

Jesus Blesses Children

PreK-
K

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

Young kids, especially those with older siblings, often feel left out or excluded. Jesus welcomed children of all ages! Use this lesson to hear from the kids about times when they've felt unimportant or left out just because they were younger than everybody else.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Crayons
- Masking tape
- Scissors
- White paper (cut into thirds horizontally, 1 strip per kid)
- Clear tape

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Assorted classroom toys or supplies
- Single-hole punches
- Yarn
- Stickers (optional)

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Look around the room for items that belong together. Have kids find pairs or groups of things that they think go together. These could be sets of classroom toys or supplies. Invite kids to share why they chose those items. There are no right or wrong answers!

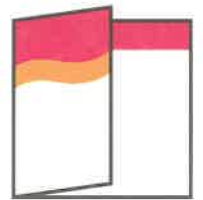
Circle up with kids for an opening conversation.

Gather in a circle with kids holding hands. **Holding hands is a way we show we belong to one another. We're going to gently squeeze each other's hands. When you feel one of your hands squeezed, squeeze your other neighbor's hand. I'll start us off.** Squeeze the hand of the kid on your right. Go around the circle once to the right. Do it again by squeezing to the left.

Pray together: **Dear God, sometimes it's hard to feel like we belong. Thank you for creating a kingdom that welcomes everyone, including kids! Amen.**

Pass out leaflets and crayons.

Look at the first column of photos on the leaflet. What do you see? Which of the photos doesn't belong with the rest? Invite kids to cross out the flower. **Look at the column in the middle. Find the photo that doesn't belong.** Kids may cross out the bike. **What**



about the last column? What are those photos of? Who is in your family? Which photo doesn't belong? Invite kids to cross out the rain boots. Collect their leaflets until Respond.

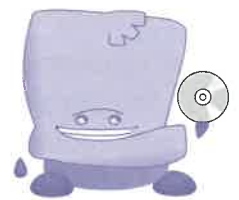
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

In the video today, Ada and Victor feel left out. Let's see what happens when the younger kids try to help the older kids.

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

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **What do the big kids tell Ada and Victor they are too young to understand?**
- **When have you been told you are too little to do or learn something?**
- **How did Ada and Victor realize that they could learn about the Bible just like the bigger kids?**
- **Where do you learn about God and the Bible?**
- **What are things that kids your age can do to help out at church?**



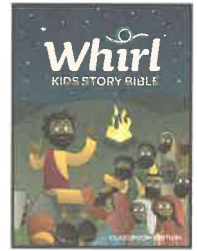
Open your Whirl Kids Story Bibles.

Let's find our story for today! Help kids find "Jesus Blesses Children" on page 246. Before you read, invite kids to look for how happy Jesus was to be around little children.

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

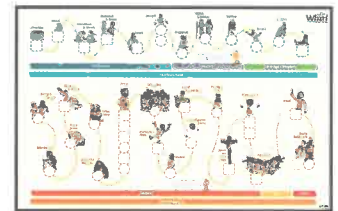
Ask these questions after you read the story:

- **Why do the disciples want the children to go away?**
- **Where do you try to stay quiet?**
- **What surprised you about Jesus allowing the children to come to him?**
- **Did the disciples make a mistake? Did Jesus forgive them?**
- **How can you show others how to love and share with everybody?**



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

Point out the Testament (New) 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!

Use masking tape to create a circle on the floor large enough for all the kids to stand inside. Have kids first stand outside the circle. **Jesus said kids belong in God's kingdom. We're going to play a game to help us learn more about how we all belong.** Call out things the kids have in common: **Step into the circle and hold hands if you are wearing blue/have brown hair/are a big brother or sister/like ice cream/etc.** Kids step in and out of the circle with each thing called. End with: **Step into the circle and hold hands if you are part of God's kingdom!** (If you think kids in your group will be sensitive to features they may or may not have in common with other kids, you may give kids different, colorful stickers instead. Kids stand in or out of the circle based on attributes of their stickers.)

BIBLE BIT

In Jesus' day, children were loved, but they weren't considered important. There were no playgrounds or special places designed for them. When Jesus welcomed them, it was *a big deal!*

WATCH IT AGAIN

If you watch the video again, pay attention to how Ada and Victor use the Bible to learn that kids belong in God's kingdom.

OUR CHURCH

Find a way for the kids to contribute to worship this week. Could they assist the adults who are serving as ushers, communion assistants, greeters, etc.?

RESPOND 10

Pass out leaflets, crayons, white paper strips, and clear tape.

Unfold and tear off leaflet square.

1. **We've been talking about how kids belong in God's family. What other kind of family do you belong to? God makes us feel loved. How does your family make you feel loved?**
2. Invite kids to draw the people they belong to on the white paper strips. Kids may draw friends, teachers, family members, or others.
3. **A treasure box is where people keep things that are valuable to them. We're going to make a treasure box where we can put the pictures of our most treasured people.**
4. Invite kids to color the white circles on the leaflet in jewel colors.
5. Turn the square over so the Family side is facing up. Show kids how to fold the bottom up along the dotted line in the middle of the treasure box side. Lightly tape the left and right sides.
6. Fold the top down along the other dotted line on the treasure box side. The square should now be transformed into a treasure box.
7. Invite kids to place the pictures they drew of their treasured people inside their treasure boxes.
8. **How can you let the people in your treasure box know how special they are to you?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Everyone belongs in God's kingdom—adults *and* kids! The next time you feel left out or unimportant because you are little, remember that Jesus said kids are *very* important. How can you remember what Jesus said about kids? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Pass out leaflet panels, scissors, single-hole punches, and yarn.

Let's make necklaces! You can wear one side and share the other with someone who belongs to you. Invite kids to choose a necklace and cut it out, creating two halves. Assisting kids as needed, punch a hole in each half, thread yarn through each hole to create two necklaces, and tie.

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.