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Jesus Welcomes the Children

Background for the Catechist

Growing in Faith

The Bible story for today's session is found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. In this story, people are pressing toward Jesus with their children but are rebuked by the disciples. Jesus, however, calls to the children and says, "Let the children come to me and do not prevent them; for the [K]ingdom of God belongs to such as these. Amen, I say to you, whoever does not accept the [K]ingdom of God like a child will not enter it" (Luke 18:16-17).

So what does it mean to accept the Kingdom of God like a child? It means that we have a faith that is rooted in complete trust and abandonment to God's will. As a child looks with complete and total trust in those who care for them that they will be well protected and loved, so too are we called to such a level of trust and faith in God.

Jesus constantly calls us to deeper faith in his Father and reminds us that God is aware of all of our needs and is always providing for us. Jesus' very life is a model of trust in God the Father who is always reaching out to us with love.

For Reflection

*In what ways can I become more childlike in faith?
How might my actions and my own faith build trust
with the children I am working with this week?*

About the Children

The way we welcome children into our classrooms is very important. Our greetings and smiles will tell the children how much we enjoy being with them. As we welcome the children, it is also important to give a special welcome to their parents or caregivers. Invite them to stay in the classroom for part of the lesson or for the whole lesson. Share with the children that they can meet other new friends and do a fun activity in the Welcome Center. Take the time to explain the activity to both the children and their parents. Your joy and enthusiasm for helping these young children learn about God will encourage them to want to participate in the lessons.

A Few Suggestions . . .

One way we create a positive relationship with each of the children is by bending or kneeling down to their eye level to greet them. Ask each child to tell you something they enjoy doing, and share with them some fun things they will be doing in religion class. Encourage the parents or caregivers to help them make their name badges, and always share that you welcome their presence in the classroom.

More Background

For further reading and reflection see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§ 163-165, 301, 305; *Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church* § 27; *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* pages 37, 44, 59.

Lesson Planner

Faith Focus

Jesus welcomes all children.

Bible Story

"Let the Children Come to Me" (Based on Matthew 19:13-15, Mark 10:13-16 and Luke 18:15-17)

Enriching the Lesson

- RCL Benziger *Stories of God's Love* Music CD and companion Songbook, Song 1
- Visit our preschool Web site www.RCLBenzigerPreschool.com this week.

Chapter Objectives

After this week's lesson the children should be able to:

- recall the Bible story "Let the Children Come to Me."
- recognize that Jesus loves them.
- share with their family that Jesus loves them.

Materials Needed

In addition to the general supplies named on page 9 of this guide, you will need the following materials for teaching this lesson:

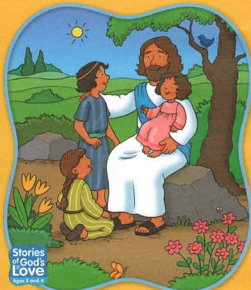
- name badge for each child made from stiff poster board cut into rectangles with edges rounded-off for safety
- several washable markers of different colors
- glue and collage material or stickers for children to use to decorate name badges
- hole punch and yarn to make name-badge necklaces
- closed Bible with bookmark placed at Matthew 19:13-15
- copies of activity master on page 198 of this guide, one for each of the children
- punch-out figures of Jesus, Abbey, Carlos, Jamal and Kim; blocks

Prayer

God, Father of all,
you welcome us into your embrace
as Jesus welcomed the children.

Help me to grow in faith
so that I may share my faith and trust
in your great love
with the children in my care.
Amen.

1 Jesus Welcomes the Children



Let the Children Come to Me

Many people came to Jesus to listen to him. One day some people brought their children to Jesus. They wanted their children to be close to Jesus.

Some of Jesus' special friends and helpers told the people to stay back. They told them not to let the children get too close to Jesus and not to bother him.

When Jesus saw and heard what his helpers were doing, he stopped them and said, "Let the children come to me. Children are very special to God and close to him. You need to love and trust God as children do."

Jesus took the children into his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them.

BASED ON MATTHEW 19:13-15,
MARK 10:13-16 AND LUKE 18:15-17

Day One

Lesson Objective

Recall the Bible Story "Let the Children Come to Me."

Welcome

- Set up a Welcome Center each week. Include enticing materials that relate to the story for the week. This week provide fun art materials that the children can use to make or decorate a name badge.
- Bend or kneel down and greet the children as they enter. Show the children your name badge. Direct the children to the Welcome Center and invite them to choose a marker for you or their parents to write their name in large letters on the name badge and then to decorate their name badge.
- Encourage the children to share the materials, and acknowledge children who display cooperative behavior with such statements as, "Sara, thank you for passing the green crayon to Nick!"
- Assist the children in completing their name badges by punching holes in the corners of the name badges and using yarn to make name-badge necklaces that the children can place around their necks.

Gather

- As the children are finishing their work in the Welcome Center, begin to softly play song 1, the theme song provided on the *Stories of God's Love* Music CD, or another gathering song that you will regularly use to signal that it is time for the children to clean up and move to the Story Time Area.
- Encourage the children to tidy up the Welcome Center and help others if needed.
- Invite the children to the Story Time Area wearing their name-badge necklaces.

Teach

Introduce the Bible story.

- Sing the following welcome song to help the children learn one another's names to the tune of "Skip to My Lou," or create your own tune. Repeat the song until you have welcomed each child.

Hello (*child's name*). We're glad you're here!
Hello (*child's name*). We're glad you're here!
Hello (*child's name*). We're glad you're here!
Welcome to our class.

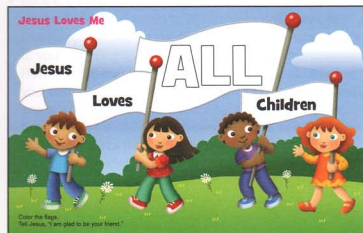
- Collect the name badges. Place them near the door for the children to pick up as they leave or save them for the next gathering.
- Show the children a Bible. Share with them that the Bible is a special book that God gave us. The Bible tells us many stories about God's love for us. The Bible is the holy book of our Church family.
- Show the children the illustration on the teaching poster or the children's leaflet. Point to and name Jesus. Tell the children that Jesus told us the best stories about God's love. Invite the children to listen closely to what Jesus told the children.

Tell the Bible story.

Invite a child to come up and open the Bible to the place marked by the bookmark, Matthew 19:13–15. Take the opened Bible, place the children's leaflet in it, and tell the Bible story "Let the Children Come to Me" found on the For My Family Page.

Recall the Bible story.

- Tell the children that you will play a game with them to help them remember the Bible story. Explain that you are going to say something from the Bible story but are going to leave out an important word. They will say the missing word. Model the activity. For example, while pointing to your shirt: I am wearing a _____. (shirt)
 - The people brought their _____ to see Jesus. (children)
 - The friends of Jesus told the people to _____. (stay back)
 - Jesus said, "Let the _____ come to me." (children)
 - Jesus took the children into his _____ and blessed them. (arms)
- Praise the children for remembering the story so well. Summarize by reminding the children that Jesus loves them as he loved the children in the Bible story.



Apply

Work on the children's leaflet activity.

- Distribute the children's leaflet. Give the children time to look at them. Talk about the different parts of the leaflet, explaining to them that the back page has a special message for their family.
- Call their attention to the picture on the center two pages and ask them to describe what they see. (*Children marching with flags.*) Tell them that the names of the children in the picture are Carlos, Kim, Abby and Jamal.
- Ask the children to listen carefully as you tell them what the flags say. (*Jesus loves all children.*) Have them color the flags. Read all the words aloud together after they have completed the activity.
- Ask the children to choose one of the punch-out characters, and invite them to parade around the room saying, "Jesus loves me!"

Connect with the child's life.

- Talk about how happy we are that we have the Bible so that we can hear stories about Jesus. Remind the children that today our Bible story told us that Jesus loved the children. Point out to the children that the story also tells us that Jesus loves them. Encourage the children to tell their family, "Jesus loves me and Jesus loves you too!"
- Tell the children to take their leaflet home and share the Bible story and the activity with their family.



Pray

- Gather the children at the prayer table. Tell them that you will teach them a special prayer that they will say to begin their prayer at the end of religion class. Teach them: "My head I bow. / My hands I fold. / Now I talk to God." Note: Use this call to silence to prepare the children for prayer throughout the year.
- Introduce today's prayer by saying, "Today we will thank Jesus for loving the children and for loving us." Practice the prayer with the children.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for loving the children.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for loving the children.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for loving me.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for loving me.

Teacher: Together let us pray, "Amen."

All: Amen.

- Tell the children to quiet themselves for prayer as they quietly pray in their hearts "My head I bow . . ." (*Pause.*)
- Tell the children to pray the words of the prayer aloud after you. Lead the children in prayer.

Day Two

Lesson Objective

Recognize that Jesus loves them.

Gather

Softly play song 1, the theme song provided on the *Stories of God's Love* Music CD, or another gathering song that you will regularly use to signal the children to gather in the Story Time Area. Invite the children to choose one of the punch-outs and parade with you into the Story Time Area as they say aloud, "Jesus loves me."

Teach

- Show the children the teaching poster or the cover of the children's leaflet. Have them look at the illustration and ask, "What is happening in the picture? (*The children are with Jesus. Jesus has his arms around the children.*)"
- Congratulate the children for remembering the story. Remind them that Jesus did this to show people that children are special to God. God loves all children, including them, in a special way.

Apply

Work on the "Jesus Loves Me" coloring activity.

- Have available copies of the activity master on page 198 of this guide, one for each of the children, and crayons. Note: Make sure there are crayons to match skin complexions.
- Hand out the activity sheets. Point to the title "Jesus Loves Me" and read it aloud. Have the children color in their own eye color, draw on hair and color in the lips and face. Walk among the children as they are working on the activity and talk about how each is different but that Jesus loves them all.
- Conclude the activity by reminding the children that the Bible story helped us learn that Jesus loved the children and let everyone know that children are special to God.

Connect with the child's life.

Tell the children that they will take the pictures they drew of themselves home. Ask them to share the pictures with their family and point to the words on the picture, "I Am Special. Jesus Loves Me" when they show their family their picture.

Pray

- Gather the children at the prayer table. Tell them that you will teach them a special prayer that they will say to begin their prayer at the end of religion class. Teach them: "My head I bow. / My hands I fold. / Now I talk to God." Note: Use this call to silence to prepare the children for prayer throughout the year.
- Introduce today's prayer by saying, "Today we will thank Jesus for loving the children and for loving us."
- Tell the children to quiet themselves for prayer as they quietly pray in their hearts "My head I bow . . ." (*Pause.*)
- Tell the children to pray the words of the prayer aloud after you. Lead the children in prayer.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for loving the children.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for loving the children.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for loving me.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for loving me.

Teacher: Together let us pray, "Amen."

All: Amen.

Day Three

Lesson Objective

Share with their family that Jesus loves them.



Gather

Softly play song 1, the theme song provided on the *Stories of God's Love* Music CD, or another gathering song that you will regularly use to signal the children to gather in the Story Time Area. Invite the children to choose one of the punch-outs and parade with you into the Story Time Area as they say aloud, "Jesus loves me."



Teach

- Tape the *Stories of God's Love* children punch-out figures to blocks to make stand-up figures. Put these figures and some additional blocks in the Story Time Area.
- Show the children the teaching poster or the cover of the children's leaflet to help them recall the Bible story. Retell the Bible story and have the children use the figures to act out the Bible story as you retell it.



Apply

Play the "Welcome Children, Come to Me" game.

- Play this game outdoors or inside. Tell the children you will play the "Welcome Children, Come to Me" game with them, which is similar to the game of "Red Rover, Red Rover." Share with them that you will use the words:
Welcome children, come to me.
As Jesus called the children near,
I call (name of child or pair of children)
to come over here.
- Repeat the words several times so that the children will remember them. Explain to the children that they can choose to skip, hop, crawl or dance across the open space to you.
- Have the children line up on one side of the space facing you. Remind them that Jesus welcomed the children and you would like to do the same. Begin playing the game.
- Continue to call the children over by name, one child or two children at a time, making sure that you leave a pair for the end so that no one child is left to be the last one called over.

Connect with the child's life.

Ask and affirm the children's responses to, "What is the Church's holy book?" (*Bible*) Tell the children to invite someone at home to read it with them.



Pray

- Gather the children at the prayer table. Tell them that you will teach them a special prayer that they will say to begin their prayer at the end of religion class. Teach them: "My head I bow. / My hands I fold. / Now I talk to God." Note: Use this call to silence to prepare the children for prayer throughout the year.
- Introduce today's prayer by saying, "Today we will thank Jesus for loving the children and for loving us."
- Tell the children to quiet themselves for prayer as they quietly pray in their hearts "My head I bow . . ." (*Pause.*)
- Tell the children to pray the words of the prayer aloud after you. Lead the children in prayer.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for loving the children.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for loving the children.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for loving me.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for loving me.

Teacher: Together let us pray, "Amen."

All: Amen.

Additional Activity

Draw my favorite things.

Use this activity to help the children share about themselves.

- Have on hand crayons and pieces of plain white paper folded into four sections on which you have written "My Favorite Things" on the top of the page, one piece of paper for each of the children.
- Hand out the pieces of paper to the children. Invite the children to draw pictures of one of their favorite things in each square. Give assistance to children who need help drawing their favorite things.

My Teacher Welcomes Me

Background for the Catechist

Friends of Jesus

In the second part of the Great Commandment, Jesus calls us to love our neighbors as ourselves. (See Matthew 22:39.) When we love others as ourselves, our relationships with other people are characterized by caring, helping, sharing and communicating.

Jesus showed us the importance of communication with others as a basis of friendship. He told his disciples, "I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father" (John 15:15). Good communication is the foundation for any strong relationship.

We have been called together by God to be his Church, the community of the friends of Jesus Christ. We care about and for one another. We help one another. We share our material and spiritual blessings with one another. Together we experience, celebrate and communicate the love of Christ to all of those around us.

For Reflection

In what ways do I live out the call to love others as myself? What can I do to help the children reach out to others as friends?

About the Children

Three- and young four-year-olds use their growing mastery of language to engage with their environment and the people in their environment. They employ an increasing number of speech patterns that initiate and keep conversations going with others. Their growing awareness of self and others will enable them to begin to play simple games and participate for longer periods of time in small-group experiences. Most threes and young fours will enjoy sitting and listening to engaging stories for up to ten minutes but still need ample opportunities to move, interact and play with others.

A Few Suggestions . . .

Sharing and listening are key skills necessary for the development of social relationships. Modeling these skills and giving young children ample opportunities to practice them is important and can help children build new friendships with peers and adults. By asking children for their input and really listening to their responses, you will help children both learn how to engage in conversation and feel good about their contribution. Incorporating moments when children share with each other what they like or what they have done can begin to build the foundation for good listening skills.

More Background

For further reading and reflection see *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§ 748–757, 787–789; *Compendium—Catechism of the Catholic Church* §§ 147–160; *United States Catholic Catechism for Adults* pages 111–123.

Lesson Planner

Faith Focus

We gather as friends to learn about Jesus who welcomes us to be his friends.

Story

"Jamal and Abby"

Enriching the Lesson

- RCL Benziger *Stories of God's Love* Music CD and companion Songbook, Song 1
- Visit our preschool Web site www.RCLBenzigerPreschool.com this week.

Chapter Objectives

After this week's lesson the children should be able to:

- recall the story "Jamal and Abby."
- name some things that Jamal and Abby like about their religion class.
- share things they like to do in religion class.

Materials Needed

In addition to the general supplies named on page 9 of this guide, you will need the following materials for teaching this lesson:

- paper in variety of colors, weights and textures (construction paper, copy paper, card stock, sand paper) cut into shapes of circles, squares, triangles and rectangles
- medium-sized soft ball
- punch-outs of Abby and Jamal
- pitcher of lemonade; variety of healthful snacks; basket containing tablecloth, paper plates and paper cups
- flower pot or covered coffee can, clay, tape, baking cups, shapes of leaves cut from white paper and pipe cleaners

Prayer

Lord God,
I love you with
all my heart, soul and mind.
Help me reach out in love to others,
welcoming all as friends.
May my example help encourage the children
to do the same.
Amen.

Jamal and Abby



Jamal tucked the fluffy yellow blanket around the baby doll in the toy bed. He was having so much fun playing in the family center during religion class. Abby was in the center with him. She was pretending to cook soup on the play stove.

Abby looked at Jamal and said, "I love to play pretend in the family center. Miss Diaz said we could play here for a little while longer. I'm going to make soup and lemonade for the dolls. Want to help me?"

Jamal smiled at his new friend and said, "Yum! I wish the lemonade was real. It's my favorite!"

Abby giggled and said, "It's just pretend, silly." "I know," he answered. "I like to pretend. I like to come to religion class so we can play together. What is your favorite thing here?"

"Ummm . . . I like Miss Diaz. She is so nice. And I like the way she tells us stories about Jesus," Abby said.

"Me too!" Jamal said. "And you know what Miss Diaz said? She said Jesus loves all of us!"

Abby smiled as she stirred her pretend soup. Stories about Jesus made her feel good inside. She wanted Miss Diaz to tell them more about Jesus. Abby couldn't wait to tell her Mom all about her new friend Jamal and the stories about Jesus Miss Diaz told them.

Day One

Lesson Objective

Recall the story "Jamal and Abby."

Welcome

- Provide crayons or markers; and paper of a variety of colors, weights and textures cut into shapes of circles, rectangles and triangles large enough for the children to draw on. Note: Have the children wear their name-badge necklaces that they made in the previous session.
- Direct the children to the Welcome Center and invite them to use the crayons and markers to draw and color a picture of something they like to do.
- Walk among the children as they are working. Address the children by name and invite them to talk about their favorite colors as they work on their drawings. Help the children get to know each other through conversation as they work, addressing one another by name.

Gather

- Play the gathering song that the children first heard last week to signal that it is time for the children to clean up and move to the Story Time Area. Have the children bring their pictures to the Story Time Area. After all the children have gathered in the Story Time Area, invite them to share their pictures or talk about who they played with during the welcome time.
- Tell the children that they are going to play a game that will help everyone get to know each other. Have them stand, hold hands to form one large circle and sit back down.
- Explain to the children that you are going to call out one of their names and roll a ball to that child, saying, "(Name), welcome to our class." Tell them that they will keep playing the game until everyone's name has been called out and the ball rolled to them.
- Begin playing the game.

Teach

Introduce the story.

- Show the children the teaching poster or the cover of the children's leaflet for chapter 2. Point to and read the title "Jamal and Abby" aloud to the children. Ask the children:
 - What do you think Jamal and Abby are doing? (*playing pretend at the family center*)
 - What might they be saying to each other? (*talking about their pretend play and their favorite thing in religion class*)
- Invite the children to listen carefully to discover what Jamal and Abby like about religion class.

Tell the story.

Tell the story using the punch-outs of Jamal and Abby to dramatize the dialog and actions of the story.

Recall the story.

- Ask the children to raise both hands if they know the answers to the questions you ask them. Affirm their responses.
 - Introduce Jamal and Abby once again using the punch-out figures. (Refer to the brief description of each of the *Stories of God's Love* characters on page 16 of this guide.) Hold up the punch-out figures of Abby and Jamal one at a time and ask the children to tell you the name of each character (*Abby and Jamal*) as you show them each punch-out.
 - What did Miss Diaz tell Jamal and Abby about Jesus? (*Jesus loves all of us.*)
- Praise the children for remembering the story so well.



Apply

Work on the children's leaflet activity.

- Have several children assist you in handing out the children's leaflet for chapter 2. Have all the children look at the cover to recall the story and then open their leaflet to the Activity Pages.
- Ask the children to share one of their own favorite things. Provide crayons or markers and have them color the heart next to their favorite things. Call upon each of the children by name and have them share their favorite things with the group. This sharing will help the children come to know each other better.
- Be sure to write their names and date on the back of their work.

Connect with the child's life.

- Call attention to the back page of the children's leaflet and tell the children that this page is for their family. Ask the children what things they will tell their families that they like to do in religion class.
- Remind the children to take their leaflet home and to share the story and activity or ask their parents to reread the story on the For My Family Page with them.

Pray

- Gather the children at the prayer table.
- Introduce the prayer by saying, "Today we will thank Jesus for being our friend and for all of our friends."
- Quiet the children by having them repeat after you, "My head I bow. / My hands I fold. / Now I talk to God." (*Pause.*)
- Tell the children to pray the words of the prayer aloud after you. Lead the children in prayer.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for being my friend.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for being my friend.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for all of my friends.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for all of my friends.

Teacher: Together let us pray, "Amen."

All: Amen.

Day Two

Lesson Objective

Name things that Jamal and Abby like about their religion class.

Gather

Play the theme song on the *Stories of God's Love* Music CD or the gathering song to signal that it is time for the children to clean up and move to the Story Time Area.

Teach

- Show the children the teaching poster or the cover of the children's leaflet. Have them look at the illustration, then ask and affirm them for responses to these questions. Provide clues to help the children recall the story so that they can easily answer the questions.

—What is happening in the picture? (*Abby and Jamal are playing together in religion class.*)

—What is a favorite thing that Abby and Jamal like to do in religions class? (*They like to listen to Miss Diaz tell stories about Jesus.*)

- Congratulate the children for remembering the story. Tell them that you will tell them many stories about Jesus this year.

Apply

Have a "Welcome Friends" party.

- Place on a table a pitcher of lemonade; several dishes of healthy snacks, such as dried cereal and graham crackers; a basket that contains a tablecloth, paper plates and paper cups; and a centerpiece or other decoration.
- Have the children wash their hands. Tell them that one of the things friends like to do together is to have a party.

- Invite the children to have a friends party. Begin the celebration with the following prayer. Tell the children to pray the words aloud after you.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for all our friends in religion class.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for all our friends . . .

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for this food.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for this food.

Connect with the child's life.

Ask and affirm responses to the question, "When do you have a party with your family?" Call on the children who respond to tell you about some of their best parties.

Pray

- Gather the children at the prayer table.
- Introduce the prayer by saying, "Today we will thank Jesus for being our friend and for all of our friends."
- Quiet the children by having them repeat after you, "My head I bow. / My hands I fold. / Now I talk to God." (*Pause.*)
- Tell the children to pray the words of the prayer aloud after you. Lead the children in prayer.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for being my friend.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for being my friend.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for all of my friends.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for all of my friends.

Teacher: Together let us pray, "Amen."

All: Amen.

Day Three

Lesson Objective

Share things the children like to do in religion class.



Gather

Play the theme song on the *Stories of God's Love* Music CD or the gathering song to signal the children that it is time to clean up and move to the Story Time Area.



Teach

- Hold up and show the children the punch-outs of Jamal and Abby. Use the punch-outs to briefly retell the story, focusing on Jamal's question to Abby, "What is your favorite thing here?" and Abby's response, "Ummm . . . I like Miss Diaz. She is so nice. And I like the way she tells us stories about Jesus."
- Ask the children to share with you one of their favorite things they have done so far this year in preschool.



Apply

Make the table decoration for the prayer table.

- Lead the children in this activity to help them develop a sense of ownership of the learning space and a sense of belonging to and feeling at home (welcome) in the learning space. Invite the children to decorate the table in the Prayer Center.
- On a table have a flower pot or a 3-pound covered coffee can, clay, tape, pipe cleaners, baking cups (to be used as flowers) and shapes of leaves cut from white paper.
- Show the children the materials and tell them, "We are going to work together to make the table decoration for the prayer table." Explain that they will use the baking cups for flowers.
- Ask the children to color the baking cups and leaves. Assist them in taping the leaves and flowers to the pipe cleaners. Have the children take turns pressing some of the clay into the bottom of the coffee can. Then have them take turns arranging the flowers in the pot.
- Talk with the children about the fun things they will do together in school and making new friends in school.

Connect with the child's life.

Share with the children some of the favorite things that you like to do with your family. Ask the children to share with you some of the favorite things that they like to do at home with their families.



Pray

- Gather the children at the prayer table.
- Introduce the prayer by saying, "Today we will thank Jesus for being our friend and for all of our friends."
- Quiet the children by having them repeat after you, "My head I bow. / My hands I fold. / Now I talk to God." (Pause.)
- Tell the children to pray the words of the prayer aloud after you. Lead the children in prayer.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for being my friend.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for being my friend.

Teacher: Thank you, Jesus, for all of my friends.

Children: Thank you, Jesus, for all of my friends.

Teacher: Together let us pray, "Amen."

All: Amen.

Additional Activity

Play a "Getting-to-Know-You" game.

Use this game as a good way for children to get to know each other, learn how to take turns and have some fun.

- Provide two or three bean bags or soft balls (a pair of heavy socks rolled into a ball makes a good indoor ball) and a basket for each group of children.
- Divide the children into groups of four or five. Have each group form a line. Give the first child in each group a bean bag or soft ball and tell them to toss them into the basket. Retrieve the balls from the basket and pass them to the next child in the line. Continue the game until every player has had a chance to toss the bean bags or soft balls into the basket.
- Encourage the children who are waiting their turn or who have tossed the bean bags or soft balls into the basket to cheer for the other children by name as they take their turns. Note: You may need to tell the children who are cheering the name of the child who is tossing the bean bag or ball.