

Early Childhood Devotions

FOR CHILDREN AGES 3 TO 7

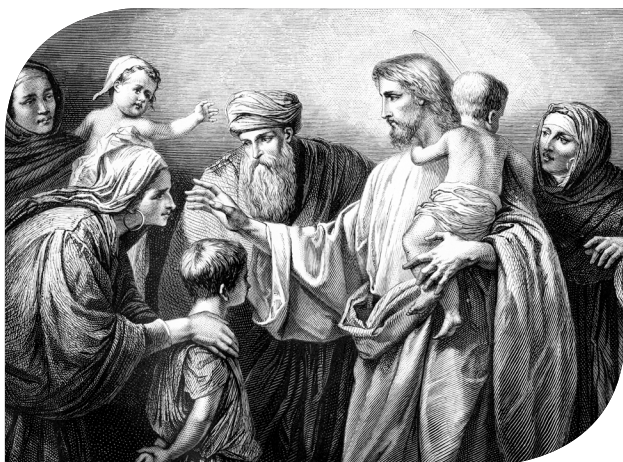


REAL. PRESENT. GOD.

FOCUS: Jesus Is Real. Jesus Is Present. Jesus is God.

Jesus and the Children

MATT. 11:25–26, 19:13–15, 21:14–16; MARK 10:14–16; LUKE 10:21, 18:15–17



Before You Teach

“Jesus declared, ‘I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children’” (MATT. 11:25). Jesus, as He did so often, changed the world order when He invited children to come to Him and warned against harm toward them. We have a biblical imperative to, without judgment or prejudice, invite and welcome all children and families into our spaces, blessing and caring for them. Walking with them we meet Jesus, and together are invited into His open, loving arms. It is there that we are truly blessed! With the Holy Spirit working in and through us, children come to know that Jesus is real. Jesus is present. Jesus is our compassionate, forgiving and all-loving God!

Greeting

Set time aside to greet each child upon entry. Your smile and welcoming words establish a positive outlook for the day. *Good morning/afternoon, child of God. Jesus loves you!*

Gathering

Signal children to gather in your worship area. Say, *Pretend you are walking into this school and people around you see Jesus walking beside you. How would you answer if someone asks, “Who is this?”* Allow time for responses. *Although you cannot see Him, you can be certain that Jesus loves you and is with you wherever you are and wherever you go.*

Tell the Story

YOU WILL NEED: Stop sign.

DIRECTIONS: Signal children to speak the word “stop” as the sign is raised, repeating italicized phrases after you.

Moms and dads were bringing children to Jesus to have Him reach out to them and bless them. The disciples scolded them, saying, *“STOP! Go away! Jesus is too busy for you!”* Aunts and uncles were bringing children to Jesus. The disciples scolded them, saying, *“STOP! Go away! Jesus is too busy for you!”* Grandmas and grandpas were bringing children to Jesus. The disciples scolded them, too, saying, *“STOP! Go away! Jesus is too busy for you!”*

When Jesus saw this He was angry and said, **“Let the little children come to Me and do not STOP them!”** Jesus took the children in His arms, put His hands on them and blessed them. Then Jesus said, **“I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from those who know more. Instead You have shown them to children, which is Your will, and exactly what You wanted to do.”** Jesus loves ALL children! Jesus loves YOU!

PRAY TOGETHER

Remind children that Jesus always listens when we pray.

Dear Jesus,
You are filled with great love for all,
Grownups and children, big and small.
Thank You for Your amazing grace.
Your love gives me a happy face. Amen.



Remember the Story

BIBLE WORDS TO REMEMBER

Pre-K & K: “[Jesus] took [the children] in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them”
(MARK 10:16).

Gr. 1 & 2: “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven”
(MATT. 19:14).

ACTIVITIES

Create: “Jesus’ Love Gives Me a Happy Face” bulletin board. Surround an image of Jesus with “Happy Face” self-portraits, drawn or painted by the children. Option: Add precut hearts to the display.



Do: Jesus’ love is open to the world. Send cards to children who need to be comforted by the knowledge that Jesus is with them. Contact Lutheran Social Services center (956-687-8333) in McAllen, Texas, which has worked with immigrant communities, or *upbring.org* through the LCMS Texas District (800-938-5777) for information and service opportunities.

Sing: “Jesus Loves the Little Children” (LOSP, p. 94).
For Adults a new and meaningful text to a familiar tune: “When We Watch the Rescue” (*carolynshymns.com/when_we_watch_the_rescue.html*, accessed April 14, 2019). Tune: Away in a Manger. Text by Carolyn Winfrey Gillette © 2018. Carolyn gives permission for free use of this hymn to churches seeking to help immigrant children.

Live the Story

“See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God” (1 JOHN 3:1, NIV).

This year’s series of Early Childhood Devotions concludes with the words of the apostle John. The word “lavish” in this translation of 1 John 3:1 conveys the extravagance of the love we have in Jesus. Wrap yourself in His love and the assurance of His grace, boldly sharing it with others: children, youth, adults, friends, neighbors, even the person behind you in line at the coffee shop! Blessings!

Sending

Gather children in your “Sending Circle.” Pass a small cross, guiding each child to in turn offer a brief prayer, or to silently pass the cross along. As children depart, sign the cross saying, **“Remember, Jesus loves you and is with you wherever you are and wherever you go!”**



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Writer: Dr. Judith Christian Designer: Lisa Moeller

NOTE: You will need the songbook: *Little Ones Sing Praise (LOSP)*, copyright © 1989 Concordia Publishing House (CPH), St. Louis, Mo.

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