



WHAT ABOUT THE CHILDREN?

Preschool-K • #NT15 • April 21, 2024

Concept

Jesus loves children.

Goal

Children will learn that Jesus loves everyone, no matter how old they are, and wants everyone to know and love Him. He wants grownups to love and trust Him the way children do.

Passage

Mark 10:13-16

Key Verse: "... Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all." Mark 10:15

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Read Aloud Bible Stories Vol. 1, Lindvall</i> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>"Harold the Hippo" hand puppet or other animal hand puppet</i> <p>Lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Laminated, magnet-backed pictures of:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ <i>Bible-time family walking</i> ◦ <i>Jesus' disciples looking stern</i> ◦ <i>Angry Jesus</i> ◦ <i>Welcoming Jesus, hugging a child</i> <p>Learning Activity #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Praise Bible, Mack Thomas</i> 	<p>Activity Station:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed page with family & key verse, 1/child • Heart stamps, 5/room • Washable stamp pads, 3/room • Markers/crayons <p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Printed, 2-sided heart copied on colored cardstock, 1/child • Assorted large beads, 10/child • Yarn or string for necklace, 18-20"/child • Hole punch

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the shaded areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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This story of "Jesus loves the little children" is sandwiched between two stories of folks who thought they had ways to ensure getting to heaven. In Mark 10:1-12, the Pharisees tried to test Jesus on points of the law. Jesus held to a different standard than the Pharisees in his interpretation of the Law. The Pharisees sought to achieve righteousness and entry to heaven through their adherence to the Law and therefore searched for loopholes to excuse their behavior. Jesus taught that God's standard of righteousness is so high that it can never be achieved by fallen human beings. The purpose of the Law was to point to the perfection of God and man's utter inability to keep that standard. He frustrated the Pharisees when he spoke authoritatively about the Law because He removed their loopholes. Immediately following the story of the little children is the parable of the rich young ruler. A law-observing young man who wanted to gain heaven through good works approached Jesus and asked how he could inherit eternal life. Jesus responded, "You know the commandments" The man responded, "Teacher, I have kept all these things from my youth up." "And looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him, and said to him, 'One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess, and give to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me'". The youth was disappointed for he owned much. He trusted in his wealth for security in this life. He wanted it both ways—to trust God for his eternity but handle things on this earth for himself. Jesus had a better way.

The account of the little children records parents bringing young children to be touched by Jesus. A tender scene—except the disciples are fighting with the parents to keep the children away! Jesus was angry that these men would keep the children from Him and told them that these children were role models for those who would enter heaven! This was quite a surprise for the religious leaders in this culture who heavily valued the wisdom gained by years. Jesus expressed his value of the children. There are several reasons that these children are candidates for the kingdom of heaven. The first is their easy acceptance of Jesus. They allowed Him to take them in his arms and hold them. In addition, they had nothing that made them deserving of anything they received. A child's life is completely provided for. There is nothing s/he does to earn shelter, clothing or food. They are dependent on the goodness of their parents. Likewise, we must acknowledge our dependence on God to meet every need. Most significantly, we are totally dependent on the goodness of God to provide a way to live eternally with Him.

Set Up

The day of class: For Learning Activity #1, cut out hearts (for the kids that are too young to do so themselves) and punch 2 holes in each on "x." Cut yarn into 18-20" lengths. Optional: punch additional holes around the edge of each heart to make a lacing card; if you do this, you will need to cut the yarn pieces about twice as long.

Incorporation Lg. Group

Activity Stations:

- **Read-Aloud – "The Boys and Girls and Jesus"**
 - **Instructions:** Read "The Boys and Girls and Jesus," pages 66-93 of the Read Aloud Bible Stories Vol. 1. Talk with the children about how much Jesus loves everyone.
- **Craft – "Let the Children Come..." color page**
 - **Instructions:** Give each child a printed page (with a family and the key verse) and some markers. Have them color the page and stamp hearts on their pictures. As the children work, tell them that today's Bible lesson is about some children Jesus' friends were trying to keep away from Jesus. But Jesus told them to come because Jesus loves children.

Introduction Lg. Group

Boys and girls, this is my friend Harold the Hippo. He was just telling me how sad he is. (Make Harold nod or squeak in agreement.) Harold's mom just had Harold's new brother and Harold's feeling left out. His mommy has a lot of work to do with the new baby and he's not sure she loves him anymore. (Squeak or nod Harold in agreement.)

Lesson Lg. Group

You know, Harold that makes me think of a time that Jesus told his friends how much He loves children. You sit over here and listen. (Put Harold down.) One day some parents were bringing their children to Jesus so he could meet them and give them a hug. (Put up picture of family walking.) Before the families could meet Jesus, they had to meet Jesus' friends. (Put up picture of friends looking stern.)

Jesus' friends knew that Jesus was very busy. He had many important things to do. Lots of grownups wanted to ask Jesus questions. So Jesus' friends thought they should decide who was important enough to meet Jesus. When they saw the children they thought, "These are just children. They aren't important enough to see Jesus." So they told the children to go away.

But Jesus loves everyone no matter how old they are. What do you think Jesus did when He saw His friends keeping the children away? Do you think He was glad? (NO!) Did Jesus think, "I know these children want to see me, but I am so busy and just don't have time?" (NO!) What do you think happened?

**Lesson
Continued
Lg. Group**

He was angry with His friends. (Put up picture of angry Jesus.) He told them to let the children come. (Take down angry Jesus and put up welcoming Jesus.) Jesus hugged the children. He told his friends—and all the people around him—that grownups need to trust Him like these children did. Jesus said that heaven belonged to people who were like these children. The children didn't have any money to give Jesus, did they? They didn't have any food to give Jesus. They didn't have anything they could give Jesus. They could only freely accept His love. Jesus wanted the grown-ups to know that just like the children, there was nothing they could give Jesus. He wanted them to accept His love just like the children did.

Harold, you know Jesus loves everyone, even children. He loved children then and He loves children now. He loves you. Jesus wants children like you to love Him, too.

Your parents give you love and food and clothes and a place to live. You receive good things from your parents. He wants you to receive good things from Him, too. He told all the people who listened to Him teach that day that "... whoever does not receive the Kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all."

You can be a part of God's family by asking Him to forgive you for all your bad choices. You can ask Him to forgive you just like you ask your mom for a drink when you are thirsty.

Jesus loves everyone. So I know that Jesus thinks you're special and loves you very much, Harold. I also know that your mommy thinks you're special. Maybe you just need to let her know that you are missing her. Why don't you go ask her for a hug? And you know what? You could ask God to show you ways you can help your mommy with your new baby brother. You know you're a big brother now and you will be able to teach your baby brother so many things. Isn't that exciting? (Harold squeak)

Bye, Harold! Wave goodbye to Harold, boys and girls. (Put puppet away.) Aren't you glad that Jesus loves everyone? Jesus thinks each one of you is special.

Let's get into small groups now to pray.

Jesus didn't tell the children to go away. He let them know that He loved them and wanted them to love Him. How can you show Jesus you love Him? Let's thank God that He loves everyone and wants all of us to be His friends. Let's ask Him to help us learn how much He loves everyone, even children.

Transition

**Learning
Activity#1
Sm. Groups**

Transition

Learning Activity#2 Lg. Group

Let's make a craft that will remind us that Jesus loves everyone.

Craft – Heart Necklace

Instructions: Give each child a heart, a length of yarn and some beads. String the heart onto the yarn and decorate it. Add beads to the yarn on either side of the heart and tie a knot on each side to keep the beads from falling off. Tie the ends of the yarn together to make a necklace. While the children work, talk with them about Jesus' great love for them and how much you love Him.

Transition

Learning Activity#3 Lg. Group

You can go listen to the story, play with playdough or talk to Harold when you are finished.

Story – "Jesus and the Children"

Instructions: Read the story on pages 356-363 of The Praise Bible.

What about the Children?

Bible Guy Skit

Bible Guy and Mrs. Bible Guy enter. B.G. is stomping and flouncing "like a child."

B.G. : ... but my question was really important!

Mrs. B.G. : I'm sure it was, but that is no excuse for stomping away mad. If you would have been patient, I know Jesus would have had time for you.

B.G. : Why should I have to wait for him to talk to a bunch of kids? What could kids have to say about Jesus?

Mrs. B.G. : They don't have to say anything. They just want to be with him.

B.G. : (jumping up and down in a tantrum) But I wanted to be with Jesus! I wanted to ask him my question! It was important!

Mrs. B.G. : Are you saying the children aren't important?

B.G. : (sputtering) Well, of course I'm not saying that, but, come on... they are just kids.

Mrs. B.G. : Jesus didn't treat them like "just kids." He thinks children are very special and worth as much as any grown-up. What was that he said?

B.G. : Yeah, yeah... that kingdom of God thing? What does that mean anyway?

Mrs. B.G. : I think he said, " The kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these little children. You must accept the kingdom of God as a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it."

B.G. : What do you think he means?

Mrs. B.G. : Well, look at how the children acted toward Jesus. They just went to him and enjoyed being hugged and held by him. They didn't feel like they had to say or ask something important.

B.G. : (begins to dawn on him) O-o-oh... So you are saying they didn't act like I did, huh?

(thinks for a minute)

I guess I felt like I needed to think of something important to say so I could show Jesus how special I am.

Mrs. B.G. : You are special to Jesus, but not because you have something more important to say. He loves everyone and everyone is important to Him.

B.G. : (smacks himself on the forehead) WOW! So I was wrong to think I deserve Jesus' love or that I could earn it.

Mrs. B.G. : Exactly! He says we can be with him forever if we just ask him. Those little children knew they couldn't earn or deserve being with Jesus, but they loved him and wanted to be with him, so they just asked!

B.G. : I feel pretty foolish. I think I need to stop trying to look important and just let Jesus love me as I am. Those kids had it right all along!