

Jesus Blesses Children

Grades
1-2

BELONG

MARK 10:13-16

What's happening in this story?

Just before this passage, the Pharisees were quizzing Jesus about divorce. The focus of his response was decidedly about God's promotion of justice for those whom society tends to treat as inferior. Now, as the disciples would follow societal conventions and keep children from approaching Jesus, he welcomes them and holds them up as models of discipleship.

What does this story mean for kids?

While children were often mistreated or ignored in Jesus' day, he wanted people to know that the little ones were valued members of the kingdom of God. In fact, he even affirmed them as examples for grown-ups of how to receive the kingdom! Kids can rest in Jesus' love just as he invited their New Testament counterparts to do—without having to act like miniature adults. They can also demonstrate Jesus' message by welcoming all people in their church, school, and community.

Why this theme?

Jesus frequently redefines stereotypical definitions of who's "in" and who's "out." It's a tension in his whole ministry that teaches us about God's character and grace.

AGE LEVEL TIP

No one wants to be an outsider. Groups are already starting to form at this age and kids may have experienced being left out of a game, a party, or a seat at the lunch table. Mix kids up during today's lesson so that everyone can feel like they belong.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Construction paper
- Markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Yarn
- Ink pads (washable)
- Hand wipes
- Sticky notes (2 per kid)

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Have kids fold sheets of construction paper in half twice, forming four squares. Then ask kids to unfold their paper and fill up the four squares by using markers to draw four different pictures of groups they belong to, such as sports teams, their class at school, and family.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

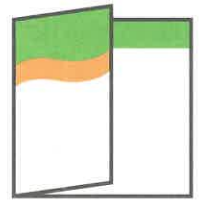
Today we will learn about belonging. How does it feel to belong? Accept all answers. **I want everyone to hold on to the yarn unless I call your name. Call two names.** Ask the two kids, **“How does it feel when you don’t belong?”** Jesus wants all people to belong in God’s kingdom.

Pray together: **Dear Jesus, thanks to you, we can spread love and sharing wherever we go so that all people belong! Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

Hold up leaflet. **It looks like some of our friends need to find their way through a corn maze to Jesus. Corn mazes are huge mazes cut out of cornstalks in a farmer’s field. Let’s help our friends get through the maze!** After finishing the maze, ask, **Who is holding the**

kids back from getting to Jesus? Why would these adults keep the kids from getting to Jesus? Allow kids to respond. **Jesus wants everyone to belong to God. Jesus wants kids to belong to God.** Collect their leaflets until Respond.



Gather kids around the screen where you’ll watch the video.

We have two friends in our video today who we don’t see very often. Let’s watch and meet these friends.

View Episode 9, “The Broom,” on the Year Gold Winter PreK–Grade 2 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **Do Ada and Otto believe what the big kids tell them? What changes their minds?**
- **Do you ever want to be like kids who are older than you are?**
- **Has anyone ever made you feel like you are not old enough yet? Why?**
- **What word did Ruby use to describe talking about the Bible? Have you heard this word before?**
- **Who asks you what you think about Bible stories?**



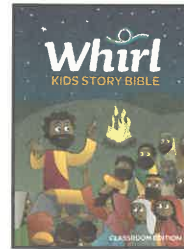
Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles.

Let's find our story for today! Help kids find "Jesus Blesses Children" on page 246. Before you read, invite kids to look for all the different hand signs.

Read the story and Ada and Otto's questions and comments on each page.

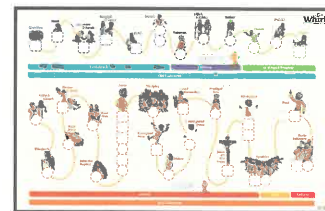
Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **What is God's kingdom about? Who is God's kingdom for?**
- **What do you think a hug from Jesus feels like?**
- **How did Jesus feel when the disciples tried to keep the children away?**
- **Why do you think the parents wanted Jesus to know their children?**
- **Do you always know when you are blessed by others? Why or why not?**



Gather near the Wall Chart to place today's sticker.

Point out the Testament (New), Bible section (Gospels), and character image (Jesus). **Today's Bible story is about Jesus blessing children. Let's add a sticker to remind us of who Jesus blessed** (children). Point to the corresponding image of children on page 249 in the Whirl Kids Story Bible.



Play together!

Play a game of Blob Tag in an open space. **In Blob Tag, we all become part of the blob and have to work together!** One child or leader is "It." As "It" gently tags kids, the tagged kids must hold hands in a chain with "It" and tag another kid with their free hand. The game continues until all kids are part of the blob. (Groups in smaller spaces can play this game on their knees.) When the game is complete, un-blob and talk about it. **What was it like when we all had to work together?**

BIBLE BIT

Women and children were not valued in Jesus' world. In today's story, Jesus sends a very strong message to his followers as to the place of children in God's kingdom.

WATCH IT AGAIN

What pictures are in Otto's pop-up book? What grade are Ruby and Gabe in?

OUR CHURCH

As a class, take an inventory of your church. How does your church include children of all ages? What activities are *only* for children? What activities are *only* for adults?

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets, ink pads, markers, and hand wipes.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. Hold up a leaflet. **Let's look at our map of the United States! How many places can you name in our state? Look at the list of continents. How many countries can you name in the different continents?**
2. Take out ink pads. **Let's make a thumbprint on each place we belong to. I was born in (place of birth), so I'm going to put a print on that state.** Make a print. **Now let's all make a print on the state or continent where we were born.** Give kids time. **I belong to the state/country and continent where I was born. We all have connections to places. These connections help us belong.**
3. Explore other places on the map where kids have some connection. Kids might stamp places where they have lived or visited, or places where they have family history. Encourage kids who can't think of connections to put a thumbprint on every state or continent where people might be reading this Bible story today (that could be all of them!). **Let's get started putting a print on all the places where we have a belonging-connection.**
4. When kids are finished stamping, clean off inky fingers with hand wipes and compare maps. **Today we thought about all the places we have connections to. We came up with a lot of connections! We have one more connection to add to our map. We all are connected to God. We all belong to God. God isn't a country, state, or continent. God is bigger than any one place! So let's write "BELONG" really big with markers so it covers our map.**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

What does it mean to belong? To whom do we belong? Allow kids to respond. **We belong to our families, our schools, and our church. We also belong to God. Jesus taught us that all people belong to God—even kids! When Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me," he showed everyone that kids are important people of God.**

Pass out leaflet panels, markers, and sticky notes.

Show kids the sticky note messages on the leaflet, then invite each kid to copy their favorite two messages onto two real sticky notes. **Stick your messages up on doors around our church as you leave today!**

Send kids out with a blessing.

Circle up with kids. **God blesses all of us. And that means me** (place a hand on your chest). **And that means you** (place your other hand on the shoulder of the kid next to you). Each kid passes the blessing by repeating those words and actions. When the blessing makes it back to you, say, **Go and bless the world.**

Thank kids for coming today. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.