

God's kingdom belongs to people like these children. (Mark 10:14b)

## Jesus and the Children – Mark 10:13-16

### Prepare to Lead

#### Activities At-a-Glance

- Jesus Loves Me Bracelet** (Craft)
- Stop and Go** (Craft)
- God's Kingdom** (Journaling)
- God's Special Child** (Writing)
- I Can Come to Jesus** (Prayer)
- God's Kingdom Mural** (Collaborative Art)
- Peaceful Place** (Response Activities)
- Come to Jesus** (Game/Movement)
- Bible Toys** (Art)
- Invitations to God's Kingdom**  
(Creative Writing/Art)
- Kingdom Liturgies** (Worship Activity)

#### Supplies At-a-Glance

- |                              |                                                               |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>crayons</i>               | <i>various art supplies such as stickers and paper scraps</i> |
| <i>colored pencils</i>       |                                                               |
| <i>markers</i>               | <i>pictures of people of all ages</i>                         |
| <i>scissors</i>              |                                                               |
| <i>tape</i>                  | <i>recyclable materials such as boxes and containers</i>      |
| <i>stapler</i>               |                                                               |
| <i>glue</i>                  | <i>various types of paper</i>                                 |
| <i>craft sticks</i>          | <i>pens</i>                                                   |
| <i>large pieces of paper</i> |                                                               |

#### Suggested Books

- For Every Child* by Caroline Castle
- God's Coming Visit* by Franz Huber

### Tips for the Leader

- At the start of a new month, make sure your classroom is still a space where children feel welcome. Greet each child on their level, especially those you haven't seen in a while!
- It's a new month so be sure to have this month's Bible Verse and Faith Word posters posted in your room or easily accessible.
- This month's faith word is *kingdom*—God's dream for the world, where all people are loved and included.
- Spend time considering what you believe about God's kingdom. Open your heart to new observations as you explore God's kingdom with children.
- Don't forget to have all your supplies and materials prepped and easily accessible for your lesson. A prepared leader is a successful leader!

## Prepare to Wonder

### Faith Word: KINGDOM

In today's lesson, we will explore the familiar Bible story of Jesus blessing the children. The disciples tried to keep the children from Jesus. We are not told why the parents were bringing their children to Jesus. In those days, the infant mortality rate was high. It is likely that the parents had heard of Jesus' healing miracles and wanted him to bless and protect their children.

When the disciples attempted to discourage the parents from bringing their children to see Jesus, they weren't intentionally being mean to children. They were acting in a way consistent with the social norms and expectations of the time. When Jesus reprimanded the disciples for keeping the children away, he made a clear statement that access to him and to God's love was for everyone. By blessing the children, Jesus showed that they were full members in God's family.

In addition to welcoming and blessing the children, Jesus used them as an example to teach the disciples about the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said that the kingdom of heaven belongs to people like the children. The kingdom of heaven can be a difficult concept for children (and adults) to understand. Some people refer to the coming kingdom of heaven, alluding to a time in the future when Jesus will return. However, during his ministry, Jesus taught that the kingdom of heaven is a present reality. The spirit of God is within us and among us.

### Spiritual Practice for Adults

This week, meet or talk with someone who is older or younger than you. When you are talking, ask these questions:

What do you believe about God?

What does the kingdom of heaven look like?

If you could give one piece of advice, what would it be?

# Come Together

## Come Together

**Supplies:** *Class Pack, Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook, Wonder Box, green cloth, battery-operated candle, child's toy such as a stuffed animal*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Set up a Wonder Table (see p. 3) with a green cloth, battery-operated candle, and a Wonder Box (see p. 3). Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16) and Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21). Place the toy inside the Wonder Box.*

- Point to the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster, and invite the children to wonder about what the word *kingdom* means.
- Invite the kids to join you in a circle.

**SAY:** This month we will be learning about God's kingdom.

**ASK:** How old are you? Does Jesus love you?

- We recommend reading stories from the *Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook*. Allow an elementary-age child to read the story, "Jesus and the Children" (pp. 182–183) from the storybook or read Mark 10:13-16 from a CEB Bible.

**PRAY:** Dear God, thank you for Jesus who welcomes and loves us. Amen.

## Jesus Loves Me Bracelet – Preschool

**Supplies:** *Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons, scissors, tape or stapler*

**Prepare Ahead:** *Photocopy "Jesus Loves Me Bracelet" (Reproducible 10A) for each preschooler.*

- Hand out a copy of "Jesus Loves Me Bracelet" to each preschooler.

**SAY:** Jesus loves you, and Jesus loves me! Let's make a bracelet to remind us how much Jesus loves us.

- Invite the preschoolers to color their bracelets.
- Help the preschoolers cut out and assemble their bracelets to wear. Attach the bracelet by stapling or using a piece of tape.

**SAY:** When you look at your bracelet you can always remember Jesus loves you!

## Stop and Go – Younger Elementary

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons, scissors, craft sticks, glue*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Stop and Go" (Reproducible 10B) for each child.*

- Hand a copy of "Stop and Go" and a craft stick to each child.

**SAY:** In the Bible story, the disciples did not want the children to be with Jesus. It's almost like they said "Stop!" But Jesus invited the children to come to him. Jesus said "Go!"

- Encourage the children to color and cut out the stop and go signs.
- Show the children to glue a craft stick in between the two signs.
- Invite the children to use the sign to retell and act out the Bible story.

## God's Kingdom – Older Elementary

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, colored pencils or markers*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "God's Kingdom" (Reproducible 10C) for each child.*

- Hand out a copy of "God's Kingdom" to each child.

**SAY:** In the Bible story, Jesus says the kingdom of heaven belongs to the children that came to him.

**ASK:** What do you think that means?

- Invite the children to draw what they think God's kingdom looks like.
- Invite willing volunteers to share.

## God's Special Child – All Ages

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book, crayons or markers*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "God's Special Child" (Reproducible 10D) for each child.*

**SAY:** Jesus loved all the children that came to him. They were each special to him.

**ASK:** What makes you special?

- Invite the children to complete and color the page.

# Wonder Time

## Share a Story

*Supplies:* Celebrate Wonder DVD, TV, DVD player

- Invite the children to join you in a circle on the floor.
- Watch the Session 10 video (Celebrate Wonder DVD).

**WONDER:** What was your favorite part of the story? What would it feel like to get a hug from Jesus?

## Interactive Bible Story

*Supplies:* Reproducible Kids' Book

*Prepare Ahead:* Photocopy today's Take-Home Pages from the Reproducible Kids' Book, 10E–10G. Display the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster (Class Pack—pp. 9 & 16).

- Invite several readers to take turns reading and/or acting out the story, one section at a time.

**WONDER:** Why did the disciples prevent the children from seeing Jesus?

## Wonder with Me

*Supplies:* Class Pack, Wonder Box, scissors

*Prepare Ahead:* Lay out the Unit 3 Wonder Story Mat (Class Pack—pp. 7 & 18). Locate and cut out the Unit 3 story figures (Class Pack—p. 3) if you haven't already.

**SAY:** Today's faith word is *kingdom*.

**ASK:** What is God's kingdom like?

- Show the children the Unit 3 Faith Word Poster (Class Pack—p. 21).
- Read the definition of the word *kingdom* from the Faith Word Poster.

**ASK:** Who is included in God's kingdom?

**SAY:** Today, we learned that Jesus welcomes children into God's kingdom.

- Have a child place the children on the Wonder Mat.

**WONDER** together:

- What is the best part of the story?
- What confuses you about this story?
- What does God's kingdom look like?

- Open the Wonder Box to reveal the toy.

**WONDER:** What does a toy have to do with the Bible story?

**SAY:** People of all ages are a part of God's kingdom.

**ASK:** Do you think the children had toys when they were talking with Jesus?

## Experience Wonder

### God's Kingdom Mural – All Ages

*Supplies: large pieces of paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils, stickers, various art supplies, tape or stapler*

**SAY:** This week we are going to work together. Children of all ages can help each other to do God's work.

- Pair up the children by putting an older child with a younger child.
- Give each group a large piece of paper and invite the children to draw a mural together. Encourage them to draw what the kingdom of God looks like.
- When the groups are done, tape together each mural.
- Hang the mural in your church space.

**PRAY:** Thank you God, for a kingdom where everyone has a part. Help us show your kingdom to everyone. Amen.

### Examine the Bible Verse – Early and Older Elementary

**SAY:** Our Unit 3 Bible verse is Mark 10:14b. Let's find it in our Bibles.

**ASK:** Is Mark in the Old or New Testament? (*New*). Where is the Book of Mark located in the New Testament? (*second book*) In what chapter of Mark is our verse located? (*10*) What is the verse number? (*14*)

**SAY:** The Bible story is found in the Book of Mark, which is one of the Gospels.

- Gather the kids around the Unit 3 Bible Verse Poster. Read it together.

**SAY:** Our Bible verse comes from today's Bible story.

**ASK:** What do you think this verse means? Why would others want to be like children?

## Peaceful Place – Preschool and Early Elementary

**Supplies:** copies of the Unit 3 Faith Word (Reproducible Kids' Book 10F); Celebrate Wonder Bible Storybook; For Every Child, by Caroline Castle; God's Coming Visit, by Franz Huber; paper; crayons; pictures of people of all ages

**Prepare Ahead:** Photocopy the Unit 3 Faith Word Coloring Page (Reproducible 10F) for each child.

- Assist the children, as needed, as they interact with the items provided.
- Have the children look at the pictures.
- Encourage the children to draw what they think they might look like as they grow up.
- Encourage the children to color the Unit 3 Faith Word Coloring Page.

**Tip:** All of the supplies/activities suggested for the Peaceful Place are optional.

## Go in Peace

### Spiritual Practice – Exploring God's Kingdom Through Community

**SAY:** A spiritual practice is something we do to help us be present with God. This month we are going to practice ways that we can be encouraging members of God's community.

- Guide the children through a spiritual practice.

**ASK:** What is one thing that makes you special?

- Go around the group and ask each child to name something special about themselves.
- After each child responds, have the group say, "You are a special child of God." If a child cannot think of an answer, let the group help.

**PRAY:** Loving God, thank you for making us each special. Thank you for welcoming us and making us all a part of your kingdom. Amen.

## Family Spiritual Practice

*Supplies: Reproducible Kids' Book; Leader Guide—p. 128*

*Prepare Ahead: Photocopy "Family Celebration Letter" (p. 128) for each child.*

**SAY:** Let's look at your Take-Home Pages for today (Reproducibles 10E–10G). Have your family help you with this week's spiritual practice. Be sure to tell your family about our new faith word and say the special prayer at home.

- Send a copy of the Take-Home Pages and the Family Celebration Letter home with each child.

## Supplemental Activities

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### Preschool – Come to Jesus

*Supplies: paper, markers, tape*

*Prepare Ahead: Write "JESUS" on a piece of paper and tape it to one wall.*

**SAY:** Today we learned that Jesus called the children to him.

- Gather the children together.
- Play a version of "Mother May I" by having the children line up on one side of the room opposite from the "JESUS" paper.

**SAY:** We are going to get to Jesus in different ways.

- Instruct the children to take different movements forwards and backwards until the group gets to Jesus. Examples of movements are: take giant steps, take baby steps, walk fast, walk slow, hop, gallop, skip, and so forth.
- When the children get to Jesus, encourage them to give high-fives, fist bumps, or hugs.

**SAY:** Everyone is welcome with Jesus.

- Repeat the game as time allows.



## Early Elementary – Bible Toys

*Supplies: recyclable materials such as boxes and containers, markers, scissors, tape, glue*

**ASK:** What kinds of toys do you think Jesus played with? What toys were in the Bible?

- Invite the children to use the materials to create a Bible toy or a brand new toy. Children can work individually, or in pairs or small groups.
- Allow willing volunteers to show the group their toys.
- Leave time for the children to play with their toys.

## Older Elementary – Invitations to God's Kingdom

*Supplies: paper, scissors, markers, glue, various art supplies*

**SAY:** Jesus welcomed the children in his presence, and we can welcome everyone into God's kingdom. God's kingdom is a place where everyone is included and loved.

**ASK:** What would it look like to invite someone to God's kingdom?

- Encourage children to brainstorm their answers.
- Working individually, or together in pairs or groups, invite the children to design and create an invitation to God's kingdom.
- Invite willing participants to share what they have created.

## Intergenerational Activity – Kingdom Liturgies

*Supplies: paper, pens*

**SAY:** Every one in our church family is unique and special to God. We all have a role to play in God's kingdom.

- Divide participants into groups by age such as young children, youth, and adults.
- Have the groups write a prayer, call and response, or song for worship.
- Give the groups plenty of time to work on it.
- Bring the participants back together.
- Invite the groups to share.
- If you can, incorporate the liturgies into worship.

God's kingdom belongs to people like these children. (Mark 10:14b)

## The Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin – Luke 15:3-10

### Prepare to Lead

#### Activities At-a-Glance

- Sheep and Coins (Art)
- Color and Celebrate (Color by Number)
- Search and Find (Puzzle)
- I Am Found Book (Art)
- Now I'm Found (Music)
- Can You Find It? (Game)
- Peaceful Place (Response Activities)
- God Celebrates Me (Movement)
- Celebration Hat (Craft)
- Circle Drawings (Activity)
- Cards for the Community (Activity)

#### Supplies At-a-Glance

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|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| <i>crayons</i>            | <i>pencils</i>                    |
| <i>colored pencils</i>    | <i>party hats and noisemakers</i> |
| <i>markers</i>            | <i>drawing paper</i>              |
| <i>scissors</i>           | <i>stickers</i>                   |
| <i>glue</i>               | <i>hole punch</i>                 |
| <i>cotton balls</i>       | <i>string or yarn</i>             |
| <i>foil</i>               | <i>cards or stationery</i>        |
| <i>construction paper</i> |                                   |
| <i>tape</i>               |                                   |

#### Suggested Books

Who Counts?: 100 Sheep, 10 Coins, and 2 Sons by Amy-Jill Levine and Sandy Eisenberg Sasso

### Tips for the Leader

- Be careful of the language you use in the session when talking about who belongs in God's kingdom and "who is missing." Help children understand that there aren't any qualifications for being included in God's kingdom. God includes everyone.
- Be sure to have any copies made and supplies you want to use for this session ready to go!
- Having music playing while children complete activities can help create a calm and safe atmosphere.
- Be sensitive to any children who may feel left out based on today's discussion.