

Day one

We are all different ages, and all are welcome

Bible reading

Mark 10:13-15

International Children's Bible



Jesus Accepts Children

¹³Some people brought their small children to Jesus so he could touch them. But his followers told the people to stop bringing their children to him. ¹⁴When Jesus saw this, he was displeased. He said to them, 'Let the little children come to me. Don't stop them. The kingdom of God belongs to people who are like these little children. ¹⁵I tell you the truth. You must accept the kingdom of God as a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it.'

Bible video

youtu.be/VPUMDVBO7dY?si=fu1__I5XKc_G6ax3

Saddleback Kids (1:17)

Arrival activity

Sharing The Welcome

Make some welcome bracelets to swap with others. Beads on elastic, paracord friendship bracelets, or slap bands (blanks available from Baker Ross to colour or put stickers on).



Story

You will need someone to play Jesus, some disciples, some people coming to see Jesus, and parents and children. Please make sure before you do this that the children in the play know exactly what to expect so they are not taken by surprise, as this may cause upset.

[Jesus is talking with his disciples. Someone walks past and looks at them. They turn round and pass the group again. They then get excited and run up towards the group. The disciples move to meet them, acting as a barrier to Jesus.]

Fan: Excuse me, excuse me! That's him, isn't it? That's Jesus?

Disciples: Yes it is but ...

Fan: I'm his biggest fan, I mean like, really his biggest fan! I know of all the stories he's told and all the miracles. Can I meet him, please? Please can I meet him?

Disciples: *[to each other]* Do you think Jesus wants to see them? Do you think they'll be welcome to see Jesus? Um ... let's ask that crowd *[pointing to the children]*. What do you think? Do you think this person is welcome to meet Jesus?

[Jesus to nods to the children. Get the children to shout 'yes'.]

Disciples: Well there you go, come on and meet Jesus.

Fan: Oh thank you, thank you. *[Runs to talk to Jesus and acts super-excited the whole time].*

[Someone in posh clothes walks towards the disciples. Speak in a posh voice.]

Posh: Did I hear you say that was Jesus? Well, I simply must meet him. I am very important and I'm sure he'll want to meet me.

Disciples: *[Disciples mutter to each other, then look to the crowd].* What do you think? Should we let ol' fancy pants here is welcome to see Jesus? *[Jesus nods and beckons to Posh.]*

Crowd: Yes!

[Posh goes and meets Jesus, shaking his hand and chatting with him and Jesus' biggest fan].
[A beggar, dressed in tatty clothes, walks cautiously towards the disciples. The beggar does not speak in a loud or confident voice.]

Beggar: Um, excuse me. I... I wondered if I might see Jesus. I've heard a lot about him and I, um, hoped that I could, um, see him?

Disciples: Hmm, I don't know. You're not very rich or important are you? *[Beggar slumps forward, hurt by their words.]* What do you lot think? Are they welcome to meet Jesus? *[Asks the 'crowd'.]*

[Jesus nods vigorously towards the children.]

Crowd: Yes!

Disciples: Wait, what did you say?

Crowd: *[Louder]* YES!

[Beggar runs towards Jesus and Jesus hugs him and they all start talking.]

[Parents and children approach the disciples. The disciples cross their arms and stare at the parents and children. The fan, Posh and the beggar stop talking, and stare at them.]

P&C: Hi, we've bought our children to meet Jesus. We hoped that he would bless them.

[Disciples look to the crowd.]

Disciples: Ha! Look at them, all sticky and small and snotty. Do you think they're welcome to meet Jesus?

Crowd: Yes!

Disciples: Say again?

Crowd: YES!

Disciples: Ha! Wrong! No they're not. *[Jesus looks shocked]*

The fan, Posh and the beggar: No! Children are not welcome.

[Jesus looks to the crowd and waves his hands at them. Get the crowd to shout.]

Crowd: Oh yes they are!

Disciples and F,P, B: Oh no they're not!

Crowd: Oh yes they are!

Disciples, F, P, B: Oh no they're not!

Crowd: OH YES THEY ARE!

Disciples, F, P, B: OH NO THEY'RE ...

[Jesus steps forward and breaks through the disciples, towards the children and parents.]

Jesus: Enough! You should listen to these children [*points to the crowd*], they can teach you so much! [*Disciples look shocked.*]

Disciples: What? But they're just ... children! They're not important.

Crowd: Oh yes we are!

Disciples: Oh no you're not!

Crowd: Oh yes we are!

Disciples: Oh no ...

Jesus: Shush. They are important. You must let all the children come to me.

[Jesus steps forward and places hands on children's heads (actors).]

Jesus: Don't stop them, because God's kingdom belongs to people who are like these little children. The truth is, you must accept God's kingdom like a little child accepts things, or you will never enter it.

[Turns to the crowd.]

Jesus: Who is welcome to come and see me?

Crowd: Everyone!

Jesus: Exactly, you make sure you tell people that, especially if they're like this lot and they say someone isn't welcome to come and see me! Will you do that for me? Great, thank you. Now, I've got to be on my way, still so much to teach this lot and lots more wonderful children to meet, just like you. Bye for now.

[Everyone leaves still in character – fan gushing over Jesus; Posh acting important; Beggar happy to be there; children walking next to Jesus; disciples looking thoroughly confused.]



Wondering questions



- Who was made welcome in this story?
- Who did the welcoming?
- What does this story say to us?
- Where do you see this story today?

Small group prayer

Initials



1. Make the initial of someone else in the group, using some foil.
2. Place all the initials in the middle of the space you are using, and then pray over them with the following prayer:



Thank you, God, that you welcome us all, especially (go round the group saying the name of the person they created the initial for. Sign in Makaton the sign for "bless", which is: in the air, lay your hands face down in front of you, pull them back towards you and make fists and push fists down slightly)
Bless each of us as we learn about you,
Bless each of us as we make new friends this week
Bless each one of us when we sleep tonight.
Amen

2. Using either finger paints or slightly diluted poster paint, pass the individual pictures around the group so everyone can put their fingerprint into the pictures.
3. When the paint has dried, make a face on each of the fingerprints, and decorate the mat and doorway.
4. You should end up with a very colourful doorway full of smiling fingerprints. By using fingerprints to make the faces, you can talk about how each person is unique and precious to God.



STEM activity

Jigsaw Faces

You will need:

- plain jigsaw pieces (please see the template provided)
- colouring pencils.

What you do:

1. Give each child a jigsaw piece, and ask them to draw a picture of themselves onto it.
2. Create a jigsaw to show how we all fit together with Jesus.

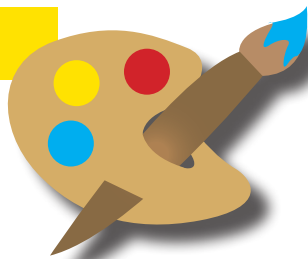


Activity/craft

We're All Welcome With God

You will need:

- paper
- paint for finger painting
- pens.



What you do:

1. Make an outline of a doorway, with the doors open and a welcome mat at the door.

Recipe



URC Children Biscuits

You will need:

- round biscuits or mini gingerbread people
- writing icing.

What you do:

You may choose to decorate round biscuits with the Children Together badge. Clearly, you will not be able to do the multicoloured circle or the writing as it is on the badge, but you could do the cross and the fish and have a go at writing Children Together. Alternatively, you could decorate two mini-gingerbread people, and use icing to join their hands together.



Games



Children's Party Games

Jesus welcomed the children just as they were, and also talked about entering the kingdom of Heaven with childlike hearts. Have some fun playing some classic children's party games. Here are a few to get you going:

Pin The Tail On The Donkey

You will need:

- a large picture on the wall/door of a donkey
- a few paper tails with Blu-Tack/sticky dots
- a blindfold.

What you do:

Children take it in turns to wear the blindfold and try to place the tail on the donkey in the right position. Points or a prize for the one who comes the nearest.

Other versions of this game could be to place the eyes and nose on a face, or place the hat on the person.

Pass The Parcel

You will need:

- a parcel with distinct layers, possibly with a consequence or small treat in each layer
- music.

What you do:

1. Children sit in a circle and, while the music plays, they pass the parcel round.
2. When the music stops, the person holding the parcel tears off one layer. They do the consequence or keep the prize.
3. The music starts again, and the parcel moves on.

Duck, Duck, Goose

What you do:

1. The children sit in a circle on the floor. Someone is chosen to be the first player.
2. They walk around the outside of the circle, gently touching each person on the head and saying Duck.
3. When they are ready, they say Goose and the person they chose has to get up and chase them round the circle.
4. Can the player get back to the goose's seat first, or will the goose catch them? Play then continues.

Hide And Seek

What you do:

1. The children go and hide anywhere in the area you have designated, and then the leaders go and seek them out.
2. Once found, they return to home base.
3. Who will be the last person to be found?

Chocolate Game

You will need:

- a dice
- a set of scarves, gloves and hats
- a large chocolate bar on an unbreakable plate
- knife and fork.

What you do:

1. The children sit in a circle with the chocolate etc in the middle.
2. They pass the dice round, rolling it in turn.
3. When someone rolls a six, that person goes to the centre, puts on the hat, gloves and scarf and, using the knife and fork, they begin to unwrap the chocolate and eat as much as they can before another person rolls a six and takes their place.

Musical Statues

You will need party music.

What you do:

1. When the music plays, the children dance.
2. When the music stops, the children freeze into statues.
3. Anyone who moves is out.

Islands

You will need:

- sheets of newspaper
- music.

What you do:

1. When the music plays, the children dance around.
2. When the music stops they must run and stand on a piece of newspaper or the sharks (leaders) will get them out.
3. Each round, the leaders remove pieces of the paper and rip them into smaller islands to make the game trickier.

Large group prayer

A Web of Welcome and Blessing



You will need a ball of wool.

What you do:

1. Get everyone to sit or stand sit in a circle.
2. Give the ball of wool to one of the adults to begin the prayer.
3. Throw the ball across the group, holding firmly onto the end and say, 'You are welcome. God bless you.'
4. Depending on the size of your group, it would be good to include the person's name.
5. The person across the circle catches the ball of wool and then, holding onto the wool at the point where they caught it, throws the ball to another person in the circle, saying 'You are welcome. God bless you'.
6. Ensure that, as the ball of wool is passed around, each person continues to hold the wool when they pass the ball to someone else.
7. Continue until everyone in the circle has hold of the wool. The more that the wool is passed across the circle, the more it will look like a spider's web.
8. Then each person can look down the lines of wool to the two people their thread is linked to and say 'God bless you' to each.
9. Finally, all chorus, 'God bless us all, AMEN.'

