Jesus and the Children

Storytelling/Drama

Spiritual Practices

Art

Cooking

Games

Missions

Science

Deep Blue Rotation Stations
Art

Cooking

Games

Missions

Science

Spiritual Practices

Storytelling / Drama

Jesus and the Children
Jesus and the Children

Bible Story
Matthew 19:13-15

Bible Verse
“Allow the children to come to me,” Jesus said. Matthew 19:14a

Anchor Point
Jesus blesses me.

My Plan
- Bible Story—Jesus and the Children
- Choose a Voice Bible Verse
- Jesus and Me Portrait—All Children
- Child of God Pendant—All Children
- Children of God Collage—Younger Children
- Child of God Beaded Keychain—Older Children
- Worship

DID YOU KNOW?

Today’s lesson will explore the familiar Bible story of Jesus blessing the little children. Parents were bringing their children to Jesus for him to bless them and pray for them. In those days, the infant mortality rate was high. About 30 percent of children did not make it to the age of 6, and 60 percent of children died before reaching the age of 16. It is likely that parents had heard of Jesus’ healing miracles and wanted him to bless and protect their children.

When the disciples attempted to discourage the parents from bringing their children to see Jesus, they weren’t intentionally being mean to children. They were acting in a way consistent with the social norms and expectations of the time. According to their social customs, children should not have been allowed to disturb Jesus while he was teaching.

When Jesus reprimanded the disciples for keeping the children away, he made a clear statement, declaring that access to him and to God’s love was for everyone. There are no “non-persons” in God’s kingdom. By correcting the disciples and blessing the children, Jesus showed that children were full members in God’s family. Use this week’s lesson as an opportunity to affirm to the children that they are an integral part of God’s family and your church family.

Children certainly can relate to this week’s story and being told not to do something. As you teach this week’s lesson, help your children think about how they feel when they are not allowed to do something that they want to do (even if there is a good reason for the restriction). Help the class imagine how the children might have felt when they were not allowed to go to Jesus, and how they might have felt when Jesus allowed them to come.
JUMP IN!

BIBLE STORY—JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

SAY: Today’s Bible story is about Jesus. Our story is from the first book of the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew. Our story is also about children. At the time Jesus lived, children were treated differently than most children are treated today. Children were treated more like property than people. Adults didn’t pay much attention to children and did not expect to be disturbed by them. Let’s listen to how Jesus treated children.

• Tell the children the following story:

People were bringing their children to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to bless their children. The disciples tried to keep the people and their children away from Jesus. “Go away! Don’t bother Jesus,” they told the people and their children. When Jesus noticed what was happening, he told the disciples to let the children come to him. The children came to Jesus and Jesus blessed them. Jesus told his disciples, “God’s kingdom belongs to people like these children. All people are important to God.”

CHOOSE A VOICE BIBLE VERSE

Supplies: poster board, marker

Before class: Write the Bible verse in large print on a poster board and hang it in your space.

• Form a circle with the children near the Bible verse poster. Read the verse as a group.

ASK: Who was Jesus speaking to when he said these words?

SAY: Let’s read our verse again. This time we will use a squeaky voice.

• Have the children read the verse using a squeaky voice.

ASK: What other kinds of voices should we use to say our Bible verse?

• Let the children choose types of voices. Encourage children to say the verse together in each type of voice.

TIPS

• Possible types of voices: loud, whispery, sad, staccato, lilting, sing-song.

DIVE DEEPER

Choose from the following activities as your time and the children’s interests allow.

JESUS AND ME PORTRAIT—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: paper, washable paint, brushes, art smocks, paper or plastic table covering, small containers for water and paint, paper plates (if needed), pencils

Before class: Cover the table with paper or plastic. Pour a small amount of water into several containers for cleaning brushes. Pour paint into small containers.
**Art**

**SAY:** Today we heard the story of Jesus blessing the children. Imagine that Jesus were here today to give you a blessing. Paint a picture of Jesus blessing you. You are the artist. It is your picture and you can imagine the scene however you like.

- Invite each child to paint a picture of Jesus blessing him or her. Some children may prefer to use a pencil to sketch the picture before beginning to paint.
- Affirm each child's efforts. Encourage children to share their paintings with each other.

**TIP**

- As an alternative to placing the paint in small containers, make a paint palette for each child by placing a small amount of each color paint on a paper plate.

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**CHILD OF GOD PENDANT—ALL CHILDREN**

**Supplies:** shrink plastic sheets, scissors, permanent markers, paper punches, string, baking sheet, foil, pot holders, oven

**Before class:** Preheat the oven to the temperature recommended in the instructions for your shrink plastic. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil. Cut the shrink plastic into 4-inch squares.

**SAY:** Today we heard the story of Jesus and the children. The disciples wanted to keep the children away from Jesus. Jesus reminded the disciples that people of all ages are important to God. We are all God's children. You are going to make a pendant that reminds you that you are a child of God.

- Give each child a square of shrink plastic.

**SAY:** After you decorate this plastic, we will bake it and it will shrink.

- Have each child use a paper punch to punch a hole in the plastic.
- Encourage each child to use permanent markers to write the words, “Child of God,” on the pendant and decorate it as desired.
- Lay the decorated plastic pieces on the prepared baking sheet. Place the baking sheet in the preheated oven for the time recommended in the instructions for your shrink plastic. This is usually 1-to-3 minutes.
- If your oven has a window, allow children to watch as the shrink plastic bakes. The pendants will curl up around the edges and then flatten.
- When the pendants are cool, let each child thread the string through the hole in the pendant and tie the ends of the string together.

**TIP**

- Before decorating, children may cut their pendants into different shapes, such as hearts, circles, hexagons, or triangles.
- If you do not have access to a full-size oven, a toaster oven will usually work for this activity.

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**CHILDREN OF GOD COLLAGE—YOUNGER CHILDREN**

**Supplies:** mural paper, magazines to cut up, scissors, glue, marker

**Before class:** Cut a large piece of mural paper. Across the top of the paper write, “Children of God.” Look through the magazines and remove any pages with inappropriate pictures or text.
**SAY:** Today we heard the story of Jesus and the children. Jesus often talked about the kingdom of God to describe what the world would be like if everyone lived as God wants us to live. When Jesus blessed the children, he told his disciples that God’s kingdom belonged to people like the children. Jesus was reminding his disciples that all people are important to God. People of all ages are God’s children.

- Invite the children to look through the magazines and cut out pictures of people.
- Encourage the children to work together to sort all the pictures they have cut out into age groups: babies, children, youth, adults, and older adults.
- Show the children the words you have written on the mural paper.

**ASK:** Do any of the pictures you have cut out show people that are not children of God?

**SAY:** Children of all ages are important to God. We are all God’s children. God loves everyone.

- Let the children work together to glue all the people pictures onto the mural paper.

**TIP**

- *Include magazines that show cultural diversity in people.*

**CHILD OF GOD BEADED KEYCHAIN—OLDER CHILDREN**

**Supplies:** beading string, keychain rings, pony beads, letter beads, scissors, bowls

**SAY:** Jesus reminded his disciples that people of all ages are loved by God. You are going to make a keychain that says “Child of God.” You can attach your keychain to your backpack or hang it up in your room to remind you that you are important to God.

- Have each child cut a length of string approximately 2 feet long.
- Encourage each child to fold the string in half and put approximately one inch of the folded end of the string through the keychain ring.
- Have each child reach through the loop formed by the folded end of the string and pull both loose ends of the string through the loop to secure the string to the ring.
- Let each child find letter beads to spell CHILD OF GOD.
- Encourage each child to place beads on both strings, spelling the word “child” on one string and the words “of God” on the other string. Children may choose other beads to add to fill each string.
- Have each child tie the two ends of the string together, forming a knot.
WORSHIP

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 6

Before class: Make copies of the “Family Letter” (p. 6).

• Gather the children together in your worship space.
• Invite the children to share their responses to the following questions:
  1. What's something you want to thank God for this week?
  2. What's something you want to ask God to help you with this week?

TIP

Use a talking piece such as a ball, stuffed animal, Bible, or small stone to encourage children to take turns sharing. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak. When that person is finished, she or he may pass the talking piece to someone else.

SAY: Let’s review today’s Bible story. I’m going to read some sentences. If the sentences are from our story, show me two thumbs up and say, “Ding, ding, ding!” If the sentences aren’t quite right, show me two thumbs down and say, “Buzz!”

• Read the following sentences and encourage the children to respond:
  People were bringing their elephants and giraffes to Jesus for him to bless them. (Thumbs down)
  Parents wanted Jesus to bless their children. (Thumbs up)
  The disciples said, “Right this way! Jesus will bless your children!” (Thumbs down)
  Jesus did not want to bless the children. (Thumbs down)
  The disciples tried to turn the people and their children away, but Jesus said, “Allow the children to come to me.” (Thumbs up)
  Jesus blessed the children. (Thumbs up)

SAY: Good job! Jesus blessed the children and told the disciples that everyone is important to God, including children.

PRAY: Loving God, thank you for loving us. As your beloved and blessed children, help us remember to bless others and share your love with them. Amen.

• Offer blessings as the children leave. Send a family letter home with each child.
Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we explored the story of Jesus and the children through art experiences. Here’s a way to follow up on this lesson at home as a family.

EXPLORE ART

Through the years, many artists have illustrated the story of Jesus blessing the children. Search the Internet for artist’s renditions of Jesus and the children. Or visit your library and look for books containing art showing Jesus and the children.

Discuss the pictures you find.

• How do the artists portray Jesus?
• How are the children portrayed?
• How many children are in the picture?
• What do the parents look like?
• Are the disciples pictured?
• Which pieces of art are your favorites? What do you like about these pictures?

Invite each family member to draw, sketch, or paint a picture of Jesus blessing the children.
Jesus and the Children

Rotation Stations

Cooking

Art

Games

Missions

Storytelling /Drama

Science

Spiritual Practices

Jesus and the Children
DID YOU KNOW?

Today’s lesson will explore the familiar Bible story of Jesus blessing the little children. Parents were bringing their children to Jesus for him to bless them and pray for them. In those days, the infant mortality rate was high. About 30 percent of children did not make it to the age of 6, and 60 percent of children died before reaching the age of 16. It is likely that parents had heard of Jesus’ healing miracles and wanted him to bless and protect their children.

When the disciples attempted to discourage the parents from bringing their children to see Jesus, they weren’t intentionally being mean to children. They were acting in a way consistent with the social norms and expectations of the time. According to their social customs, children should not have been allowed to disturb Jesus while he was teaching.

When Jesus reprimanded the disciples for keeping the children away, he made a clear statement, declaring that access to him and to God’s love was for everyone. There are no “non-persons” in God’s kingdom. By correcting the disciples and blessing the children, Jesus showed that children were full members in God’s family. Use this week’s lesson as an opportunity to affirm to the children that they are an integral part of God’s family and your church family.

Children certainly can relate to this week’s story and being told not to do something. As you teach this week’s lesson, help your children think about how they feel when they are not allowed to do something that they want to do (even if there is a good reason for the restriction). Help the class imagine how the children might have felt when they were not allowed to go to Jesus, and how they might have felt when Jesus allowed them to come.

Bible Story
Matthew 19:13-15

Bible Verse
“Allow the children to come to me,” Jesus said. Matthew 19:14a

Anchor Point
Jesus blesses me.

My Plan
- Bible Story—Jesus and the Children
- Sign the Bible Verse
- Bagel Faces—All Children
- Earth Dip—All Children
- All Sizes Trail Mix—Younger Children
- All Sizes Fruit Kabobs—Older Children
- Worship

Bible Story—Jesus and the Children
Sign the Bible Verse
Bagel Faces—All Children
Earth Dip—All Children
All Sizes Trail Mix—Younger Children
All Sizes Fruit Kabobs—Older Children
Worship
JUMP IN!

BIBLE STORY—JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

SAY: Today’s Bible story is about Jesus. As you listen to the story, each time you hear Jesus’ name, I want you to stand up or sit down. If you are sitting down when you hear it, stand up. If you are standing up when you hear it, sit down.

• Tell the children the following story, encouraging them to stand up and sit down as instructed.

Some people brought their children to see Jesus. They wanted Jesus to bless their children. The disciples tried to stop the people from bringing their children to Jesus. However, Jesus told the disciples to allow the children to come to him. Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children.” Then Jesus blessed the children and sent them on their way. Jesus was trying to teach his disciples that the kingdom of heaven belongs not only to those who are powerful; the kingdom of heaven is available to everyone. Jesus often talked about the kingdom of heaven, or the kingdom of God, to describe what the world would be like if everyone were living as God wants them to live. When we follow Jesus’ teachings and share God’s love with others, we are living in God’s kingdom. When Jesus blessed the children, he reminded his disciples that everyone is important in God’s kingdom, including children.

SIGN THE BIBLE VERSE

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 7, poster board, marker

Before class: Familiarize yourself with the “Bible Verse Signs” (p. 7). Write the Bible verse in large print on a poster board and hang it in your space.

• Form a circle with the children near the Bible verse poster. Read the verse as a group.

SAY: Today we are going to learn to sign our verse.

• Teach the children the signs for the Bible verse. Encourage the children to sign and say the Bible verse with you several times.

DIVE DEEPER

Choose from the following activities as your time and the children’s interests allow.

BAGEL FACES—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: bagels, spreadable cream cheese, paper plates, spoons, bowls, marker, food to decorate bagels (such as sliced carrots, sliced black olives, cherry tomatoes, sliced mushrooms, sliced cucumber, sliced bell pepper, alfalfa sprouts, dried cranberries, raisins, and so forth)

Before class: Slice the bagels in half if they are not precut. Place each of the food items to be used for decorating in separate bowls. Place spoons in the bowls as needed. Use a marker to write each child’s name on the edge of a paper plate. Place a bagel half on each plate.

SAY: Jesus taught his disciples that everyone is important in God’s kingdom, including children. You are a child of God. It doesn’t matter how old you are or what you look like. Today we are going to decorate bagels to look like faces.
• Have the children wash their hands and find their paper plates.
• Give each child a generous spoonful of spreadable cream cheese. Encourage each child to use a spoon to spread the cream cheese on the bagel half.
• Invite children to choose food items to decorate their bagels to create a face.
• Have a bagel face viewing party to allow children to admire one another’s creations.

**SAY:** Your bagel faces are unique and wonderful, just like you. God’s kingdom wouldn’t be complete without you!

**TIP**
• You may use full-size or miniature bagels for this activity. Full size bagels allow more room for decoration.

**EARTH DIP—ALL CHILDREN**

**Supplies:** 32 ounces vanilla yogurt, 12 ounces whipped topping, blue and green food coloring, bear-shaped graham crackers, large round serving platter, bowls, spoons

• Have the children wash their hands.
• Let the children divide the vanilla yogurt between two mixing bowls, placing approximately two-thirds of the yogurt in one bowl and one-third of the yogurt in the other bowl.
• Have the children divide the whipped topping into the two bowls, placing approximately two-thirds of the whipped topping in the bowl with the larger amount of yogurt and one-third of the whipped topping in the other bowl.
• Let the children stir each bowl of dip to combine the yogurt and whipped topping.
• Encourage the children to add a few drops of blue food coloring to the bowl, with two-thirds of the dip and a few drops of green food coloring to the other bowl.
• Let the children stir each bowl of dip until the color is distributed.
• Have the children place the blue dip on the serving platter and use a spoon to spread the blue dip into a circle to cover the bottom of the plate.

**SAY:** We are going to make our dip resemble the earth. We have water, now we will use the green dip to make land. Since it’s art, it’s okay if the green portion doesn’t look exactly like the continents.

• Encourage the children to spoon the green dip on top of the blue dip to form “continents.”
• Have the children place the bear-shaped graham crackers on the serving platter around the outside edge of the dip.

**SAY:** Jesus’ teachings remind us that God’s love is for everyone, all over the world. We will eat our earth dip during our closing worship time.

**TIP**
• Exact measurements are not necessary for this recipe.
ALL SIZES TRAIL MIX—YOUNGER CHILDREN

**Supplies:** variety of food items to make snack mix (various cereals, pretzels, chocolate chips, dried fruit, miniature marshmallows, and so forth), 1-cup measuring cups, large bowl with a lid

- Have the children wash their hands.

**SAY:** We are going to make trail mix today. As you can see, we have a variety of ingredients to include in our trail mix.

- Encourage the children to arrange the trail mix ingredients by size, lining them up from the smallest to the largest.
- Invite children to work together to add 1 cup of each ingredient to the large bowl, beginning with the smallest ingredient.
- When all ingredients have been added, put the lid on the bowl, securing it tightly.
- Let each child have a turn shaking the bowl.
- Remove the lid and look at the finished mix.

**SAY:** We included all different sizes of ingredients in our trail mix. Our trail mix wouldn't be the same if we had left out even one of the ingredients. God’s kingdom includes people of all different sizes. Everyone is important in God’s kingdom.

**TIPS**

- As you are selecting items for the trail mix, include a variety of sizes of foods, such as mini chocolate chips and large pretzel twists.
- If you do not have a large bowl with a lid, you may have the children stir the mix together.

ALL SIZES FRUIT KABOBS—OLDER CHILDREN

**Supplies:** assorted fruit of your choice (strawberries, grapes, blueberries, raspberries, canned pineapple, canned mandarin oranges, and so forth), wooden skewers, cutting boards, table knives, colander, bowls, can opener, plates

- Have the children wash their hands.
- Encourage the children to work together to prepare the fruit, placing each kind of fruit in a separate bowl. Depending on the fruit, this may require washing, peeling, opening the cans and draining, and cutting fruit into bite-size pieces as appropriate.
- Place all the bowls of fruit on a table where the children can reach them. Have the children arrange the bowls of fruit in a line from the largest pieces to the smallest pieces.
- Give each child a wooden skewer. Invite each child to put one piece of each type of fruit on the skewer, beginning with the largest piece of fruit.
- Have the children continue making fruit kabobs so that there are enough kabobs for each child in the class to have one later. Put the finished fruit kabobs on plates.

**SAY:** We included all different sizes of fruit pieces in our trail mix. Our fruit kabobs wouldn’t be the same if we had left out even one of the types of fruit. God’s kingdom includes people of all different sizes. Everyone is important in God’s kingdom.

- Refrigerate the fruit until closing worship time.
WORSHIP

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 6, food made during the lesson time, serving utensils, napkins

Before class: Make copies of the “Family Letter” (p. 6).

• Gather the children together in your worship space.
• Invite the children to share their responses to the following questions:
  1. What's something you want to thank God for this week?
  2. What's something you want to ask God to help you with this week?

TIP
Use a talking piece such as a ball, stuffed animal, Bible, or small stone to encourage children to take turns sharing. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak. When that person is finished, she or he may pass the talking piece to someone else.

SAY: To we are celebrating the fact that everyone is welcome in God's kingdom. Sometimes Jesus described God's kingdom as a great feast. Let's have a great feast together!
• Encourage the children to help set out the food and utensils, and serve the food.
• Say or sing a blessing for the food. As you eat together, review the story.
• Offer blessings as the children leave. Send a family letter home with each child.
Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we explored the story of Jesus and the children through cooking experiences. Here’s a way to follow up on this lesson at home as a family.

DECORATE COOKIE FACES

Jesus taught about the kingdom of heaven or the kingdom of God to describe what the world would be like if everyone lived as God wants us to live. Today we celebrated the fact that everyone is welcome in God’s kingdom.

Have a cookie decorating party with your family. Decorate the cookies to resemble faces. Consider sharing your cookie faces with friends. Include a note with the cookies telling your friends that you are glad they are in your life.

You will need:

• cookies (homemade or store bought)
• decorator icing
• sprinkles and colored sugar (optional)
Bible Verse Signs

“Allow the children to come to me,” Jesus said. Matthew 19:14

Allow (Permit): Hold your hands with palms facing each other. Scoop both hands frontwards and up.

Children: Move both hands, palms down, as if you are patting the heads of several children.

Come: Hold out your hand with index finger extended, palm up. Move your hand toward yourself.

Me: Point to yourself.

Jesus: Touch your longest finger to each palm.
Jesus and the Children

Games

Art
Cooking
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Storytelling / Drama
DID YOU KNOW?

Today’s lesson will explore the familiar Bible story of Jesus blessing the little children. We are not told why parents were bringing their children to Jesus. In those days, the infant mortality rate was high. About 30% of children did not make it to the age of 6, and 60% of children died before reaching the age of 16. It is likely that parents had heard of Jesus’ healing miracles and wanted him to bless and protect their children.

When the disciples attempted to discourage the parents from bringing their children to see Jesus, they weren’t intentionally being mean to children. They were acting in a way consistent with the social norms and expectations of the time. According to their social customs, children should not have been allowed to disturb Jesus while he was teaching.

When Jesus reprimanded the disciples for keeping the children away, he made a clear statement, declaring that access to him and to God’s love was for everyone. There are no “non-persons” in God’s kingdom. By blessing the children, Jesus showed that they were full members in God’s family. Use this week’s lesson as an opportunity to affirm to the children that they are an integral part of God’s family and your church family.

Children certainly can relate to this week’s story and being told not to do something. As you teach this week’s lesson, help your children think about how they feel when they are not allowed to do something that they want to do (even if there is a good reason for the restriction). Help the class imagine how the children might have felt when they were not allowed to go to Jesus, and how they might have felt when Jesus allowed them to come.
JUMP IN!

BIBLE STORY—JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

Supplies: CEB Deep Blue Kids Bibles

SAY: Today’s Bible story is found in the Gospel of Matthew, the first book in the New Testament. There is a shortcut you can use with many Bibles to find the Book of Matthew.

• Have children open their Bibles to approximately the middle of the book.

SAY: When you open to the middle of the Bible, you often land in the Book of Psalms. If you found the Book of Proverbs instead, simply turn back a few pages to find Psalms.

• Have children divide the back half of the Bible in half again.

SAY: This is a quick shortcut to find the Book of Matthew. If you found Malachi instead, turn forward a few pages. If you found Mark, turn back a few pages.

• Have the children find Matthew 19:13-15. Encourage them to follow along as you read aloud.

ADD A WORD BIBLE VERSE

Supplies: poster board, marker

Before class: Write the Bible verse in large print on a poster board and hang it in your space.

• Form a circle with the children near the Bible verse poster. Read the verse as a group.

SAY: Jesus told his disciples not to stop the children from coming to him. We are going to say our verse several more times, adding one word each time we say it. We will begin by saying, “Allow.” Then we will say, “Allow the.” Each time we say the verse we will add another word until we have said the entire verse.

• Invite the children to say the verse with you as directed.

DIVE DEEPER

Choose from the following activities as your time and the children’s interests allow.

OBSTACLE COURSE—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: objects to set up an obstacle course, (chairs, hula hoops, tables, and so forth), masking tape

Before class: Set up an obstacle course using the objects you have collected. For example, you might set up several chairs that the children have to walk around, followed by a couple of hula hoops lying on the floor that have to be stepped in, and a table that must be crawled under. Place a line of masking tape on the floor several feet in front of the first obstacle to indicate the start. Place another line of tape on the floor several feet after the last obstacle to indicate the finish line.

• Explain the route through the obstacle course to the children.

• Invite the children to take turns going through the obstacle course.

• Stand just in front of the finish line.
As each child approaches the finish line, SAY: Stop! You must not cross the finish line now. Go back to the start, please.

After you have stopped all the children at least once, ASK: How did you feel when I told you that you couldn’t cross the finish line? Who tried to stop the children in today’s Bible story?
  • Allow the children to go through the obstacle course and cross the finish line.

TIP
  • If you have a large class, consider allowing groups of three or four children to go through the course together.

HOW OLD DO YOU HAVE TO BE?—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 6, device for playing music, chairs, scissors, basket

Before class: Make a copy of “How Old?” (p. 6). Cut the cards apart and place them face down in a basket. Set up a circle of chairs, facing the chairs to the outside of the circle. Set up chairs for the number of children in your class, minus one.
  • Have the children form a circle around the chairs. Start playing music and have the children begin walking around the chairs.

SAY: When the music stops, find a seat.
  • Stop the music and let the children find seats.

SAY: There are not enough chairs in our circle for everyone; so one person is left standing. However, you are not out of the game if you are left standing. Instead, you’ll draw a question from the basket and see if the class can answer it.
  • Invite the child left standing to choose a card and read the question to the class. Encourage children to answer the question.
  • Do not remove any chairs. Start playing the music again, encouraging children to begin walking around the circle.
  • Continue playing the game until all questions have been asked.

STOP TAG—YOUNGER CHILDREN

Before class: Identify a large open area to play the game.

SAY: We are going to play a game of tag. If you are tagged by one of the disciples you must stop running and stay where you are. If you see someone that is stopped, say, “(Child’s name), you are a blessing!” to unfreeze them. If you have been stopped by a disciple, you may begin moving again when you receive a blessing.
  • Encourage the children to play the game.

ASK: Who blessed the children in our Bible story?
COLLECT THE BIBLE VERSE—OLDER CHILDREN

**Supplies:** Leader Guide—p. 7, scissors, beanbags

**Before class:** Make copies of “Bible Verse Cards” (p. 7) and cut the cards apart. You will need one set of cards for each child.

- Spread the Bible verse cards out on the floor so that no cards are on top of each other.
- Designate a distance away from the cards for the children to stand.
- Invite children to take turns tossing a beanbag toward the cards. If a beanbag lands on a card, the child that threw the beanbag may pick up the card if he or she does not already have that card.
- Play the game until each child collects a complete set of Bible verse cards.
- Encourage the children to put the Bible verse cards in order.

**TIPS**

- If you do not have a beanbag, a clean sock rolled into a ball makes a good substitute.
- If you have a large class, let the children play in teams instead of individually. Have each team work together to collect a set of Bible verse cards.

WORSHIP

**Supplies:** Leader Guide—p. 5

**Before class:** Make copies of the “Family Letter” (p. 5).

- Gather the children together in your worship space.
- Invite the children to share their responses to the following questions:
  1. What’s something you want to thank God for this week?
  2. What’s something you want to ask God to help you with this week?

**TIP**

Use a talking piece such as a ball, stuffed animal, Bible, or small stone to encourage children to take turns sharing. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak. When that person is finished, she or he may pass the talking piece to someone else.

**ASK:** How old do you have to be to be loved by God? How old do you have to be to follow God?

**SAY:** Jesus taught his disciples that everyone is important to God, including children.

**ASK:** What are some ways that you follow Jesus?

**PRAY:** God, thank you for Jesus who teaches us about you. Help us to remember to follow Jesus’ example and teachings as we look for ways to share your love with everyone we meet. Amen.

- Send a family letter home with each child.
Dear Families,

Today we explored the story of Jesus and the children through movement and games. Here’s a way to follow up on this lesson at home as a family.

HELP THE CHILDREN REACH JESUS
### How Old?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How old do you have to be to go to kindergarten? (5)</th>
<th>How old do you have to be to get a driver’s license? (16)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How old do you have to be to vote? (18)</td>
<td>How old do you have to be to run for President of the United States? (35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How old do you have to be to be loved by God? (Any age)</td>
<td>How old do you have to be to be a child of God? (Any age)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How old do you have to be to share God’s love with other people? (Any age)</td>
<td>How old do you have to be to teach others about God? (Any age)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Bible Verse Cards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Allow”</th>
<th>the</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>come</td>
<td>to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>me,”</td>
<td>Jesus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>said.</td>
<td>Matthew 19:14a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jesus and the Children

- Art
- Cooking
- Games
- Missions
- Storytelling / Drama
- Spiritual Practices
- Science

Missions

Jesus and the Children
Jesus and the Children

DID YOU KNOW?

Today’s lesson will explore the familiar Bible story of Jesus blessing the little children. Parents were bringing their children to Jesus for him to bless them and pray for them. In those days, the infant mortality rate was high. About 30 percent of children did not make it to the age of 6, and 60 percent of children died before reaching the age of 16. It is likely that parents had heard of Jesus’ healing miracles and wanted him to bless and protect their children.

When the disciples attempted to discourage the parents from bringing their children to see Jesus, they weren’t intentionally being mean to children. They were acting in a way consistent with the social norms and expectations of the time. According to their social customs, children should not have been allowed to disturb Jesus while he was teaching.

When Jesus reprimanded the disciples for keeping the children away, he made a clear statement, declaring that access to him and to God’s love was for everyone. There are no “non-persons” in God’s kingdom. By correcting the disciples and blessing the children, Jesus showed that children were full members in God’s family. Use this week’s lesson as an opportunity to affirm to the children that they are an integral part of God’s family and your church family.

Children certainly can relate to this week’s story and being told not to do something. As you teach this week’s lesson, help your children think about how they feel when they are not allowed to do something that they want to do (even if there is a good reason for the restriction). Help the class imagine how the children might have felt when they were not allowed to go to Jesus, and how they might have felt when Jesus allowed them to come.

Bible Story
Matthew 19:13-15

Bible Verse
“Allow the children to come to me,” Jesus said. Matthew 19:14a

Anchor Point
Jesus blesses me.

My Plan
- Bible Story—Jesus and the Children
- Bible Verse Wave
- Plan a Children’s Book Drive—All Children
- Write Letters to Your Church—All Children
- Decorate Posters—Younger Children
- Read to Younger Children—Older Children
- Worship
JUMP IN!

BIBLE STORY—JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

SAY: Today’s Bible story is about a time Jesus taught his disciples about God’s love.

ASK: Who does God love?

SAY: Sometimes Jesus needed to remind his disciples that God’s love is for everyone. Today’s story is one of those times. This story is from the Gospel of Matthew in the New Testament.

• Tell the children the following story.
  People were bringing their children to Jesus so Jesus could place his hands on them and bless them. Jesus’ disciples tried to stop the people from bringing their children to Jesus. Jesus told the disciples to let the children come to him. Jesus said, “God’s kingdom belongs to people like these children.” Then Jesus blessed the children and sent them on their way. God’s kingdom is the phrase Jesus used to describe what the world would be like if everyone lived like God wants us to live. Jesus taught his disciples that everyone is important in God’s kingdom, including children.

BIBLE VERSE WAVE

Supplies: poster board, marker

Before class: Write the Bible verse in large print on a poster board and hang it in your space.

• Form a circle with the children near the Bible verse poster. Read the verse as a group.
• Choose a child to begin the wave.

SAY: We will say the Bible verse together again. As we say the first word, (child’s name) will stand up and raise his (or her) arms in the air and then sit down. As we say the second word, the next person in the circle will stand up and raise his or her arms in the air and then sit down. The wave will continue around the circle as we say the Bible verse with one person standing up with each word we say.

• Have all the children say the Bible verse as the wave travels around the circle. Say the Bible verse more than once, if necessary to give all children a chance to participate in the wave.

DIVE DEEPER

Choose from the following activities as your time and the children’s interests allow.

PLAN A CHILDREN’S BOOK DRIVE—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: Leader Guide—pp. 6 and 7, large boxes or laundry baskets, markers, crayons, tape

Before class: Decide where you will donate the children’s books you collect. Check with organizations to make sure they can accept your donations and ask if they have any restrictions on the types of books they can use. Make arrangements to have the information about the book drive distributed in worship or in other ways to invite the congregation to participate. Make several copies of “Children’s Book Drive Poster” (p. 7). Make a copy of “Family Letter” (p. 6) and add the necessary information. Photocopy the completed letter for each child to take home following worship.
SAY: Jesus teaches us that all people are important, including children. Today we are going to organize a children’s book drive. We will collect new and gently used books for several weeks. This book drive is a way we can help children know that they are important and cared for.

- Let the children know where you will donate the books you collect.
- Have the children color the copies of the “Children’s Book Drive Poster” and use them to decorate the cardboard boxes or laundry baskets to use as collection containers.
- Keep a collection box in your classroom. Have the children place the other collection boxes outside of your classroom or in other areas of the church to encourage people to donate.

BOOK DRIVE CHECK-IN

- Have children check the collection containers placed in other parts of the church and bring any collected books to your classroom.
- Invite children to count the books.

ASK: Have you read any of these books? What ages of children do you think will enjoy these books?

- Remind children how the donated books will be distributed.

TIPS

- Customize this activity to your set-up and schedule. If you have classes using the mission rotation on multiple weeks, consider having the first week’s class do the set-up. Have remaining classes do a check-in and collection. Send notes home with children each week.
- Organizations that may benefit from donations of children’s books include children’s hospitals, neighborhood youth centers, schools, and organizations that work with homeless families or victims of domestic violence.

WRITE LETTERS TO YOUR CHURCH—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: paper, pencils

Before class: Decide what you will do with the children’s letters so that you can let them know who they will go to before they write them.

SAY: Jesus taught his disciples an important lesson about the age requirement for God’s love.

ASK: What’s the age requirement for God’s love? How old do you have to be to share God’s love?

SAY: Sometimes adults forget that children are important. Jesus reminds us that you are!

ASK: How old do you have to be to be a part of our church family?

SAY: There is no age requirement to be a part of God’s family or a part of our church family. You are all an important part of our church family. Your participation in the church is important. Your thoughts and opinions are also important.

ASK: If you could tell the adults in our church something, what would you say? What things do you like about our church that you would like to continue? Are there things you would like the church to do that we aren’t doing? Do you have an idea for a mission project that the church could do?
• Allow a few minutes for the children to brainstorm for ideas, remembering to affirm all suggestions.

**SAY:** Today we are going to write letters to the church. This is your opportunity to let the adults in the church know what you think about our church. You may write about something we’ve discussed, or you may have another idea you would like to write about.

• Divide the children into groups of three-to-six children each. Give each group of children papers and pencils.
• Invite each group of children to work together to write a letter. Offer assistance to any group that needs help with writing or thinking of ideas.

**SAY:** Thank you for sharing your opinions and ideas. You are important and your ideas matter.

• Deliver the letters the children have written.

**TIPS**

• Depending on your church, you might decide to have the children write their letters to the church council, to the pastor, to an adult Sunday school class, or to the church in general.

• Consider arranging to have some of the children’s letters read aloud at some event, or printed in the church newsletter.

• Instead of having children write letters in small groups, you may choose to help them write one letter as a class. Consider this option if you have a large number of younger children that need assistance with writing.

**DECORATE POSTERS—YOUNGER CHILDREN**

**Supplies:** Leader Guide—pp. 8-11, crayons, markers

**Before class:** Make several copies of each of the “Be Like a Child” posters (pp. 8-11).

**SAY:** Jesus told his disciples that God’s kingdom belongs to people who are like children.

**ASK:** What do you think Jesus meant? How can children set an example for others about how to be a follower of Jesus?

**SAY:** You are going to decorate posters to remind people to be like children.

• Show the children the posters. Invite each child to choose a poster.
• Encourage each child to draw a picture to go along with the words on the poster.
• Have the children help you display the posters around the church.

**READ TO A YOUNGER CHILD—OLDER CHILDREN**

**Supplies:** children’s books

**Before class:** Arrange for the children to visit your church nursery or preschool class and spend time reading to the children.

**ASK:** Why didn’t the disciples want people to bring their children to Jesus? Has anyone ever tried to stop you from doing something because you are a child?

**SAY:** There are some things that have an age requirement. Being a follower of Jesus is not something that requires you to be a certain age. People of all ages are important to God. People
of any age can love and serve God. Today you are going to share God's love with children that are younger than you.

- Let children know who they will be reading to. Invite each child to pick out a book to read to a younger child.
- Take the children to the class you have arranged to visit. Encourage children to spend time reading to the younger children.

**TIP**

- Offer the option of working in pairs to read a book. This will help children who may not feel comfortable reading aloud.

**WORSHIP**

**Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 6**

**Before class:** Make copies of the “Family Letter” (p. 6) as instructed in the Book Drive activity.

- Gather the children together in your worship space.
- Invite the children to share their responses to the following questions:
  1. What's something you want to thank God for this week?
  2. What's something you want to ask God to help you with this week?

**TIP**

*Use a talking piece such as a ball, stuffed animal, Bible, or small stone to encourage children to take turns sharing. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak. When that person is finished, she or he may pass the talking piece to someone else.*

**SAY:** Jesus reminded the disciples that people of all ages, including children, are important to God. There is no age requirement to do God's work. We have been doing God's work today.

**ASK:** In addition to the things we have done today, what are some other ways you can do God's work?

**SAY:** Remember to look for opportunities to share God's love and do God's work every day. Don't let anyone tell you that you are not important. You are loved by God.

**PRAY:** God, thank you for Jesus who reminds us we are all loved by God, regardless of our age. Help us to remember that everyone we meet is loved by God. Help us to find ways to share God's love with others. Amen.

- Offer blessings as the children leave. Send a family letter home with each child.
Dear Families,

Today we explored the story of Jesus and the children through mission and service activities. Here’s a way to follow up on this lesson at home as a family.

**DONATE TO OUR BOOK DRIVE**

Our Sunday school class is collecting children’s books to be donated to _________________.

We invite you to bring new and gently used children’s books and place them in the collection boxes located throughout the church.

We will be collecting children’s books until _________________.

Thank you for helping us share God’s love with others.
Donate Children’s Books Here
Be Like a Child Poster 1

Be Like a Child—
Love God!

Jesus taught that God’s kingdom belongs to those who are like children.
Be Like a Child Poster 2

Be Like a Child—Help People.

Jesus taught that God's kingdom belongs to those who are like children.
Be Like a Child Poster 3

Be Like a Child—
Share God’s love.

Jesus taught that God’s kingdom belongs to those who are like children.
Jesus taught that God’s kingdom belongs to those who are like children.
Jesus and the Children

Science Stations

- Art
- Cooking
- Games
- Missions
- Storytelling/Drama
- Spiritual Practices

Science
DID YOU KNOW?

Today’s lesson will explore the familiar Bible story of Jesus blessing the little children. Parents were bringing their children to Jesus for him to bless them and pray for them. In those days, the infant mortality rate was high. About 30 percent of children did not make it to the age of 6, and 60 percent of children died before reaching the age of 16. It is likely that parents had heard of Jesus’ healing miracles and wanted him to bless and protect their children.

When the disciples attempted to discourage the parents from bringing their children to see Jesus, they weren’t intentionally being mean to children. They were acting in a way consistent with the social norms and expectations of the time. According to their social customs, children should not have been allowed to disturb Jesus while he was teaching.

When Jesus reprimanded the disciples for keeping the children away, he made a clear statement, declaring that access to him and to God’s love was for everyone. There are no “non-persons” in God’s kingdom. By correcting the disciples and blessing the children, Jesus showed that children were full members in God’s family. Use this week’s lesson as an opportunity to affirm to the children that they are an integral part of God’s family and your church family.

Children certainly can relate to this week’s story and being told not to do something. As you teach this week’s lesson, help your children think about how they feel when they are not allowed to do something that they want to do (even if there is a good reason for the restriction). Help the class imagine how the children might have felt when they were not allowed to go to Jesus, and how they might have felt when Jesus allowed them to come.

Bible Story
Matthew 19:13-15

Bible Verse
“Allow the children to come to me,” Jesus said. Matthew 19:14a

Anchor Point
Jesus blesses me.
JUMP IN!

BIBLE STORY—JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

**Supplies:** Leader Guide—pp. 8 and 9

**Before class:** Make a copy of “Jesus” (p. 8) and “Children” (p. 9). Practice telling the story while holding up the pictures at the appropriate times.

**SAY:** Today’s Bible story is about Jesus.

• Show the children the picture “Jesus.”

**SAY:** Today’s Bible story is also about children.

• Show the children the picture “Children.”

**SAY:** I need your help telling today’s story. When I hold up this picture (hold up “Jesus”), I want you to say, “Jesus.” When I hold up this picture (hold up “Children”), “I want you to say, “children.”

• Tell the children the following story, holding up the pictures to allow the children to add the words in parentheses.

People were trying to bring their (children) to (Jesus) so that (Jesus) could place his hands on them and bless them. The disciples tried to stop parents from bringing their (children) to (Jesus). (Jesus) told the disciples to let the (children) come to him.

(Jesus) said, “The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these (children).” Then (Jesus) blessed the (children) and sent them on their way.

(Jesus) was trying to teach his disciples that the kingdom of heaven does not belong to those who are powerful, but that it is available to everyone. The kingdom of heaven refers to what the world would be like if everyone were living as God wants them to live. Everyone is important in the kingdom of heaven, including (children).

BIBLE VERSE ROUND

**Supplies:** poster board, marker

**Before class:** Write the Bible verse in large print on a poster board and hang it in your space.

• Form a circle with the children near the Bible verse poster. Read the verse as a group.

**ASK:** Who was Jesus talking to?

• Divide the children into three groups. Assign each group a number—1, 2, or 3.

**SAY:** We are going to read the verse two more times. This time we will say it as a round. That means each group will start and stop at different times. The second group will start after the first group says, “the.” The third group will start after the second group says, “the.” You will need to pay attention to the others in your group so you can stay together.

• Encourage the children to read the verse twice as a round. Cue each group when it is their turn to come in.
DIVE DEEPER

Choose from the following activities as your time and the children’s interests allow.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL DIG—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: terra cotta pot, permanent marker, towel, hammer, sandpaper, shallow tray, sand, water, plastic spoons, bowls, paint brushes, large shallow tray

Before class: Use a permanent marker to draw simple designs on the terra cotta pot. The designs will help guide the children as they reassemble the pot. Wrap the pot in a towel. Use the hammer to break the pot into several pieces. Examine the pot shards for sharp edges. Use sandpaper to smooth sharp edges if necessary. Place the broken pot pieces in the bottom of the large shallow tray. Fill the tray with sand. Add water to the sand to help it stick together.

SAY: Today we heard the story of Jesus and the children.

ASK: Who tried to stop the children from coming to Jesus?

SAY: The disciples weren’t trying to be mean to the children. They were acting in a way that was normal at that time. In Bible times, children were treated more like property than people. Jesus taught the disciples that children are important to God, too. Jesus lived about 2,000 years ago. Many things were different at that time than they are now.

Archaeology is the study of artifacts from the past to learn about how people lived back then. Archaeologists dig up things that have been buried for many years and study them to discover how people used to live. The things that archaeologists find are often broken and have to be pieced together like a puzzle. Today you are going to pretend to excavate an archaeological dig.

• Show the children the tray of sand you have prepared.

SAY: Archaeologists have to be careful when they are excavating so that they don’t break anything while trying to get it out of the ground. They will often divide a site into a grid and dig up one area at a time. We will use plastic spoons and remove sand from one section of our grid at a time. When you find something, you can use paint brushes to brush the sand away.

• Encourage the children to begin in one corner of the tray and carefully begin to remove sand.

• Have children place the removed sand in a bowl.

• As each piece of the pot is found, have the children lay it carefully on a towel and brush the sand away.

• After several pieces of pot have been found, let some children begin to try to piece the pot together while the other children continue the excavation.

• Have the children continue working until they have found the entire pot.

SAY: Archaeology is slow work. At an archaeological dig, the dirt is sifted to make sure nothing is missed. Archaeologists study the things they find to learn how people in the past lived. The kinds of things they find provide clues about what kind of food the people cooked, what kinds of toys the children played with, and what tools were used. Archeologists help us learn about the past.
NEVER-ENDING LOVE—ALL CHILDREN

**Supplies:** paper, tape, pencils, scissors

**Before class:** Cut 8 ½-by-11 paper in half length-wise to make pieces of paper that are 4 ¼-by-11.

**Say:** Jesus reminded his disciples that everyone is important to God, including children. You are loved by God.

**Ask:** Will God ever stop loving you? Is there anything you can do to make God love you?

**Say:** God loves you. God will always love you, no matter what. God’s love for you is never-ending.

- Give each child a piece of paper. Show each child how to fold his or her paper in half bringing the long sides together.
- Encourage each child to cut the paper along the fold line to make two long paper strips.
- Have each child tape the paper strips together at the narrow ends to make one long strip, taping along the entire edge of the connection point on both sides.
- Show each child how to bring the ends of the paper strip together, but just before forming a loop, make a half twist in one end.
- Encourage each child to tape the ends of the strip together, once again taping along the entire edge of the connection point on both sides.

**Say:** You have just made a Möbius (MeR-bee-us) strip. A Möbius strip is special because it has no end; it only has one side. You can test this by drawing a line down the center of your Möbius strip. Place your pencil on your Möbius strip and begin drawing a line down the middle. Do not pick your pencil up until you return to the point where your line began.

- Encourage each child to draw a line down the center of the Möbius strip.

**Say:** Notice that even though you never lifted your pencil, the line is on all sides of the paper. The surface of this Möbius strip is never-ending just like God’s love for you.

- Encourage each child to write these words along the line on her or his Möbius strip: “God’s love for me will never end.”

**Ask:** What do you think would happen if you cut your Möbius strip in half?

- Have each child cut along the line drawn on the Möbius strip.

**Ask:** What happened when you cut your Möbius strip in half?

**Say:** A circle is a good symbol of God’s love, because a circle has no end.
PEOPLE SORTING—YOUNGER CHILDREN

**Supplies:** mural paper, scissors, tape, pencils, markers

**Before class:** Cut large sheets of mural paper. Tape the paper up to cover a large area of wall.

**SAY:** Today we are going to do some people sorting. First, I would like you to line up by height. Line up from the shortest to the tallest.

- Have the children stand in a line with their backs against the paper-covered wall.
- Make a mark above each child's head to mark the height on the paper.
- Let the children move and look at the lines you have made. These lines should resemble stair steps of varying heights.

**SAY:** Now I want you to line up by age. Line up from the youngest to the oldest.

- Encourage the children to line up as directed. Help children who are the same age to decide who is younger and older according to their birthdays.
- Have the children stand in a line with their backs against the paper-covered wall.
- Use a different color marker to make a mark above each child's head on the paper.
- Let the children move and look at the lines you have made.

**ASK:** Are these lines the same as the ones I made the first time?

**SAY:** People grow at different rates. If a person is older, that does not mean he or she will be taller. Now I want you to line up in alphabetical order by your first name.

- Encourage the children to line up as directed. Help the children line up alphabetically by saying, "Everyone whose name begins with an A line up. Next everyone whose name begins with a B." Go through the entire alphabet until all children are in line.
- Have the children stand in a line with their backs against the paper-covered wall.
- Use a different color marker than the first two times to make a mark above each child's head.
- Let the children move and look at the lines you have made.

**ASK:** Are these lines the same as the ones I made the first two times?

**SAY:** The lines are different when we use different ways of sorting. We could come up with many different ways of sorting ourselves. Each method of sorting would produce different results. No matter how we sort ourselves, we are all important to God. God loves all of us. It doesn't matter how old we are, how tall we are, or what letter our name begins with. We are all loved by God.

THEN AND NOW—OLDER CHILDREN

**Supplies:** Leader Guide—p. 10, pencils

**Before class:** Make copies of “Then and Now” (p. 10).

**SAY:** Today we heard the story of Jesus and the children. At the time Jesus lived, children were treated differently than they are now. Children were considered to be property of their parents. Jesus taught that children are important to God. The attitudes about children are not the only thing that was different during Jesus’ time. There are many things that have changed in the nearly 2,000 years since Jesus lived.

- Give each child a copy of “Then and Now” and a pencil.
Discuss each item in the column, “Life at the Time of Jesus.” Have the children describe how each item compares to life now.

Encourage children to write their observations in the “Now” column.

Invite the children to share other ways they can think of that life is different now than it was at the time Jesus lived.

**SAY:** Although many things have changed, God’s love for us has not.

**WORSHIP**

**Supplies:** Leader Guide—p. 7

**Before class:** Make copies of the “Family Letter” (p. 7).

- Gather the children together in your worship space.
- Invite the children to share their responses to the following questions:
  1. What's something you want to thank God for this week?
  2. What's something you want to ask God to help you with this week?

**TIP**

*Use a talking piece such as a ball, stuffed animal, Bible, or small stone to encourage children to take turns sharing. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak. When that person is finished, she or he may pass the talking piece to someone else.*

- Invite the children to work together to retell the story.
- Lead the children in the following praise cheer.

  **Leader:** I say “God's”, you say, “love.” God's
  **All:** Love
  **Leader:** God's
  **All:** Love
  **Leader:** I say, “Never,” you say, “ending.” Never
  **All:** ending
  **Leader:** Never
  **All:** ending
  **Leader:** God's
  **All:** love
  **Leader:** Never
  **All:** ending!

**PRAY:** God, thank you for your never-ending love for us. Amen.

- Offer blessings as the children leave. Send a family letter home with each child.
Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we explored the story of Jesus and the children through science activities. Here’s a way to follow up on this lesson at home as a family.

WATCH THE DEEP BLUE BIBLE ADVENTURES

Download the Deep Blue Bible app on your mobile device. Watch the Deep Blue kids tell the story of Jesus and the children.

Scan this QR code to download the Deep Blue Kids App.

Or visit website at: www.deepbluekids.com/app
Jesus and the Children: Science Station

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Children
## Then and Now

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Then</th>
<th>Now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Usually only sons received formal education, though girls received instruction at home from their parents.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• School was held at the synagogue.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Children learned to read by reading the Torah (the Jewish Scriptures).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Scriptures were written on parchment scrolls.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People sat on the floor or on mats to eat their meals.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Meat was only eaten on the Sabbath and only rich people ate meat every Sabbath.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Walking was the main form of transportation, even for long distances.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Jesus and the Children

Storytelling / Drama

Spiritual Practices

Art

Cooking

Games

Missions

Science

Spiritual Practices

Jesus and the Children
DID YOU KNOW?

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When the disciples attempted to discourage the parents from bringing their children to see Jesus, they weren’t intentionally being mean to children. They were acting in a way consistent with the social norms and expectations of the time. According to their social customs, children should not have been allowed to disturb Jesus while he was teaching.

When Jesus reprimanded the disciples for keeping the children away, he made a clear statement, declaring that access to him and to God’s love was for everyone. There are no “non-persons” in God’s kingdom. By correcting the disciples and blessing the children, Jesus showed that children were full members in God’s family. Use this week’s lesson as an opportunity to affirm to the children that they are an integral part of God’s family and your church family.

Children certainly can relate to this week’s story and being told not to do something. As you teach this week’s lesson, help your children think about how they feel when they are not allowed to do something that they want to do (even if there is a good reason for the restriction). Help the class imagine how the children might have felt when they were not allowed to go to Jesus, and how they might have felt when Jesus allowed them to come.
JUMP IN!

BIBLE STORY—JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

Supplies: Deep Blue Bible Storybook

SAY: Our Bible story today is from the Gospel of Matthew.

ASK: Is Matthew in the Old Testament or the New Testament?


• Read the story, “Jesus and the Children” (p. 239) from the Deep Blue Bible Storybook.

ASK: Why do you think the disciples tried to keep the children from Jesus?

SAY: At the time Jesus lived, children were treated more like property than people. The disciples did not think children should be disturbing Jesus. Jesus teaches us that God’s love is for everyone, including children.

CONTROL THE VOLUME OF THE BIBLE VERSE

Supplies: poster board, marker

Before class: Write the Bible verse in large print on a poster board and hang it in your space.

• Form a circle with the children near the Bible verse poster. Read the verse as a group.

SAY: Now let’s pretend I am a volume control slider. We will say the verse together three more times. When I am standing over here (move all the way to your right side), the volume needs to be very soft. As I walk across the room, the volume increases; and when I am standing over here (move all the way to your left side), the volume is very loud.

• Encourage the children to say the verse with you three more times as you control the volume with your position.

DIVE DEEPER

Choose from the following activities as your time and the children’s interests allow.

GUIDED MEDITATION OF BLESSING—ALL CHILDREN

ASK: Why were parents bringing their children to Jesus? What is a blessing?

• Invite the children to sit comfortably on the floor. Have the children place their hands in their laps, palms facing upward.

• Read the following meditation calmly and slowly.

Take a deep breath in. As you exhale, close your eyes. Take another breath in and hold it for a count of three, 1, 2, 3, now slowly let it out. Continue to breath normally. Think about the time you spend at home. Think about the things you do when you’re at home—eat, spend time with your family, sleep—all the things you do at home. Imagine that Jesus is with you as you do those activities at home. Hear Jesus tell you that you are loved by God.
Take a deep breath in…and let it out. Think about the time you spend at school and all the things you do at school—learn, study, write, spend time with friends—all the things you do at school. Imagine that Jesus is with you as you do those activities at school. Hear Jesus tell you that you are a beloved child of God.

Take a deep breath in…and let it out. Think about the time you spend outside and all the things you do outside—walk, bike, play sports—all the things you do outside. Imagine that Jesus is with you as you do those activities outside. Hear Jesus tell you that you are an important part of God’s kingdom.

Take a deep breath in…and let it out. Think about all the time you spend at church and all the things you do here—worship, pray, sing, spend time with your church family—all the things you do at church. Imagine that Jesus is with you as you do those activities at church. Hear Jesus tell you that God will never stop loving you.

Take a deep breath in…and let it out. Cross your arms and place each hand on your opposite shoulder as if you were giving yourself a hug. Take a deep breath in…and let it out. Know that God loves you and always will.

• Invite the children to open their eyes.

SAY: God loves and blesses each of us.

ASK: How does it make you feel to know you are loved by God?

CELEBRATE YOU—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 7, colored pencils, crayons

Before class: Make copies of “A Celebration of You” (p. 7).

SAY: Today we heard the story of Jesus blessing the children. Jesus taught his disciples that all people are important to God, including children. Each one of you is important to God. We are going to take some time to celebrate you today.

• Give each child a copy of “A Celebration of You.”
• Have each child write her or his name vertically along the left side of the page.
• Encourage each child to think of a word that describes himself or herself that begins with each letter of his or her name. Have children write the words next to the letters of their names.
• Invite each child to decorate the person shape to resemble her or him. If children prefer, they may fill the person shape with additional descriptive words instead of drawing a self-portrait.

SAY: You are special and unique. God loves you and you are an important part of God’s kingdom.

YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD—YOUNGER CHILDREN

SAY: A blessing is a way to let someone know that he or she is special and loved. Jesus blessed the children in our Bible story. We can give blessings to one another. We are going to spend some time blessing each other today.

• Have the children stand in a circle.
SAY: I am going to begin to describe someone in our circle who is a child of God. If I might be describing you, remain standing. If I am not describing you, sit down and try to guess who I am describing. When only one person is left standing, all of us will bless that person by saying, “(Child’s name) you are a child of God!”

• Choose a child and begin describing that child using sentences beginning with “I spy a child of God …” For example, “I spy a blessing who is wearing red. I spy a child of God wearing red and with long hair. I spy a child of God wearing red, with long hair, and wearing boots.”

• Continue describing the child until he or she is the only one standing. Lead the children in blessing the standing child.

• Have all the children stand up. Repeat the game describing a different child. Continue playing the game until all children have received a blessing.

SAY: You are important to God.

COMPARE GOSPEL ACCOUNTS—OLDER CHILDREN

Supplies: Bibles

SAY: Today we heard the story of Jesus and the children.

ASK: Do you remember what book of the Bible the story we heard is from?

SAY: Matthew is one of four books of the Bible that are known as the Gospels. The Gospels are the first four books of the New Testament.

• Have the children find the Gospels in their Bibles.

ASK: What are the other three Gospels?

SAY: The Gospels tell stories of Jesus’ birth, life, ministry, death, and resurrection. Some of the stories that are told in the Gospels are found in more than one of the Gospels. The story of Jesus and the children is found in three of the Gospels—Matthew, Mark, and Luke.

• Divide the children into three groups.


• Invite one child from each group to read the Scripture aloud.

ASK: What is similar about these three stories? What differences do you notice about the stories?

SAY: At the time Jesus lived, adults weren’t expected to pay attention to children. Jesus, however, noticed the children and invited them to come to him.

ASK: What do you think Jesus was trying to teach his disciples when he told them to let the children come to him?
WORSHIP

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 6

Before class: Make copies of the “Family Letter” (p. 6).
- Gather the children together in your worship space.
- Invite the children to share their responses to the following questions:
  1. What’s something you want to thank God for this week?
  2. What’s something you want to ask God to help you with this week?

Tip
Use a talking piece such as a ball, stuffed animal, Bible, or small stone to encourage children to take turns sharing. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak. When that person is finished, she or he may pass the talking piece to someone else.

Say:
Today we heard the story of Jesus blessing the children. Jesus talked about God’s kingdom to describe what it would be like if everyone lived as God wants us to live. Jesus told his disciples that you must be like children to be a part of God’s kingdom.

Ask:
What do you think Jesus meant? What characteristics do children have that help them live as God wants us to live? How does God want us to live?

Say:
As children, you are an important part of God’s kingdom. Everyone can learn something from you about how to share God’s love in our world.

Pray:
God, thank you for your amazing love for us. Help us to live as you want us to live and share your love with everyone we meet. Amen.
- Offer blessings as the children leave. Send a family letter home with each child.

Cover art: Illustrations of the Deep Blue Kids are by Tim Moen, character designer; Jesse Griffin, 3D artist; Julio Medina, 3D artist; Eric M. Mikula, facial rigging; Christopher Slavik, layout artist.
Family Letter

Dear Families,

Today we explored the story of Jesus and the children through spiritual practices. Here's a way to follow up on this lesson at home as a family.

BLESS ONE ANOTHER

• Find a time when you can sit down with everyone in your family. Sit in a circle around a table.

• Give each family member a piece of paper. Have each family member write his or her name at the top of the paper.

• Pass the papers around the circle. Write a sentence on each person’s paper telling at least one thing you value about him or her. Continue passing the papers around the circle until each person has had an opportunity to write on each paper.

• Say a prayer together thanking God for your family.

#blessed
A Celebration of You

You are a child of God. God loves you. You are an important part of God’s kingdom.
Jesus and the Children

Storytelling / Drama

Art
Cooking
Games
Missions
Science
Spiritual Practices

Jesus and the Children
Jesus and the Children

DID YOU KNOW?

Today’s lesson will explore the familiar Bible story of Jesus blessing the little children. Parents were bringing their children to Jesus for him to bless them and pray for them. In those days, the infant mortality rate was high. About 30 percent of children did not make it to the age of 6, and 60 percent of children died before reaching the age of 16. It is likely that parents had heard of Jesus’ healing miracles and wanted him to bless and protect their children.

When the disciples attempted to discourage the parents from bringing their children to see Jesus, they weren’t intentionally being mean to children. They were acting in a way consistent with the social norms and expectations of the time. According to their social customs, children should not have been allowed to disturb Jesus while he was teaching.

When Jesus reprimanded the disciples for keeping the children away, he made a clear statement, declaring that access to him and to God’s love was for everyone. There are no “non-persons” in God’s kingdom. By correcting the disciples and blessing the children, Jesus showed that children were full members in God’s family. Use this week’s lesson as an opportunity to affirm to the children that they are an integral part of God’s family and your church family.

Children certainly can relate to this week’s story and being told not to do something. As you teach this week’s lesson, help your children think about how they feel when they are not allowed to do something that they want to do (even if there is a good reason for the restriction). Help the class imagine how the children might have felt when they were not allowed to go to Jesus, and how they might have felt when Jesus allowed them to come.
JUMP IN!

BIBLE STORY—JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

**SAY:** Our Bible story is about Jesus.

**ASK:** Do you think we will find this story in the Old Testament or the New Testament?

**SAY:** Stories about Jesus are found in the New Testament. Today’s story is from the first book of the New Testament, the Gospel of Matthew.

- Tell the children the following story.

  Parents were bringing their children to Jesus so he could bless them. The disciples scolded the parents and tried to stop them. When Jesus saw what the disciples were doing, he said, “Let the children come to me.” Jesus told the disciples, “The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children.” Then Jesus blessed the children and sent them on their way.

STAND UP, SIT DOWN BIBLE VERSE

**Supplies:** poster board, marker

**Before class:** Write the Bible verse in large print on a poster board and hang it in your space.

- Form a circle with the children near the Bible verse poster. Read the verse as a group.

**SAY:** This Bible verse is from our story.

**ASK:** Who was Jesus speaking to when he said these words?

**SAY:** We are going to read our verse two more times. Each time we say a word, we will stand up if we are sitting down, or sit down if we are standing up.

- Encourage the children to say the verse twice, standing up and sitting down as indicated.

DIVE DEEPER

Choose from the following activities as your time and the children’s interests allow.

THE DISCIPLES’ STORY—ALL CHILDREN

**Supplies:** Leader Guide—p. 6

**Before class:** Make copies of “The Disciples’ Story” (p. 6).

- Recruit six children to read the story. Give each reader a copy of “The Disciples’ Story” and allow the children to choose parts.

**SAY:** We are going to hear our Bible story from the disciples’ point of view.

- Invite the children to read the story. Thank your volunteers for telling the story.

**ASK:** Why were the parents bringing their children to Jesus? Why did the disciples try to stop the children?
SAY: At the time Jesus lived, children were treated more like property than people. The disciples did not think children should be disturbing Jesus. Jesus, however, taught us that God’s love is for everyone.

STORY LITANY—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 7, mural paper, scissors, marker

Before class: Make a copy of “Jesus and the Children Litany” (p. 7). Write the response on a large sheet of mural paper. Display the response where the children will be able to see it.

SAY: We are going to tell our Bible story as a litany. After I read each line of the story, we will join together in a response.

• Show the children the response for the litany. Invite the children to read the response with you.

SAY: We are going to add movement to our response—one movement per syllable. The pattern will be three leg pats, four claps, and three stomps.

• Encourage the children to practice the response with the movement.

• Read the story from “Jesus and the Children Litany,” encouraging the children to join in the response as directed.

ASK: How do you think the children felt when the disciples tried to stop them? How do you think the children felt when Jesus told the disciples to let them come to him?

A DAY WITH JESUS—YOUNG CHILDREN

Supplies: Leader Guide—p. 8, crayons

Before class: Make copies of “A Day With Jesus” (p. 8).

ASK: Who didn’t want the children to trouble Jesus?

SAY: During the time when Jesus lived, children were looked upon as property. The disciples were acting as they had been taught. Jesus had other ideas, though. He told the disciples to let the children come to him. Jesus taught the disciples that everyone is important to God, no matter how young or old they are.

• Give each child a copy of “A Day With Jesus.”

SAY: Jesus loves you and wants you to know you are important to God. Let’s use our imaginations and think about what it would be like if Jesus were to spend a day with us.

ASK: What do you think it would be like to spend a day with Jesus? What would you do together?

• Encourage each child to write or draw a response to the prompt on “A Day With Jesus.”

• Invite children to share their responses.

SAY: Always remember that you are loved by God. Jesus taught people about God. One of the things Jesus taught is that God loves everyone.
**IMAGINE THE KINGDOM—OLDER CHILDREN**

**Supplies:** paper, pencils

**SAY:** In our Bible story, we heard Jesus talking about the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven refers to what the world would be like if everyone lived the way God wants us to live.

**ASK:** How does God want us to live? What would the world be like if everyone followed Jesus’ teachings all the time?

**SAY:** Those are good ideas. Continue to use your imagination and write a story describing what it would be like to live in the kingdom of heaven.

- Give each child a piece of paper. Invite children to work individually or in pairs to write a story imagining the kingdom of heaven.
- Encourage children to share their stories with each other.

**ASK:** Would you like to live in a world like that? What could we do to make our world more like the kingdom of heaven?

**WORSHIP**

**Supplies:** Leader Guide—p. 5

**Before class:** Make copies of the “Family Letter” (p. 5).

- Gather the children together in your worship space.
- Invite the children to share their responses to the following questions:
  1. What’s something you want to thank God for this week?
  2. What’s something you want to ask God to help you with this week?

**TIP**

*Use a talking piece such as a ball, stuffed animal, Bible, or small stone to encourage children to take turns sharing. Only the person holding the talking piece may speak. When that person is finished, she or he may pass the talking piece to someone else.*

**SAY:** In the Bible story today, parents were bringing their children to Jesus for a blessing. A blessing is a special way of praying for someone. When we bless someone we ask God to help them feel God’s love. We are going to end our time together by blessing each other.

- Invite the children to stand in a circle.

**SAY:** We are going to take turns stepping into the center of the circle. When you are in the center of the circle, the rest of us will say, “You are a child of God.”

- Encourage children to take turns stepping into the circle to receive a blessing. Have the children share a blessing with each person as directed.

**PRAY:** God, thank you for your son, Jesus, who taught us about you. Thank you for loving each person, no matter how young or old we are. Help us to find ways to share your love with people of all ages. Amen.

- Offer blessings as the children leave. Send a family letter home with each child.

Cover art: Illustrations of the Deep Blue Kids are by Tim Moen, character designer; Jesse Griffin, 3D artist; Julio Medina, 3D artist; Eric M. Mikula, facial rigging; Christopher Slavik, layout artist.
Dear Families,

Today we explored the story of Jesus and the children through storytelling and drama. Here’s a way to follow up on this lesson at home as a family.

READ ABOUT JESUS AND THE CHILDREN IN THE BIBLE

• Find Matthew 19:13-15 in your Bible.
• Read the story aloud.
• Now close the Bible and work together to write the story in your own words.
The Disciples’ Story

**Disciple 1:** Well, hello! We are some of Jesus’ disciples.

**Disciple 2:** The time we spent with Jesus was incredible.

**Disciple 3:** Jesus taught us a lot about God.

**Disciple 4:** He taught us how God wants us to live.

**Disciple 5:** Jesus taught us about loving God and loving other people.

**Disciple 6:** And he showed us by example how we are to love others.

**Disciple 2:** That’s true. Jesus loved people! I mean he really loved people!

**Disciple 4:** Yes, even those who were overlooked by others.

**Disciple 6:** Do you remember when Jesus scolded us for trying to keep those children from bothering him?

**Disciple 1:** I remember! Jesus had been teaching and he was taking a break.

**Disciple 3:** Some parents came to see Jesus and they had their children with them.

**Disciple 5:** We tried to turn the parents away.

**Disciple 6:** We didn’t think Jesus would want to be bothered by children.

**Disciple 4:** We were wrong!

**Disciple 2:** When Jesus saw what was happening, he told us to let the children come to him.

**Disciple 5:** Jesus hugged the children and blessed them.

**Disciple 3:** Then Jesus told us the kingdom of heaven belonged to people like those children.

**Disciple 1:** Jesus talked to us a lot about the kingdom of heaven.

**Disciple 6:** He said if everyone lived like God wants us to live, the kingdom of heaven would be here on earth.

**Disciple 5:** Jesus taught us that everyone is important in God’s kingdom, including children.

*(Based on Matthew 19:13-15)*
Jesus and the Children Litany

Leader: Parents were trying to bring their children so that Jesus could place his hands on them and pray.

All: Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

Leader: The disciples tried to stop parents from bringing their children to Jesus.

All: Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

Leader: Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like these children.”

All: Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

Leader: Then Jesus blessed the children and sent them on their way.

All: Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

Leader: Jesus was trying to teach his disciples that the kingdom of heaven does not belong to those who are powerful. It’s available to everyone.

All: Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

Leader: The kingdom of heaven refers to what the world would be like if everyone were living as God wants them to live.

All: Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

Leader: When you share God's love with others, you are living out the kingdom of heaven.

All: Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

Leader: Everyone is important in the kingdom of heaven. This includes children!

All: Jesus said, “Let the children come to me.”

(Based on Matthew 19:13-15)
A Day With Jesus

If Jesus were here to spend an entire day with me, we would...