

LESSON 3
JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: Jesus Loves Us**SCRIPTURE:** Mark 10**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Jesus welcomes little children, taking them in His arms and blessing them. He teaches that His kingdom belongs to those who are like little children.**WORD OF WONDER:** God so loved the world. He gave His one and only Son. —from John 3:16**FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS****WHO?**

During the time of Jesus, children entered adulthood around age 12. Girls would plan for marriage, and boys would either continue studying the Torah (Jewish Scriptures) or enter into their father's trade. The children who came to Jesus would probably have been fairly young.

WHAT?

The disciples were likely trying to protect Jesus' time so He could teach and heal those who they deemed important. But Jesus makes it clear that people must accept the kingdom of God like little children, who realize it is a gift from God, not something that can be gained through worldly knowledge or wisdom.

WHERE?

Jesus was in southern Israel and across the Jordan River. He was surrounded by crowds, including some of the Pharisees, who were constantly testing Jesus because they were suspicious of His teachings. He wasn't necessarily in friendly territory—His teachings and actions were being closely watched.

WHEN?

Jesus was on His way to Jerusalem for the final time—it is there He would eventually face His death. After welcoming the children, Jesus continued to teach about the kingdom of God and how it operates in ways opposite the world.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Shortly before Jesus blessed the children in [Mark 10](#), He took a child in His arms and taught that welcoming little children in His name is the same as welcoming Him (see [Mark 9:33–37](#)). Multiple times during His ministry, Jesus cared for children, noticing, healing, and blessing them.

Curiosity

Play Stations

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: It's Me!

Set up: Set out play dough and a variety of miscellaneous small items, such as buttons, pipe cleaners, googly eyes, and beads. You can also set out dough sculpting supplies.

Play: Encourage the kids to create a model of themselves out of the play dough. They can flatten a circle with the play dough and add objects to make a face and hair, or they can create their whole body with the play dough and use the objects to sculpt. Let them use their imaginations to create whatever they believe represents them. It's OK if it is more abstract than realistic.

Play Station: Heart Decorating

Set up: Ahead of time, use a marker to draw hearts on construction paper and set out decorating materials, such as stickers, heart-shaped stamps and ink pads, and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids use the decorating materials to decorate the hearts.

Play Station: Jesus and the Children Coloring Sheet

Set up: Print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out the coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of someone who loves them.

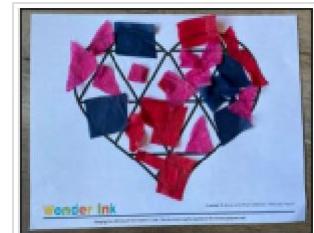
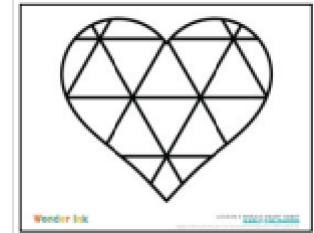
Craft: Mosaic Heart

Ahead of time, print copies of the [Mosaic Heart Sheet](#) for each kid. If possible, print onto cardstock. Cut out the hearts and place them on a table along with small tissue paper squares and glue sticks. You can tear or cut the tissue paper into small pieces ahead of time.

We're going to create a mosaic. Can anyone guess what a mosaic is? Give kids a moment to answer.

A mosaic is something big made out of smaller things. You have a big heart in front of you. This represents God's heart! You also have colorful pieces of tissue paper. You can take whatever pieces of tissue paper you want and glue them onto the heart. You can rip it and then glue it. Rip the tissue in half and hold it up to a heart to demonstrate. You can even roll a piece of tissue into a ball and glue it that way! Demonstrate this as well.

All of these colorful pieces are the ways Jesus loves you. He loves every piece of you. He loves you even when you mess up or when you aren't perfect. He loves you by forgiving you. Allow the kids to glue small pieces of colorful paper onto the heart to make a mosaic.



Leader Tip: You can create a mosaic heart ahead of time, so the kids have a visual. This will help them understand and get excited for what they're about to create!

Identity

Closing Game: Guess What I Love

We're learning that Jesus loves children. Jesus is powerful and amazing. And sometimes we might begin to think that Jesus is too busy or too important for us. Or maybe we think that Jesus only has time for our big problems and not the simple things we need. But Jesus is always here for us. Can you think of a few things you love? Don't say it out loud! Think of one thing you love and keep it in your mind.

Let's play a game to guess what each person loves. One person at a time can come up to the front and do motions that show what they love. The rest of us can guess what it is. Here's an example: If I love swimming, I will do this. Make a swimming motion with your arms. Let's try one more! Can you guess what I love this time? Pretend to pour some cereal in a bowl and eat it with an imaginary spoon. Give the kids a moment to guess. I love eating cereal! Who wants to go next?

If none of the kids volunteer, pick another leader to go up to the front and play. Kids may need help coming up with ideas of things to act out. If any kids get stuck on acting it out and don't know what to do when it's their turn, try asking them for a verbal clue. They might be able to describe it with words to help the other kids guess what it is.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them and thank God for His love for kids. Gather the kids into a circle.

Let's all stand in a circle. Let's imagine Jesus is here with us in our circle. Remember how much Jesus loves us. Let's pray and thank God for how much He loves us.

God, thank You for spending time with us and loving us. Thank You for knowing what we need and caring about us always. We love You! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you remember Jesus is always with you wherever you go. He loves you always, no matter what! May every step you take in life move you closer to Him, and may your lives show others how much Jesus loves them!