

JESUS, THE SON OF GOD

Bible Basis: Matthew 19:13–15; Mark 10:13–16; Luke 18:15–17

Key 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, the Son of God, told the children to come to him. I am important to Jesus.

Resource: *The Story for Children*, Chapter 25: “Jesus, the Son of God”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Start your class with a discussion about important people. Talking about important people will help the children in your class focus on today’s Bible point. Gather your class around you. Have each child tell you about someone they think is important and why. Children may mention parents, teachers, your pastor, the president, or famous celebrities. After each child has named someone, talk about other people who are important. Ask:

- **What makes someone important?**
- **Who do you think is the most important person in the world?** (Let children answer honestly. Ensure that children do not make judgments about whether another child’s answer is right or wrong.)
- **How do you show someone that they are important to you?**

Say, **We’ve talked about a lot of important people. In today’s Bible story, we are going to learn about a group of people who were important to Jesus.**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Stuff You Need: Copies of *The Story for Children*, Bibles, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 25*

Optional: Bible-time outfit for an adult

Tell the story from *The Story for Children*, Chapter 25. You can also have children find Mark 10 and mark it in their Bibles. The children can follow along when Thaddeus reads the Scripture passage listed in the story.

IMPORTANT PEOPLE

Today’s story is a first person narrative from the perspective of Thaddeus, one of Jesus’ disciples. If you’d like, you can dress up in Bible-time clothes. For more fun, ask an adult who does not normally teach your class to come in and share the Bible story.

Hi! My name is Thaddeus. I'm one of Jesus' 12 disciples. We thought we knew Jesus pretty well. After all, we had been traveling with him for a while and listening to him teach. He'd been doing some amazing things. We'd even seen him feed five thousand men with two loaves of bread and five fish from a little boy's lunch. Have you ever tried to feed that many people with a lunch meant for one child? We thought we were going to look really silly trying to feed that many people with so little food.

Jesus walked on water and calmed a furious storm. He healed tons of people and then he did something none of us would have ever believed if we hadn't seen it with our own eyes. Jesus had a good friend named Lazarus. One day, Jesus heard that Lazarus was really sick, but by the time we got to Lazarus' house, he had been dead for four days. We all knew that Jesus could heal sick people, so no one understood why Jesus hadn't helped Lazarus. We walked to Lazarus' tomb and Jesus asked for the stone to be rolled away. Now, I don't know if you know, but it doesn't smell that good inside a tomb. But some people rolled the stone away anyway. Jesus prayed and then shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" We all watched in amazement as Lazarus walked out of that tomb alive and well, as if he'd never been sick.

Jesus is always surprising us with the things he does, but we still thought we knew Jesus pretty well.

One day, Jesus had been teaching the people. When Jesus teaches, everyone tries to get close to him. They think he's pretty special. This time, parents were trying to get their children close to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to bless their children. You see, blessings were really important. A blessing is more than fancy words. A blessing from Jesus had God's power to bring about the words that were spoken. A blessing had power to bring what was said to happen.

The other disciples and I had this one covered. If you didn't know, teaching crowds is hard work. We thought Jesus should have a break from teaching and rest for a while. So, we sent the parents and children away. "Not now," we said. "Jesus has more important things to do." After all, Jesus is the Son of God. He should be spending time with important people like our leaders. So, we kept sending them away. We didn't want the children to take up Jesus' time.

Then, Jesus got angry. We didn't know why he was so angry. We were only trying to help him. Every child from miles around would have come to be blessed by Jesus. He could have been there all night blessing the children. What did we do this time? We were always getting into trouble for things. But every time Jesus would forgive us.

I'd tell you what Jesus said, but maybe you'd like to help me. What Jesus said was so important that three different people wrote about it in their books about Jesus' life. Can you read what Jesus said? (Have a child read Mark 10:14b–15.)

Jesus told the children to come to him. When he said that, some of the children wiggled out of their parents' hands and ran to Jesus. Others were shy and tried to hide behind their parents. Jesus took some of the children in his arms and gave them hugs. He put his hands on some of their heads. But, he blessed all of them. By the time Jesus was done, even the shy children were trying to get close to Jesus.

We were right about one thing. Children came from everywhere to be blessed by Jesus. He said that to receive the kingdom of God you have to have faith like a little child and just believe. I guess we still have a lot to learn from Jesus, but we know that children are important to Jesus. We won't make that mistake again!

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 25*. Ask children to look at the picture and tell you what the picture says about Jesus. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- What did Jesus do in the story?
- What does this story show about Jesus and children?

Say, **Jesus told the children to come to him. Spending time with someone can show they are important to you.**

Collect the cards for now. You'll send them home with the children later.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

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

OPTION 1: Come to Me Game

Play this active version of the game "Red Light, Green Light" to help children remember that Jesus told the children to come to him. Make sure you have a large area to run or play this game outside. Have children stand against one wall. Two children should stand at the other side of the playing area. One child will say Jesus' words, "Come to me." All the children should run or walk quickly toward the game leaders. The second leader should say, "Don't come." And then all the children should freeze and stop moving. Anyone who keeps moving must return to the start. The first two children to reach to leaders become the new leaders.

OPTION 2: Jesus Loves the Little Children

Stuff You Need: Jesus Loves the Little Children Activity Sheet

Optional: CD player, CD with "Jesus Loves the Little Children" song

Give an activity sheet to each child. Many of the children in your class will know the first verse to the song "Jesus Loves the Little Children," inspired by today's lesson. Teach your class all the verses using the activity sheet. Each verse tells one thing that Jesus did to show the children they were important to him. Sing the song several times together as a class. If you have a CD with the song on it, use it while you sing. Children may also enjoy making up additional verses or motions.

OPTION 3: IMPORTANCE AWARDS

Stuff You Need: Importance Awards Activity Sheet, craft foam, glue, decorating supplies, safety pins, safety scissors

Jesus showed everyone that children were important to him when he spent time with them and blessed them. Ahead of time, cut pieces of craft foam (two for each child slightly larger than the awards on the activity sheet). Let children make an award to wear, and one to give away that shows children are important to Jesus. Give an activity sheet to each child. Let the children cut out the

awards and glue them to craft foam. Then let each child decorate two awards — one for the child and one to give away. Use a safety pin to attach one of the awards to each child's shirt.

OPTION 4: ALL THE CHILDREN

Stuff You Need: Paper, pencils, safety scissors, markers, glue, decoration supplies such as fabric scraps, lace, and wallpaper samples

Optional: Paper doll template from Lesson 2

Lay the paper horizontally in front of you. Fold the paper accordion-style. The more folds you make, the more paper dolls you will have. Have children trace the shape of a person onto the paper with the arms and the legs extending to each side of the fold. Have children cut out the shape, leaving the folds at the arms and the legs. Unfold the paper doll cut-out to reveal a chain of people. Let the children color and decorate the people.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Spend time praying and blessing each child by name. If you feel comfortable, put your hand on the child's head or shoulder as you bless them in Jesus' name. Consider asking parents to come to class five minutes before the end of class to participate in this blessing with you. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 25*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.