

SMALL GROUP

TODAY'S WONDER TRUTH: JESUS LOVES US



WORD OF WONDER:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.
—John 3:16–17 (NIV)

GOD'S BIG STORY:

Jesus and the Children
(Mark 10)

POST-LARGE GROUP QUESTIONS:

- In today's part of God's big story, who came to Jesus while He was teaching? *(Many people gathered around Jesus when He taught. On this day, parents brought their children to Jesus.)*
- Who tried to stop the children from visiting with Jesus? *(the disciples)*
- How did Jesus feel when the disciples didn't allow the children to come to Him? Why do you think He felt this way? *(He was angry.)*
- What did Simon and his friends do when Jesus called them to follow Him? *(They left everything and followed Jesus!)*
- What did Jesus do for the children? *(He took them in His arms and blessed them, which means He spoke God's love and favor over them.)*
- Jesus loves all of you! What are some things you think Jesus loves about you?

Welcome Question

- Who is one person you like to hang out with? Why do you like being with that person?
- It's fun to hang out with friends and family members! Today we'll hear a story from the Bible about a time when some kids, just like you, got to hang out with Jesus!

Curiosity Questions

- How do you think people in the Bible felt when they were with Jesus?
- Has there been a time when you weren't able to be with someone you love? Tell us about it.

Curiosity Activity: Action-Packed Red Light, Green Light

- Have kids stand side by side at one end of the room. Stand facing them at the opposite end.
- **Let's play Action-Packed Red Light, Green Light! As usual, you will move forward when you see green paper and stop when you see red paper. However, you may only move forward by doing the actions I call out.**
- Stand at least 10 feet away from the kids and hold the red and green sheets behind your back. Instruct kids to move toward you when you raise the green sheet and to continue moving until you raise the red sheet. The first kid to reach you wins!
- Play several rounds, and at the start of each round, instruct the kids to use one of the actions listed below. Change the action each round.
- Actions
 - Jump
 - Walk backward
 - Crawl like a bear
 - Waddle like a penguin
 - Walk on your knees
 - Dance like a ballerina
 - Walk on your heels
 - Choose your own movement
- **Wow! There are lots of ways to move, but it isn't always fun when we're told to stop. The good news is—unlike our game where we had to stop frequently—when we move toward Jesus, we never have to wait or stop. In fact, the opposite happens. When we move toward Jesus, He will move toward us.**
- **Jesus welcomes us into His arms because, like today's Wonder Truth states, **JESUS LOVES US.****

Word of Wonder Activity

- **Today in God's big story, Jesus took the children in His arms and blessed them. Why? Because Jesus loves us! Let's say our Word of Wonder together and remember God's amazing love for us!**
- **Let's play a game to practice our verse!**
- Invite kids to form a circle. Explain that they will take turns bouncing the ball, and while the ball is in the air, the person who bounced the ball will say as much of the verse as he can before the ball hits the ground.
- When the next person bounces the ball, she can start saying the verse wherever the previous person left off.
- If your group is mostly younger kids, kids can take turns bouncing the ball, but everyone can say the verse together.
- For preteens, add challenge by having them catch the ball again before it hits the ground.
- For even more challenge, put a pile of small objects (jacks, buttons, interlocking bricks, etc.) in the center of the circle and encourage the person bouncing the ball to try picking up as many of the objects as possible before the ball hits the ground—all while saying the verse!

Responding in Worship: Hanging Out with Jesus

- In God's big story today, we heard about Jesus welcoming the little children into His arms. **Why do you think He did this?** Allow kids time to answer.
- **Yes! Jesus welcomed the children because Jesus loves kids, and He loves you too! Jesus will never ignore you or dismiss you. Jesus is thinking about you all the time, even when you aren't thinking about Him. We are always on His mind because Jesus loves us.**
- **What kind of activities do you think Jesus would enjoy doing with you?** Encourage every kid to share one idea.
- **God gives the Holy Spirit to every person who follows Him. The Holy Spirit is God's loving presence with us! That means that even though Jesus is not with us physically, like He was with the kids in today's story, through the Holy Spirit, we can hang out with Jesus!**
- **Let's spend some time with Jesus as we think about how amazing He is! Today you can choose an activity station where you'll get to hang out with Jesus!**
- Explain how each station works and then invite kids to choose a station to spend time hanging out with Jesus.
 - Art Station: Kids can use the art supplies to draw a picture for Jesus of something they would enjoy doing with Him.
 - Journal Station: Kids can journal their thoughts, questions, prayers, and concerns to Jesus. Kids may also choose to write a short story, song, or poem.
 - Building Station: This is a time for kids to be creative and have fun with Jesus through building things.
 - Prayer Station: This is a time for kids to sit and talk with Jesus. They can offer silent prayers or pray aloud in a quiet voice.
- If there's time, you can give a signal and allow kids to move to additional stations. Otherwise, gather kids back together after several minutes at their stations.

SMALL GROUP PRAYER

You are like the kids in today's story! You can come to Jesus anytime. He is always waiting and ready to talk to you. Let's spend some time today talking with Jesus in prayer.

Invite kids to join you in a circle to spend time talking to Jesus. Ask whether anyone has a question, something they would like to share with Jesus, or a prayer request. Give each kid a chance to participate, then close in prayer, remembering to thank Jesus for loving us!