

# Jesus welcomes children

## Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16

Aim: to know that Jesus thinks children are important



SpT11



The gospel accounts often suggest that Jesus turned the accepted standards of society upside down. He criticised hypocrisy, and often challenged his own followers about their behaviour and attitudes. Understandably the twelve disciples were very protective of Jesus, knowing how the constant demands for healing and stories wore him down. When some parents came with their children, seeking a blessing, the disciples discouraged them, probably perceiving children as a low priority with little potential as followers. They reflected the values of society at the time, where both women and children were seen as having little significance outside of the home. However, Jesus, very publicly, told them off, making the point that Kingdom of Heaven was for children too. In fact he went further suggesting that being child-like was the basic qualification for belonging to his extended family



Have some items or pictures of things that give people status e.g. a crown, a big car, an official badge, a nice house, an expensive handbag. Explain that all these things can make someone feel that they are important. Remind them that everyone is equally important to God regardless of whether they have any of these things.

*In today's story we find out how Jesus had to remind his friends, the disciples that children are important to him too*



Give out paper smiley faces on one side and a sad face on the other. These could be on paperplates or stuck on to cereal box card for strength. Ask everyone to hold up the right kind of face to react to what is happening in the story. Before the session go through the story and work out which face to hold up yourself for each part of the story.

Read 'Jesus and the children' (p194) holding up the smiley face or the sad face at appropriate points.



- *I wonder why the disciples didn't want the children to meet Jesus*
- *I wonder why Jesus thinks that children are special*



Get everyone to act out the story with some people being the parents and children and some the disciples.

Have a discussion about the place of children in your church and whether anything needs to change in the light of this story

As full members of God's kingdom and potential examples to follow, have the children pray blessing on the adults in the room



- With parental permission take a photo of each child (to be deleted immediately after the session) and print it. Stick it on to a piece of card that says 'Jesus loves...' on it. If the child is able to write their own name then encourage them to do so.

- Alternatively buy really cheap mirrors (available from Ikea!) or mirror card and do the same thing but without the photo
- Have lots of dolls and teddies available for the children to play with and show love to
- Make a display board for your church which says 'Jesus loves...' write or print out the names of everyone in the group in large letters so that they can decorate it and stick it on the board



Sing this quietly as a prayer encouraging everyone to join in with the actions. You can here the tune here:

<https://youtu.be/KqghCEtITFo>

*Jesus loves me, this I know, (big self hug)*  
*for the Bible tells me so. (hands opening like a book)*  
*Little ones to him belong. (rock a baby in your arms)*  
*They are weak, but he is strong. (show your muscles)*  
 Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus love me! (Big self hug)  
*Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so. (hands opening like a book)*  
 Jesus love me, this I know. (big self hug)  
*As he loved so long ago. (open arms out wide)*  
*Taking children on his knee, (arms together onto knees)*  
*saying, 'let them come to me.'* (beckon with index finger)  
 Yes, Jesus loves me! Yes, Jesus love me!  
 Yes, Jesus loves me! The Bible tells me so.



- Jesus love is very wonderful
- Nothing's too big
- He says that you're amazing

