Preschool–Grade 6

Jesus Loves the Little Children

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jesus loves kids and wants them to come to Him. Everyone is welcome, and no one should stand in the way.
Bible passage: Mark 10:13–16 and Matthew 19:13–15. Read them before class.
Memory verse: "But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." *Mark 10:14 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Let Them Through (5–10 minutes)

Stand at one end of the room. Choose four kids to be "blockers." They stand in a loose line in the middle of the room. One child at a time tries to walk to you, and the blockers step in the way (no pushing, no grabbing). After a few tries, call out, "Let them through!" The blockers step aside, and every child walks straight to you. Ask: *How did it feel to be blocked? How did it feel when the way was open?* Say: "Today we will hear what Jesus said when His disciples got in the way of some children."

2. Bible story: Suffer the Little Children (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Mark 10. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Where Jesus was. Look up Mark 10:1. Jesus came into the **coasts** (the land) of Judaea, on the far side of the Jordan River. The people **resort**ed to Him again, which means they came to Him, and He taught them, "as he was **wont**," the way He always did. Matthew says great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there (Matthew 19:1–2).

They brought young children. Look up Mark 10:13. People brought young children to Jesus, "that he should touch them." Matthew says they wanted Him to "put his hands on them, and pray" (Matthew 19:13). Luke calls them **infants**, babies (Luke 18:15). But the disciples **rebuked** those who brought them, which means they scolded them and told them they were wrong (Mark 10:13). The Bible doesn't tell us why they did it.

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Jesus was much displeased. Look up Mark 10:14. When Jesus saw it, He was **much displeased**: very unhappy, even upset, with what His disciples did. He said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not." **Suffer** means let or allow, and **forbid them not** means don't stop them. "For of such is the kingdom of God" means God's kingdom belongs to people like these children. Matthew says "the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 19:14).

As a little child. Look up Mark 10:15. "Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein." **Verily** means truly. Jesus was teaching the grown-ups too: everyone has to come to God the way a little child does.

He blessed them. Look up Mark 10:16. "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them." Jesus did more than the people asked: they asked Him to touch the children, and He held them in His arms too. Then He went on from there (Matthew 19:15).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. The disciples rebuked those who brought the children, and Jesus was much displeased (Mark 10:13–14). What does that show about how Jesus feels about kids?
2. Jesus said, "forbid them not." What are some things that can keep a kid from coming to Jesus today?
3. Jesus said grown-ups must receive the kingdom of God "as a little child" (10:15). What do little children do that grown-ups could learn from?
4. The people asked Jesus to touch the children, and He took them up in His arms too (10:13, 10:16). What does that tell you about Jesus?
5. Who is someone younger than you that you could help come to Jesus?

Recall questions

1. What did the disciples do? *(They rebuked those that brought the children, Mark 10:13)*
2. How did Jesus feel when He saw it? *(Much displeased, 10:14)*
3. What three things did Jesus do for the children? *(Took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them, 10:16)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **much displeased** means very unhappy, **suffer** means let, **forbid them not** means don't stop them, and **of such is the kingdom of God** means God's kingdom belongs to people like them. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jesus said, 'Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not.' No one is too young to come to Jesus. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: welcome someone the way Jesus welcomed the children: sit with a kid who is alone, be kind to a younger child, or invite a friend to church.

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Mark 10:1: Where did Jesus go? *(Into the coasts of Judaea by the farther side of Jordan)*
2. Matthew 19:2: What did Jesus do for the great multitudes? *(He healed them there)*
3. Mark 10:13: Why did they bring young children to Jesus? *(That he should touch them)*
4. Matthew 19:13: What else did they want Jesus to do? *(Put his hands on them, and pray)*
5. Luke 18:15: What word does Luke use for the children? *(Infants)*
6. Mark 10:14: How did Jesus feel when the disciples rebuked them? *(He was much displeased)*
7. Matthew 19:14: Whose kingdom did Jesus say is "of such"? *(The kingdom of heaven)*
8. Mark 10:16: What three things did Jesus do? *(He took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that Jesus loves kids and never turns them away. Help us come to You like little children, and help us never stand in the way of someone else coming to You. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks why the disciples rebuked the people: the Bible doesn't tell us why, so we don't guess. It tells us that Jesus was much displeased and said, "forbid them not" (Mark 10:14).

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