Session 13

Jesus Blesses the Children

Mark 10:13-16

Worship Theme:

God loves us.

Weaving Faith Into Life:

Children will worship Jesus because he loves them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Sequence</th>
<th>What Children Will Do</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| **Let’s Praise God!** (up to 25 minutes) | **Sing**  
- “Wonderful” (Isaiah 9:6) (track 17)  
- “God So Loved the World” (John 3:16) (track 21)  
- “Everybody Come Along!” (track 14)  
- “How Wide?” (Ephesians 3:18) (track 8)  
- “You Gave” (John 14:19b) (track 10)  
- “King Jesus Is All” (track 11) |
| **KidsOwn Worship Kit:**  
- Songs From FaithWeaver |
| **Classroom Supplies:**  
- CD player, newsprint, tape, colored chalk (1 per child), TV, DVD player,  
- The Wizard of Oz DVD |

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<tr>
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| **Let’s Learn the Point!** (up to 25 minutes) | **All the Little Children**  
Make a sock and newspaper “baby,” and act out the Bible story.  
In the Bag  
Look in a bag to see a "picture" of someone who is special to Jesus.  
* Love Like a Magnet  
See the power of a magnet, and talk about Jesus’ love. |
| **Classroom Supplies:**  
- Tube sock, newsprint, bath towel, baby blanket, markers  
- Paper grocery bag, mirror, tape  
- Magnet, paper clips that the magnet will attract, metallic and nonmetallic household objects |

Preschool
### Session Sequence: Let’s Learn the Point! (up to 25 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Children Will Do</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
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<tr>
<td>* One Big Happy Family</td>
<td>Classroom Supplies:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play a game as they try to stay in a small area</td>
<td>1 bedsheet for every 10 kids</td>
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<tr>
<td>together.</td>
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<tr>
<td>* Magnetic Love</td>
<td>Classroom Supplies:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use a magnet to learn about Jesus’ love.</td>
<td>Magnet, small items such as pins or paper clips</td>
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<td></td>
<td>with enough iron that magnet will pick them</td>
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<tr>
<td>* You Are Special</td>
<td>up.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Say loving things to each other.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Session Sequence: Let’s Pray! (up to 10 minutes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What Children Will Do</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Offering</strong></td>
<td><strong>KidsOwn Worship Kit:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Give their offerings to God.</td>
<td>* Songs From FaithWeaver: “God So Loved the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>World” (John 3:16) (track 21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Praise Pairs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Classroom Supplies:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work with a partner to come up with reasons to</td>
<td>Offering bowls, CD player</td>
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<tr>
<td>praise God.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Thank You, Jesus</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Say a closing prayer.</td>
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* Starred activities can be used successfully with preschool and elementary children together. Customize your session to fit your needs. You can separate preschoolers and elementary children for Let’s Learn the Point! Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.
Imagine a celebrity today on his way to a big movie premiere. Surrounded by “handlers,” he hurries from his car into the theater, basking in the admiration of fans but not stopping to give anyone special attention. This may be the picture the disciples had of Jesus. They saw it as their job to keep the masses away from Jesus—especially those as insignificant as children. After all, he was a very important spiritual leader, and he needed all his strength and emotional energy to fight off the attacks of the Pharisees. He needed to be spending his time with those who were influential and powerful. He certainly shouldn’t be wasting his time with small children.

But as he did many times in his ministry, Jesus challenged the status quo. He ignored what the disciples considered politically important—appeasing the religious leaders of the day—and spent his time blessing children. He knew that the Pharisees’ hearts were set against him. They didn’t want to learn from him or follow him; they just wanted to lure him into one of their traps (Mark 10:2). So he turned his attention to those with tender hearts: the children (and their parents!). The parents had come to Jesus seeking a blessing on their children from this great teacher. It’s easy for us to picture Jesus laying his hand on a child’s head and giving a few words of blessing. But he did more than that; he took the children in his arms and hugged them! And then he blessed them.

Think about it. If you were a parent of one of these small children whom the famous Jesus of Nazareth stopped to bless, what would you think of Jesus? How would you respond later when you heard he’d been crucified and then rose from the dead? If you were one of the children, think about all the times you’d be told the story of being held and blessed by Jesus! In this act of blessing the children, Jesus showed the common person—even the small child—how important we all are to him.

Another theme also winds through this passage: To make it to heaven, you must become like one of these small children. What did Jesus mean by that? What makes one fit for God’s kingdom? The religious leaders had it all wrong. As the church sometimes does today, they relegated children to a place of insignificance until they grew to adulthood. Instead, we must value and encourage the qualities of children that make them receptive to the grace Jesus offers.

What are the qualities of children that make them well suited for God’s kingdom? They’re humble and trusting, which prepares them to naturally put their faith in Jesus. Jesus’ message is that, just as children place their trust in their parents, we must be humble and willing to place our trust in God. We can’t work our way into heaven through all the right actions, as the Pharisees tried to do. We must relax and trust Jesus, as these small children did.

**Devotion for Leaders**

Jesus, the Lord Almighty who created the world and conquered death, cares about each baby, each child, each youth, and each adult. Jesus is passionate about you and wants a friendship with you. Wow! **Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** Important people often associate only with other important people—it’s all about who you know, right? Jesus is different! He loves everyone the same. Can you fathom the depth of Christ’s love for you? Read Romans 8:38-39, and bask in your Savior’s love. Then think about this question: Do you follow your Lord’s example? Who can you love with the love of Jesus?
Why We Worship for Leaders

Children love to hear the story of Jesus scolding the disciples when they tried to keep children away from him. The story tells them that, without a doubt, Jesus loves them. In this worship session, children will discover that they are an important and valued part of God’s family. They will learn that they can offer themselves to God, who will be pleased with their gift. Use this worship session to lead kids in praising a great and loving God who cares for them no matter what.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Let’s Praise God!

- Tape a long sheet of newsprint (about 1 foot per child) to a wall. Tape the newsprint around a corner and onto a second wall if you need more space.
- Rent or borrow the movie The Wizard of Oz. Set up a TV and DVD player, and cue the movie to show Dorothy and her friends in the wizard’s throne room. You’ll show a three-minute segment.

Magnetic Love—Set up an overhead projector.

Preschool Activities—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

Web Help—Get bonus leader tips and ideas at kidsownworship.com.

Let’s Praise God!

Play Songs From FaithWeaver, Winter 2010-2011 as children arrive. Ask some children to stand at the door and welcome everyone who comes in. Ask these greeters to smile, shake hands, and say, “Welcome! God loves you!”

When you’re ready to begin, welcome everyone warmly.

Welcome, everyone! Before we get started today, I want to make sure I know your names. On the count of three, call out your name, nice and loud. Ready? One, two, three! (Shout your name as well.)

Thank you! Now I’m sure I know your names! Each of you has a special name that your parents chose for you when you were born. The song we’re going to sing has lots of names for Jesus. The Bible says God gave Jesus the name above all other names. That means no other name is more important or more powerful. Let’s start our worship time by singing “Wonderful.”

Sing “Wonderful” (Isaiah 9:6).

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

How many of you have seen the movie The Wizard of Oz? We just sang a song about someone very important and wonderful—Jesus. The characters in The Wizard of Oz went to the Emerald City to see someone they thought would be wonderful—the Wizard of Oz.
**Ask**  
Why did they want to see the wizard? (They needed his help; because the wizard could give them what they needed.)

**Say**  
Let’s watch what happens when the characters finally get to meet the wizard.

Show the clip from The Wizard of Oz that you cued before class.

**Ask**  
How did the characters act when they were meeting the wizard? (They were excited; they were afraid.)

**Ask**  
Why do you think they acted so scared? (He seemed powerful; he was very important.)

**Say**  
Who’s the most important person you can think of? (The president; a king; Jesus.)

**Ask**  
Do you think you’d be scared if you met that person? Why or why not? (Yes, I don’t know if he’d want to meet me; no, I know Jesus loves me; yes, I wouldn’t know what to say or how to act.)

**Say**  
I’ve got great news for all of you! Jesus is the most important person ever. But we don’t have to be scared of him. Today we’ll talk about a time some children wanted very much to see Jesus. Jesus’ disciples told them to go away, but Jesus welcomed the children with open arms. We don’t have to be afraid of Jesus. He loves us so much that he’s always ready to welcome us and spend time with us.

We’re here today to worship Jesus because he loves us! He has a special place in his heart for children, and right now that means you and the person next to you! Turn to the people on your right and left, shake hands, and say, “Jesus loves us!”

Wait while kids shake hands.

**Say**  
When you were born, relatives and friends probably gave your parents gifts to show how happy they were that you were born. That’s one way we celebrate the birth of new babies. God loves us and does the same thing for us. God gave us the greatest of all gifts by sending his Son, Jesus, to show us the way to heaven. Let’s sing “God So Loved the World” to tell God how happy we are that he sent Jesus to us.

Sing “God So Loved the World” (John 3:16).

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Say**  
I’m so glad Jesus came and died for you and me. When we believe in Jesus, we become a part of God’s family. Everyone here has an earthly family; some have big families, and some have small families.

How many of you have two or three people in your family, including yourself and your parents? If you have two or three people in your family, stand up. Wait for a moment for children to respond.
If you have four people in your family, stand up. Continue raising the number until all children are standing. Have the child or children from the largest family or families come stand with you.

Say: Not all of us know what it's like to have a big family. [Name of child], tell us one good thing about being a part of a big family. Pause while the child responds. Thank you, [name of child], for sharing that with us. You can sit down now. Look around you, everyone. You are a part of a large family! Everyone who believes in God is a member of the family of God! And that family is bigger than just the people in this room. It includes everyone in the world who believes in and loves God’s Son, Jesus. Now, that’s a big family! Let’s sing “Everybody Come Along!”

Sing “Everybody Come Along!”

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

Say: Part of being God’s child is knowing that God will always watch out for you and take care of you. God takes care of us because he loves us. In our next song, we’re going to sing, “He’ll be where you are, and he never will leave you.” That’s God’s promise to you.

Sometimes when we need our moms or dads the most, they’re not there. Maybe you’re at school and they’re at work. Maybe some of you have a mom or dad who doesn’t live with you. Whatever the reasons, we all miss our parents sometimes. But God promises that he’ll always be here for us. God will always be right where we are.

Let’s form a big circle around the room before we sing our next song. Our circle will represent the fact that we’re all part of God’s family.

Wait while everyone forms a circle.

Say: You are each important to God. Children are very special to God. One time, Jesus’ friends tried to keep some children from bothering Jesus. Jesus said to his friends, “Let the little children come to me…for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” That means Jesus wants you! Let’s sing “How Wide?” If you need Jesus today, tell him that in your heart as we sing.

Sing “How Wide?” (Ephesians 3:18).

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

Have the children sit down, and point out the newsprint you taped to the wall before the session.

Say: God loves us so much! When I feel his love, I want to love God back. There are lots of ways we can show God we love him. We can sing to him, talk to him, or do kind things for others. We can even write to God or draw for him. Those are all ways to express our feelings for God. Let’s take a few minutes right now to tell God in a fun way that we love him.
**Give a piece of chalk or a marker to each child.**

**Say** Let’s all find a spot on our “art canvas”—the big piece of paper on the wall—to draw on. I’m going to give you two minutes to draw something that shows your love for God. It can be anything you want. It can be a free-form design or a picture of something specific. Ready? Let’s begin.

After two minutes, tell children to stop drawing.

**Say** Good job, everyone! Now take a minute or two to connect your drawing in any way you want to the drawings made by people on your right and left. You can add a new drawing, or you can simply connect the drawings with lines or designs. Just make sure your picture is connected with and touching the drawings on both sides of your own.

Give kids a few minutes to connect their drawings; then have them sit down.

**Say** Look at our worship drawing! Each of you made a part of it, but it’s all connected as one big piece. It’s a masterpiece! That means it’s extra special. I know God is happy with it because you made it to show your love for him. No matter how you feel about your art, you can feel good about you because God loves you. Let’s sing about God’s love.

Sing “You Gave” (John 14:19b).

Lyrics are in the back of the book.

**Ask** • How does it make you feel to know that God is proud of you? (I feel loved; I feel excited to know that; it makes me feel special.)

**Say** Let’s thank God for accepting us and loving us as we sing “King Jesus Is All.” Let’s tell Jesus that we want to love him more than anything. He’s our all in all.

Sing “King Jesus Is All.”

Lyrics are in the back of the book.

Let’s Learn the Point!

**Preschool Activities, pages 175-176**

At this time, have the preschool leader invite the preschoolers to go to their own room for this section of activities. Tear out the Preschool Activities page, and give it to the preschool leader. Have the preschool leader bring the preschoolers back to participate in Let’s Pray! with the older children. If you prefer to keep all the children together, do the starred (*) activities. They will work well with both elementary and preschool children.
Preschool Activities

Jesus Blesses the Children

Mark 10:13-16

Worship Theme:

God loves us.

Easy Prep for Leaders

In the Bag—Tape a small mirror to the inside bottom of a paper grocery bag, and fold over the top to close it.

Using Theo

Consider using Theophilus the FaithRetriever puppet today in these ways:

- Have Theo lead the preschoolers from the main worship area to the preschool room.
- Let the children take Theo to see “Jesus” in the “All the Little Children” activity. Explain that Jesus loves animals, too.
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.

All the Little Children

You’ll need a clean sock (tube socks work well), newsprint or clean rags, a bath towel, a baby blanket or doll blanket, and markers.

Say

Hi, everybody! We’re learning today that God loves us—and that means you! Children are extra special to God. One time some children wanted to see Jesus. Jesus’ friends thought he was too busy, so they told the parents to take the children away. Jesus heard them, and he got upset! He said, “Let the little children come to me.” Then the children laughed and played and hugged Jesus. Jesus loves children! Let’s make something to help us act out this story.

Show children how to stuff the sock with crumpled newsprint or clean rags. Have children draw a baby’s face and hair on the toe part of the sock. Next fold the bath towel in half or in fourths—depending on the size of the towel—and lay the sock at one end with the “face” area hanging off the towel. (See the illustration.) Roll up the towel to create the baby’s “body.” The sock face should be showing. Help children wrap the “baby” in the blanket. Have just the face showing. Allow everyone to take a turn holding the baby.

Then choose a child to pretend to be Jesus and stand at one end of the room. Have the other children and the baby gather at the other end of the room. The child playing Jesus should say, “Let the children come to me.” Then all the children can walk to Jesus, place the baby on Jesus’ lap, and hug Jesus. Have children take turns pretending to be Jesus and carrying the baby.

Preschool Leader Tip

For extra fun, make more than one baby for the children to hold.
**Preschool Activities**

*Love Like a Magnet*

Set out the magnet, paper clips, and household objects on a table.

**Say** Jesus loves children. You are special to him.

**Ask** When Jesus comes, what will the children want to do?

**Say** When Jesus comes, the children will want to be with him! We love Jesus, too! And Jesus loves you!

Have children look inside the bag one at a time. Make sure children can see themselves in the mirror, and give everyone a chance to look.

**Ask** • Who is the special person Jesus loves?

• Why does he love you so much?

**Say** You are each very special to God because he made you. He loves you, and so do I. I have a hug for each of you from Jesus and me!

Hug children one at a time, and tell them something that’s special about them.

**In the Bag**

Hold up the closed grocery bag you prepared before the session.

**Say** Inside this bag is a picture of someone very special to Jesus. This person is very important. I wonder who it could be! You can look inside the bag and see the special person, but keep the person a secret until everyone has a chance to look. Are you ready? Remember, don’t tell anyone who you see!

Bring the magnet near the paper clips so they are attracted to the magnet. Repeat this once or twice. Then have children test the other items to see if the magnet will pick them up.

**Say** Not everyone in the world loves Jesus. It’s our job to tell people about Jesus so they can know his love, too!

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*Warning*

This activity uses magnets. Swallowed magnets can attract each other through opposing intestine walls, causing serious infection or even death. Seek immediate medical attention if magnets are swallowed or inhaled.
Elementary Activities

* One Big Happy Family

You’ll need an old sheet or blanket for every group of 10 children.

Have children form groups of no more than 10. Have each group sit on a sheet.

**Say**

God loves us, and he especially loves children. One time when Jesus was busy teaching, some children wanted to see him. Jesus’ friends thought he was too busy, so they told the parents to take the children away. Jesus heard them, and he got upset! He said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Then the children went happily to Jesus, and he laughed and played with them. Jesus wanted to show everyone that he loves children!

Let’s play a game together to remind you that God loves you and that we’re all part of his family. Your group is a family. You need to work together to be successful. Every time I say “fold,” fold your sheet in half, and have everyone stand on it. There’s one rule: You must all stand on the sheet with no part of your bodies touching the floor.

Each time you say “fold,” make sure the children are standing on their sheets with no one touching the floor. This will become more difficult as the sheets become smaller. Continue until most groups’ members can no longer find ways to stand together on the sheets. Have everyone sit down.

**Ask**

- How did you feel as the sheet got smaller and smaller? (I felt cramped; I didn’t want to be left out.)
- How did you manage to stay on the sheet as it got smaller and smaller? (We had to work together; I didn’t stay on.)
- What part of this game was the most fun? What part was the least fun? (It was fun trying to work together; I didn’t like falling off the sheet.)

**Say**

In this game, you had to work together as a family. Each of you was an important part of your team. That’s how we are in God’s family. Each of us is an important part of God’s family.

Magnetic Love

Put the paper clips on a smooth surface where kids can see them.

**Say**

What will happen if I touch these paper clips with a magnet?

Show kids how the magnet picks up the paper clips.

**Ask**

- Why does the magnet draw certain things to itself? (The magnet attracts those things; forces in the magnet and paper clips will bring them together.)

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(continued from page 174)

**Warning**

This activity uses magnets. Swallowed magnets can attract each other through opposing intestine walls, causing serious infection or even death. Seek immediate medical attention if magnets are swallowed or inhaled.
There is a force in the magnet called magnetism. You can’t see magnetism, but you can see what it does. It drew the paper clips to the magnet because the paper clips are metal.

Find a partner, and discuss these questions together. After a few minutes, you can share your answers with us.

- Why do you think the children in the story were drawn to Jesus? (They knew that Jesus is God; they wanted to get to know him better; they knew that Jesus loved them.)
- What draws you to Jesus? Why do you want to be with Jesus? (Jesus loves me; I want to have a friendship with Jesus; I want to learn from him; I want to spend time with him.)
- Why do you think Jesus loves you? (He just wants to; I’m special to Jesus; he made me.)

After a minute or two, have children share their answers.

Those are great ideas! Jesus loves us all very much. When people love us, we want to spend time with them because it feels great to be loved. Let’s find out more about Jesus’ love.

* You Are Special

Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them.” The word hinder means “hold back.” I’m going to say this verse and put someone’s name in it. If I say your name, stand up.

Say the verse, using a child’s name instead of the words the little children. Change them to him or her. Then wait for the child to stand.

Jesus loves [name of child]. If Jesus were here talking to us, he would probably say something nice to [name of child]. Right now let’s be his voice. Someone tell me something that’s special about [name of child] or something you like about [name of child].

Call on someone to say something affirming about the child.

Jesus says, “The kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Say that with me. “The kingdom of God belongs to such as these.” Good job. Let’s say the first part of the verse to each person in our group. Then we’ll say something we like about that person. Then we’ll end by saying the last part of the verse together.

[Name of child], you choose someone and put his or her name in the first part of the verse.

Prompt the children with the words of the verse if necessary. Repeat this activity until everyone has been affirmed.

You can feel good knowing that Jesus thinks good and loving things about you. He loves you just the way you are. Let’s pray now and thank God for loving us.

Invite children to pray. When volunteers have prayed,
Jesus, thank you for making each of us special and different. Thank you for loving us just the way we are. We love you, too, Jesus. Amen.

Let’s Pray!

The Offering

Today we learned that Jesus loves us. Jesus wants you to come to him just as the children came to him in the Bible story. We’ll all come to the front of the room. If you brought money, you can put it in the offering bowl. If you didn’t bring money, that’s fine, too. As you’re coming to the front of the room, pretend that you’re one of the kids in the Bible story coming to be with Jesus. In your heart, tell Jesus thank you for loving you, and tell Jesus why you want to be near him.

Play “God So Loved the World” (John 3:16) in the background while children bring their offerings.

Praise Pairs

Have children each find a partner.

Talk with your partner about ways God shows his love to you. Choose the top two things you want to praise God for. Give children a few minutes to talk with their partners.

The partner who is wearing the most green, please stand. When it’s your turn, praise God by saying one of the things you and your partner thought of. For example, you might say, “We praise you, God, for showing your love by helping us in school,” or “We praise you, God, for showing your love by giving us families.”

When children who are standing have prayed, have them sit and have their partners stand. Continue until everyone standing has had a chance to praise God.

Thank You, Jesus!

End your worship session with a closing prayer.

Jesus, we want to thank you for loving us so much. It feels so good to be loved for who we are. We know that you’ll love us no matter what. Thank you for loving us. Amen.