

Jesus Blesses Children

Grades
5-6

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

Kids know they belong when people talk with them about their lives and interests. Take time each week to check in with every kid in your group. Ask them what's going on in their lives. What's happening at school? With their favorite activities? With their family?



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Pencils
- Permanent markers (various colors)
- Pens

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Paper cups (up to 100)
- Chenille stems (5 to 8 per kid)
- Pony beads

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Provide up to 100 paper cups. Kids will work together to create a structure out of them. They can make a tower, a building, or anything else. Before class, knock it down and remind kids that Jesus breaks down barriers so we can all belong.

Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

In today's story, we learn about who belongs in God's kingdom. **Spoiler alert: Everyone does!** Ask kids to share their names, including their middle name, and answer: **What groups, teams, or clubs do you belong to? What does it feel like to belong?** Answer the question yourself too.

Pray together: **Dear God, help us remember that we belong in God's kingdom—always. Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and pencils.

Partner up, and interview your partner using the prompts on your leaflet. Write down their responses. Give kids time to complete the interview. Then split your group into groups of six or eight and give kids time to introduce their partner to the group. After each introduction, have everyone respond with,



"(Name), you belong in God's kingdom!"

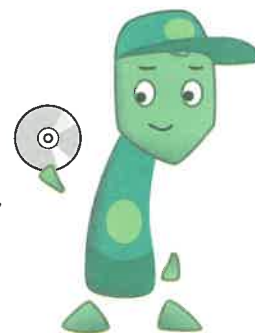
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

What would you do if our pastor asked you to present a Bible story in church? In today's video, kids are asked to create a presentation of a Bible story for worship. Watch what happens when other kids try to help.

View Episode 9, "Youthful Nuisance," on the Year Gold Winter Grades 3–6 DVD.

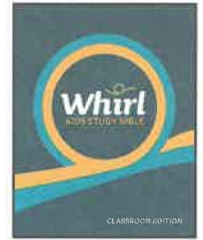
Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What Bible story were Gabe and Ruby trying to present?**
- **Why do you think Ruby and Gabe didn't accept help from younger friends?**
- **When did the older kids figure out what Jesus was talking about in the Bible story they were working on?**
- **How do you treat younger kids?**
- **How can our class get to know younger kids better?**



Open your Whirl Kids Study Bibles.

Today's passage is from the book of Mark. It's in the New Testament in the Gospels and Acts section of the Bible. If this is your first time reading from Mark, invite kids to check out the book introduction and comic on page 1198.



In Jesus' time, children were often ignored or considered less important than adults. In this story, Jesus reminds his disciples that all people are important and belong in the kingdom of God.

Help kids find Mark 10:13-16 and read it in this creative way together: Sit in a circle facing outward. Invite a volunteer to read verse 13. Turn inward and invite a volunteer to read verse 14. Put hands on the shoulders of the people next to you and invite a volunteer to read verses 15-16.

Invite kids to check out what Ruby says about Mark 10:13-16.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **Why do you think the disciples didn't want kids to be near Jesus?**
- **Why do you think Jesus welcomed the children?**
- **Who in your life makes you feel like you are always welcome and always belong?**
- **How can you help younger kids or visitors at our church feel welcome?**
- **How do kids participate in church life in our congregation?**

Make your mark on the Wall Chart.

Look at the chart and find the theme for today. Give kids time to find the word *Belong*. **Jesus wanted everyone to know that all people belong in God's kingdom, and that means you!** Provide permanent markers in a variety of colors, and invite kids to write their names in and around the box by *Belong* because all kids belong!



BIBLE BIT

It was radical that Jesus welcomed kids. He wanted to make sure people knew that kids were (and are) important and loved completely by God.

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, pay close attention to the facial expressions and body language of the younger kids when they are banished from the creative process. How do their reactions make you feel?

OUR CHURCH

Provide opportunities for fifth and sixth graders to connect with young children. Maybe they can be Bible-reading buddies once a month or prayer partners.

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out pens, chenille stems, and pony beads.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **Jesus realized that kids are awesome and made sure that grown-ups learned that kids have an important place in God's kingdom.**
2. **In the blue exclamation points, write words that describe why kids are awesome.**
3. **In the circles around the chenille stem stick figures, write words that describe why you are awesome.**
4. **Create two kid-figures using chenille stems and pony beads. Form them into an action pose. Are they praying, dancing, reading, playing soccer?**
5. As kids create, encourage them to discuss ways kids can contribute to the church and why kids are valuable.
6. **Give one of your figures away to an adult and tell them why kids are awesome. Keep one of them to remind yourself that you belong in the kingdom of God.**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Kids are important to Jesus, and they are important in God's kingdom. Have a conversation about your own congregation and how kids are welcome or not. Ask kids if they feel important at church. Ask them how they might feel more important. Take time to hear kids' responses.

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pencils.

The disciples tried to keep kids away from Jesus. Solve the puzzle using the code at the top to figure out exactly what Jesus did. (Answer: "And he took them up in his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them," Mark 10:16.)

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.