The use of multiple scholarly sources, critical interaction with differing interpretations, and thematic comparison of responses further strengthened the reliability and academic integrity of the research findings.

1.10.3 Ethical Considerations

The study observed appropriate ethical standards throughout the research process. Participation in the field research was voluntary, and respondents were informed of the purpose and nature of the study before participation. Participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity where necessary, and the information obtained from respondents was used solely for academic purposes. Respondents were also given the freedom to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any stage of the research process. The researcher further sought to conduct the study with integrity, accuracy, fairness, and sensitivity towards both the participants and the theological subject matter under investigation.

1.10. 4 Timeline of the Study

Table 1:1. The structure of the research paper is presented in the table below.

Time	Activity	Description
Month 1	Proposal Refinement and Approval	Refinement of the research proposal and obtain the necessary academic approvals while ensuring compliance with institutional requirements.
Month 2	Literature Review	Review of relevant biblical, theological, and pastoral literature to establish the theoretical and scholarly foundation of the study.
Month 3	Exegetical Study	A detailed textual, literary, and theological analysis of Matthew 18:10–14 to establish its meaning and implications for the salvation of children.
Month 4	Research Design and Development of Tools	Preparation and refinement of questionnaires and interview guides to ensure clarity, relevance, and ethical compliance.
Month 5	Data Collection	Administration of questionnaires and conduct interviews with selected clergy, children’s ministry leaders, and lay members within the Diocese of Kampala.
Month 6	Data Analysis and Interpretation	Thematic analysis and interpretation of field data and integration of the findings with insights from the exegetical study.
Month 7	Dissertation Writing and Finalization	Writing, editing, proofreading, and finalizing the dissertation for submission.

1.11 Organization of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into five chapters, moving from the introduction and contextual background to the exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:10–14, its theological implications and practical applications, and finally to the conclusion and recommendations.

Chapter one: Introduction

Chapter One introduces the study and outlines the background, statement of the problem, general and specific objectives, research questions, significance, scope, methodology, limitations, and organization of the dissertation.

Chapter two: Literary and contextual background of the gospel according to Matthew

Chapter Two explores the literary and contextual background of the Gospel according to Matthew, including its authorship, audience, purpose, literary setting, and major theological themes relevant to Matthew 18:10–14. It provides the contextual foundation for the exegesis of the passage.

Chapter Three: Exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:10-14

Chapter Three provides an exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:10–14, with attention to its literary structure, grammar, syntax, and key Greek terms. It examines the meaning and theological significance of the passage in relation to children's salvation.

Chapter Four: Theological Implications and Practical Applications

Chapter Four examines the theological implications of Matthew 18:10–14 for understanding children's salvation in the Diocese of Kampala. It also proposes biblically grounded applications for strengthening children's salvation, discipleship, and spiritual nurture.

Chapter Five: Conclusion

Chapter Five summarizes the major findings of the study, draws the conclusions, and provides recommendations for strengthening children's ministry in the Diocese of Kampala and for further research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERARY AND CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND OF THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides the literary and contextual background of the Gospel according to Matthew in order to provide a foundation for understanding Matthew 18:10-14. It begins by examining the general background of the Gospel, its historical and literary context, structure, and major theological themes. It then considers the place of Matthew 18 within the Gospel and its emphasis on humility, the “little ones,” care for the vulnerable, and responsibility within the believing community. The chapter also engages relevant scholarly perspectives are also examined to provide a clearer understanding of the passage. Together, these discussions provide the foundation for the exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:10–14 in the next chapter.

2.1 General Background

The Gospel of Matthew is a theologically structured narrative that portrays Jesus as the fulfilment of Israel’s Scriptures while shaping the identity and practice of the community formed around him. Throughout the gospel, Jesus is presented not only as the fulfilment of God’s promises but also as the authoritative teacher of his people. The gospel has traditionally been attributed to Matthew, a former tax collector, whose background may help explain its careful organisation and structured presentation. Even so, although the Gospel has long been associated with Matthew the tax collector (Matt 9:9), the text itself is formally anonymous, and its authorship remains debated.²³ Most scholars dated the Gospel to AD 70–90, when the destruction of Jerusalem, had already reshaped the religious and social landscape of Judaism and early Christianity.²⁴

The Gospel reflects a distinctly Jewish-Christian orientation. Its frequent use of fulfilment quotation shows Matthew’s concern to demonstrate that Jesus stands in continuity with the Laws and the Prophets. More than any of the other Gospels writers, Matthew draws extensively on the Old Testament to show that Jesus fulfils Israel’s Scripture. This continuity, however, is not merely a repetition of earlier promises but their fulfilment in the person and ministry of Christ. As France observes, Matthew presents Jesus as the authoritative fulfilment of God’s redemptive plan revealed throughout the Old testament.

²³ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1-13*, Word Biblical Commentary 33A (Dallas: Word Books, 1993), lxx–lxxv.

²⁴ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 18-25.

The work is best understood not as a neutral historical account but as a theologically shaped document written for a specific community. Its repeated emphasis on righteousness, obedience, and communal order suggests a context in which identity and practice required further clarification.²⁵ The Gospel is arranged around major teaching sections (discourses), such as the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), which present Jesus' teachings in a structured and authoritative form. These themes become especially evident in Matthew 18, where issues of status, responsibility, and community relations are addressed directly. Thus, the background of the Gospel is not incidental but provides essential foundation for understanding Matthew 18:10–14, which reflects the Gospel's broader concern for caring for vulnerable members within the believing community.

2.2 Historical Context

Matthew's Gospel emerges from a context of transition and tension. The destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 intensified the separation between Jewish and Christian communities, forcing emerging Christian groups to redefine their identity and authority structures.²⁶ Matthew responds to this situation by presenting Jesus as the authoritative interpreter of God's will, whose teaching takes precedence over competing claims to religious authority.

The broader Roman context also shaped the environment in which the Gospel was produced. Social life was structured by hierarchy, honor, and status, while economic inequality reinforced divisions between elites and the marginalized.²⁷ Within such this context, teachings that elevate the "least" and redefine greatness in terms of humility represent a deliberate and radical inversion of prevailing values.

At the same time, the Matthean community appears to have faced internal tensions. The prominence of material dealing with discipline, forgiveness, and communal responsibility suggests ongoing conflict related to leadership and mutual accountability.²⁸ Matthew 18 addresses these issues directly, indicating that they were practical concerns rather than merely theoretical ones.

Consequently, Matthew 18:10–14 should not be read as an abstract theological statement but as addressing concrete communal problems, particularly the neglect or marginalization of vulnerable members.

²⁵ France, *The Gospel of Matthew*

²⁶ Luz, *Matthew 5-10*

²⁷ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of Matthew: A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), 23-30.

²⁸ France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 674-678.

2.3 Literal Context

The Gospel of Matthew presents a carefully structured narrative in which accounts of Jesus' activity are interwoven with extended teaching. This arrangement is not strictly chronological but thematic, emphasizing both what Jesus does and what he teaches. The Gospel is commonly understood to be organized into alternating narrative and discourse sections, culminating in five major teaching blocks (Matt 5-7; 10; 13; 18; 23-25).²⁹ This structure highlights Jesus as the authoritative teacher whose instruction shapes the identity and practice of the community.

As has been widely observed in structural studies, the Gospel reflects a deliberate relationship between narrative sections and major discourses, through which both the identity of Jesus and the formation of the community are progressively developed.³⁰ Within this broader framework, the movement of the narrative follows the Messiah's arrival, the development of his ministry, increasing opposition, the formation of his community, and the events leading to his death and resurrection.³¹

Matthew 18 forms the fourth major discourse and belongs to the section in which the Messiah instructs and shapes the life of his community (18:1-20:34).³² The chapter addresses relationships within the believing community and unfolds in a deliberate sequence: greatness is redefined through humility (18:1-5), actions that harm others are condemned (18:6-9), the value of each member is affirmed (18:10-14), and procedures for restoration and forgiveness are established (18:15-35). This progression develops from internal disposition to communal responsibility.

The structure of the chapter may be summarized as follows:

Table 2.1 Structure of Matthew 18

Section	Unit	Content	References
Matthew 18. Community Discourse	1	True greatness defined as humility and childlikeness	18:1-5
	2	Warning against causing little ones to stumble	18:6-9
	3	Parable of the lost sheep: God seeks the vulnerable	18:10-14
	4	Restoring a sinning brother and church discipline	18:15-20
	5	Parable of the unforgiving servant and limitless forgiveness	18:21-35

²⁹ France, *Gospel of Matthew*, 67410-12, 16-20.

³⁰ David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 129-132.

³¹ *The ESV Concise Study Bible* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2021), "Introduction to Matthew," 1059

³² *ESV Concise Study Bible*, 1059.

Within this structure, Matthew 18:10-14 occupies a central position. It follows the warning against causing others to stumble and precedes instructions on restoration, thereby linking accountability with recovery. The passage establishes the principle that no member of the community is expendable and serves as the theological basis for the practices that follow.³³

The logic of the discourse is clear and intentional. God's Will is that none should perish, and God's action is focused on seeking the one who is lost. The implication is that the community must reflect this priority in its own life. The instructions on discipline and forgiveness derive their meaning from this principle, indicating that communal relationships are guided by responsibility for others.

Accordingly, Matthew 18:10-14 must be read within both the broader literary structure of the Gospel and the immediate flow of the discourse. Its placement helps explain its function as the conceptual bridge between warning and restoration. This literary context also prepares the way for a detailed exegetical analysis of the passage.

2.4 Structural Analysis

The passage shows a clear progression in thought within the broader discourse of Matthew's Gospel. Verse 10 introduces a warning concerning the treatment of the "little ones," establishing the main ethical concern of the unit. Verses 12–13 then present the parable of the lost sheep, which serves as a narrative illustration within the discourse. The passage concludes in verse 14 with a theological statement grounded in the will of the Father.

This movement from warning to illustration to theological conclusion reflects the integration of discourse and narrative in Matthew, where teaching is conveyed through story.³⁴ The parable functions not simply as an example, but as an explanation of the warning given in verse 10, expressing in narrative form the divine concern for the "little ones."

The structure therefore establishes a close relationship between divine action and communal responsibility. The shepherd's response becomes the model for how the community is to act toward the "little ones," in accordance with the will of the Father.

2.5 Theological themes in the Gospel of Matthew

The Gospel of Matthew presents a coherent theological account of Jesus as Messiah, structured around his arrival, ministry, opposition, suffering, and final commission (Matt 1:1–28:20). This narrative progression closely follows the outline preserved in the ESV Study

³³ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 430-435.

³⁴ David R. Bauer, *The Structure of Matthew's Gospel* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1988), 129-132.

Bible, highlighting the movement from the Messiah's arrival to his authoritative teaching, rejection, and universal commission. Within this framework, Matthew develops a consistent coherent theological vision of Jesus' identity and the community he forms. Read alongside major scholarship, including R. T. France, Ulrich Luz, and Donald A. Hagner, several dominant themes emerge that are firmly rooted and structurally integrated.³⁵

2.5.1 Jesus as the Messiah

Matthew presents Jesus as the Messiah promised in Israel's Scriptures. This is established in Matthew 1:1 and confirmed throughout the Gospel (Matt 3:17; 16:16; 26:63-64), culminating in his declaration of universal authority (Matt 28:18). The designation "Messiah" is not merely titular but central, guiding the interpretation of Jesus' authority, teaching, and mission throughout the entire Gospel.

2.5.2 Fulfillment of Scripture

Matthew consistently emphasizes that Jesus fulfills the Law and the Prophets (Matt 1:22-23; 2:15, 17-18, 23; 5:17). Fulfillment is not merely predictive but deeply theological, indicating that God's purposes are fulfilled in the life and mission of Jesus. As R. T. France notes, fulfillment means the realization of God's saving intention rather than mere simple correspondence between prediction and event.³⁶

2.5.3 The Kingdom of Heaven

The kingdom of heaven stands at the center of Jesus' proclamation (Matt 4:17) and defines the content of his mission. It is both present, revealed in Jesus' ministry (Matt 12:28), and future, awaiting its consummation (Matt 25:31-46). The ethical demands of the kingdom are clearly articulated in Jesus' teaching, particularly in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt 5-7), where righteousness is defined in everyday practical and relational terms.

2.5.4 The Church and Communal Responsibility (Matt 18:10–14)

The formation of the church is a major theme in Matthew (Matt 16:18; 18:15-20). Chapter 18, as the community discourse, addresses the shared life of this emerging body. Within this context, Matthew 18:10–14 functions as a theological focus. The warning not to despise the "little ones" and the parable of the lost sheep establish key principle no member of the community is expendable.

³⁵ *ESV Concise Study Bible*, 1059. 1059

³⁶ France, *The Gospel of Matthew* 10-15.

This centrality is evident not only in its position within the discourse but also in its function, as it provides the theological foundation basis from which the subsequent instructions on discipline (18:15-20) and forgiveness (18:21-35) draw derive their authority.

The logic of the passage is straightforward. God's will is that not even one should perish, and God's action is focused directed toward seeking the one who is lost. The ethical implication is that the community must reflect this concern in its own practices. While Ulrich Luz highlights the ecclesial dimension of this passage, R. T. France reflects its grounding in the will of the Father, indicating that communal responsibility is theological rather than merely social.³⁷

2.5.5 Conflict, Suffering, and Discipleship

Matthew presents increasing opposition to Jesus (Matt 11-12), culminating in his suffering and death (Matt 26-27). This pattern also extends to his followers, who are warned of persecution (Matt 10:16-25; 24:9-13). Discipleship is therefore defined not only by obedience but by faithful in the face of opposition. As Donald A. Hagner argues, suffering is central to Matthew's understanding of faithful discipleship.³⁸

2.5.6 Mission to the Nations

The Gospel culminates in the command to make disciples of all nations (Matt 28:19-20), extending the mission beyond Israel (cf. Matt 10:5-6). This transition reflects the worldwide scope of Jesus' authority and the expansion of the community he forms. The mission is not merely geographic but also formative, involving the teaching of obedience to Jesus' commands.

Matthew's gospel therefore presents a cohesive theological vision in which Jesus as Messiah fulfills Scripture, inaugurates the kingdom, and forms a community defined by obedience and responsibility. These themes are structurally and theologically woven within the narrative. Within this framework, Matthew 18:10-14 functions as a significant interpretive passage, demonstrating that the life of the community is shaped by the will of the Father to preserve each of its members. Discipleship in Matthew is therefore not merely individual but communal, shown through the active care and responsibility exercised within the believing community.

³⁷ Luz, *Matthew 1-7, 8-20*; France, *The Gospel of Matthew*.

³⁸ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28* (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 760-765.

2.6 Scholarly Discussion

A key interpretive issue concerns the identity of the “little ones” (μικροί) in Matthew 18:10–14. Ulrich Luz argues that the term should be understood primarily in a figurative sense, referring to humble believers within the community, particularly those of low status or limited faith. By contrast, R. T. France maintains that, although the term extends beyond literal children, it retains a specific reference to actual vulnerable persons, including children and socially marginalised individuals.

The disagreement is significant. Luz reads the passage primarily in ecclesial terms, emphasizing shared community dynamics and identity. France, however, stresses its ethical emphasis, arguing that the text requires tangible concern for vulnerable individuals rather than merely abstract recognition.

This study adopts a balanced position. Matthew’s use of the term is intentionally broad, encompassing both literal and metaphorical referents. By preserving this ambiguity, the Gospel strengthens the ethical demand: the community’s responsibility extends to all who are vulnerable, whether socially, spiritually, or structurally.

2.7 Preliminary Analysis

This section provides an initial examination of the passage prior to detailed exegesis. The focus is primarily descriptive, attending to the text in its present form and identifying important features that will guide subsequent analysis.

The passage is considered within its immediate literary context, where it contributes to a broader discourse addressing relationships within the community of believers, particularly in relation to humility and care for the vulnerable. Attention is also given to its placement and function is carefully observed, especially the arrangement of clauses and patterns of emphasis, as these contribute to the development of the passage.

Preliminary attention is given to key lexical elements in the Greek text, particularly where they appear essential to the coherence of the passage. These observations remain at the level of initial identification, with detailed analysis reserved for subsequent sections.

The discussion commences with textual criticism in order to establish the most dependable reliable form of the text. Thereafter, the analysis is proceeds systematically through the passage.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter examined the literary and contextual background of the Gospel according to Matthew as the foundation for understanding Matthew 18:10–14. It considered the general background, historical and literary context, structure, and central theological themes of the Gospel. Particular attention was given to the place of Matthew 18 within the community discourse and to the themes of humility, care for the “little ones,” communal responsibility, and God’s concern for the marginalised.

The chapter established that Matthew 18:10–14 should be understood within the broader context of Jesus’ teaching concerning life within the believing community. This contextual background provides the foundation for examining the meaning of the “little ones,” the warning against despising them, the parable of the lost sheep, and the father’s will that none should perish. The next chapter therefore presents an exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:10–14, with particular attention to its text, language, structure, and theological significance in relation to children’s salvation.

CHAPTER THREE: EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 18:10–14

3.0 Introduction

The place of children within God's saving purpose remains an important subject of theological and pastoral concern within the church. Although many churches actively engage in children's ministry, they often view children primarily as future members of the Christian community rather than as persons who already stand within the scope of God's saving purpose. Consequently, ministry to children is frequently reduced to moral instruction and religious education, while deeper theological reflection on children's salvation and spiritual formation remains limited. This challenge is also evident within the diocese of Kampala, where salvation is often associated mainly with adult understanding and a conscious profession of faith.

Matthew 18:10-14 addresses this issue within the context of Jesus' teaching on humility, responsibility, and care within the believing community. The discourse begins when Jesus places a child before the disciples (Matt. 18:2-5), making the child central to his teaching about the kingdom. The subsequent warning against despising the "little ones" and the parable of the lost sheep further highlight God's will for those who are vulnerable and easily overlooked. The passage therefore presents children not as peripheral figures within the kingdom of God, but as persons who stand under the Father's care and saving desire.

Scholarly interpretation of the "little ones" varies considerably. Some scholars understand the expression broadly as referring to humble believers within the Christian community, while others argue that the immediate context points first to actual children. This study adopts the latter position while recognizing the broader theological application of the text. Accordingly, it maintains that children are the primary referent within the immediate context of Matthew 18:10-14, and while wider application to vulnerable believers develops from this primary reference.

This chapter therefore presents an exegetical analysis of Matthew 18:10–14 to explore its meaning and theological implications concerning children's salvation within the Diocese of Kampala. Particular attention is given to how the passage portrays God's desire for the "little ones" and the implications of this teaching for children's discipleship, spiritual formation, and pastoral ministry within the church.

3.1 Greek Text (NA28)

“[10] Ὅρατε μὴ καταφρονήσητε ἐνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων· λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ παντὸς βλέπουσι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς.

[12] Τί ὑμῖν δοκεῖ; ἐὰν γένηται τινὶ ἀνθρώπῳ ἑκατὸν πρόβατα καὶ πλανηθῇ ἐν ἐξ αὐτῶν, οὐχὶ ἀφήσει τὰ ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη καὶ πορευθεὶς ζητεῖ τὸ πλανώμενον;

[13] καὶ ἐὰν γένηται εὑρεῖν αὐτό, ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι χαίρει ἐπ’ αὐτῷ μᾶλλον ἢ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα τοῖς μὴ πεπλανημένοις.

[14] οὕτως οὐκ ἔστιν θέλημα ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ἵνα ἀπόληται ἐν τῶν μικρῶν τούτων.”

3. 2 English Translation (ESV)

10. “See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

12. What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?

13. And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray.

14. So, it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.”

3.3 Textual Criticism

Textual criticism seeks to establish the most reliable form of the text by carefully examining the available manuscript evidence and assessing significant textual variant. In Matthew 18:10–14, the textual tradition is remarkably stable, with only minor variations that do not significantly affect the meaning of the passage.

The principal textual issue in this passage involves Matthew 18:11 (“For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost”). This verse appears in later manuscripts and is reflected in translations based on the *Textus Receptus*, such as the King James Version (KJV). By contrast, the verse is absent from several of the earliest and most reliable Greek manuscript,

including Codex Sinaiticus (□) and Codex Vaticanus (B).³⁹ Modern critical editions of the Greek New Testament, such as NAS5, therefore omit this verse, and translations dependent on these editions (ESV, NIV, NRSV, CSB) likewise adopt the shorter reading.⁴⁰

Most textual scholars regard the verse as a secondary addition, probably introduced through scribal harmonization with Luke 19:10 rather than forming part of Matthew's original composition.⁴¹ Apart from this textual variant, the remaining verses are highly consistent across the manuscript tradition. Minor differences in wording or order occur, but these do not materially alter the meaning of the passage. Given the strength of the external evidence and the coherence of the shorter reading, this study adopts the critical text that omits verse 11. This decision does not alter the theological thrust of the passage, since the theme of divine concern for the lost is already clearly conveyed in verses 12–14.

3.4 The Exegetical Analysis of Matthew 18:10-14

3.4.1 Matthew 18:10

See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 18:10 begins with the command Ὁρᾶτε (“See that” or “beware”), which is a present active imperative expressing continual vigilance. Although the verb ὁράω literally means “to see,” its meaning in a warning context contends to “be careful” or “be on guard.” Jesus therefore instructs the disciples to constant attentiveness in the way they regard and treat the “little ones.” By placing the imperative at the beginning of the verse, Matthew gives it rhetorical emphasis and highlights the seriousness of Jesus’ instruction. Similar uses of this verb occur elsewhere in the Gospels, such as Matthew 24:4 and Mark 8:15, where the verb introduces warnings calling for discernment and responsibility within the believing community. The command therefore frames the verse as a matter of kingdom responsibility toward the vulnerable.

The warning is expressed through the phrase μὴ καταφρονήσητε (“do not despise”). The verb καταφρονέω carries the sense of “to look down on,” “to disregard,” or “to treat as insignificant.” Accordingly, the emphasis is not on physical mistreatment alone, but on an

³⁹ Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1994), 36.

⁴⁰ Eberhard Nestle et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012); United Bible Societies, *The Greek New Testament*, 5th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2014).

⁴¹ Metzger, *Textual Commentary*, 36.

attitude of contempt or spiritual neglect toward people regarded as insignificant. From a grammatical perspective, the construction μὴ with the aorist subjunctive functions as a strong prohibition, communicating the force of “never do this.” Jesus therefore forbids every form of contempt directed toward the worth of the “little ones.” Whether demonstrated through attitudes, actions or neglect. Within the cultural setting of the first century, children possessed little social status and were commonly viewed as dependent and insignificant. Against this background, Jesus reverses accepted assumptions about greatness by placing children at the center of kingdom (cf. Matt. 18:1–5).

This emphasis is further reinforced by the expression ἐνὸς τῶν μικρῶν τούτων (“one of these little ones”). The singular ἐνός (“one”) draws attention to the worth of each individual indicating that every “little one” must be disregarded. The phrase τῶν μικρῶν (“the little ones”) describes those who are small, weak, or vulnerable, while the demonstrative τούτων (“these”) refers back directly to the child Jesus had placed before the disciples earlier in the discourse. For this reason, the narrative context plays a crucial role, since the teaching in Matthew 18 unfolds from Jesus’ presentation of a child and the model through whom the value of the kingdom is communicated.

Scholars hold differing views on the scope of the expression “little ones.” Ulrich Luz and Donald A. Hagner understands the phrase more broadly to refer to humble or vulnerable believers within the Christian community.⁴² Their interpretation shows the wider ecclesial implications of the passage. By contrast, Craig S. Keener and D. A. Carson maintains that the immediate context indicates actual children as the primary referent, since Jesus had already placed a child before the disciples in Matthew 18:2–5.⁴³ R. T. France takes a mediating position, recognising a broader application while arguing that the saying remains grounded in the child present within the narrative.⁴⁴ The main distinction between these scholars is therefore methodological. Luz and Hagner emphasize theological extension, whereas Keener and Carson give priority to its literary and narrative context. France seeks to integrate both perspectives. This study aligns primarily with the contextual approach of Keener and Carson because the demonstrative τούτων (“these”) naturally points back to the child already

⁴² Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20: A Commentary*, trans. James E. Crouch, Hermeneia (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001), 436–37; Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, Word Biblical Commentary 33B (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 527.

⁴³ Craig S. Keener, *A Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1999), 447–48; D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, rev. ed., ed. Tremper Longman III and David E. Garland (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2010), 398.

⁴⁴ R. T. France, *The Gospel of Matthew*, New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2007), 690–91.

introduced in the passage. Accordingly, the broader application to vulnerable believers is understood as secondary, developing from primary reference to children. This interpretation is particularly significant for the present study because it identifies children, rather than adults alone, as central within the scope of Jesus' purpose and instruction.

Jesus then supports the warning in a theological explanation: λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν ὅτι οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ἐν οὐρανοῖς διὰ παντός βλέπουσι τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς μου τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς ("For I say to you that their angels in heaven continually behold the face of my Father who is in heaven"). The expression λέγω γὰρ ὑμῖν introduces Jesus' authoritative basis for the command, while the conjunction γάρ serves to connect the theological statement to the prohibition against despising the "little ones." Accordingly, the command is founded not only on ethical responsibility, but in heavenly reality.

The phrase οἱ ἄγγελοι αὐτῶν ("their angels") indicates that the "little ones" occupy a recognized place before God. The present tense verb βλέπουσι ("they behold") combined with διὰ παντός ("continually" or "always") highlights their angels; continual access to the Father's presence. Within biblical and royal court imagery, seeing the face of a ruler signifies privileged standing before one authority (cf. Esth. 1:14). Accordingly, the statement contrasts earthly evaluations within the heavenly perspectives, those whom society considers acknowledged may regard as insignificant are recognized before the Father in heaven.

The phrase τὸ πρόσωπον τοῦ πατρὸς μου ("the face of my Father") further underscores the theological significance of the verse. Throughout the biblical tradition, access to God's "face" represents favor, acceptance, and nearness to the divine presence (cf. Num. 6:25; Ps. 16:11). The title "my Father who is in heaven" brings together intimacy and authority, a theme that appears repeatedly in Matthew (cf. Matt. 5:16; 6:9). The Father enthroned in heaven is also the Father who watches over the "little ones." For this reason, despising them stands in opposition to heavenly values and divine care.

France warns against developing a detailed doctrine of guardian angels from this verse, maintaining that the emphasis is on heavenly significance of the "little ones."⁴⁵ Luz likewise interprets the statement as highlighting divine purpose rather than angelology itself.⁴⁶ Keener, by contrast argues that the language reflects Jewish traditions in which angels represent and protect God's people before the divine presence (cf. Ps. 91:11; Heb. 1:14).⁴⁷

⁴⁵ France, *Matthew*, 691.

⁴⁶ Luz, *Matthew* 8–20, 437

⁴⁷ Keener, *Matthew*, 448.

Although these scholars differ in their understanding of the precise role of the angels, they concur that the central emphasis of the verse rests on the dignity and value of the “little ones” before God. Accordingly, this study interprets the reference to angels primarily as a theological affirmation that children remain under the direct attention, care, and authority of the heavenly Father.

From the theological perspective, Matthew 18:10 makes clear that children are not spiritually insignificant within the kingdom of God. Jesus bases their value not in social status or human importance, but in their relationship to the heavenly Father. Accordingly, the verse therefore challenges attitudes that marginalize children within the life of the church while providing a biblical foundation for recognizing the importance of their spiritual formation. In light of the argument of this study, Matthew 18:10 shows that children fall within the scope of God’s saving care and ought to be intentionally included in the church’s ministry of discipleship, nurture, and pastoral care.

3.4.2 Matthew 18:12

What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?

Jesus begins the parable with the question *Tí ὑμῖν δοκεῖ* (“What do you think?”), a rhetorical expression that intentionally engages the disciples into the process of judgment. Rather than issuing a direct assertion, Jesus presents the teaching in a way that requires the audience to participate intellectually and morally in the argument. Grammatically, *δοκεῖ* is a present active indicative of *δοκέω*, functioning impersonally and meaning “what seems right to you?” or “what is your judgment?” The present tense emphasizes immediate evaluation, while *ὑμῖν* (“to you”) addresses the disciples collectively, thereby making the judgment communal rather than individual. The question therefore functions pedagogically, leading the hearers to reach the conclusion themselves before Jesus draws out its theological implications.

R. T. France argues that the question appeals to ordinary human judgement, so that the hearers are compelled to acknowledge the shepherd’s behavior as appropriate before recognizing its deeper theological significance.⁴⁸ By contrast, Ulrich Luz emphasizes the rhetorical strategy of the question, noting that deliberately draws the disciples in the logic of the parable so that the conclusion emerges through participation rather than direct instruction.

⁴⁸ R. T. France, *Matthew*, 691.

⁴⁹ While France stresses common-sense reasoning, Luz places emphasis on rhetorical engagement. Taken together, their interpretations demonstrate that the interrogative form is central to the persuasive force of the passage because it moves the disciples from passive listeners into participants within the argument itself.

The conditional clause *ἐὰν γένηται τινι ἀνθρώπῳ ἑκατὸν πρόβατα* (“if a man has a hundred sheep”) introduces the pastoral setting of the parable. The conjunction *ἐὰν* introduces a third-class condition, describing a realistic and conceivable situation rather than an abstract hypothetical case. The expression *τινι ἀνθρώπῳ* (“a certain man”) deliberately presents the figure of the shepherd, allowing the audience to identify naturally with the scenario. The flock of “a hundred sheep” suggests substantial responsibility and economic value. However, the structure of the narrative immediately shifts attention away from the collective to the individual sheep.

Craig L. Blomberg observes that the significance of the number lies in the contrast between one and ninety-nine, which intensifies the value of the individual sheep within the larger flock.⁵⁰ France similarly notes that the narrative deliberately redirects attention from the security of the majority to the vulnerability of the one.⁵¹ Taken together, these views reveal that the emphasis of the parable is not numerical calculation but rather a significance of the endangered individual within the community.

The problem is introduced in the clause *καὶ πλανηθῇ ἐν ἑξ αὐτῶν* (“and one of them goes astray”). The verb *πλανηθῇ*, an aorist passive subjunctive from *πλανάω*, carries the sense of wandering or becoming lost. The passive form is exegetically important because it shifts the focus away from deliberate rebellion and toward vulnerability and exposure. The sheep is presented not as defiant but as endangered.

Joachim Jeremias argues that the imagery elicits compassion rather than blame, since wandering sheep in biblical tradition symbolize weakness and helplessness.⁵² France, however, cautions against reducing the image to sentimentality, maintaining that the sheep’s separation from the flock represents genuine danger and therefore intensifies the urgency of the shepherd’s response.⁵³ The scholarly interaction is important because Jeremias emphasizes vulnerability, whereas France highlights the seriousness of the condition itself.

⁴⁹ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 437.

⁵⁰ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 278.

⁵¹ France, *Matthew*, 692.

⁵² Joachim Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, rev. ed. (London: SCM Press, 1972), 132.

⁵³ France, *Matthew*, 692.

Taken together, these interpretations show that the significance of the sheep lies precisely in its exposed and endangered state.

The rhetorical question οὐχὶ ἀφήσει τὰ ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη (“does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains?”) marks the shepherd’s response. The particle οὐχὶ expects an affirmative answer and therefore directs the hearers toward agreement. The future verb ἀφήσει (“he will leave”) expresses deliberate action rather than impulsive behavior. Of equal importance is the phrase ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη (“on the mountains”), which indicates that the ninety-nine remain within a recognized grazing area rather than being recklessly abandoned.

France argues that the shepherd’s conduct appears economically irrational because risking ninety-nine sheep for one runs contrary to ordinary expectations of practical management.⁵⁴ Luz, however, interprets this apparent irrationality as the theological center of the parable, arguing that the narrative deliberately overturns conventional calculations of value by prioritizing the endangered individual over the secure majority.⁵⁵ Together, these scholars demonstrate that the tension within the parable is deliberate: what appears unreasonable from an economic perspective is understandable within the framework of divine will.

The shepherd’s response finds its climax in the phrase καὶ πορευθεὶς ζητεῖ τὸ πλανώμενον (“and he goes and searches for the one that went astray”). The participle πορευθεὶς (“having gone”) conveys decisive movement, while the present tense verb ζητεῖ (“he searches”) highlights continuous and sustained effort. The shepherd does not merely acknowledge the loss; he actively seeks the wandering sheep. The object τὸ πλανώμενον (“the one that has gone astray”) maintains the emphasis on the sheep’s continuing condition of vulnerability.

Jeremias interprets the shepherd’s action as evidence of active care rather than passive awareness, arguing that the search itself constitutes the defining feature of the shepherd’s character.⁵⁶ Similarly, N. T. Wright maintains that the shepherd’s initiative reflects a pattern of divine care in which the vulnerable are not left to recover independently but are actively sought out.⁵⁷ Taken together, their interaction reinforces the theological movement of the text from awareness of loss to intentional pursuit, emphasizing that true care is expressed through persistent action on behalf of the vulnerable.

⁵⁴ France, *Matthew*, 693.

⁵⁵ Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 437.

⁵⁶ Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 134.

⁵⁷ N. T. Wright, *Matthew for Everyone, Part Two* (London: SPCK, 2004), 24.

Within the immediate context of Matthew 18, the parable serves as an interpretive illustration of Jesus' teaching about the "little ones." The movement of the narrative consistently focuses attention on the vulnerable member who is separated and endangered. The shepherd's conduct demonstrates that vulnerability demands intentional action rather than passive observation. Consequently, the parable establishes a theological principle that the worth of an individual is not measured by numerical significance or social status, but by the concern that seeks and protects the vulnerable.

3.4.3 Matthew 18:13

And if he finds it, truly, I say to you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray.

Verse 13 continues from the shepherd's search to his response after finding the lost sheep. The clause καὶ ἐὰν εὑρῇ αὐτό ("and if he finds it") introduces the successful outcome of the search. The conjunction ἐὰν presents the finding of the sheep as a real possibility, while the verb εὑρῇ (aorist subjunctive of εὐρίσκω) marks the decisive moment of recovery. The focus remains on the individual sheep, which is underscored by the singular pronoun αὐτό ("it").

R. T. France argues that the clause reflects the shepherd's expectation of success, showing that the search is purposeful and directed toward recovery rather than uncertainty.⁵⁸ Joachim Jeremias likewise argues that the shepherd's actions are driven by determination, since the value of the sheep makes the search necessary from the beginning.⁵⁹ Both scholars show that the clause as emphasizing intentional restoration rather than accidental discovery.

The statement ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν ("truly I say to you") momentarily interrupts the narrative and confers authority on what follows. The expression identifies the shepherd's joy as the main point of the parable. The particle ἀμὴν strengthens the certainty of Jesus' words, while λέγω ("I say") introduces the statement as a direct and authoritative declaration.

Jeremias observes that Jesus' use of ἀμὴν is distinctive because he uses it to introduce his own teaching with authority.⁶⁰ France agrees that the formula signals the importance of the statement that follows, but emphasizes its function within Matthew as a maker of

⁵⁸ R. T. France, *Matthew*, 694

⁵⁹ Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 134.

⁶⁰ Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 36.

authoritative teaching.⁶¹ Both, these views show that the verse is moving beyond narrative detail toward theological meaning.

The central emphasis of the verse is found in the clause ὅτι χαίρει ἐπ' αὐτῷ (“that he rejoices over it”). The present tense verb χαίρει (“he rejoices”) expresses continuing joy rather than a brief emotional reaction. The phrase ἐπ' αὐτῷ (“over it”) indicates the recovered sheep as the cause of the shepherd’s joy. The focus therefore shifts from the act of finding to the significance of restoration.

France argues that the emphasis falls on the extraordinary joy associated with the recovery of the sheep rather than simply on the recovery itself.⁶² Ulrich Luz likewise interprets the joy as the theological center of the parable because it reveals the value attached to restoration.⁶³ Craig Blomberg, however, argues that the joy challenges ordinary human assumptions about value, since the response to a single sheep appears disproportionate.⁶⁴ While France and Luz focus on the theological meaning of the joy, Blomberg highlights its rhetorical effect in challenging normal expectations. Together, the scholars show that the shepherd’s joy reveals the great value placed on the lost sheep.

This emphasis is further reinforced by the comparison μᾶλλον ἢ ἐπὶ τοῖς ἐνενήκοντα ἐννέα (“more than over the ninety-nine”). The comparative μᾶλλον (“more”) heightens the shepherd’s response and introduces a deliberate reversal of expected priorities. The point is not that the ninety-nine are unimportant, but that the recovery of the lost sheep brings greater joy because restoration has taken place.

France argues that the comparison intentionally appears so as to direct attention to the significance of the individual.⁶⁵ Luz interprets the contrast theologically, arguing that restoration becomes more significant than continued security.⁶⁶ Joachim Jeremias similarly notes that the comparison reverses ordinary expectations by shifting attention from the majority to the one sheep.⁶⁷ Although the scholars approach the text differently, they agree that the comparison is designed to redefine value and priority within the kingdom of God.

The phrase τοῖς μὴ πεπλανημένοις (“those who did not go astray”) identifies the condition of the ninety-nine sheep. The perfect participle πεπλανημένοις depicts a continuing state of

⁶¹ France, *Matthew*, 694.

⁶² France, *Matthew*, 694.

⁶³ Ulrich Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 438.

⁶⁴ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 279.

⁶⁵ France, *Matthew*, 694.

⁶⁶ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 438.

⁶⁷ Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus*, 134.

security. The contrast is therefore between the sheep that remained safe and the sheep that experienced the joy of recovery after being lost.

France emphasizes that the ninety-nine are not neglected but serve as the background for understanding the significance of the recovered sheep.⁶⁸ Luz agrees, though he places greater emphasis on the theological meaning of restoration rather than on the condition of the ninety-nine themselves.⁶⁹ Their interaction shows that the comparison exists not to reduce the value of the many, but to highlight the importance of restoring the lost.

In conclusion, Matthew 18:13 emphasizes the joy that accompanies salvation. Through the shepherd's response, Jesus teaches that the recovery of the lost carries special significance within the kingdom of God. The verse therefore reveals God's deep care for the vulnerable and demonstrates that salvation, not numerical importance, determines true value within the community of believers.

3.4.4 Matthew 18:14

So, it is not the will of my Father who is in heaven that one of these little ones should perish.

Verse 14 presents the theological conclusion of the parable of the lost sheep. The statement begins with οὕτως (“so” or “in this way”), a term that establishes a direct connection between the shepherd's actions in verses 12–13 and the will of the Father. The adverb therefore functions as the interpretive bridge within the passage. The shepherd's search for the lost sheep is not presented merely as an example of human compassion, but as a revelation of God's purpose. The movement of the text progresses from narrative illustration to theological assertion.

R. T. France interprets οὕτως primarily as a structural connector linking the parable with its conclusion.⁷⁰ Ulrich Luz, however, argues that the term carries theological significance because it presents the shepherd's conduct as reflecting God's care for the weak.⁷¹ Davies and Allison also observe that the word gives interpretive force to the parable by making the narrative the basis of the theological statement that follows.⁷² France therefore emphasizes the grammatical function of the term, whereas Luz and Davies-Allison stress its theological

⁶⁸ France, *Matthew*, 694.

⁶⁹ Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 438

⁷⁰ R. T. France, *Matthew*, 695

⁷¹ Luz, *Matthew 8–20*, 439.

⁷² W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 2 (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 768.

implication. These interpretations demonstrate that οὕτως is both structural and theological, for it links the parable to its conclusion while also identifying the shepherd's actions as a reflection of God's will.

The theological assertion itself appears in οὐκ ἔστιν θέλημα (“it is not the will”). The present tense verb ἔστιν presents the Father's will as continuous and enduring, while the negation οὐκ emphatically excludes the possibility that the loss of the “little ones” could accord with the father's intention. The emphasis falls not on human effort but on the settled purpose of God.

France argues that this statement makes explicit the theological meaning of the parable explicit by grounding it directly in the Father's will.⁷³ Craig L. Blomberg similarly maintains that the verse clarifies God's purpose of preserving even the least significant members of the community.⁷⁴ Davies and Allison further note that the statement transforms the parable into a direct doctrinal affirmation about divine purpose.⁷⁵ While France emphasizes the clarity of the theological claim, Blomberg highlights its pastoral implication, and Davie and Allison stress its interpretive role within the narrative. These interpretations indicate that the verse moves beyond illustration to state clearly what God wills concerning the vulnerable.

The source of this will is identified by ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ Πατρὸς ὑμῶν τοῦ ἐν οὐρανοῖς (“before your Father who is in heaven”). The expression “your Father” emphasizes relationship, while “in heaven” stresses his authority and sovereignty. Matthew consistently combines these themes to portray God as both a caring Father and heavenly ruler. The phrase therefore grounds the statement in both intimacy and authority.

Ulrich Luz emphasizes the relational aspect of “your Father,” arguing that the phrase highlights God's concern for members of the believing community.⁷⁶ France, however, stresses the authority implied in the expression “in heaven,” noting that the Father's will carries sovereign force.⁷⁷ Davies and Allison bring these perspectives together by arguing that Matthew intentionally joins relationship and authority within the same expression.⁷⁸ Their observations demonstrate that divine care in Matthew is never separated from divine sovereignty: the Father who rules in heaven is also personally concerned for the vulnerable.

⁷³ France, *Matthew*, 695.

⁷⁴ Blomberg, *Matthew*, 280.

⁷⁵ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 768.

⁷⁶ Luz, *Matthew 8-20*, 439.

⁷⁷ France, *Matthew*, 695.

⁷⁸ Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 768.

The content of the Father's will is then defined in ἵνα ἀπόληται ἐν τῶν μικρῶν τούτων ("that one of these little ones should perish"). The conjunction ἵνα introduces what is excluded from divine intention, while the singular ἐν ("one") places particular emphasis on the individual. The value of the vulnerable is therefore expressed not collectively but personally. Even one "little one" matters before God.

The phrase τῶν μικρῶν τούτων ("these little ones") connects directly with the child introduced earlier in Matthew 18:2–5. The demonstrative τούτων ("these") points back to the immediate narrative setting and therefore indicates a concrete rather than abstract reference.

At this point, scholars differ regarding the identity of the "little ones." Donald A. Hagner and France interpret the phrase more broadly as referring to humble or vulnerable believers within the Christian community.⁷⁹ In contrast, Craig S. Keener and D. A. Carson argue that the immediate narrative context requires the primary reference to be actual children, since Jesus has already placed a child before the disciples.⁸⁰ N. T. Wright supports this contextual reading by emphasizing that God's kingdom is directed especially toward the weak and dependent.⁸¹ The difference between these scholars is methodological. Hagner and France emphasize theological extension, whereas Keener and Carson gives priority to the narrative context. The contextual reading is more persuasive because the demonstrative τούτων naturally refers back to the child already present within the scene. The broader application to vulnerable believers may follow, but it develops from the primary reference to children.

The seriousness of the statement is intensified by the verb ἀπόληται ("should perish"), derived from ἀπόλλυμι, which conveys the idea of complete loss or destruction. In the context of the parable, the term points not only to present danger but also to the possibility of ultimate ruin. At the same time, the image of the lost sheep, however, prevents the word from being understood as referring solely to irreversible destruction, since the sheep remains recoverable.

France interprets the term within the broader context of Matthew's wider emphasis on judgment and therefore stresses its eschatological dimension.⁸² Carson similarly argues that the word points toward ultimate destruction.⁸³ In contrast, Keener emphasizes the immediate context of the lost sheep and maintains that the term retains the sense of a sheep that is

⁷⁹ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14-28*, Word Biblical Commentary 33B (Dallas: Word Books, 1995), 528; France, *Matthew*, 695.

⁸⁰ Keener, *Matthew*, 399.

⁸¹ Wright, *Matthew for Everyone, Part 2*, 24.

⁸² France, *Matthew*, 695.

⁸³ Carson, *Matthew*, 399.

endangered yet recoverable.⁸⁴ Wright extends this restorative emphasis further by interpreting the verse within the framework of God's saving concern for the vulnerable.⁸⁵ While France and Carson stress final loss, Keener and Wright emphasize present vulnerability and restoration. These differing perspectives indicate that the term includes both the danger of present loss and the possibility of ultimate ruin if left unresolved.

The structure of verse 14 therefore progresses carefully from the parable to its theological meaning. The shepherd's search provides the pattern for interpreting the Father's will, and the conclusion clearly states that the loss of even one vulnerable person stands outside divine intention.

3.5 Meaning of Matthew 18:10-14

Matthew 18:10–14 reveals that children have an important place within God's kingdom and are under God's loving care. Through the warning against despising the "little ones" and the parable of the lost sheep, Jesus emphasizes that the vulnerable are not overlooked by the Father. The passage presents God as personally concerned with the preservation and return of even one "little one," showing that their value rests on the Father's will rather than on human measures of importance or status.

The passage therefore provides a strong theological foundation for the church to take children seriously in its life and ministry of the church. By presenting the "little ones" as those whom God deeply values, Matthew 18:10–14 challenges approaches that minimize children's spiritual significance or postpone serious engagement with their faith. In conclusion, Matthew 18:14 teaches that God's will is directed toward the preservation and salvation of the "little ones." Within the immediate context, these "little ones" refer first to children, though the principle extends to all who are weak and vulnerable within the community of believers. Through the conclusion of the parable, Jesus reveals that no vulnerable individual is insignificant before God, because the Father's care extends personally and deliberately to each of them.

3.6 Conclusion

Matthew 18:10–14 portrays the "little ones" as precious before God and demonstrates the Father's concern for their preservation rather than their destruction. The exegetical analysis indicates that, within the immediate context of Matthew 18, the "little ones" refer primarily to

⁸⁴ Keener, *Matthew*, 449.

children because Jesus had placed a child before the disciples (Matt. 18:2–5), and the demonstrative expression "these little ones" naturally points back to that child. Although the principle also applies to humble and vulnerable believers, the passage primarily refers to children. The parable of the lost sheep further reveals God's initiative in seeking those who have gone astray, His joy in their restoration, and His desire that not even one should perish. These exegetical findings form the biblical and theological foundation for considering the implications of Matthew 18:10–14 for the salvation of children.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS, THEOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

4.0 Introduction

This Chapter presents and integrates the findings from the exegetical study of Matthew 18:10-14 concerning children's spiritual formation and discipleship. The discussion examines how the theological vision of Matthew 18:10-14 relates to contemporary ecclesial understanding and pastoral practice within the Church.

The chapter follows the qualitative exegetical-theological methodology discussed in Chapter Three, which integrated biblical exegesis with field research. The exegetical component employed grammatical-historical, literary, and theological approaches to examine Matthew 18:10-15, while the field research explored pastoral attitudes, theological perspectives and ministry practices within the Diocese of Kampala. By bringing these approaches together, the study was able to evaluate areas of convergence and tension between the biblical text and contemporary church practice.

The discussion draws on data collected through semi- structured interviews and questionnaires administered to clergy, children's ministry leaders, and lay members involved in the spiritual nurture of children within the Diocese of Kampala.

Table 4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age category	18-25	8	17.8
	26-35	16	35.6
	36-45	9	20
	46-55	7	15.6
	56+	5	11.1
	Gender		
	Male	21	46.7
	Female	24	53.3
Role in Church	Clergy	11	24.4
	Children's ministry leaders	15	33.3
	Lay members	19	42.2
Years of service	1-5 years	12	26.7
	6-10 years	19	42.2

	11- 15 years	4	8.9
	16-20 years	4	8.9
	above 20	6	13.3
Parish	A	15	33.3
	B	15	33.3
	C	15	33.3

4.1.1 Interpretation of Demographic Characteristics of respondents

Table 4.2 summarizes the demographic characteristics of the 45 respondents who participated in the study. The respondents were drawn from selected Anglican parishes within the Diocese of Kampala and comprised clergy, children's ministry leaders, and lay members involved in the spiritual nurture of children.

In the line of age, the largest proportion of respondents fell within 26 and 35 years (35.6%, n = 16), followed by those aged 36-45 years (20.0%, n = 9). Respondents aged 18-25 years constituted 17.8% (n = 8), while those aged 46-55 years accounted for 15.6% (n = 7). The smallest age comprised of respondents aged 56 years and above (11.1%, n = 5). Overall, these findings indicate that the study included respondents from a broad range of adult age groups actively involved in church life and ministry, thereby offering diverse perspectives on children's salvation and spiritual formation.

The gender distribution indicated that female respondents constituted the majority (53.3%, n = 24), while male respondents accounted for 46.7% (n = 21). The relatively balanced representation of both genders strengthened the study by incorporating perspectives from both men and women regarding children's salvation, discipleship, and spiritual nurture within the Church.

Regarding church roles, lay members formed the largest category (42.2%, n = 19), followed by children's ministry leaders (33.3%, n = 15) and clergy (24.4%, n = 11). This distribution allowed the study to capture views from different levels of church leadership and participation, thereby contributing to a comprehensive understanding of theological and pastoral perspectives concerning children's salvation within the Diocese of Kampala.

The findings on Ministry experience revealed that the majority of respondents had served in the Church for 6-10 years (42.2%, n = 19), while 26.7% (n = 12) had served for 1-5 years. Respondents with more than 20 years of service accounted for 13.3% (n = 6), whereas those

with 11–15 years and 16–20 years of service each represented 8.9% (n = 4). These findings suggest that most respondents had substantial ministry experience and were therefore well positioned to provide informed reflections on children’s ministry and spiritual formation.

The respondents were equally distributed across the three participating parishes. Parishes A, B, and C each contributed 15 respondents (33.3%), ensuring balanced representation from the different study locations. This distribution suggested that the findings reflected perspectives from multiple parish contexts within the Diocese of Kampala rather than from a single parish setting.

Overall, the respondents represented a diverse group of respondents in terms of age, gender, church role, ministry experience, and parish affiliation. This diversity strengthened the study by bringing together a broad range of perspectives on children’s salvation, discipleship, and spiritual formation within the Diocese of Kampala.

With the demographic profile established, the chapter now turns to the presentation and analysis of the findings based on the research questions that guided the study.

The findings are organized around the following research questions:

- i. What was the exegetical and contextual meaning of Matthew 18:10–14 concerning children’s salvation?
- ii. How did the participants interpret children’s salvation theologically, and what were the contemporary understandings within the Diocese of Kampala?
- iii. What strategies, grounded in Matthew 18:10–14, could strengthen children’s salvation and discipleship ministries in the Diocese of Kampala?

The chapter then examines the exegetical and contextual meaning of Matthew 18:10–14, focusing particularly on themes of vulnerability, divine concern, discipleship, pastoral responsibility, and the place of the “little ones” within the kingdom of God. It also considers contemporary understandings within the Diocese of Kampala, including how churches teach about salvation, nurture children spiritually, and respond to challenges affecting discipleship, participation, parental involvement, and ministry effectiveness. The final section proposes biblically grounded strategies for strengthening discipleship and pastoral care ministries within the Diocese of Kampala informed by theological implications of Matthew 18:10–14. The chapter concludes with a theological integration of exegetical findings and field data to assess how contemporary church practice corresponds with the theological vision of Matthew 18:10–14 concerning children’s inclusion within God’s salvific plan.

4.2 How the Church Teaches about the salvation of Children

The researcher asked respondents how their Church teaches about the salvation of children. Their responses indicated that the Church employs a variety of platforms and pedagogical approaches. Respondents reported that instruction is provided through “Dream Wave” (a children’s ministry programme), “seminars,” and “holiday weekly fellowships”. They also explained that the Church teaches that children are precious to God and they should be spiritually nurtured, trusting in His mercy for their salvation until they can embrace faith”. In addition, respondents stated that the Church “leads children to receive salvation from early childhood age and also guides them on how to live and walk with Christ as they grow”. Others indicated that teaching is offered through sermons, Bible studies and fellowships.

These respondents suggest that the Diocese of Kampala uses a multi-modal approach to children’s spiritual formation through formal liturgical settings, dedicated children’s programmes, and informal fellowship contexts. The emphasis on nurturing children from early childhood reflects a broadly Wesleyan and evangelical theological posture, consistent with the Anglican heritage of the Church of Uganda, which holds that while salvation is ultimately a work of divine grace, the Church has a covenantal responsibility to provide the formative environment in which children can come to personal faith. At the same times, the variation in depth and consistency of response across parishes suggests that while the theological conviction about children’s value is broadly shared, the practical implementation is uneven and appears to depend largely on the individual initiative of clergy and children’s ministry leaders rather than a standardized diocesan curriculum.

4.3 Whether Children Require Personal Repentance and Faith for Salvation

The researcher asked respondents whether children require personal repentance and faith for salvation. All forty-five respondents answered affirmatively, indicating “yes”. The explanatory remarks included statements such as “salvation is personal for all” and that “it is by their hearts that they believe and by their mouths that they confess, as guided by the Holy Spirit.”

These responses indicate a unanimous theological consensus among respondents that salvation, even for children, is not automatic, hereditary, or purely ecclesiastical in nature; it requires a personal response of faith and repentance. This position is consistent with the evangelical soteriological tradition and reflects a broadly held conviction in the Church of Uganda that children must be guided into a conscious, personal encounter with Christ. The

unanimous nature of this response is theologically significant because it implies that the Diocese of Kampala does not subscribe to a sacramentalist or automatic salvation model for children but rather sees the task of children's ministry as creating the conditions and opportunities for children to make an informed, heartfelt commitment to Christ. Accordingly, this has direct implications for curriculum design, pastoral practice, and the age-appropriateness of evangelistic approaches in children's ministry, reinforcing the need for deliberate, child-centred discipleship that invites rather than coerces personal faith responses.

4.4 Current Nurturing of the Faith and Spiritual Formation of Children in the Parish

The researcher asked respondents how the parish currently nurtures the faith and spiritual formation of children. Their responses showed that multiple mechanisms are employed. Respondents described the use of regular training and workshops for teachers" and the provision of "platforms for children to lead services. They also referred to "involving and teaching children in ministry"; "teaching them scripture and Christian beliefs, involving them in worship, and providing mentorship and community support" as well as the organisation of "youth conferences and seminars" through which children are "groomed and nurtured in their spiritual formation." Others highlighted the maintenance of "fellowships for children to grow."

These responses suggest that the Parishes within the Diocese of Kampala employ a reasonably diverse range of formative practices aimed at nurturing children's faith. The emphasis on both knowledge transmission (scripture, Christian beliefs) and participatory engagement (children leading services, mentorship, community involvement) reflects an understanding that spiritual formation is not merely cognitive but relational and experiential. The inclusion of teachers training as a distinct activity is particularly significant, as it suggests an awareness that the quality of children's ministry depends largely upon the preparation and ongoing development of those who lead it. At the same time, the diversity of responses also indicates a lack of standardisation, suggesting that the breadth and depth of formative provision available to a child may vary considerably depending on the parish attended within the Diocese.

4.5 Ways the Church's Teaching on Salvation includes or overlooks Children

The researcher asked respondents how the Church's teaching on salvation includes or overlooks children. Their responses revealed a mixed picture. On the inclusive side,

respondents noted that “the message preached is for all, both adults and children at different levels.” However, respondents also identified area where children are overlooked, including “neglecting their spiritual development - assuming salvation is automatic without teaching them faith and discipleship as they grow” and the exclusion of “some children for what they cannot do.”

These responses point to tension at the heart of contemporary practice in the Diocese of Kampala. While the Church officially espouses an inclusive theology in which all - adults and children - are recipients of the Gospel, the practical reality is that children are sometimes functionally excluded from the salvific process through passive neglect, overly adult-centred preaching, and the assumption that salvation will occur automatically without intentional discipleship. The observation that some children are excluded “for what they cannot do” points to a form of ability-based gatekeeping that contradicts the theological affirmation, established under Objective one, that every child is precious before God. This tension between theological conviction and pastoral practice emerges as critical finding that the Diocese needs to address through structural reform, clerical formation, and the deliberate placing of children at the centre of its evangelistic and discipleship frameworks.

4.6 Effectiveness of current Children’s Ministries and Challenges faced

The researcher asked respondents to assess the effectiveness of current children’s ministries in promoting salvation and discipleship. Their responses reflected mixed levels of effectiveness, with respondents rating their parishes as ranging from “somewhat effective” to “effective.” No parish was unanimously rated as “very effective” or “not effective.”

Respondents were also asked about the challenges the Church faces in helping children grow in their faith and understanding of salvation. Their responses identified a cluster of interconnected difficulties. These included “lack of enough manpower (willing and teachable)” and “fear of parents due to many false teachers that can mislead their children”; “financial difficulty” and “limited staffing or ministers for children”; “limited time, lack of resources, lack of parental support, and difficulty making complex spiritual concepts accessible to children”; “many religious doctrines that are unclear,” the cost of Church activities for children, and the corrosive influence of secular culture, including “music, movies and fashion”; and “limited resources in terms of personnel to walk with children on their salvation journey.”

These responses point to a multi-dimensional challenge that operates simultaneously at the levels of human resources, financial capacity, theological clarity, family partnership, and

cultural environment. The concern about false teachers and unclear religious doctrines is particularly significant in the contemporary Ugandan religious landscape, where the proliferation of independent charismatic and prosperity-gospel movements has created doctrinal confusion among both adults and children. The Diocese of Kampala therefore needs to develop a robust, clearly articulated theology of children's salvation to equip parents, clergy, and lay leaders with consistent and scripturally grounded guidance for children navigating this complex religious environment. The financial and personnel constraints identified by respondents also highlight the need for strategic resource allocation and the allocation of lay volunteers as a sustainable complement to professional ministry staff.

4.7 Biblically Grounded Strategies for Strengthening Children's Salvation and Discipleship Ministries in the Diocese of Kampala

The third objective of this study sought to propose biblically grounded strategies for strengthening children's salvation and discipleship ministries in the Diocese of Kampala. Questions in Section E of the interview guide were designed to address this objective directly. The responses and their interpretation are presented below.

4.7.1 Better Equipping Clergy and Lay Leaders to Minister to Children Regarding Salvation

The researcher asked the respondents how clergy and lay leaders can be better equipped to minister to children regarding salvation. Their responses identified training, relational investment, and financial support as the primary avenues. Respondents called for "training them on the modalities that come with discipling children, "support in finances and knowledge in regards to children's salvation, "and training in "child theology, learning ways to teach scripture, developing mentoring skills, training more ministers, and increasing financial funding. "Others emphasised a relational approach summarised as "encourage involvement in their Church, know their names, pray for them, remember what they love, connect with them at the family level.

These responses suggest that effective ministry to children is not primarily a matter of programme sophistication but well informed and relationally invested leadership. The call for training in child theology is particularly important because it suggests that many current ministers, though well-intentioned, may lack the specialised theological and developmental knowledge required to engage children meaningfully on matters of faith and salvation. The Diocese of Kampala could therefore benefit greatly from investing in a structured child theology curriculum as part of its clergy formation and continuing education programmes.

Equally significant is the emphasis on relational proximity - knowing children by name, praying for them individually, and connecting with their families which reflects the incarnational model of ministry exemplified by Jesus in Matthew 18, where the shepherd's love is not abstract but personally directed toward the one lost sheep.

4.7.2 Strategies the Diocese of Kampala can Adopt to Strengthen Children's Salvation and Discipleship

The researcher asked respondents which strategies the Diocese of Kampala could adopt to strengthen Children's salvation and discipleship ministries. The responses were rich and multifaceted. Respondents proposed providing first-rate training, equip a major team to train the rest, support families, and prioritise people not programmes"; developing "faith-based programmes, involving parents in spiritual formation, and integrating prayer and service opportunities into children's church life"; organising youth and children conferences, workshops and seminars, do charity children-based activities, and do follow-up activities and evaluations for the converted"; and using "one-on-one discipleship, group discipleship, and activities to engage children."

These responses outline a comprehensive strategic framework that operates at four interconnected levels: leadership development, programme design, family engagement, and accountability. The emphasis on prioritising "people not programmes" reflects a healthy corrective to the institutional tendency to substitute structural activity for genuine relational investment. The call for follow-up and evaluation of converted children is particularly commendable, as it addresses one of the most significant gaps identified in the literature on children's ministry: the tendency to celebrate decisions for Christ without providing the sustained discipleship that consolidates and matures those decisions into durable faith. The Diocese of Kampala should consider formalising these strategies into a coherent diocesan children's ministry framework, grounded in the theological principles of Matthew 18:10-14, to provide consistent guidance and accountability across all its parishes.

4.7.3 Ensuring every Child feels Valued and Spiritually Cared for

The researcher asked respondents how the Church can ensure that every child feels valued and spiritually cared for. Their respondents emphasised that the creation of safe, inclusive, and participatory spaces is essential. Respondents called for "creating a safe space for children to express themselves and grow in Christ"; "promoting equality in their deeds and teachings"; "creating a good attentive environment that caters for each child, providing guidance, encouraging participation in worship, and praying for every individual";

“increasing the number of avenues for children to minister and increasing their involvement in church activities”; and practical acts of pastoral care such as “calling or visiting to check on them, involving them and making them responsible, and providing free resources like Bibles in Church.”

These responses affirm that children’s sense of being valued is cultivated not through declarations alone but through consistent, tangible acts of inclusion, investment, and care. The emphasis on creating safe spaces is theologically resonant with the Matthew 18, where Jesus’ injunction not to despise the little ones implies the creation of an environment in which children can be themselves, vulnerable, curious and growing, without fear of rejection or marginalisation. The Diocese of Kampala could therefore evaluate its current environments and practices against this standard, asking whether its buildings, programmes, liturgies, and interpersonal cultures communicate to every child that they are known, loved, and indispensable to the Body of Christ.

4.7.4 The Role of Parents and Families in Reinforcing the Church’s Mission towards Children’s Salvation

The researcher asked respondents about the role parents and families can play in reinforcing the Church’s mission of children’s salvation. Their responses consistently pointed to the family as the primary and indispensable unit of spiritual formation. Respondents identified the need for “devoted supervision, prayer, and involvement”; “support in every way possible”; “modelling faith in daily life, teaching scripture at home, guiding children in prayer, and supporting Church activities”; the conviction that “parents and families should train children in the right way and also make them feel loved”; and the importance of families doing “their part at home to keep children plugged in, bringing and involving the children in Church activities.”

These respondents pointed to the family as the irreplaceable primary locus of a child’s spiritual formation, with the Church functioning as a partner and reinforcer rather than the sole agent of children’s salvation. This understanding is deeply consonant with the biblical model of Deuteronomy 6:6-7, in which the command to transmit faith is addressed first to parents within the home, and with the Reformed and Anglican tradition of viewing the family as the domestic church. Accordingly, a children’s ministry strategy that focuses exclusively on Sunday activities and Church-based programmes, while neglecting the equipping and support of parents, will be structurally deficient. The Diocese could therefore develop intentional family ministry initiatives - including parenting workshops, household devotional

resources, and mechanisms for regular communication between clergy and families - that empower parents to be the primary disciple-makers in their children's lives, in alignment with the values articulated in Matthew 18:10-14.

4.8 The Context of Matthew 18:10–14 in the Diocese of Kampala today

The realities described in Matthew 18, closely respond to contemporary social conditions affecting children within Kampala and the wider Ugandan context. Many children experience poverty, unstable family environment, neglect, abuse, weak parental guidance, and increasing exposure to secular and digital influences. Such conditions contribute to both social and spiritual vulnerability.

Within church settings, these realities are sometimes reflected in inconsistent discipleship structures, limited theological attention to children to children's salvation, and insufficient ministry resources directed toward children's spiritual formation. Consequently, the experience of being overlooked or insufficiently nurtured spiritually remains a continuing concern within some area of church ministry.

Respondents expressed concern about children who lack consistent spiritual guidance, meaningful discipleship, parental support, or active participation within church life. The field findings also showed that challenges such as inadequate training, limited ministry personnel financial constraints, and weak family involvement continue to affect children's spiritual formation within many church contexts.

The context of Matthew 18:10–14 within the Diocese of Kampala today reveal significant parallels between the concerns addressed in the biblical text and the realities facing children within the contemporary Church. Issues of vulnerability, spiritual neglect, limited discipleship structures, and responsibility toward children remain evident within the contemporary context of the Diocese of Kampala.

4.9 Integration, Theological Discussion, and Judgment of the Exegetical Findings and Field Data

The integration of the exegetical findings and the field data shows a strong correspondence between the theological vision of Matthew 18:10–14 and contemporary concerns surrounding children within the Diocese of Kampala. The exegetical study established that the "little ones" within the immediate Matthean context refer primarily to children, whom Jesus intentionally places at the Centre of the kingdom discourse. The warning against despising the "little ones," together with the parable of the lost sheep, demonstrates that children stand

within the Father's salvific concern and preserving will. Similarly, field findings showed that respondents generally acknowledged children as spiritually important members of the Church who require guidance, discipleship, prayer, and pastoral care. This convergence between the text and the field data demonstrates that the spiritual value of children is widely recognized within the Diocese of Kampala.

However, the study also revealed a significant tension between theological affirmation and ecclesial practice. Although respondents consistently affirmed the importance of children, the practical structures of ministry often reflected implicit adult centered assumptions concerning salvation, spiritual maturity, and participation within the Church. In several responses, children's ministry was primarily associated with moral instruction, discipline, and behavioral formation rather than sustained discipleship and theological nurture. This tendency suggests that spiritual significance is still frequently linked to adulthood, intellectual maturity, or the capacity for formal theological articulation. Theologically, such assumptions stand in tension with Matthew 18:10–14, where the "little ones" are valued not because of demonstrated achievement or maturity, but because of the Father's salvific concern for them. The passage therefore challenges ecclesial models that unconsciously measure spiritual significance according to adult standards of comprehension and participation.

The study also has important ecclesiological implications. Since Jesus places the child at the Centre of the kingdom discourse in Matthew 18, the Church cannot faithfully embody the values of the kingdom while simultaneously marginalising children within worship, discipleship, leadership structures, or pastoral ministry. Accordingly, this finding has direct implications for the Diocese of Kampala and the wider African Church, particularly in areas where children's ministry is often regarded as supplementary rather than central to the mission of the Church.

The findings also showed that children should be recognized as genuine participants within the worshipping and discipling community rather than passive observers waiting for adulthood.

The integration of the findings further demonstrated that ministry practice often reveals underlying theological assumptions concerning belonging within the kingdom community. While many churches verbally affirm that children are loved by God and belong within the Church, practical ministry patterns occasionally communicate a more limited theological understanding of children's participation within salvation. The field findings showed that children's ministry is frequently positioned at the margins of ecclesial life through inadequate

discipleship structures, limited ministry investment, inconsistent pastoral follow-up, and insufficient theological reflection on children's spiritual formation. Accordingly, the study found that the marginalization of children is not always explicit, but may occur structurally through the absence of intentional theological and pastoral prioritization. In this respect, the field findings revealed a gap between the theological vision of Matthew 18 and the operational realities of ministry within some church contexts.

The study implies that ministry to children must move beyond moral instruction and occasional church programmes towards intentional spiritual formation. The findings show that ministry to children cannot be reduced to Bible stories, discipline, and behavioral guidance alone. Instead, children's ministry must include intentional discipleship, prayer, mentorship, pastoral care, scripture teaching and meaningful participation within worship and church life.

The study also showed that the theological tension identified within the field findings is closely connected to broader understandings of salvation and spiritual maturity. Several responses implied that children's salvation remains incomplete until the child reaches an age associated with sufficient cognitive understanding or conscious verbal confession of faith. Such perspectives reflect an implicit prioritization of intellectual capacity in the understanding of salvation. The exegetical findings, however, revealed that Matthew 18:10–14 does not ground the value of the “little ones” in intellectual attainment, theological articulation, or social status. Rather, the passage emphasizes divine initiative, seen both in the Father's concern for the “little ones” and the shepherd's active pursuit of the lost sheep. Accordingly, the study therefore found that Matthew 18 challenges approaches that postpone children's spiritual significance until adulthood and instead presents children as persons who already stand within the sphere of divine salvific concern.

The study also has implications for the inclusion of vulnerable persons within the Church. The broader semantic range of the “little ones” demonstrates that the passage speaks not only to children, but also to all who are vulnerable, dependent, or susceptible to exclusion. This includes children with disabilities, children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and those who experience social or spiritual marginalization. John Swinton argues that genuine belonging within the Church requires the creation of conditions that make participation possible. Amos Yong similarly maintains that the Church authentically reflects the body of Christ only when vulnerable and excluded persons are intentionally incorporated into communal life. Based on

the finds, they imply that churches must take seriously issues of accessibility, participation, pastoral care, and inclusion within the worshipping community.

The study further showed that ministry practices are often shaped by competing theological models of spiritual formation. The emphasis on behavioral discipline within some ministry contexts indicates that children's spirituality is occasionally interpreted primarily in moral or performance-oriented terms. Such approaches tend to prioritize external conduct and behavioral conformity as indicators of spiritual growth. However, the theological movement of Matthew 18:10–14 places primary emphasis on divine care, preservation, and restorative pursuit rather than performance-based acceptance within the kingdom community. Accordingly, the study therefore determined that some practical ministry approaches unintentionally risk reducing children's spiritual formation to behavioral management rather than participation within the Father's salvific and nurturing concern.

In conclusion, the study finds that Matthew 18:10–14 provides a substantial theological foundation for understanding children as persons who already stand within God's salvific plan and who therefore require intentional spiritual nurture within the life of the Church. While the Diocese of Kampala has demonstrated growing awareness concerning the importance of children's ministry, the study found that important tensions remain between theological affirmation and practical ecclesial embodiment. Children are frequently acknowledged as spiritually valuable, yet ministry structures sometimes continue to reflect assumptions that associate spiritual significance primarily with adulthood, intellectual maturity, and formal theological comprehension. In light of these findings, the study concludes that Matthew 18:10–14 challenges the Church to re-examine ministry practices that unintentionally marginalize children and instead recognize them as active participants within the worshipping, discipling, and salvific community of faith.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

This study explored the implications of Matthew 18:10-14 for children's salvation and spiritual formation in the diocese of Kampala through an exegetical analysis of the passage. The analysis showed that the text presents God's deep concern for the "little one's expressed in the warning against despising them, the shepherd's search for the lost sheep, and the Father's desire that none should perish.

The finding further indicates that children should be recognized as persons within God's saving concern and should therefore receive intentional spiritual nurture, discipleship, protection, and pastoral care. The field findings from selected Anglican parishes in the Diocese of Kampala confirmed the importance of children's ministry, while also identifying gaps in training, resources, consistent discipleship, and partnership between the Church and families.

Based on the findings, the study concludes that Matthew 18:10 -14 provides a biblical and theological basis for strengthening children's salvation and discipleship ministries in the Diocese of Kampala. Faithful application of this passage calls the Church to reflect the father's concern for the "little ones" by giving deliberate attention to children's evangelism, discipleship, spiritual nurture and pastoral care.

Drawing from the fourth specific objective, which sought to propose practical, biblical grounded applications for strengthening children's salvation and discipleship ministries in the Diocese of Kampala, this study suggests that this can be achieved by implementing the following recommendation.

First, the Diocese of Kamala should develop and implement a clear biblical and theological framework to guide children's salvation, discipleship, and spiritual formation in every parish. Such a framework should outline practical approaches to age-appropriate evangelism, discipleship, follow-up, pastoral care, safeguarding, and the meaningful participation of children in church life. It should also inform the development and selection of biblically sound and contextually appropriate teaching materials for children.

Second, the Diocese of Kampala and its parishes should strengthen children's ministry through regular training and adequate resource allocation. Clergy, children's ministry leaders, teachers and volunteers should receive continuous training in the biblical and theological understanding of children's age – appropriate evangelism and discipleship, child development, pastoral care and child safe guarding. In addition to sufficient financial, human,

and material resources should be provided to support effective ministry including appropriate teaching materials, suitable ministry facilities and regular monitoring evaluations of children's programmes

Third, the Diocese of Kampala should strengthen collaborations between the churches and families while establishing intentional and continuous discipleship structures for children within every parish. Parents and guardians should be equipped to nurture their children's faith through prayer, Scripture reading, family devotions, Christian teaching and godly living. Likewise, parishes should provide ongoing opportunities for children to grow in their understanding of scripture, prayer, worship, Christian character and service, while encouraging their meaningful participation in the worship and ministry life of the church.

In this way, the children's ministry within the Diocese of Kampala will more faithfully reflect the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 18:10-14 by valuing, seeking, nurturing and protecting the "little ones" while intentionally providing children with opportunities to hear the gospel, respond in faith and receive salvation.

At the same time, these recommendations will address the contextual challenges identified in the Diocese and contribute to a more intentional, biblical grounded, and sustainable approach to children's salvation, discipleship and spiritual formation

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: AN EXEGETICAL ANALYSIS OF MATTHEW 18:10–14 AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON SALVATION OF CHILDREN IN THE DIOCESE OF KAMPALA

This questionnaire is designed for data collection as part of a research dissertation by Kisakye Rebecca Kataate, a Master of Divinity student at Uganda Christian University. Your honest responses will be highly appreciated and treated with utmost confidentiality. Feel free to express your opinion.

Section A: Background Information

1. Age: _____
2. Gender: _____
3. Role in Church (Clergy, Lay Leader, Member, Student, Other): _____
4. Diocese/Parish: _____
5. Years of service in the Church: _____

Section B: Understanding of Matthew 18:10–14

6. How familiar are you with Matthew 18:10–14?

- ☐ Very familiar
- ☐ Somewhat familiar
- ☐ Not familiar

7. According to your understanding, who are referred to as “these little ones” in Matthew 18:10–14?

8. How do you interpret the concept of “not despising these little ones”?

9. What message do you think Jesus intended to communicate through the parable of the lost sheep in Matthew 18:12–14?

10. How does this passage relate to the salvation and spiritual nurture of children in the Church?

Section C: Theological Understanding of Children's Salvation

11. How does your Church teach about the salvation of children?

12. In your view, do children require personal repentance and faith for salvation?

- ☐ Yes

- ☐ No

- ☐ Not sure

Explain your answer:

13. How does the Parish currently nurture the faith of children?

14. In what ways does the Church's teaching on salvation include or overlook children?

Section D: Contemporary Practices and Challenges

15. How effective are the current children's ministries in promoting salvation and discipleship?

- ☐ Very effective
- ☐ Effective
- ☐ Somewhat effective
- ☐ Not effective

16. What challenges does the Church face in helping children grow in their faith and understanding of salvation?

17. How can the clergy and lay leaders be better equipped to minister to children regarding salvation?

Section E: Strengthening the Salvation and Discipleship of Children

18. What strategies can the Diocese of Kampala adopt to strengthen children's salvation and discipleship based on Matthew 18:10–14?

9. How can the Church ensure that every child feels valued and spiritually cared for?

20. What role can parents and families play in reinforcing the Church's mission towards the salvation of children?

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Thank you for your time and valuable contribution to this study.

Appendix 2: Turnitin Report



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