## Session Sequence | What Children Will Do | Supplies
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### 1. Let’s Praise God! (about 25 minutes)
Sing
- “God Loved the World So Much” (John 3:16) (track 14)
- “Go and Make Disciples” (Matthew 28:19) (track 15)
- “Worship Only You” (track 1)
- “His Mercy” (Titus 3:5a) (track 6)
- “Into My Heart” (track 4)
- “Faith” (Hebrews 11:1) (track 17) | KidsOwn Worship Kit: Songs From FaithWeaver Classroom Supplies: Chalkboard (or whiteboard), chalk (or dry-erase marker), eraser, CD player |
### 2. Let’s Learn the Point! (about 25 minutes)
* Acceptance Cake
Taste the individual ingredients found in cupcakes to compare them to the final product. | Classroom Supplies: Small containers, flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda, salt, cooking oil, vinegar, vanilla, water, chocolate cupcakes, napkins
The Sorting Game
Sort people based on criteria to learn about what makes us different and the same. | --- |
Who Does God Love?
Hide and come to the leader when the leader calls to discover that God loves everyone. | Classroom Supplies: Stickers, Hershey’s Hugs candies |
### Session 11 • KidsOwn Worship

* 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 Section 2. Or, if you keep the children all together for the entire worship session, we suggest you choose from the starred activities.

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| **Let’s Learn the Point!** *(about 25 minutes)* | **Circle of Acceptance**  
Wait for acceptance into an inner circle to discover that God accepts into his family anyone who believes in Jesus.  
Classroom Supplies:  
Masking tape | **Favorites**  
Choose a category they fit into, and receive treats based on what they chose.  
Classroom Supplies:  
Paper, markers, tape, bag, 1 candy per child | **Acceptance Skits**  
Create skits demonstrating God’s acceptance.  
Classroom Supplies:  
Items that are familiar to kids (see page 139) |
| **Let’s Pray!** *(about 10 minutes)* | **The Offering**  
Offer their gifts to God.  
Classroom Supplies:  
Offering bowls | **Cheers!**  
Pray and cheer for Jesus to thank him for accepting them.  
Classroom Supplies:  
Beanbag | **Rhythmic Prayers**  
Make up rhythmic prayers, and share them with the group.  |

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This passage begins at the home of Cornelius, a Roman centurion in Caesarea, the headquarters for the Roman occupation of that area. As a centurion, Cornelius would have been in charge of a unit of about 100 men and would have been considered a man of noble character. For a non-Jew to have been considered God-fearing meant that Cornelius followed the Jewish religion to some degree, possibly to the greatest extent he could as a non-Jew. His vision of the angel at “about three in the afternoon” probably means that he was following Jewish religious practices, since that was a regular time of prayer for the Jews. And it is to his credit that when an angel of God spoke to him, he didn’t hesitate to do what he was told.

Today one might question the validity of building a theology on dreams and visions. However, dreams and visions, such as Peter’s trance in this passage, were a common means God used to deliver his messages to people during Bible times. Though God may still speak to us in unusual ways, we have the Bible as his primary means of communication and as a guide for determining the validity of any of those unusual modes of communication.

Peter’s vision came to him as he was praying at noon—another of the regular times of prayer for Jews. Peter, too, was following normal Jewish religious practices. Another of these practices was the strict adherence to the dietary restrictions spelled out in Leviticus 11. Many of the forbidden animals described there were included in the sheet suspended before Peter in his vision. Being told to kill and eat such animals shocked Peter.

The challenge to Peter’s beliefs didn’t end when the sheet disappeared. It was obviously no coincidence that Cornelius’ servants appeared just as Peter’s vision ended. Peter was thinking through the meaning of his vision when he was summoned to go to the house of a non-Jew who said an angel had told him to send for Peter to hear what he had to say. And God made it clear to Peter that the servants’ arrival was connected to what God was trying to teach him. God told him that the men were there, that he had sent them, and that Peter was to go with them. It became apparent to Peter that the vision had much wider implications than the food Christians were to eat.

Peter took a huge risk in following God’s leading to reach out to Cornelius and his family. The Jewish Christians were likely appalled by his actions. In fact, when he returned to Jerusalem, he had to explain his actions and describe how God had directed them. Only then did the Christians there open their hearts to allow that non-Jews could become Christians (Acts 11:1-18).

Peter set an example for us by taking advantage of an opportunity to tell someone unexpected about his faith. We dare not ignore that example; rather, we must be willing to tell anyone who is interested about what God has done for us through Jesus.
**Why We Worship for Leaders**

Children feel happy when they’re included in what’s going on in their world. Many children also know the pain of being excluded. But a marvelous truth about the Lord is that he accepts all who believe in him. He rejects no one. Peter learned this in a vivid way when the Lord sent him to Cornelius, a non-Jew. In the events that followed, Peter learned that the gospel is for everyone. Through the activities in this worship session, children will discover that God accepts us right where we are and leaves no one out. Use this session to lead children in praising an accepting God.

**Easy Prep for Leaders**

**Circle of Acceptance**—Use masking tape to make a circle on the floor large enough for all the elementary children to stand inside at the same time.

**Favorites**—

- Make signs by writing each of the following words on a separate piece of paper: smart, musical, athletic, artistic, likes animals, likes computers, likes the mall, likes movies. Display the signs around the room.
- Put candy in several bags or bowls. Make sure you have enough candy for everyone to have a piece.

**Acceptance Skits**—Collect and bring in several common items familiar to kids, such as a skateboard, in-line skates, a calculator, a sandwich, a pair of socks, and a video game.

**Preschool Activities**—Refer to the preschool pages for preparations.

**Let’s Praise God!**

Play *Songs From FaithWeaver, Spring 2012* as children arrive. Stand at the door and welcome kids as they enter. As each child is greeted, ask him or her to stand next to you in a line and help you welcome the others as they arrive. Encourage children to smile, shake everyone’s hand, and say, “Welcome!” When everyone has arrived, have kids be seated.

**Say**

Good morning, everyone! Jesus is with us here today! I hope you enjoyed our special welcome when you came in this morning. I wanted you to feel welcomed and accepted here today. I’m glad you’re here. Today we’re going to talk about God’s acceptance. God welcomes and accepts everyone who believes in him. Isn’t that great? If you love Jesus this morning, stand up.

If someone is still sitting, say something like, “Now the rest of you can stand just because Jesus loves you!”

**Say**

Let’s start our worship by singing “God Loved the World So Much.”

Sing “God Loved the World So Much” (John 3:16). Lyrics are in the back of this book.
After the song, have everyone sit down.

**Say**

God loves the world. That’s good news because it means God loves you and me! Have you ever tried to tell someone about Jesus? If you have, raise your hand. (Pause.) Have you ever prayed for someone who doesn’t know Jesus? If you have, raise your hand. (Pause.) Have you ever heard of people traveling all over the world just to tell others about Jesus? If you have, raise your hand. (Pause.)

**Ask**

- Why do you think people travel so far to tell others about Jesus? (So everyone can know about Jesus; because they won’t know about him any other way.)
- Why do people need to know about Jesus? (Because Jesus wants to have a relationship with them; Jesus loves everyone, and he wants them to love him, too.)

**Say**

God loves all people, and God wants everyone to know him. God accepts all people who believe in him. It’s our job to tell others the good news about Jesus so that others can come to know and believe in Jesus. Let’s stand and sing a song about telling others the good news.

Sing “Go and Make Disciples” (Matthew 28:19).

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

After the song, have everyone continue to stand.

**Say**

Raise your hand if you’ve had a rough week this past week. (Pause.)

Take a look around you. If people near you raised their hands, pat them on the back and say, “Aww.” (Pause.)

Clap your hands if you had a great week. (Pause.) That’s a nice sound to hear! Well, whether we’ve had a bad week or good week, God loves us all. He’s here with us today, and we are here to worship him. Let’s sing “Worship Only You.”

Sing “Worship Only You.”

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

Have everyone sit.

**Say**

We all know that Jesus wants to give us eternal life. But how do we get to heaven? I’m going to make some statements about getting to heaven. If you think my statements are true, stand up. Remain seated if you think they’re false.

- I will go to heaven because I go to church.
- I will go to heaven because I’m a good person.
- I will go to heaven because I believe in Jesus.
Only one of those statements is true. The first song we sang is from John 3:16. It says, “Whoever believes in [Jesus] will...have eternal life.” Now you might think that if you’re good enough and go to church, you will go to heaven. But the Bible says that “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). That means that no matter how good we are, it’s not enough. That’s why God sent Jesus to get us to heaven; Jesus is perfect. We don’t go to heaven because of good things we do; we go to heaven because of what Jesus has done. Let’s all worship God by singing “His Mercy.”

Sing “His Mercy” (Titus 3:5a).

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

Stand near the chalkboard, and have everyone sit down.

I’m so glad God saved us! When you invite friends to your house, do your friends come over and clean your room? Of course not! Maybe you wish they would! Maybe your mom or dad makes you clean your room before you have friends over. Picture your room at home right now. I need a few volunteers to describe some of the messes you’ve got in your bedrooms.

Give kids time to respond. Then draw a large heart shape in the middle of the chalkboard.

Wow! You have your work cut out for you! Our rooms often get messy. And sometimes so do our hearts.

Scribble inside the heart shape each time you say one of the following statements.

Maybe you got in a fight with someone in your family on the way to church today.

Maybe you took some money that didn’t belong to you without asking.

Maybe you were mean to someone.

Maybe you lied to your mom or dad.

Maybe you cheated on a test at school.

That makes your heart quite a mess, doesn’t it? And sometimes no matter how hard we try, we just can’t seem to keep our hearts clean. But God has the answer for you.

Use an eraser to “clean up” all the scribbles.

God sends Jesus to help you clean up. God doesn’t expect you to do it by yourself. He doesn’t wait ’til you are perfect to let Jesus in. He wants to be with you now! He’ll come into your heart and life and help you to be obedient, kind, and forgiving. He’ll give you peace and joy and forgiveness. What a friend and Savior Jesus is! Let’s sing “Into My Heart.” As we sing, welcome God into your heart and life.
Sing "Into My Heart."

Lyrics are in the back of the book.

Erase the heart, and quickly draw two stick figures.

**Say**
I want you to meet two pretend characters today. First meet Mike. Write "Mike" under one of the figures. He's the star athlete at school. Soccer and basketball are his games. He's the lead scorer in both sports and is helpful to others on his team. In school he gets good grades. He goes to church every Sunday.

Meet Ike. Write "Ike" under the other figure. He's not good at sports and gets into trouble at school. His grades are not good, and he has very few friends. He doesn't go to church, but he thinks about God a lot.

Which of these two kids would you like to be friends with? Show me by clapping for your favorite. Clap if you choose Mike. (Pause.) Clap if you choose Ike. (Pause.)

**Ask**
Why did you choose the person you did? (He seems more likable; he sounds more fun to hang out with; because I'd want to help him get to know God better.)

**Say**
Many times we choose friends based on outward appearances. We like the fastest, best, and smartest. But that can be a problem. What you didn't know is that Mike gets good grades because he cheats on tests. He also lies to his parents and sometimes even to his friends. Ike doesn't do well in school because he's always tired. He works after school to earn extra money to help his family pay bills.

When we have favorites, it hurts others. It means people get left out. We've all experienced that at one time or another. But Jesus doesn't have favorites! He accepts us and loves us just the way we are. He sees what's inside us—the good and the bad.

Let's stand and sing “Faith.” As you sing, thank Jesus for loving and accepting you just the way you are. We all need Jesus, and he'll always be with us.

Sing "Faith" (Hebrews 11:1).

Lyrics are in the back of this book.

**Pray**
God, thank you for sending Jesus. Thank you for accepting each of us right where we are. And thank you that we don’t have to be perfect to be loved by you. We worship you and praise you because you are a God of love. Help us to accept others the way you accept us. In Jesus' name, amen.
Let’s Learn the Point!

Preschool Activities, pages 145-146

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.

Elementary Activities

* Circle of Acceptance

Have everyone stand outside the masking tape circle you prepared before the session.

**Say** I’m going to make some statements. If the statements apply to you, stand inside the circle. If they don’t apply, stay where you are and wait until you hear a statement that does apply.

• You’ve read all of the Old Testament.
• You live in a house with more than four bedrooms.
• Your family has a red car.
• You’ve been to Disneyland.
• You’re wearing a blue shirt.
• You have green eyes.
• You know John 3:16.
• You like to watch movies.
• You love Jesus.

By now everyone should be inside the circle. If someone is still outside the circle, add something silly like, “You’re here at children’s church today.”

**Ask**

• How did it feel to stand outside the circle and not be able to go in? (I knew I’d get in eventually; I felt left out for a while.)

• How is our circle like God’s family? (Everyone is included in God’s family; God wants everyone in his family.)

• How is our circle different from God’s family? (There’s only one way to get in God’s family; we have to believe in Jesus to get into God’s family.)

**Say** You all got inside the circle. God accepts everyone who believes in Jesus. He loves you whether you know a lot or a little. He loves you whether you live in a big house or a tiny apartment. He loves you no matter what you look like. He loves you!
* Favorites

Point out the signs on the wall with the category words on them. Tell kids to find one category they fit into and stand near that sign. There must be at least one person at each sign. Stand in the center of the kids with a bag of candy, and move around while you talk.

Say
Jesus told his friends to tell everyone about him. But some of his friends thought he meant only certain people called the Jews. If you were Jewish, they would preach to you; if you weren’t Jewish, they didn’t think you were important. That would be like me deciding that the artistic group is important and the rest of you aren’t. The kids in the artistic group are my favorites.

Give a piece of candy to everyone in the artistic group.

Say
Or maybe I’d like the people who like computers. Another favorite.

Give candy to everyone in the computer group.

Say
There was a man named Cornelius who wasn’t Jewish. He prayed every day to know more about God. God heard his prayers. God sent Peter to see Cornelius. But first God told Peter that he must teach everyone—not just the Jewish people—about Jesus. So Peter went to Cornelius and told him all about Jesus. Everyone there believed and was baptized. Peter finally understood that the gospel was for everyone—not just the Jews.

Ask
• How did it feel when some of you got a treat and others didn’t?
(I felt more special; I felt left out.)

Say
God doesn’t separate people the way we sometimes do. He doesn’t have favorites. It doesn’t matter whether you’re musical or artistic or smart. It doesn’t matter whether you’re a boy or girl, young or old, tall or short, rich or poor, dark skin or light. He accepts everyone who believes. God gives his gifts to everyone.

Have some of the kids who have candy help you give treats to those who don’t.

(continued on page 147)
Worship Theme:

God accepts all who believe in him.

Easy Prep for Leaders

Acceptance Cake—Put a small amount of the following items in separate small containers (or put the dry items in small piles on a paper plate): flour, sugar, unsweetened cocoa, baking soda, salt, cooking oil, vinegar, vanilla, and water. You’ll also need chocolate cupcakes or cake—enough for all the children—and napkins.

* Acceptance Cake

Have children wash their hands and gather around the table with the baking ingredients in the center. Have volunteers each dip a finger in an item and taste it. Divide the foods into two groups: ones that taste good and ones that don’t.

Bring out the cupcakes, and set them before the children.

Even though some of our ingredients didn’t taste good by themselves, mixed together they make a yummy chocolate cake.

Extra Impact

If you want to make cupcakes or cake using the exact ingredients listed in the “Acceptance Cake” activity, use the following recipe: combine 1½ cups flour, 1 cup sugar, ¼ cup cocoa, 1 teaspoon baking soda, ½ teaspoon salt, 1 cup water, ¼ cup plus 2 tablespoons oil, 1 tablespoon vinegar, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Blend well. Bake in a greased 8-inch square pan at 350 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes. The recipe makes 6-8 servings.

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.
- Have Theo call out the categories during “The Sorting Game.”
- See the KidsOwn Worship Kit for a puppet skit written for today’s worship session.

ALLERGY ALERT

Be aware that some children have food allergies that can be dangerous. Know your children, and consult with parents about allergies their children may have. Also be sure to read food labels carefully as hidden ingredients can cause allergy-related problems.

Extra Impact

- Can you see the vinegar in these cakes?
- Can you see the sugar or the water or the oil?

Say

No! When we put together all the ingredients for these cupcakes, they all mix together to make chocolate cake. That’s how it is with God and us. God accepts all of us into his family. When we believe in God, we all become part of a big, happy family. Let’s eat our cupcakes and thank God for accepting everyone who believes in him.

Distribute cupcakes and napkins to the children, and let them enjoy the snack.
Preschool Activities

The Sorting Game

Say Jesus told his friends to tell everyone about him. But some of Jesus’ friends thought he meant only certain people called the Jews. So for a while, they only told Jewish people about Jesus. They sorted people kind of like we divided the foods between the good-tasting and the bad-tasting. Let’s play a game to see what this was like.

Have the group stand in a circle. Call out the following categories (feel free to adapt them to your group). After you read a category, have the children who meet the criteria come and stand in the center of the circle. Then have the children return to their places in the circle before you read the next category.

• all children wearing red
• all children with green eyes
• all children wearing tennis shoes
• all children with freckles
• all children with black hair
• all children who have brothers

Ask • Who does God love?

Say God loves all of you! Everybody was called, and everybody got a sticker. That’s what it’s like with God. He accepts everyone who believes in him. I have one more treat for you to let you know that God loves you just the way you are.

Have the children sit down.

Ask • Who does God love?

Say God loves all of you! Everybody was called, and everybody got a sticker. That’s what it’s like with God. He accepts everyone who believes in him. I have one more treat for you to let you know that God loves you just the way you are.

Distribute the Hershey’s Hugs candies to the children.

Who Does God Love?

You’ll need one sticker and one or two Hershey’s Hugs candies for each child.

Say I’m going to close my eyes and count to 10. While I’m counting, go and hide somewhere around the room. We’re going to find out who God loves.

Count to 10 while children hide. Encourage them to hide behind chairs, under tables, next to bookcases, and so on even though they won’t be totally hidden from view. When you’ve finished counting,

Say Good job finding hiding places, everybody. Be really quiet now and listen to what I say. If you have a red shirt on today, come and stand next to me. God loves you.

Ask • Who does God love?

Say God loves all of you! Everybody was called, and everybody got a sticker. That’s what it’s like with God. He accepts everyone who believes in him. I have one more treat for you to let you know that God loves you just the way you are.

Distribute the Hershey’s Hugs candies to the children.
Acceptance Skits

Have kids form small groups of at least four. Give each group one of the familiar items you brought.

Say We’ve been learning that God accepts us just as we are. Use the item I gave your group, and make up a quick skit that shows how God accepts us every day, all the time. For example, if I gave your group a CD, you could act out someone stealing the CD, asking God’s forgiveness, and then being forgiven. Or maybe you could act out someone giving a friend his or her favorite CD to share that God is loving and accepting.

I’ll give you a few minutes to come up with your skit. Then we’ll share our skits with each other. Remember that your skit should demonstrate that God loves everyone who believes in him.

After several minutes, have kids perform their skits for the rest of the group.

Say You all did a great job! Let’s never forget that God loves us and accepts us.

Let’s Pray!

The Offering

Say Today we talked about how God accepts all who believe in him. He doesn’t have favorites! Take a minute to think of someone you know who needs Jesus’ love and acceptance. Pray for that person as you give your offering.

Take the offering.

Cheers!

Say We learned today that God loves us all. Now we’re going to take a few minutes to appreciate God. You’ve heard the cheer “Two, four, six, eight! Who do we appreciate?” Well today we appreciate Jesus! I’m going to toss this beanbag to someone. If you get the beanbag, tell us one thing you want to praise God for. Then we’ll all say the cheer together to Jesus. Then toss the beanbag to someone else.

After children have praised and cheered several times, collect the beanbag and set it aside. Divide the room in half, and have children on each side of the room take a turn yelling the cheer to see which side can cheer the loudest and most enthusiastically.

Pray Lord, thank you for loving us and accepting us. Please accept our cheers today as a sign of our love for you. Help us to love others as you do. Amen.
Rhythmic Prayers

Have children find partners. Have each child sit cross-legged with his or her knees touching the partner’s knees. Lead everyone in the following rhythmic prayer. For each line of the prayer, children should slap their own knees on the first word, then clap hands with their partner. Lead the prayer, having everyone repeat the words after you.

God…
God loves…
God loves me.
He…
He accepts…
He accepts me.

Have kids work with their partners to make up their own prayer rhythms. If they want to, they can experiment with other sounds, such as snapping fingers or tapping other parts of their bodies. Give children a few minutes to make up rhythmic prayers. Then have each pair take a turn leading the group in a prayer rhythm.

Pray God, we thank you for accepting everyone who believes in you. We love you and thank you for that. Thank you, God, for your love. In Jesus’ name, amen.
Encouragement for Leaders

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men” (Colossians 3:23).

No matter what your role is in the church, perform it to the best of your ability. Even if you think no one notices your efforts, God does!