

Teachers Dig In

Dig In to the Bible

- Read: Luke 14:15-24
- In This Passage: Jesus tells a parable about a great feast. The man hosting the feast invites many people, but they make excuses not to come. So he invites the outcasts of society, who all come and enjoy the banquet. Jesus wants everyone to come to his feast in heaven because Jesus includes everyone.
- Bible Point: Jesus includes everyone...
- Application: ...so we include others.
- Summary Verse: "Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves" (Philippians 2:3).

Dig Deeper

- You'll Be Teaching: *Jesus includes everyone.* Most kids have experienced feeling excluded. But when they do get to be in the "in" crowd, it's easy to forget to sympathize with those on the outside and include them. Help kids see that Jesus includes everyone in his family, and we can, too.
- Think About: In what areas of your life do you feel like an outsider? Turn to Jesus and feel his welcoming embrace.

Dig In to Prayer

- Ask God to reveal to you which kids in your class may not feel included, and pray that those kids will form great friendships at church.

Quick Tip

- DIG IN has a lot of thought-provoking discussion questions, including questions about stories from kids' lives. These are questions everyone will want to answer! If you have a larger group, let kids share their stories in groups of three or four instead of discussing as a whole class where only a few get to share. You might ask a few kids to report back afterward, but that way everyone is included in the discussion.

This Lesson at a Glance



OPENING

Kids share about a topic related to the lesson.

Supplies

- Bible



CORE BIBLE DISCOVERY

Kids reject or accept invitations to a banquet.

Supplies

- Bible
- “Invitations” handout (1 for every 2 kids) (download [here](#))
- banquet-like snacks, such as crackers, cheese, and strawberries
- pitchers of water
- cups
- plates
- napkins
- paper
- markers
- plastic tablecloth (optional)

Easy Prep

- Cut each “Invitations” handout in half.
- Set up a banquet by setting a table with cups, plates, and napkins. Place snacks and pitchers of water on the table. For an added touch, decorate your banquet table with a tablecloth.



LIFE APPLICATION WRAP-UP

Kids talk to Jesus about all that he invites them to.



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Kids race to categorize shapes.

Supplies

- “Shapes” handout (2 per child) (download [here](#))
- 5 large sheets of paper
- marker
- painter’s tape
- scissors
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- On each of the 5 sheets of paper, draw 1 of these shapes: star, circle, heart, cross, and diamond. There will be no paper to match the arrow on the handout.
- Tape the papers to different walls or tables in your room, spaced well apart.
- Cut apart the “Shapes” handouts along the dotted lines.
- Shuffle the shape cards into a well-mixed pile in the center of your room.



CRAFT

Kids prepare bags to give to people who are homeless.

Supplies

- paper lunch bags (1 per child)
- markers
- granola bars (1 per child)
- individual packs of fruit snacks (1 per child)
- other individually packaged snacks (1 per child)

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.

- paper
- chenille wire
- tape
- stickers



LOW-ENERGY GAME

Kids play a game where they have to figure out the rules to be included.



OBJECT LESSON

Kids use oil to create a barrier between food coloring and water.

Supplies

- plastic tablecloth (1 per table)
- clear disposable cups (1 per child)
- water
- vegetable oil
- food coloring (1-3 sets of 4 primary colors)
- wet wipes
- bucket or sink

Easy Prep

- Cover tables with plastic tablecloth to avoid food-coloring stains.



DEEPER BIBLE

Kids explore how to accept Jesus' invitation.

Supplies

- Bibles
- cups (1 per child)
- pitchers of water

**Marked supplies can be reused from Core Bible Discovery*

Let's keep kids safe! You can help by using supplies as instructed for only ages 3+, purchasing child-safe items, and being aware of allergy concerns.



Supplies

- Bible

Welcome

- Thank kids for coming.
- Just for fun, have kids double high-five four friends.
- Make announcements.
- Introduce new kids.
- Celebrate birthdays by having kids say, “Three cheers for our birthday friends! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! It’s your birthday!”
- Collect the offering.

Introduce the Lesson

Say: **Today we’re going to learn that Jesus includes everyone, so we include others. Jesus told a story about a party to show how he includes everyone.**

Share

- Tell kids about a fun party *you* went to.
- Have kids form pairs. Ask kids to share about fun parties *they’ve* been to.
- After partners have discussed, ask two or three kids to share with the whole group.

Summarize

Open a Bible to Luke 14, and say: **No one likes to be left out, especially from fun parties like those. The good news is, Jesus includes everyone! One way God speaks to us about his love for everyone is through the Bible. He’s ready to talk with you right now. Let’s pray and listen.**

Pray, praising Jesus for including everyone.



Supplies

- Bible
- “Invitations” handout (1 for every 2 kids) (download [here](#))
- banquet-like snacks, such as crackers, cheese, and strawberries
- pitchers of water
- cups
- plates
- napkins
- paper
- markers
- plastic tablecloth (optional)

Easy Prep

- Cut each “Invitations” handout in half.
- Set up a banquet by setting a table with cups, plates, and napkins. Place snacks and pitchers of water on the table. For an added touch, decorate your banquet table with a tablecloth.

Invite Kids to a Banquet

Say: **In today’s Bible story, Jesus told a parable. A *parable* is a story Jesus told to make a point. Today’s parable is about a banquet, or fancy party, someone was having.** Motion to your banquet table and show all the tasty treats you’ve brought to share. Talk about how you were thinking of the kids and what they might like as you provided each of these special foods.

Say: **Let’s see what happened in this story.**

Read Luke 14:16-20.

Say: **Those are some silly excuses! I’m going to invite some of you to my banquet. When I do, come up with the silliest excuse you can for why you can’t come.**

Distribute invitations to about one-third of the kids. As you distribute them, wait for each child to tell you his or her silly excuse before moving on to the next child.

After you’ve distributed about one-third of the invitations, pause. Say: **No one wants to come to my banquet!**

Ask: • **Tell about a time you really wanted someone to come to a party or fun event, but that person didn’t make it.** Share your own story first.

• **Tell about a time you had to miss out on a fun party. What was your excuse?** Share your own story first.

Say: **Let’s see what happened next in the Bible.**

Read Luke 14:21-23.

Have some of the kids who have not received an invitation pretend they are blind. Others can be crippled, and some can pretend to hide behind hedges. As kids accept your invitations, have them sit at the banquet table. (If you have kids with disabilities, you may need to explain that in Bible times, people with disabilities were treated as unimportant. Make sure kids know they’re *not* second rate!)

At first, don’t let the kids who rejected your invitation come, and begin the banquet with just the second group.

Then say: **In Jesus’ story, the people who rejected the invitation missed out on the party. But since we’re all friends here, you can come.** Let those who rejected your original invitation come.

Enjoy the Banquet

Have kids enjoy the banquet food. As they eat, lead kids in this discussion.

Say: **Remember, a parable is a story that makes a point. Jesus told this story to a group of religious leaders called the Pharisees. The Pharisees thought God was only for some people...pretty much just them. But they hated Jesus!**

Ask: • **What point do you think Jesus wanted to make to the Pharisees? Explain.**

Say: **Jesus includes everyone. Jesus was making the point that *he* is the invitation to be in God's family. The Pharisees were rejecting the invitation, but Jesus was inviting *everyone* to be a part of the family of God. Jesus includes everyone, and he would've loved to have the Pharisees accept his invitation. But all they could focus on was how much they hated Jesus.**

Invite the Outcasts

Say: **Jesus includes everyone, so we include others. Let's think about people we could include.**

Set out paper and markers, and have kids spread out. Say: **Think of someone you've seen who didn't seem to fit in. It might be a new kid at school or someone no one else seems to like. Draw a picture of that person. Don't let anyone see your picture.**

After kids complete their drawings, have them arrange the drawings around the edges of the room, facedown. Then gather kids in the center of the room.

Say: **When we include people like this, we're showing Jesus to those people! When we're kind, caring, and accepting of everyone, we show with our lives that Jesus includes everyone. Let's "invite" these outcasts to be a part of our group.**

Have kids collect their drawings and bring them to the center of the room, laying them facedown.

Pray: **Jesus, help us find ways to show your love and acceptance to the people we drew. In your name, amen.**

Say: **Jesus includes everyone, so we include others. We can include others in fun things we're doing. And best of all, we can invite others to be part of God's family, because Jesus wants everyone to RSVP "yes"! Take your drawing home as a reminder to watch for ways to include that person this week.**



You're Invited...

Accept Invitations

Say: **Jesus includes everyone.** *You're invited to his banquet in heaven someday. Jesus invites you to be part of so much right now, too! Hold your hands out in front of you as if someone is about to hand you a gift. Holding your hands that way can be a sign that your heart is ready to accept these invitations from Jesus.*

Read the following invitations, pausing after each one for silent prayer.

- Jesus invites you to his forgiveness. Talk with him about that.
- Jesus invites you to receive his love. Talk with him about that.
- Jesus invites you to leave your troubles with him. Talk with him about that.
- Jesus invites you to experience his joy. Talk with him about that.
- Jesus invites you to have a rich and satisfying life. Talk with him about that.
- Jesus invites you to be his friend. Talk with him about that.

Wrap Up

Pray: **Jesus, thank you that you include us!** Help us include others and invite them to be part of all the amazing things you've invited us to. In your name, amen.

Thank kids for coming, and encourage them to come back next week.



Supplies

- “Shapes” handout (2 per child) (download [here](#))
- 5 large sheets of paper
- marker
- painter’s tape
- scissors
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Easy Prep

- On each of the 5 sheets of paper, draw 1 of these shapes: star, circle, heart, cross, and diamond. There will be no paper to match the arrow on the handout.
- Tape the papers to different walls or tables in your room, spaced well apart.
- Cut apart the “Shapes” handouts along the dotted lines.
- Shuffle the shape cards into a well-mixed pile in the center of your room.

Tip

- If you used the Music Video block, consider repeating the songs from today’s lesson during the game. You can find the downloadable album [here](#).

Sort the Shapes

Say: **Raise your hand if you’ve ever felt left out or like you didn’t belong. Pause. In our lives, we often see people who are included only if they “fit in,” and that means some people are left out. Let’s play a fun sorting game to show you what I mean.**

- Have kids spread out around the big pile of shapes.
- When you say “go,” everyone will pick up one shape card at a time, run it to the paper on the wall with the matching shape, and place the card on the floor below the paper.
- The goal is to sort all the shapes as quickly as possible.
- Cue kids to start playing, and play upbeat music in the background if you’d like.
- If kids ask you about the arrow shape not having a matching paper, simply say, “I guess that shape doesn’t fit in.”
- When kids have sorted all but the arrow shapes, stop the music and have everyone sit where they can see the papers on the walls.

Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell about a place where you feel like the shapes that fit in. Maybe it’s when you’re at home with family or when you’re with your team playing a sport.** Share an example from your own life first, such as hanging out with friends you can be your silly self with because you know they love you.

• **Tell about a place where you feel like the arrow shapes—like you don’t belong. Maybe at school there are some kids who leave you out.** Share an example of your own, such as feeling like you don’t belong around people who are really into sports or music when you’re not.

Say: **We’re all different, like the shapes on the cards are different. Sometimes people think that’s a reason to exclude others, but Jesus includes everyone, differences and all.** Move all the cards, including the arrows, and set them below the paper with the cross shape. **The truth is we all belong with Jesus, so we can *include* others instead of excluding them.**



Supplies

- paper lunch bags (1 per child)
- markers
- granola bars (1 per child)
- individual packs of fruit snacks (1 per child)
- other individually packaged snacks (1 per child)
- paper
- chenille wire
- tape
- stickers

Easy Prep

- Make a sample craft to show kids.



Tip

- Consider asking parents to donate food for this craft.

Make Bags for the Homeless

Say: **In Jesus' parable, a man invited everyone to a great feast, including people most others wouldn't think of inviting. We're going to make gift bags to give to a group of people our culture often overlooks: the homeless.**

Show kids the sample craft you made. Give each child a paper lunch bag. Set out the remaining supplies to share, and have kids follow these directions to make gift bags for the homeless.

- Decorate your bag so it looks like a beautiful, fancy gift bag. Be creative! For example, you might add wire handles.
- Make a card to put in the bag, telling the recipient about Jesus' love.
- Also put a granola bar, a fruit snack, and another snack item in the bag.

Talk About It

Ask: • **Tell about a time you saw a homeless person.** Share your own story first.

• **Why wouldn't most people invite a homeless person to dinner?**

Say: **Jesus includes everyone, and he invites everyone to his banquet in heaven! That includes people we might often overlook, like homeless people. Keep the bag you made in your parents' car. The next time you see homeless people, don't overlook them! It's your chance to include others and**

shine the heart of Jesus.

Have kids take their bags home and save them to give to a homeless person.



LOW-ENERGY GAME

[10 min]

Included, or Out?

Figure Out the Key to a Call and Response Game

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus includes everyone. In our lives we've probably seen some of the opposite behavior when people have left others out—like how the Pharisees in the Bible story were always deciding whether people should be included or excluded according to their rules. Let's play a game to see what it's like when you're only included if you figure out and fit into "the rules."**

- Have everyone sit in a close circle.
- Lead everyone in a simple call and response and an easy clapping rhythm to guide the game.
- You'll start with the person to your left, clapping as you say, "We're going on a picnic and we'll invite...[say person's name]!" Lead everyone in smiling and pointing at the person you just invited.
- Then the invited person will fill in this response: "I'll go to the picnic and I'll bring [kind of item]."
- For each round there will be a "key" for being allowed to come to the picnic or not.
 - For the first round, kids will need to respond with a food that begins with the first letter of their first name. For example, if there's a girl named Lydia, she'd need to say she's bringing a food such as licorice or lollipops.
 - For the second round, the key is for kids to have their arms crossed while they say what they'll bring—they can bring anything as long as they say it with their arms crossed.
 - For a third round, the key is to bring foods or any other things with words that have double letters, such as "bubbles," "apples," or even "puppies" (not for eating, of course).
 - For the fourth round, there's no key; you'll simply allow any answer, so everyone is invited.
- For each round, whisper the key to only a couple of kids so they know what to say.
- After kids respond, you'll affirm or deny their invitation to the picnic based on if their answer fits the key for the round.

Talk About It

Ask: • **What was it like when your invitation was confirmed?**

• **What was it like when your invitation was denied and you were left out?**

Say: **Jesus includes everyone. Like in the last round of the game, no one is left out of Jesus' invitation. Jesus simply invites *every single person* to have a friendship with him.**



Supplies

- plastic tablecloth (1 per table)
- clear disposable cups (1 per child)
- water
- vegetable oil
- food coloring (1-3 sets of 4 primary colors)
- wet wipes
- bucket or sink

Easy Prep

- Cover tables with plastic tablecloth to avoid food-coloring stains.

Add Water and Oil

Say: **Colors mix to create other colors.** Review that red and blue make purple, yellow and blue make green, red and yellow make orange, and green and blue make aqua. **If we drop two colors into water, the two colors will mix to create something new. But what if we don't want that? Is there a way to keep colors from mixing in a cup of water? Let's use oil to create a barrier and try to keep colors apart.**

- Form groups of three.
- Give each child a cup, and have kids fill their cups half full of water.
- Have adult or teen helpers assist you in pouring oil into each child's cup. For each group, give one child $\frac{1}{4}$ inch of oil, one child $\frac{1}{2}$ inch of oil, and one child 1 inch of oil.
- The oil will separate from water and stay at the top.

Add Food Coloring

Say: **Now let's add colors. Within your trio, decide which two colors you'd like to use.**

- Make the food coloring available for groups to share.
- Have each group member carefully squeeze two drops of each of their chosen colors onto the oil and watch what happens.
- Color beads will form and seem to get stuck in the oil. Then, after some time, the beads will break through and land in the water, where they'll mix.
- Have group members observe the differences between their oil barriers.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How did the amount of oil impact the drops of food coloring?**

Say: **The bigger the barrier, the longer it took for the food coloring to drop into the water—but it still did! The oil couldn't keep the colors away from the water. The drops broke through and mixed to create something new. Like the oil was a barrier between the food coloring and water, sometimes we put up barriers that keep certain people out of our lives.**

Ask: • **What are some of the big and small barriers that might keep us from including others?**

Give an example from your own experience to start the conversation. Perhaps having different interests or living in different places has kept you from including someone.

Say: **Jesus is a barrier breaker. He brings people together! Jesus includes everyone, and he celebrates how our differences can create something new and beautiful.** Have kids pour out their mixtures into a bucket or sink, then use wet wipes to clean their hands. Remove and throw away plastic tablecloths.



Supplies

- Bibles
- cups (1 per child)
- pitchers of water

Tip

- There are some theological differences on this topic depending on your denomination. We've tried to paint a broad picture, but this is a great chance for you to help kids understand the specifics of your denomination's stance on salvation.

Set It Up

Say: **Today we're learning that Jesus includes everyone. To make that point, he told a story about a man who threw a banquet. He invited a lot of people who made excuses about why they couldn't come, and then he invited everyone else he could find.**

Jesus told this story because some people thought God was for only a few special people. But some of the people who thought that were rejecting Jesus! Jesus is like the invitation, and they didn't realize they were rejecting the invitation. But Jesus is for everyone, and he invites everyone to the party!

In Jesus' story, not everyone said yes to the party invitation. What does it mean to accept or reject Jesus' invitation? Let's dig in to that.

Pour Water

Choose a child or two to be the Pourer(s). Give the Pourers each a pitcher of water and have them step into the hallway for a moment. When the Pourers have left, distribute cups. Explain that some of the kids will gladly accept the water as the Pourers pour, others will reject it for the first couple of tries and then accept it, and others will never accept the water. Let kids choose which role they want, and use a show of hands to make sure each role is covered. Also explain that rejecting the water doesn't mean dumping it out; it might mean covering the cup, holding it upside down, or running away from the Pourer so no water gets in the cup.

When all kids understand what to do, invite the Pourers back into the room and have them try to serve everyone water. Tell them that their goal is to serve water to as many people as possible.

Ask: • **What did you notice about the way the Pourer[s] handled rejection?**

• **If you'd been the one pouring water, how would you have responded to people who didn't want your water?**

Say: **In Jesus' story, some people were like the ones who rejected the water. They all received invitations, but if they decided not to come to the party, that was that!**

When we share about Jesus with others, our job is just to be like the water pourer. Some people might be excited to accept our message right away; others might be slower to accept our message. And other people might not want to believe anything we're saying.

Ask: • **Tell about a time you told someone about Jesus. How did the person react?** Share your own story first.

Read John 3:18-19.

Ask: • **Why do some people love the darkness more than the light and don't welcome the news about Jesus?**

Say: **Let's see what the Bible says people need to do to RSVP "yes" to Jesus' invitation.**

Dig Deeper

Have a child read Romans 10:9-10.

Ask: • **Why do you think it's important to "openly declare" that you believe in Jesus?**

Say: **Our next verse uses the word *salvation*. *Salvation* means accepting the invitation to Jesus' party by believing in him. Then we accept Jesus as our friend, and he forgives our sins.**

Have a child read Ephesians 2:8-9.

Ask: • **Why can't we boast about salvation, or being invited into a friendship with Jesus?**

Say: **These verses say we can't earn our way into Jesus' party. We can't be so good that we get there on our own. But we don't have to be! Salvation, the invitation to the banquet, is a free gift for anyone who wants it.**

Jesus includes everyone, so we include others. We can include others by sharing the good news about Jesus—whether or not they believe what we say. Part of Jesus' plan to include others is for us to spread the word!

Have a child read Romans 10:14-15.

Say: **Let's practice this right now.**

Have kids form pairs and practice telling what they believe about Jesus. They can also share the difference Jesus has made in their lives. Spend some time on this, and help kids who aren't quite sure what to say. If you have kids who haven't committed their lives to Jesus, invite them to listen to the good news and see if they want to RSVP "yes." If they do, help them do that!

Say: **Great practicing! Telling others about Jesus is a lot like planning a party. We need to spread the good news about our party!**

Jesus includes everyone, so we include others. We can invite our friends and families to Jesus' party—a lifelong friendship with him that leads to eternal life in heaven. And we can invite other people we didn't think of at first! Don't leave anyone out!

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