



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

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: Always With Me, Your Love for Me
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing





LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

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

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SCRIPTURE: Mark 10

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.

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

LESSON AT A GLANCE

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Welcome

Slide: Series Welcome Loop

As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

RESOURCES: Tac the Cat puppet

For this section, you can use the cat picture provided, or a stuffed animal cat, or a cat hand puppet.

Leader: You may remember our friend Tac, the curious cat. He's always asking questions. He has a question for you. Are you ready?

Tac the Cat: Hi, kids! Do you remember me? I'm Tac. For anyone who can spell, that's "Cat" spelled backward! I'm always curious about everything. Do you know what it means to be curious? It means to think about things and ask questions. It's good to ask questions! I have something I've been curious about ... do you want to guess what it is? *(Allow the kids to respond.)*

Tac the Cat: It's something you feel inside.

Leader: Being hungry?

Tac the Cat: No, it's something that comes from your heart.

Leader: Oh, I know! A heartbeat!

Tac the Cat: No. It's something you feel when you really, really, really like someone or something.

Leader: Ohhhh, love!

Tac the Cat: Yes, that's it! I'm curious about love! Kids, do you love anything? *(Allow the kids to respond.)* I love baked ish and watermelon and my sister. The other day I said, "I love you" to my doggy friend, Gup the Pug, and I got curious! Where does that feeling come from and what does it mean?

Leader: Yes, we can love a lot of different things! Sometimes it can be a little kind of love, like when we love a toy or a certain food, but sometimes it can be a really big kind of love, like when we love a close family member or a best friend. Love starts with God. It's in the Bible. Did you know that? There's a story about Jesus showing love to some kids.

Tac the Cat: What happened? I'm curious!

Leader: We'll find out when we hear about God's big story today!

Tac the Cat: So Jesus actually hung out with children? Do you think He played games with them and made them laugh?

Leader: I'm sure He did. Jesus loves kids! We'll learn about it in today's story.

Tac the Cat: That sounds great! Well, I've got to go hang out with Gup the Pup! I'll see you later!

Let's take a moment and think: What is something that you're curious about? Allow the kids to respond. **Have you ever loved something sooo much?** Allow the kids to respond. **What are some things you love?** Allow the kids to respond. **We all love people, and we love things, but have you ever stopped to think about how Jesus loves you?** **Display Wonder Truth Slide.**

Today's Wonder Truth is **JESUS LOVES US**. Today we'll discover Jesus loves us!

Declaring God's Wonder

Show the **Early Childhood Declaration Slide** and encourage the kids to say the statements and do the motions with you.

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much; (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

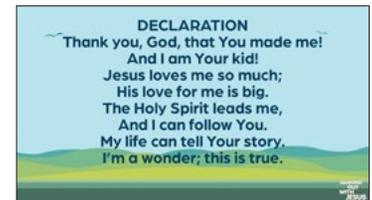
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is an example: **God, thank You for bringing each of us here to worship You today. By the power of Your Holy Spirit, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, and hearts to understand how much You love us. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

In God's big story today, we'll hear about a time when Jesus showed His love and care for little children. Let's praise Him now for His amazing love!

Play [worship videos](#) *Always With Me, Your Love for Me* and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Bible Story Picture (optional)

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 the God's Big Story Script provided or read Mark 10:13–16 from the Bible. You can also print the Bible Story Picture to give the kids a visual depiction as you tell the story.

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: Bible, cardstock (1 sheet), scissors (prep only, optional)

RESOURCES: [Happy/Sad Face Sheets \(1 /LG\)](#)

Ahead of time, print the Happy/Sad Face Sheets front-and-back. If possible, print on cardstock. Consider cutting out the faces to create a sign with a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other.



For today's part of God's big story, I have a happy face and a sad face which will help us think about whether what's happening is a good thing or a bad thing. At some parts in the story, I will hold up one of the faces. If I hold up the happy face, you can say, "Yay!" because what's happening is really good. If I hold up the sad face, you can say, "Uh-oh!" because what's happening in the story is bad. Let's give it a try. Ready? Hold up the happy face. Yay! Hold up the sad face. Uh-oh!

I think we're ready! Let's begin.

When Jesus was on earth, He spent time teaching people about God's kingdom. The kingdom means God is in charge and all wrong things in the world are being made right. Hold up the happy face and pause to allow the kids to respond. **Yay!**

Jesus helped and healed people. He did amazing things. Many people came to see and hear Jesus. Lots of people followed Jesus and learned from Him. Hold up the happy face and pause to allow the kids to respond. **Yay! But some of the religious leaders, called Pharisees, did not like Jesus. They did not like the miracles Jesus did. These leaders did not like that so many people followed Jesus.** Hold up the sad face and pause to allow the kids to respond. **Uh-oh!**

One day when Jesus taught, some parents brought their children to Him. They wanted Jesus to bless their children by speaking God's gift of love to them. Hold up the happy face and pause to allow the kids to respond. **Yay! Jesus' disciples were frustrated and told the parents to leave Jesus alone and send the children away. Jesus was a big deal, after all! The disciples thought He didn't have time to spend with a bunch of little kids.** Hold up the sad face and pause to allow the kids to respond. **Uh-oh!**

But when Jesus saw what His disciples did, He was mad. Jesus told them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't keep them away. God's kingdom belongs to people like them" (Mark 10:14). Jesus said that everyone who wants to get into God's kingdom needs to accept it like a child does.

Then Jesus took the children in His arms and blessed them. Hold up the happy face and pause to allow the kids to respond. **Yay!**

Jesus is powerful and does amazing things! He can do even more than we can imagine. And sometimes we might begin to think that Jesus is too busy or too important for us. Or maybe we think that Jesus only has time for our big problems and not simple things we need. But Jesus is always here for us. Jesus wants us to come to Him and spend time with Him. And He is always waiting with open arms ... because Jesus loves us. Hold up the happy face and pause to allow the kids to respond. **Yay!**

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the **Wonder Truth Slide**. Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is JESUS LOVES US. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

This story was not the only time when Jesus spent time with kids. Before this part of God's big story, Jesus took another a child in His arms and taught His disciples that welcoming little children in His name is the same as welcoming Him (see Mark 9:33–37). There were other times when Jesus cared for children—He noticed, healed, and blessed them.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them and thank God for His love for kids. Gather the kids into a circle. Use your own words. Here is an example:

Let's all stand in a circle. Let's imagine Jesus is here with us in our circle. Remember how much Jesus loves us. Let's pray and thank God for how much He loves us.

God, thank You for spending time with us and loving us. Thank You for knowing what we need and caring about us always. We love You! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them. Use your own words. Here is an example:

Blessing: May you remember Jesus is always with you wherever you go. He loves you always, no matter what! May every step you take in life move you closer to Him, and may your lives show others how much Jesus loves them!