



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

- Play Stations:
 - It's Me!
 - Heart Decorating
 - Jesus and the Children Coloring Sheet
- Curiosity Activity: Sticky Note Match
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Word of Wonder: From John 3:16
- Circle Time: Beanbag Toss
- LARGE GROUP
- Responding in Worship: Prayer Stations
- Closing Game: Guess What I Love





LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

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: 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

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Loves Us

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WORD OF WONDER: From John 3:16

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: play dough, miscellaneous small items (such as buttons, pipe cleaners, googly eyes, beads, etc.), dough sculpting supplies, construction paper (at least 1 sheet per kid), markers, stickers, heart-shaped stamps and ink pads, coloring utensils

RESOURCES: [Jesus and the Children Coloring Sheet \(1 per kid\)](#)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: It's Me!

Set up: Set out play dough and a variety of miscellaneous small items, such as buttons, pipe cleaners, googly eyes, and beads. You can also set out dough sculpting supplies.

Play: Encourage the kids to create a model of themselves out of the play dough. They can flatten a circle with the play dough and add objects to make a face and hair, or they can create their whole body with the play dough and use the objects to sculpt. Let them use their imaginations to create whatever they believe represents them. It's OK if it is more abstract than realistic.

Play Station: Heart Decorating

Set up: Ahead of time, use a marker to draw hearts on construction paper and set out decorating materials, such as stickers, heart-shaped stamps and ink pads, and coloring utensils

Play: Let the kids use the decorating materials to decorate the hearts.

Play Station: Jesus and the Children Coloring Sheet

Set up: Print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out the coloring utensils

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of someone who loves them.

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 OnBible; 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.

Circle Time: Beanbag Toss

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: Prayer Stations

SUPPLIES: paper (1 sheet per kid), coloring utensils, small floor mat, pillows, play dough

RESOURCES: music from the [Hanging Out with Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#)

Before the kids arrive, create four stations in your room. At one station, set out paper and coloring utensils. In the next area, make an open area to listen to music or dance. At the third station, set out small floor mats and a couple pillows for the kids to sit or recline. For the fourth station, set out play dough on a flat surface.

In God's big story today, we learned about how Jesus showed love to children. He loves you too! Jesus is always thinking about you and always wants to hear from you. He really enjoys spending time with you. Today you can choose how you want to spend time with Jesus. As you do, think about how much He loves you.

Explain how each station works and invite kids to choose a station to spend time hanging out with Jesus. After a few minutes, give them a signal to switch to a new station if they want to. Staying in one station the whole time is OK too!

- Drawing Station: Kids can use coloring utensils and paper to draw a picture that depicts how they feel about Jesus or what they want to say to Him. They can draw anything that comes to mind.
- Music Station: Play music from the [Hanging Out with Jesus Early Childhood Spotify playlist](#) and allow the kids to sing or dance, or simply listen to the music.
- Quiet Prayer: Kids can relax and pray quietly to themselves or with a leader.
- Play Dough Prayer: Kids can shape play dough into anything that is on their heart that they want to say to God.

Closing Game: Guess What I Love

We're learning that Jesus loves children. Jesus is powerful and amazing. 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 the simple things we need. But Jesus is always here for us. Can you think of a few things you love? Don't say it out loud! Think of one thing you love and keep it in your mind.

Let's play a game to guess what each person loves. One person at a time can come up to the front and do motions that show what they love. The rest of us can guess what it is. Here's an example: **If I love swimming, I will do this.** Make a swimming motion with your arms. **Let's try one more! Can you guess what I love this time?** Pretend to pour some cereal in a bowl and eat it with an imaginary spoon. Give the kids a moment to guess. **I love eating cereal! Who wants to go next?**

If none of the kids volunteer, pick another leader to go up to the front and play. Kids may need help coming up with ideas of things to act out. If any kids get stuck on acting it out and don't know what to do when it's their turn, try asking them for a verbal clue. They might be able to describe it with words to help the other kids guess what it is.