

JESUS AND THE LITTLE CHILDREN

Bible Basis: Matthew 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16

Bible Verse: “[Jesus said,] ‘Let the little children come to me. Don’t keep them away. The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them.’” —Matthew 19:14, NIV

Bible Point: Jesus loved the little children. Jesus loves you, too!

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 25: “Jesus and the Little Children”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Play the game “Red Light/Green Light” with the children. Have them stand on one side of the room, side by side, and you stand on the other. When you say, “**green light**,” they can walk toward you. When you say “**red light**,” they need to stop and freeze. At this age they will likely need to hear “red light” a few times before they actually stop. When they reach you, they can high-five you. Tell each child that they did a good job. Play the game a few times. Then have the children sit down.

Say, “**Did you enjoy playing the game? What was your favorite part? Did you like the red light better or the green light better? What if I was your grandma or your grandpa? Then you would have loved coming toward me! You would have been even more excited to get to those special people.**”

Say, “**Today, we are going to hear a story about some children who wanted to go to someone special, but people gave them the red light.**”

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Say, “**What do we know about Jesus so far?**” Prompt the children to discuss previous lessons: Jesus’ birth, Jesus’ baptism, Jesus as a teacher.

Jesus was amazing. People loved to hear him teach. Most of all, people loved him because he loved people so much. Let’s hear a story about Jesus and some children.

First, read aloud Chapter 25, “Jesus and the Little Children,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

We are going to work together to tell this story. I will be the disciples and you will be the children in the story.

First, what are disciples? They are Jesus' followers. They went with him everywhere he went. They helped him take care of people and teach people. They were learning and training so they could go out by themselves and tell people how much God loved them.

So Jesus was resting, and the disciples wanted to take care of Jesus. They wanted him to rest. But some parents saw Jesus. Some children saw Jesus. They wanted to go to him. Say, "It's Jesus! Let's go to him!" *(Have children repeat.)*

But the disciples said, "No. Jesus needs some time to rest. You can't see him right now."

The children said, "We want to see Jesus!" *(Have children repeat.)*

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me! Please don't turn them away."

The children said, "Hooray!" *(Have children repeat.)*

The children were very happy to see Jesus. He loved them and prayed for them. He loved and prayed for the babies. Jesus loved all the little children, and he loves you, too!

After the Bible story, ask:

- **Who were the disciples?** *(Jesus' followers)*
- **What was their job?** *(to help Jesus)*
- **In the story, who saw Jesus?** *(children and parents)*
- **What did they want to do?** *(go to him and see him)*
- **How do you think they felt when the disciples said they couldn't?** *(bad, sad)*
- **But what did Jesus say?** *(Let the children come to me.)*
- **Why did he say that?** *(Jesus loved the little children.)*

Pray with your children, thanking God for his love for us.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: PRAISE SONGS

Stuff you need: music player or piano and piano player

Say, "Talking about how much God loves us makes me want to tell God how much I love him! Let's sing and praise God with our voices!" Sing a few praise songs.

OPTION 2: I Am Precious to Jesus

Stuff you need: photographs from last week, craft foam frames and stick-on foam shapes, tape, permanent markers

Preparation: Print the photographs from last week. You will likely have children in class this week who were not in class last week. You can make a note for their parents to put a picture in the frame they've made, or you can check with church staff to see if they have equipment a volunteer could use to take pictures at the beginning of this session and print in time for the craft. Write, "I am precious to Jesus" in permanent marker on each frame.

Give each child their picture and a frame. Help them tape the pictures into the frames; then let them decorate the frames with the stick-on craft foam shapes.

OPTION 3: Jesus Loves Children

Stuff you need: Jesus Loves Children Activity Sheet, crayons

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk about today's story as the children color.

OPTION 4: Jesus Loves Us

Stuff you need: Jesus Loves Us Activity Sheet, heart die cuts in a variety of sizes and colors, glue or glue sticks, heart stickers

Preparation: If you can't find premade heart die cuts, cut out your own heart shapes. Check to see if your church or a friend who scrapbooks has a die-cut machine before you cut them all with scissors.

Give each child an activity sheet, glue, and a variety of heart die cuts and stickers. Encourage them to use their imaginations as they create artwork for a loved one.

OPTION 5: Red Light/Green Light

Play "Red Light/Green Light" again, but with silly rules. For example, have children hop on one foot, crawl, or take giant steps or baby steps to get to you.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 25*. Say, "**The front of this card will remind you that Jesus loved the little children. Show your parents the back and tell them that Jesus loves you, too!**" Have them practice saying this before they leave.

Use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.