



What a Mess

Jesus Spends Time with the Children

BIG IDEA: Jesus wants to spend time with me.

BIBLE BASIS: Matthew 19:13–15; Luke 18:15–16

KEY VERSE: “Give thanks to the LORD, because He is good. His faithful love continues forever.” Psalm 107:1 (NIRV)

SCHEDULE

2S & 3S CLASSES

ARRIVAL & PLAYTIME

10:30-10:55

2S & 3S LARGE GROUP

10:55-11:10

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

11:10-12:00

PRE-K & K CLASSES

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

10:30-11:15

PRE-K & KINDER LARGE GROUP

11:15-11:40

REVIEW ACTIVITIES

11:40-12:00

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

My phone rings and I see it's my friend that lives many miles away. We've been friends for a very long time, and if you met her, you would understand why. She's kind, thoughtful, and full of life. I wish so much that I could see her more often or even talk more often on the phone for greater lengths of time, but we both have kids and life is busy, so we take what we can get. We talk for 10 minutes between soccer drop off and volleyball pickup. We text back and forth for 2 minutes here and 2 minutes there. We leave 30-second voicemails. It's surprising how connected I feel with her even though our communication is so brief.

I sometimes think I should give myself permission to do the same with God. I want so badly to spend hours with Him in quiet prayer and reflection. And when I can't (or don't) find the time to do that, I feel guilty and I do nothing instead. But then I was reminded how much life and joy I receive from the brief interactions with my friend.

God wants us to spend time with Him, whether it's 60 uninterrupted minutes or 5. I think we should all strive to spend more time with our Savior, but I think we should also take advantage of the brief moments that life allows us throughout the day — 10 minutes in the Word, or 2 minutes of journaling, or 30 seconds of prayer. It's surprising how connected you can feel with God when you reach out to Him in little bits and in little ways throughout the day.

Mindy Rausch
GO! Team member



SMALL GROUP SKILL BUILDING

The Magic Circle

When it comes time for you to sit down with your small group, there is no better configuration than a circle. If you have a group of younger kids who find it difficult to seat themselves in a nice circle, have them first hold hands in a circle and then sit down. The benefits of sitting in a circle are well worth the time it takes to organize your kids in the beginning. Here's why:

Everybody feels like they are a part of the group. When your group is arranged in a big clump, the kids sitting toward the outside often don't feel like they're a part of what's going on and their attention goes elsewhere. In a circle, no one is on the outside.

The kids will talk to one another, not just you. You are the facilitator of conversation, not the center of it. If you organize your group like a miniature classroom, kids will become accustomed to talking and listening only to you. A circle allows kids to feel like they're connected to everyone in the group.

It's easier to manage. When there's a direct line of sight between you and all of the kids, they're more apt to behave. You can quickly and easily address interruptions. Are there two kids distracting each other? Separate them in the circle. Is there a kid who is more difficult to manage? Seat him next to you in the circle.

You can use eye contact to your advantage. Eye contact invites participation. If you have a kid who seldom participates, consider placing her across from you in the circle where she'll get more eye contact. Conversely, you can place kids who dominate conversation next to you.



☆ PLAY TIME ACTIVITY

Along with your other play time activities, present the following activity to children as they first arrive in the preschool room. Choose a leader to facilitate the activity. The activity is designed to introduce kids to the Bible story and Big Idea for the day.

A-MAZE-ING JESUS

Supplies: Jesus Maze (1 per child), crayons or markers (1 per child)

Directions: Give the children a maze and a crayon or marker. Challenge them to help the little girl find her way through the maze to Jesus. Watch out for the disciple though! He'll try to stop her from getting to Jesus.

Say: In today's true Bible story, there are some little children who try to spend time with Jesus, but the disciples try to stop them. During the story, we're going to learn that **Jesus wants to spend time with us.**

Question: What would you do with Jesus if you could spend a whole day with Him?

BIBLE BRIDGE (Bible Memorization Activity)

Supplies: None

Today's Bible verse:

*"Give thanks (put hands in prayer position)
to the LORD (point up),
because He is good (two thumbs up).
His faithful Love (put hands over heart)
Continues forever." (Spread hands out)
Psalm 107:1 (extend hands like you're holding a book).*

Directions: Practice the verse together several times. Next, choose two children to form a "bridge" by facing each other and holding hands in the air. Tell the other children to get into a line and walk in a circle under the "bridge." As the children march in a circle, sing the following words to the tune of "London Bridge Is Falling Down."

Can you say our memory verse, memory verse, memory verse?

Can you say our memory verse?

It's your turn!

At the end of the tune, have the two children forming the bridge lower their arms around the child who is under the bridge. Encourage the child who is trapped under the bridge to say the verse aloud. When finished, have the "trapped" child replace one of the children making up the bridge and repeat. Continue until everyone has had a turn saying the verse.

2s & 3s – Large Group at 10:55
Pre-K & K – Large Group at 11:15



★ SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

PRAYER TIME CHALLENGE (Application Activity)

Supplies: Prayer stickers (7 per child), Prayer Chart (1 per child), markers or crayons

Preparation: Print the Prayer stickers on Avery® 1-inch diameter, white, round labels (6450). Cut the label sheets into strips with 7 stickers per strip.

Say: In today's true Bible story, Jesus spent time talking with the little children. He wants to spend time talking with us too. We can talk to Jesus when we pray. Let's make a chart that helps us pray to Jesus over the next week.

Directions: Give each child a prayer chart and a strip of 7 prayer stickers. Give the children a few minutes to color the prayer stickers and prayer chart. While they're coloring, challenge the children to pray over the next week during each of the times, places, or situations on the chart. Each time they pray, they can remove one of the stickers and place it in the appropriate box. When the children are finished coloring, ask them what they would like to pray about. In other words, what do they want to talk to Jesus about? Take prayer requests, then pray together. Afterwards, have the children remove the first sticker and place it on the church box. Encourage them to continue doing this throughout the next week until all of the boxes are filled in with stickers.

Encourage the children to bring the calendar back next week. If the boxes are all filled in with stickers, they can pick a prize from the treasure box.

Question: Where is your favorite place to pray? Why do you like praying there?

STORYTIME WITH MABEL (Bible Story Review Activity)

Supplies: Messy Mabel picture or pig plush toy (1 per group)

Directions: Ask the children the questions below. Each question will help them recount a part of today's Bible story. When a child wants to answer a question, hand them the Messy Mabel plush or picture. Remind the children that they can only talk if they're holding Mabel. Continue until the whole story has been recounted.

1. Who did the people bring to see Jesus?
(*Little children — even babies!*)
2. What did the disciples say when they saw the children?
(*"Stop! You're too little!" or "Go away!"*)
3. Did Jesus want the children to go away?
(*No! Jesus wanted them to come to Him!*)
4. What did Jesus say about the children?
(*"Let the little children come to me. God's kingdom belongs to them too!"*)
5. What did Jesus do when the children came to Him?
(*He hugged them and blessed them with kind words.*)

8.4 Small Group Lesson | Pre-K & K



LET'S TALK TO JESUS (Response to God Activity)

Supplies: GO! Home Guide (printed on back of coloring sheet, 1 per child), crayons

Directions: Give each child a GO! Home Guide and some crayons or markers. The sheet will have a space for children to draw. Tell the children to draw a picture of Jesus. While they're drawing, ask them what they would say to Jesus if they could talk to Him.

Say: Guess what? You CAN talk to Jesus — it's called prayer. Prayer is just talking to Jesus. Let's say a prayer and tell Jesus all of those things you want to say to Him.

Prayer: Begin by asking if any of the children would like to pray. Allow any children who want to pray the opportunity to do so. When they're finished, close the prayer by thanking Jesus for hearing us when we pray.

Question: Why do you think the disciples told the little children to leave Jesus alone?

Question: Why do you think Jesus said, "No, let the little children come to me"?