

**Jesus Loves Children**

(based on Mark 10:13–16)

Jesus and his disciples went from one town to another. Crowds of people came to see him wherever he went. Most days there were so many people that it was hard to even get close to Jesus.

Some people wanted to hear Jesus teach. Others were hoping to see him do something amazing. Lots of sick people came to see if Jesus could help them get better. Jesus was busy from morning to night.

One day, some parents brought their children to Jesus so that he could bless them.

The disciples got annoyed when they saw the parents and children coming toward them.

“Jesus is far too busy to bother with a bunch of children,” they complained to each other. “He has much more important things to do. There are so many people that need help.”

So they tried to stop the children and their parents.

“Stop bothering Jesus!” they cried. “Look at all these people waiting to see him! Jesus is much too busy to see you today.”

The children were disappointed. They really wanted to see Jesus. The parents felt sad. They just wanted Jesus to bless their children. The parents and their children turned away and started to leave.

When Jesus saw what was happening, he got upset. “Let the little children come to me,” he called. “I want to spend time with them. Don’t keep them from me!”

When they heard Jesus call them, the children ran up to him. They chattered and laughed together.

The disciples were puzzled. They asked each other, “Why is Jesus spending time with children? They are not as important as these other people.”

Jesus could see that his friends didn’t understand.

“You have it wrong,” explained Jesus. “Children are important to God. They teach us about trusting and living in God’s ways. Watch and learn from them.”

Then Jesus hugged the children and blessed them.



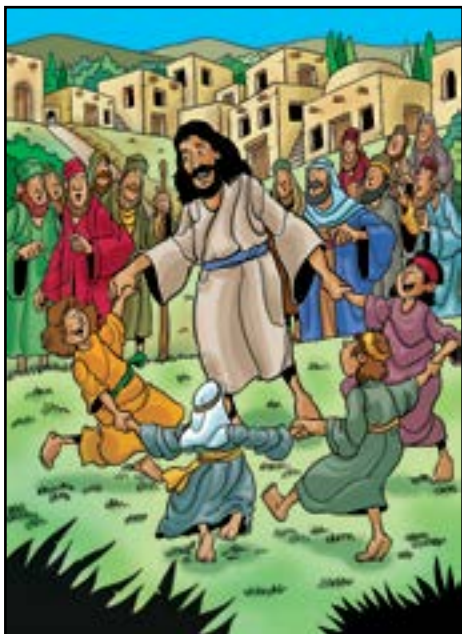
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story together—imagine and wonder.
- Help everyone understand that we are all a part of something bigger than our immediate family. Look at baby pictures together. Talk about who is holding them in the pictures. If there are pictures from their baptism, talk about how they were welcomed into an even larger family, the family of God.
- When children are at school, most of the teaching is done by an adult. Wonder together about times when a child teaches.



Responding to God's Grace

- Talk together about a time you learned something from them.
- Make a paper-doll chain to display a reminder that children are important to Jesus.
- Visit www.presbyterianmission.org/world-mission to find stories of how your church helps children around the world.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Watch the YouTube video “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (bit.ly/JesusLovesTheChildrenVideo, 2:26). Learn the motions to the three songs. Sing the songs using the motions you have practiced.
- Bake gingerbread boys and girls. Ice and decorate them with various colors and candies. All are different, but all are wonderful.
- Pray this prayer:

God, thank you for our family, the love they have for me, and the love I have for them. Thank you also for making us a part of your larger family, people all around the world. Help us to show your love for one another. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.