

Jesus Blesses the Children

Scripture Reference: [Mark 10:13-16](#)



Suggested Emphasis: Jesus loved little children. We should follow his example by taking special care of the children around us.



Background Study



Story Introduction



Telling the Story



Review Questions



Songs



Learning Activities



Other Online Resources

Story Overview:

When parents brought their small children to Jesus to be blessed by him, the disciples tried to hold them back. Jesus told the disciples to let the children come to him.

Background Study:

Some people brought their small children to Jesus so he could touch them. But his followers told the people to stop bringing their children to him. When Jesus saw this, he was displeased. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them. The kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these little children. I tell you the truth. You must accept the kingdom of God as a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it." Then Jesus took the children in his arms. He put his hands on them and blessed them.
Mark 10:13-16, ICB

You can read other accounts of this story in [Matthew 19:13-15](#) and [Luke 18:15-17](#). This is one of those stories that

children love because it is about children!

Jesus must not have been harsh and grave. These are not attributes that make children feel welcomed. He probably did not appear silly or weak either. This would not have made the parents trust him and seek his blessing. Other than what we can learn through his actions we do not know a lot about Jesus' demeanour. He definitely had strong emotions. He was indignant when the disciples tried to keep the children away. He was not afraid to rebuke them. This controlled strength along with a genuine attitude and openness drew people to Jesus.

Parents want what is best for their children. They had seen Jesus do wonderful things. He had healed people and brought comfort to even the lowliest people in society. It was the custom for parents to bring their children to a rabbi or synagogue leader before their first birthday. In this story the children were very young. Luke says they were babies ([Luke 18:15](#)) and all three passages refer to them as "little". They were old enough to be "called to him."

Matthew and Mark both record this story immediately following Jesus' discussion on divorce. It was appropriate that these parents and children come to him at this time. If women were mistreated and lacked power in the society of the time then children were even more so. Their innocence and sense of humility and hope were attributes that Jesus wanted his disciples to notice.

Jesus wants his followers to be like children. In [Matthew 18:2-6](#) he drew a child onto his knee and told the listeners that they should be like the child. In that instance he was referring to a child's humility and lowly status. A child does not think about earning, deserving or even paying for blessings. He/she simply hopes and accepts with joy. Unfortunately, as the child gets older he begins to mimic adults and have more of a "market mentality" concerning both gifts and emotions. The idea becomes "I'll do something for you (or feel good towards you) if it benefits me".

In that same passage Jesus makes it clear how we should treat children. By treating children well we are treating Jesus well. Giving children opportunities to sin (by neglecting them or withholding the care they need) is strongly condemned by Jesus ([Matthew 18:5-6](#)).

Jesus' words concerning children were extremely important and contrasted with practices of pagans of the day. It was common practice in both Greece and Rome to abandon unwanted children by the road to let them die. Later, early Christians were known for taking in these orphans.

Another passage where Jesus speaks about adults being like children is [1 Peter 2:2-3](#). We should crave pure spiritual milk like a baby craves milk.



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Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring a doll to class and talk to the children about ways we take care of a baby. Talk about how much babies and children need affection and love. Discuss child safety and the foods babies and children need and like. A young mother might be willing to bring her baby to class and talk about how she cares for her baby. Perhaps she could

show the contents of her nappy bag and explain the use of each item. “Babies need special care. In today’s story we are going to learn what Jesus said about babies and children.”

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The Story:

One day, after Jesus had been teaching people about God, some parents started bringing their babies and little children to Jesus.

“Jesus,” one of them asked, “you are such a good teacher. Will you please place your hand on my child’s head and give her a blessing?”

Jesus was very happy to bless the little children. He loved children.

But the disciples saw all of the parents and children around Jesus and they thought they were bothering him. They knew that Jesus must have been very tired from teaching all the adults. Surely he wouldn’t want to spend time with all of these children! So the disciples began telling the parents and children to go away and leave Jesus alone.

Jesus saw what the disciples were doing and he did not like it. That just wasn’t fair to the children! Jesus told the disciples to stop, “Shame on you, stop telling the children they cannot come to me.”

The disciples saw that Jesus was displeased so they let the children and parents come to Jesus. They were surprised that Jesus loved the children so much. They probably thought he only wanted to spend time with adults like them.

After Jesus spent time with the children, he told the disciples something very important. “See these little children? See how they love me? They don’t brag or try to hurt anyone like some adults do. The kingdom of heaven is made for people who have hearts like little children.”

The disciples were very surprised. They were sorry they had kept the children away from Jesus. Now they knew that Jesus thought children were very important.

It is not up to the disciples to decide who should be in the kingdom of God. The king gets to decide what kind of people deserve to be in the kingdom. If Jesus loved and accepted children and people who have the hearts of children then so would they.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[073 - Little Children Blessed](#) from [GNPI](#) on [Vimeo](#).

[Click here to download a slideshow or pictures to print.](#) Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. What did the parents want Jesus to give their children? A blessing.
2. What did the disciples do when parents brought their children to Jesus? They tried to keep the children away.
3. When Jesus saw the disciples keeping the children away, what did he say? "Let the little children come to me"

Song Suggestions:

- [1,2,3 Jesus Loves Me](#)
- [Hello Hello Song](#)
- [Jesus Loves the Little Children](#)
- [Jesus Loves Me](#)
- [L-O-V-E Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Make arrangements with the teacher in a younger bible class and let the children visit today (or next week). Perhaps your class could act out today's story for them or teach them a song.
- Discuss how [Children learn at different age levels](#).
- Collect names and addresses of children who live in other places and send them cards.
- A nice bulletin board idea is to place a picture of Jesus in the centre of the board and then put children's pictures all around. These could be pictures from magazines or even photos of the children in your class. You could entitle the board "Who does Jesus Love" or "Jesus Loves the Children".
- Help the children plan a picnic, party or other activity for younger children in the congregation. If your class is old enough then they might arrange a free babysitting night so that parents of young children could have a night out.
- Encourage the class to sit by a family with small children in worship today. They should only do this if they can be a good example for the child. Parents will not want another child to be a distraction.
- If your congregation has a crèche or childcare during worship then your class could sign up to help in there one Sunday.
- Research characteristics of children younger than the children in your class and discuss them. Children love to know how much they have grown and are often eager to help younger children.

Crafts:

- Help the children collect items to take to the local hospital for the children there. You could make parcels and decorate them. Some ideas might be colouring sheets and crayons, puzzles, books, hand or finger puppets, etc. If you put food or lollies in the parcels then be sure and label them. Some children in hospitals have strict diets.
- Help the children make parcels similar to the ones above to hand to younger children in your congregation.
- Help the children make paper doll chains of children and decorate them to look like children. (see links below for instructions)

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here](#) "Jesus Blesses the Children" printables to print on A4 size paper
[Click here](#) for "Jesus Blesses the Children" to print on Letter size paper (USA)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page at sermons4kids](#)
- [Colouring page at christiananswers.net](#)
- [Craft: Paper Doll Chain version 1](#)
- [Craft: Paper Doll Chain version 2](#)
- [A collection of activities for "Jesus Loves the Little Children" \(sermons4kids.com\)](#)
- [A collection of activities for "All the Children of the World" \(sermons4kids.com\)](#)
- [ABC word puzzle at sermons4kids.com](#)
- [Word-shape word puzzle at www.sermons4kids.com](#)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/jesus-ministry/>

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