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Jesus and the Children

Scripture: Mark 10:13-16

Theme: Jesus loves children and welcomes them

4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Sunday School Lesson Overview: "Jesus and the Children" Based on Mark 10:13, 16 | Theme: God's Big Love for Kids --- Introduction (Engage with Wonder) Start by holding up a small toy or drawing a picture of children. Ask: "What's something special about kids? Why do you think God made them?" Let children share, then transition to the story. Jesus didn't just love adults, He had a heart for little ones, too! (Use age-appropriate examples like a child's giggle or a stuffed animal as a reminder of His care.) --- Story Recap & Connection Read Mark 10:13, 16 aloud with simple phrases (e.g., "Jesus took the kids in His arms" instead of "He laid his hands on them"): > "Jesus saw little children and loved them, so He put them in the middle of His group. Then He said, 'Let the little ones come to me... for God's kingdom belongs to those who are like this.'" (Paraphrase to keep it clear.) Deeper Questions for Discussion: - Why do you think Jesus made it okay for kids to be near Him? (Hint: Think about how God made us all equal in His eyes.) - Have you ever felt too big or too small to be part of God's family? How does this story help you feel welcome? --- Activity: "Jesus' Welcome Sign" Hand out colored paper and markers. Ask kids to draw a sign saying "JESUS LOVES YOU!" (or "Little Ones Are Welcome!") and share their art. Encourage them to keep it as a reminder that no matter their size, they're loved by God. --- Application: "How Can We Welcome Kids?" Ask: "If Jesus cared so much for children, how can we show love to kids today?" Possible answers: - Invite a new friend to play. - Share God's story with someone younger. - Help others feel safe and loved (like Jesus did). Personal Challenge: "This week, do one thing to make a child smile, maybe by reading a Bible story to them or just being kind!" Praise them when they follow up! --- Closing Prayer & Encouragement Pray: "Dear God, thank You for loving kids like Jesus did. Help us to be like Him, welcoming, gentle, and full of Your joy. Amen." End with: "Remember, God made you special, just like Jesus made every child special!" (Hold up a heart or hug the group.) Keep it lighthearted, kids will feel seen and loved! 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 and the Children

One day, Jesus was teaching a big crowd of people in the town of Jericho. It was a warm afternoon, and the crowd was so large that people were sitting on the ground to hear Him. Suddenly, some parents brought their little children to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to bless and touch them. But the disciples, who were Jesus' closest friends and helpers, were upset. They whispered to each other, "Maybe we should send the kids away. They'll slow us down!"

Jesus saw how the parents looked at them with such love and concern. He gently called the disciples to Him and said, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them!" Then He took the children in His arms and blessed them, speaking to them in a kind, loving way. The crowd cheered when they saw this, Jesus was acting with such kindness toward the little ones. Some grown-ups even whispered, "Do you see how Jesus loves children?"

After that, Jesus asked the disciples, "Whoever welcomes a little child in my name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." This was a big truth, Jesus meant that we should treat children as if they are very important to Him, just as He does.

--- Deeper Questions: 1. Why do you think the disciples were upset when the children came to Jesus? 2. How did Jesus respond to the children? What can we learn from His actions? 3. What does it mean to "welcome" someone in Jesus' name? How can we do this?

--- Personal Application: Jesus didn't just talk about loving children, He showed it by touching and blessing them. The Bible tells us that God made each person, including children, in His own image. When we treat kids with kindness, we're showing others how much God loves them too. Who can you welcome today, whether it's a little child, a friend, or even someone who seems different from you?

--- Why This Story Matters: Jesus doesn't just care about adults, He loves everyone, no matter how small or big. When we follow His example, we help others see that God's love is for all of us. That's why Jesus said, "Let the children come to me." It's a reminder that God made each person special and important, and we should treat them the same way.

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 the Little Children Come to Me The Bible verse from Mark 10:14 is a beautiful reminder of how Jesus wants us to feel about children, like they matter so much to Him. When Jesus saw little kids running toward Him, He didn't stop them with an excuse or say they were too small. Instead, He smiled and said, "Let them come to Me!" This means Jesus loves all kids, big and small, and He wants us to see them the same way. Kids in our world sometimes feel like they're too young, too loud, or not important enough to pay attention to. But Jesus knows what's true: His kingdom, where love and kindness rule, belongs to those who are open, curious, and full of wonder. Just like Jesus didn't push kids away, we should never make them feel left out or overlooked. Why Does This Verse Matter for Us? Jesus didn't just talk about little kids, He wanted them to be part of His life. Maybe you've felt like you don't belong in church, school, or even your own family because you're still learning how to follow God. But this verse reminds us that everyone, including us, is welcome when we come to Him with our hearts. It's like a big invitation: "Come as you are, and I'll meet you!" Here's a question to think about: Have you ever felt too quiet, too new, or too unsure to join something important? How would it feel to ask Jesus, "Help me trust that I'm welcome?" Maybe He'll surprise you with how happy He is to see you! How Can We Show Others God's Love? Jesus didn't just love kids, He taught them too. Sometimes, we get so busy with our own lives that we forget to take time to connect with others, especially kids. Maybe you can share God's love with a younger sibling, a friend who feels left out, or even a neighbor who's lonely. Just like Jesus welcomed the little ones, we can be the ones who make them feel loved. Here's a personal challenge: Next time someone feels shy or nervous to join something, can you be the one to invite them? Or can you share a kind word or smile to remind them

they're never too small for God's kingdom? Jesus didn't stop the children from coming because they were perfect, He stopped them because they were exactly who He wanted to be near. So next time you see someone (or yourself!) who feels out of place, ask God to help you welcome them with an open heart. That's how the kingdom of God grows, one kind, loving person at a time!

Activities

Activity 1:

Children explore how Jesus invites children into His care by creating a prayer jar where they can write or draw messages of faith, kindness, or thanksgiving for kids who need love.

1. Read the Scripture (5 min): Begin by reading Mark 10:13, 16 aloud. Ask, "Why do you think Jesus took little children in His arms? What does it mean to welcome someone as if they're your own?"
2. Discuss Application (3 min): Ask, "How can we show love to children in our lives, even if they're not our own? What's one way we can be kind to someone younger?"
3. Create the Jar (7 min):
4. Each child writes or draws a word or picture on an index card (e.g., "Praise God for You", "Hold Hands in Prayer", "Thank You for My Brother/Sister").
5. Glue the cards inside a cup or jar, securing it with a strip of paper.
6. Practice Kindness (2 min): As a group, share one way they'll show love to a child this week. Close with a prayer for those who might feel left out or in need of a kind word.

Activity 2:

Children model Jesus' heart for children by designing a "kingdom of heaven" scene with a "royal welcome" for kids. They'll discuss how their actions reflect Jesus' teachings.

1. Read and Reflect (5 min): Read Mark 10:13, 16 again. Ask, "What does it mean to be like a child in God's kingdom? How can we 'come to Jesus' (like the little ones)?"
2. Discuss Personal Application (3 min): Ask, "What's one way we can welcome someone who feels different or small in our group?"
3. Create the Craft (7 min):
4. Each child folds a construction paper sheet into a simple "house" (or makes a paper crown).
5. Inside, they draw a scene with Jesus holding children (e.g., a child sitting at His feet, others playing).
6. Add details like stars for heaven or a "royal welcome" sign.
7. Share and Pray (3 min): Each child shares one thing they learned and how they'll apply it. End with a group prayer for kids who need Jesus' love.
8. Both activities blend creativity with Scripture, leaving room for deeper discussion and practical faith growth.

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for upper elementary children (ages 9, 11) based on Jesus and the Children (Mark 10:13, 16). These questions encourage reflection, deeper thinking, and personal application while keeping the conversation engaging and meaningful.
- 1. What Does It Mean to Be "Like Little Children"?
- "In this story, Jesus took the little children in His arms and blessed them. What does it mean to be like little children, and how can we show that same love and trust in our daily lives?"
- How do you think Jesus saw these children when He held them? What might they have needed from Him?
- Have you ever felt like a child in need of someone to protect or care for you? How did that make you feel, and what helped you feel safe?

- If you were one of these children, what would you have wanted Jesus to do for you? How can we, as adults, help others feel like they matter just as much?
- 2. Why Does Jesus Say "Let the Little Children Come to Me"?
- "Jesus didn't just let the children come, He invited them! Why do you think He wanted them to be near Him? How does this story show us that God loves all of us, even when we're small or different?"
- What might have made these children feel nervous or unsure about coming to Jesus? Have you ever felt that way about asking God for help?
- If Jesus were to speak to you today, what would He say to you about being brave and trusting Him, no matter your age or situation?
- How can we, like Jesus, make others feel welcome and loved, even if they don't seem "perfect" or "grown-up"?
- 3. How Can We Be Like Jesus in Caring for Others?
- "Jesus didn't just bless the children, He made sure they were treated with love and respect. How can we, as believers, show that kind of care to others, especially when they seem different or in need?"
- Think of someone in your class or neighborhood who might feel left out or forgotten. How could you include them in a way that makes them feel special?
- Have you ever felt like God was calling you to help someone, even if it was small? What happened, and how did it make you feel?
- If you could spend one day being like Jesus, just sitting with someone who needed comfort, who would you choose, and why?
- 4. What Does It Mean to Trust God Like a Little Child?
- "Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to Me,' which means He welcomes everyone who trusts Him. How does trusting God feel different than trusting something else?"
- What's something in your life that you trust, like a friend, a toy, or even a game? How does trusting God feel compared to trusting those things?
- Have you ever asked God for something small, like help with a friend or courage to try something new? What happened, and how did you feel?
- If you could ask Jesus one question about trusting Him, what would it be? How can we learn to trust Him more every day?
- These questions invite students to explore the story in a personal way, think about their own experiences, and reflect on how Jesus' love applies to their lives. Would you like any of them adjusted for a specific setting (e.g., small group, Sunday school, etc.)?

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus: Jesus Cares for Little Ones Like Us Lord Jesus, You hear the little voices of all children, just like those in the story today. You didn't just smile at them; You scooped them into Your arms, hugged them close, and said, "Let the little children come to Me." Help us remember that Your love is bigger than our worries, bigger than our mistakes, and bigger than any fear. Today, I want to be like You, gentle, kind, and full of joy, especially when others are scared or feel too big for their own good. When I feel too small or overwhelmed (like in school, with homework, or when I'm sad), remind me that You're right there, holding my hand. Help me listen when others are crying, just like You listened to the children in the story. And when I make mistakes, like Peter did with his friends, teach me to ask for forgiveness, just like Jesus forgave us. Jesus, You made it clear that You love all of us, even the ones who aren't perfect. Today, I want to love my friends better, share what I have with others who need it, and be brave enough to ask You for help when I need it. Help me grow in Your love, like a little seed in the soil, strong, trusting, and full of life. You didn't just come to earth to fix the grown-ups; You came to care for all of us, especially

the ones who are still learning. Today, I promise to follow Your example: to welcome others, to show kindness, and to trust that You're always there to hold my hand. Help me do that in small ways, like helping a classmate, telling the truth, or being kind to someone who's different. Dear God, You know my heart. Help me to live like You today, full of love for others and trust in You. Amen. --- Teacher's Note: Pause for reflection, ask, "What's one way we can love like Jesus today?" or "Who needs a hug or a kind word today?" to engage students in personal application.

>> 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.