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Jesus and the Children

Scripture: Mark 10:13-16

Theme: Jesus loves children and welcomes them

1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Sunday School Lesson: "Jesus Loves Children" Theme: God's love shines brightest when we welcome and cherish little ones in His name! Introduction (Greeting with Joy): Start the lesson with a song or dance, like "Jesus Loves the Little Children" by Bobby McFerrin, to set a warm, loving tone. Ask kids, "Who here has a favorite toy, pet, or friend?" Then tell them: "Today, we'll learn that Jesus loves all of God's children, even the littlest ones!" Scripture Reading & Story (Mark 10:13-16): Read the passage aloud with dramatic flair: "Jesus saw children coming to Him, and He didn't get mad or turn them away. He bent down, put His arms around them, and said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and don't stop them!'" Pause for kids to mimic Jesus' hugs or waves. Key Message (God's Love for Kids): Explain: "Jesus treats children like His own special friends because God made them to be loved, just like He loves you!" Share a simple truth: "Every child deserves a hug, a kind word, or someone who listens to them. That's how God shows love!" For young kids, use props like stuffed animals to show how Jesus cares for them. Application (Practice Love Today): Ask: "What's one way we can show love to another child today?" Ideas: "Share your toys, tell a friend they're awesome, or help someone carry something heavy!" End with prayer: "Dear God, thank You for loving all kids. Help us to love them too. Amen!" Closing Encouragement for Teachers: End with a heartfelt note: "You're doing amazing work teaching these kids God's love! Remember: Jesus' arms are open wide for every child, so keep hugging, welcoming, and believing in their worth!" Leave a fun activity (e.g., coloring pictures of Jesus with kids) to reinforce the lesson. Optional reflection: children can draw a picture of Jesus helping their friends, then share one way they can help someone else this week. This extra activity supports the lesson's theme and gives teachers a simple, lowprep option for extending the discussion.

Bible Story

Jesus Loves Little Children

Once, when Jesus and His disciples were traveling, some parents brought their little children to Him. The disciples were upset and tried to push them away. But Jesus saw the children and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not stop them. For the kingdom of God belongs to those like these." (Mark 10:14, NLT)

Jesus took the children in His arms, put His hands on their heads, and blessed them. He loved them so much that He wanted everyone to know how special they were. The grown-ups in the crowd watched, wondering why Jesus treated them this way.

Jesus wanted the children to feel welcome and safe. He showed them that God loves them just as they are, no matter how small or young they feel. The disciples didn't understand at first, but Jesus reminded them that God's kingdom is filled with kindness and care for the little ones.

This story teaches us that God wants us to be kind to others, especially children. Just like Jesus took the time to bless them, we can show love to those who may feel left out or unimportant. By treating others gently, we help them feel loved, just like God loves all of us.

Why does this story matter? Because it reminds us that God's love is for everyone, even the little ones. When we see someone who feels different, we can follow Jesus' example and make them feel welcome.

Key Verse

Mark 10:14 , 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.'

Let's Talk About God's Special Gift for Kids! This verse is from the Bible, and it's a wonderful message about how God loves all children, even the tiny ones! Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and don't stop them." This means that God is very happy when kids trust Him and follow Him, just like He does for you and me. The kingdom of God is like God's special kingdom where love and kindness rule, just like a big, cozy house full of helpers, friends, and amazing adventures! You might wonder, "Why does God want kids to come to Him?" Well, kids are like little seeds that God wants to grow into big, strong believers. When you believe in God, you learn to love Him and others, just like Jesus showed us. It's like when you plant a tiny seed in the soil, it doesn't stay small forever, but grows and becomes a beautiful flower or tree. God wants your heart to grow in love and faith, just like that seed does! Sometimes, grown-ups might think, "Kids are too little to understand God," but that's not true! Kids are smart in their own way, and they can learn so much from God. If you ever feel brave enough, you can come to God and talk to Him like a best friend. Just like Jesus loved the little children, He loves you too, no matter your age. You can pray, "Dear God, I love You, and I want to be Your little friend forever!" God will always listen! Now, how can we show God that we love this verse? One way is to tell other kids (or even grown-ups!) that God is their biggest friend and wants them to trust Him. You can share how Jesus wants everyone to feel safe and happy in His kingdom. Imagine giving a hug to someone who feels scared or alone, just like Jesus gave hugs to the little children! You can also draw a picture of God holding your hand and tell your family how He's always there for you, just like He is for the little ones in this verse. Would you like to try making a little prayer or drawing together to remember this verse? God is waiting to hear from you!

Activities

Activity 1:

1. Read the Verse: Start by reading Mark 10:16 aloud: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Ask: How do you think Jesus felt when he hugged these children?
2. Fold Paper: Give each child a strip of construction paper. Fold it in half lengthwise (like a hot dog bun) and cut a triangle shape from the top, this will be their wing!
3. Add Colors: Unfold the wings and let children color the top with crayons (red, blue, or white). Glue the ends to form a wing shape.

4. Practice Kindness: Hang the wings on the wall and discuss: How can we be like Jesus by welcoming others, even if they seem “small” or different?

Activity 2:

1. Story Setup: Share the story from Mark 10:13, 16, focusing on Jesus taking little children in His arms. Ask: Why do you think Jesus loved them so much?
2. Gather Kids: Have children sit in a circle. Say: “Let’s pretend Jesus is here! Who wants to be a little child?” (Call 3, 4 kids forward.)
3. Big Hug Game: One adult acts as Jesus. When Jesus says, “Come to me!” (in a gentle voice), the child runs to him. Jesus hugs them, and everyone cheers: “Jesus loves all children!”
4. Create a Mat: Fold paper into a rectangle and write “Welcome to Jesus!” on it. Place it near the circle to remind kids: Even if someone is small or new, they belong to God’s family.
5. Application Tip: After activities, pray together: “God, help us to welcome others like Jesus did. Amen.” Use the wings or hugs as a reminder to share His love daily!

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for early elementary children (ages 6, 8) based on Jesus and the Children (Mark 10:13, 16). These questions encourage deep thinking, sharing, and application of the lesson while keeping the conversation engaging and age-appropriate.
- 1. What Was Jesus Doing When He Saw the Little Children?
- "In the Bible story, Jesus saw some little children running toward Him. What do you think they were doing? Were they playing? Playing games? Maybe they were tired from running? How do you think they felt when they saw Jesus? Why do you think they wanted to talk to Him?"
- (This question invites them to visualize the scene and consider emotions, helping them connect with the children in the story.)
- 2. Why Did Jesus Lift the Little Children into His Arms?
- "Jesus didn’t just stand there, He took the children into His arms and said something special. What do you think He was telling them? Why do you think He wanted them to feel close to Him? Later in life, when you feel small or worried, what kinds of things might make you feel like Jesus did here? Maybe it’s holding your hand, or listening to you, or just making you feel loved?"
- (This encourages them to think about God’s love and how small people can feel in big worlds.)
- 3. How Can We Be Like Jesus When It Comes to Kids?
- "Jesus showed kindness to the little children, even when there were grown-ups telling Him not to. What are some ways we can be kind to kids today? Maybe it’s helping them play, sharing our toys, or just making sure they know they’re important to God. Think of one small way you could show love to a child this week, like sitting down to talk, drawing a picture for them, or telling them they’re special because they’re made in God’s image!"
- (This connects the lesson to real-life actions they can take.)
- 4. What Does It Mean That God Loves Us Just Like Jesus Loved the Children?
- "Jesus called the little children ‘God’s children,’ and He said they could come to Him anytime. If God loves us as much as Jesus loved those tiny children, what does that mean for you? How does that make you feel? Maybe it means you can talk to God like you’d talk to a friend, no matter how big or small you feel. What’s one thing you’re thankful God loves you for today?"
- (This helps them reflect on personal faith and gratitude.)
- Tips for Discussion:

- Let them share their ideas one at a time.
- Ask follow-up questions like, "How does that make you feel?" or "Can you think of someone else who showed kindness like Jesus?"
- Encourage them to draw or act out parts of the story if it feels helpful!

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus for Early Elementary Students: "Jesus Loves All Children" Let's pray together that God will help us love and care for all the children around us, just like Jesus did. Jesus loved little kids so much that He picked them up, hugged them, and said, "Let the little children come to me." Today, we can show that same kindness to one another, especially to the children we meet in our school, neighborhood, or family. Dear God, thank You for making us special because You made us. Help us to be like Jesus and welcome every child with a big smile and a heart full of love. When we see someone who looks different or might feel left out, remind us to include them, just like Jesus did. Amen. Let's imagine Jesus sitting with us right now. Can you feel His arms around you? God, help us to share our toys, our hugs, and our friendship with others, just like Jesus taught us. We don't always have to be perfect, just kind! Amen. Jesus, You know all our hearts. Help us to ask for forgiveness when we are mean or ignore someone who needs our help. Make us better friends and better servants of others, just like You showed us. Amen. Now, let's close our eyes and think of one special way we can love a child today, maybe by sharing our lunch, saying "I love you," or just giving them a high-five. Thank You, God, for loving us so much! Amen. (Teachers can repeat the last line with the class as a group ending.)

>> Missions Spotlight

UNICEF estimates that 385 million children worldwide live in extreme poverty. Mission organizations like Compassion International, World Vision, and others work to meet children's physical AND spiritual needs. Jesus said to let the children come, and we must bring the Gospel to them.

-> To the Cross

The disciples tried to keep the children away, but Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me.' Jesus loves every child. He went to the cross for children too. Every child matters to God, and every child needs to hear about Jesus.