



LESSON 3

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Loves Us

SCRIPTURE: Mark 10

GOD'S BIG STORY: Jesus welcomes little children, taking them in His arms and blessing them. He teaches that His kingdom belongs to those who are like little children.

WORD OF WONDER: God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son. —from John 3:16

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Welcome Question: Who is one person you like to hang out with? Why do you like being with that person?
- Curiosity Questions
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Word of Wonder: From John 3:16
- Discussion Questions
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Hanging Out with Jesus
- Curiosity Activity: Action-Packed Red Light Green Light



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

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WORD OF WONDER: From John 3:16

I remember as a kid being scared at night and wanting to go knock on my parents' door. Like many kids, I was afraid that if I bothered them, they might be upset. Funny thing is that the moment I worked up the courage to knock, I would hear these words: "Come in." My parents simply wanted me to seek them, and when I did, they were more than willing to let me in.

It's amazing to think Jesus wants us to come to Him. We are His kids, and Jesus quite simply wants us to come to Him because He loves us.

Read Mark 10:13–16 and see how Jesus takes His children in His arms and blesses them. That's the Jesus who loves you.

So don't let anybody block you or hold you back or get you thinking otherwise. Jesus loves you, and because of His love, you can hang out with Him. And because you are learning to hang out with Him, the kids in your ministry will get an opportunity to meet the wonderful God who loves them.

So today as you prepare, set aside distractions and spend time with Jesus. It's the most important thing you can do to help kids hang out with Him too!

—**Andrae Jones**

Nextgen Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

During the time of Jesus, children entered adulthood around age 12. Girls would plan for marriage, and boys would either continue studying the Torah (Jewish Scriptures) or enter into their father's trade. The children who came to Jesus would probably have been fairly young.

WHAT?

The disciples were likely trying to protect Jesus' time so He could teach and heal those who they deemed important. But Jesus makes it clear that people must accept the kingdom of God like little children, who realize it is a gift from God, not something that can be gained through worldly knowledge or wisdom.

WHERE?

Jesus was in southern Israel and across the Jordan River. He was surrounded by crowds, including some of the Pharisees, who were constantly testing Jesus because they were suspicious of His teachings. He wasn't necessarily in friendly territory—His teachings and actions were being closely watched.

WHEN?

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem for the final time—it is there He would eventually face His death. After welcoming the children, Jesus continued to teach about the kingdom of God and how it operates in ways opposite the world.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

Shortly before Jesus blessed the children in Mark 10, He took a child in His arms and taught that welcoming little children in His name is the same as welcoming Him (see Mark 9:33–37). Multiple times during His ministry, Jesus cared for children, noticing, healing, and blessing them.

Small Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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Pre-Service Connection (15–20 min)

RESOURCES: whiteboard, poster paper, or butcher paper, writing utensils, board games or games

Games & Activities Guide

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!

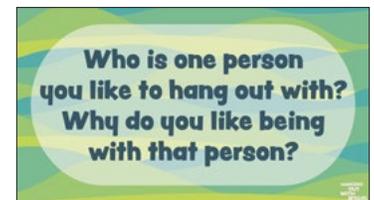
As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious" questions to engage kids. Say "I'm curious.." before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- **How do you think people in the Bible felt when they were with Jesus?**
- **Has there been a time when you weren't able to be with someone you love? Tell us about it.**



Leader Tip: This question may invite a kid to share about the death of a loved one. It is OK and healthy for kids to share about their loved ones who have died. Provide a listening ear and caring heart as they share about their grief.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, paper (2 sheets), marker

WORD OF WONDER

God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son.

—from John 3:16

Ahead of time, write the first part of the verse (“God so loved the world.”) on a sheet of paper with a marker. Then write the second part of the verse (“He sent His one and only Son.”) on another sheet of paper.

Our Word of Wonder for the Hanging Out with Jesus series is from John 3:16. Let’s practice saying the Word of Wonder together.

In today’s God’s big story, we heard about how Jesus welcomed children. Our Word of Wonder tell us God loves the world—that includes children! Let’s practice our Word of Wonder.

Recite the Word of Wonder with the whole group a few times so it’s fresh in their memory. Then split the kids so they’re sitting in two circles with a leader in each circle. Give the leader of one group a sheet of paper with the first part of the verse on it (“God so loved the world.”). The leader of the other group will have a sheet of paper with the rest of the verse (“He gave His one and only Son.”).

We’re going to do a call and response. You’re in two groups and a leader in each group has a part of the verse. The first leader will hold up the paper and help the group say, “God so loved the world.” The other leader will hold up the paper and help the group answer back with, “He gave His one and only Son.”

Are you ready? Go! Point to the first group. Let the groups go back and forth several times. When they’re finished, you can have the groups switch papers or have everyone recite the full Word of Wonder together.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **GOD**—Point up to God.
- **SO LOVED**—Hands on heart.
- **THE WORLD.**—Hands in a big circle over your head.
- **HE GAVE HIS ONE**—Point up with one finger.
- **AND ONLY SON.**—Hold your hands out on either side (like a cross).
- **FROM JOHN 3:16**—Hold your hands together as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **How can you tell God loves and cares about you?**
- **How does it make you feel to know that God loves you?**

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: My First Hands On Bible; Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme with motions each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.)

God's big story, waiting for me! (Point to yourself.)

Let's hear part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Mark in the Bible. It's the second book of the New Testament.

Read pages 262-269 in the My First Hands On Bible.

Discussion Questions

SUPPLIES: scissors (prep only), painter's tape or masking tape, beanbag

RESOURCES: Circle Time Cards (1/SG)

Ahead of time, print the Circle Time Cards and cut apart the hearts. Use painter's tape to make a giant box or circle on the ground with six sections, so it looks like either a grid or pie chart. Place one card inside each section.

Jesus loves to spend time with children. What do you think Jesus did with the children? What do you think He would do if He came to hang out with you today? Allow the kids to respond. **Jesus loves when we have fun! Let's have some fun with heart-shaped questions to help us remember that Jesus loves us, and we'll answer questions about the story.**

Show the kids the beanbag and the area you created with the painter's tape. Invite the kids to stand a few feet away and toss the beanbag onto a card one at a time. Once it lands on a card, the child can answer that question.



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Who brought the children to Jesus?** (the parents)
- **Why did they bring their children to Him?** (So He could bless them or speak God's gift of love over them)
- **How did the disciples respond when the children were with Jesus?** (They were irritated.)
- **Who's the most important person you've met?**
- **What would you say to Jesus if you got to meet Him in person?**
- **How do you show God you love Him?**
- **How do you know Jesus loves you?**
- **How should we treat others, knowing Jesus loves them too?**

Everyone is important to Jesus. He loves us and wants us to talk to Him about everything! Let's pray together and thank God for the love of Jesus.

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and thank God for caring about us. God hears all our prayers!

Head to Large Group!

Return and finish the rest of this guide before parents arrive.

Responding in Worship: Hanging Out with Jesus

SUPPLIES: coloring utensils, paper, writing utensils, interconnecting bricks and/or other blocks and building materials, paint (optional), glitter (optional), stickers (optional)

RESOURCES: "God Loves Us So" from the [Hanging Out with Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

During this activity, kids will spend time "hanging out with Jesus" as they pray and reflect at activity stations. Ahead of time, gather the materials for these activity stations:

Art Station: coloring utensils, paper, paint (optional), glitter (optional), stickers (optional)

Journal Station: paper, writing utensils

Building Station: interlocking bricks and/or other blocks and building materials

Prayer Station: no supplies needed

In God's big story today, we heard about Jesus welcoming the little children into His arms. Why do you think He did this? Allow kids time to answer.

Yes! Jesus welcomed the children because Jesus loves kids, and He loves you too! Jesus will never ignore you or dismiss you. Jesus is thinking about you all the time, even when you aren't thinking about Him. We are always on His mind because Jesus loves us.

What kind of activities do you think Jesus would enjoy doing with you? Encourage every kid to share one idea.

God gives the Holy Spirit to every person who follows Him. The Holy Spirit is God's loving presence with us! That means that even though Jesus is not with us physically, like He was with the kids in today's story, through the Holy Spirit, we can hang out with Jesus!

Let's spend some time with Jesus as we think about how amazing He is! Today you can choose an activity station where you'll get to hang out with Jesus!

Explain how each station works and then invite kids to choose a station to spend time hanging out with Jesus. Play the song “God Loves Us So” from the [Hanging Out with Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) while kids worship and respond creatively.

Art Station: Kids can use the art supplies to draw a picture for Jesus of something they would enjoy doing with Him.

Journal Station: Kids can journal their thoughts, questions, prayers, and concerns to Jesus. Kids may also choose to write a short story, song, or poem.

Building Station: This is a time for kids to be creative and have fun with Jesus through building things.

Prayer Station: This is a time for kids to sit and talk with Jesus. They can offer silent prayers or pray aloud in a quiet voice.

If there’s time, you can give a signal and allow kids to move to additional stations. Otherwise, gather kids back together after several minutes at their stations.

Make It Inclusive: Consider including certain supplies at the stations to make them even more accessible to all kids. For example, you might include kinetic sand, jumbo markers/crayons, and play dough at the Art Station, pencil grips at the Journal Station, and large blocks at the Building Station.

Curiosity Activity: Action-Packed Red Light, Green Light

SUPPLIES: construction paper (red and green, 1 sheet of each color)

Have kids stand side by side at one end of the room. Stand facing them at the opposite end. **Let’s play Action-Packed Red Light, Green Light! As usual, you will move forward when you see green paper and stop when you see red paper. However, you may only move forward by doing the actions I call out.**

Stand at least 10 feet away from the kids and hold the red and green sheets behind your back. Instruct kids to move toward you when you raise the green sheet and to continue moving until you raise the red sheet. The first kid to reach you wins! Play several rounds, and at the start of each round, instruct the kids to use one of the actions listed below. Change the action each round.

Make the game more dynamic by raising the red sheet frequently in the beginning rounds, creating an exaggeratedly slow pace for the kids to move forward! In the final round, don’t raise the red sheet at all, making it easy for kids to come toward you.

Actions

Jump

Walk backward

Crawl like a bear

Waddle like a penguin

Walk on your knees

Dance like a ballerina

Walk on your heels

Leader Tip: Consider kids' clothing when calling out actions. For example, if there are girls in dresses, you might have kids walk on two legs like an angry grizzly bear rather than crawl.

Gather kids back together. **Wow! There are lots of ways to move, but it isn't always fun when we're told to stop. The good news is—unlike our game where we had to stop frequently—when we move toward Jesus, we never have to wait or stop. In fact, the opposite happens.**

When we move toward Jesus, He will move toward us. Jesus welcomes us into His arms because, like today's Wonder Truth states, **JESUS LOVES US.**

Make It Inclusive: Invite kids with limited mobility to help you by calling out the actions for each round.