



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 that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him. —John 3:16–17

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
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Word of Wonder Activity
- God's Big Story
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- LARGE GROUP
- Elementary Responding in Worship: Hanging Out with Jesus
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Bleeding Tissue Paper Art



INVITATION

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Loves Us

SCRIPTURE: Mark 10

WORD OF WONDER: John 3:16–17

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.

LESSON 3 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Small Group

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Loves Us
SCRIPTURE: Mark 10
WORD OF WONDER: John 3:16–17

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!

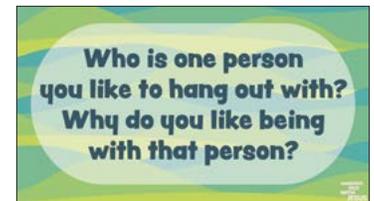
As kids arrive ...

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.**



Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity or game, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Word of Wonder Activity

WORD OF WONDER

God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son. Anyone who believes in him will not die but will have eternal life. God did not send his Son into the world to judge the world. He sent his Son to save the world through him.

—John 3:16–17 (NirV)

SUPPLIES: Bible; bouncy balls (1 per small group); small objects such as jacks, buttons, or interlocking bricks (optional)

Today in God's big story, Jesus took the children in His arms and blessed them. Why? Because Jesus loves us! Let's say our Word of Wonder together and remember God's amazing love for us!

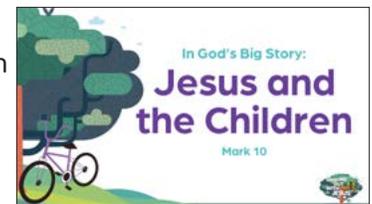
Open your Bible to John 3:16–17. Read John 3:16–17 several times together.

Let's play a game to practice our verse! Invite kids to form a circle. Explain that they will take turns bouncing the ball, and while the ball is in the air, the person who bounced the ball will say as much of the verse as he can before the ball hits the ground. When the next person bounces the ball, she can start saying the verse wherever the previous person left off. If your group is mostly younger kids, kids can take turns bouncing the ball, but everyone can say the verse together. For preteens, add challenge by having them catch the ball again before it hits the ground. For even more challenge, put a pile of small objects (jacks, buttons, interlocking bricks, etc.) in the center of the circle and encourage the person bouncing the ball to try picking up as many of the objects as possible before the ball hits the ground—all while saying the verse!

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Explain to the kids that today's story comes from the New Testament, which is the second part of the Bible. Ask kids to open their Bibles to the book of Mark, chapter 10.



Today we are learning about how much Jesus loves children and wants everyone to come to Him. Watch how Jesus welcomes kids, blesses them, and shows that trusting God with a childlike heart is the way to His kingdom. As you watch, think about how you can trust Jesus and come close to Him too.

[Read Mark 10:13–16 together as a group.](#)

Elementary Questions

- **In today's part of God's big story, who came to Jesus while He was teaching?** (Many people gathered around Jesus when He taught. On this day, parents brought their children to Jesus.)
- **Who tried to stop the children from visiting with Jesus?** (the disciples)
- **How did Jesus feel when the disciples didn't allow the children to come to Him? Why do you think He felt this way?** (He was angry.)
- **What did Simon and his friends do when Jesus called them to follow Him?** (They left everything and followed Jesus!)
- **What did Jesus do for the children?** (He took them in His arms and blessed them, which means He spoke God's love and favor over them.)
- **Jesus loves all of you! What are some things you think Jesus loves about you?**

You are like the kids in today's story! You can come to Jesus anytime. He is always waiting and ready to talk to you. Let's spend some time today talking with Jesus in prayer.

Preteen Questions

- **Why do you think the parents in today's part of God's big story brought their children to see Jesus?** (Possible answer: So that Jesus would bless them by speaking God's love and favor over them.)
- **The disciples tried to stop the children from visiting with Jesus. Why do you think they did this?** (Possible answers: They may have thought Jesus was too important to spend time with little children; they may have been trying to protect Jesus' time so He could do more important things.)
- **What did Jesus do for the children?** (He took them in His arms and blessed them, which means He spoke God's love and favor over them.)
- **What did Jesus say before He blessed the children?** ("Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them" [Mark 10:14].)
- **In God's kingdom, God is in charge and the broken parts of the world are being fixed. What do you think it means that the kingdom belongs to people who are like children?**
- **Jesus loves all of you! What are some things you think Jesus loves about you?**

Jesus loves us, and just like He did with the children in today's part of God's big story, He welcomes us and wants us to come to Him! Let's take some time to talk with Jesus in prayer.

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to join you in a circle to spend time talking to Jesus. Ask whether anyone has a question, something they would like to share with Jesus, or a prayer request. Give each kid a chance to participate, then close in prayer, remembering to thank Jesus for loving us!

Leader Tip: Let kids know that prayer is simply talking with God. Often, we pray with our eyes closed and heads bowed to help us focus on God. However, we can talk with God anywhere and in any position: sitting, standing, riding in a car, and with our eyes open!

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.

Preteen Responding in Worship: Bleeding Tissue Paper Art

SUPPLIES: bleeding tissue paper (cut into 1"-2" squares, at least 30 squares per kid), scissors (prep only), cups of water (1 per 3-4 kids), paper towels, black permanent markers (1 per 2 kids), white cardstock (1 sheet per 2 kids), paintbrushes (1 per kid), trash can, disposable gloves (1 pair per kid, optional), disposable tablecloths (1 per table, optional)

RESOURCES: [Hanging Out with Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Leader Tip: Plan ahead for this activity by ordering bleeding tissue paper from an online retailer.

Ahead of time, purchase bleeding tissue paper. You can purchase whole sheets or precut squares. If you choose to order whole sheets, plan to then cut the sheets into 1"-2" squares. Cut cardstock so that each kid has a half sheet. Fill cups half full of water. Have paper towels available for cleanup. Note that the dye from the bleeding tissue paper will stain hands and unprotected surfaces, so having gloves for kids would be helpful. Also, covering surfaces with disposable tablecloths will make cleanup easier.

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.

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Let's spend some with Jesus as we think about how amazing He is! Today, we're going to create a piece of art that reminds us of who Jesus is and how He loves us.

Have kids lightly wet the surface of their paper with water using a paintbrush. Have kids then take pieces of bleeding tissue paper and stick them on the wet surface of their paper. Encourage them to add water to the paper if the tissue paper doesn't stick. Overlapping the squares is helpful! After they have placed the tissue paper squares all over their paper, have kids lightly brush water over all of the squares so that the tissue paper color starts to bleed onto their paper. Play songs from the [Hanging Out with Jesus Elementary Spotify playlist](#) while kids create their artwork.



Once kids have finished brushing water onto the tissue paper, set the papers aside to partially dry. After several minutes, have kids remove the tissue paper squares and place them in a trash can. Explain that kids will now take a marker and draw on their artwork what they love about Jesus and how His love for them makes them feel. They can use words or symbols or draw a scene that reminds them of Jesus' love. Once they have completed their drawings, have kids share their pieces of art with one another.

Close by praying and thanking God for Jesus and for how He loves each person.