

They Are Precious in His Sight



Theme: Jesus loves the little children - Proper 22 (27) - 19th Sunday after Pentecost Yr. B

Object: A Welcome Mat

Scripture: People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Mark 10:13-14 (NIV)

Have you ever seen one of these? (Hold up the Welcome Mat.) Do you know what it's called? It's called a welcome mat. We often place a welcome mat outside the front door to our house. What is the real purpose of a welcome mat? I think that sometimes it means, "Please wipe your feet before you come into my house," but the word welcome really means to greet someone in a warm and friendly way. When someone comes to our house, do we really make them feel welcome? What if it is someone whose skin is a different color from our own? What if it is someone who doesn't dress as nicely as we do?

Sometimes I wonder if people feel welcome when they come to our church. Does the homeless person feel welcome in our church? Do people from different races feel welcome in our church? Here is a question you might want to answer. Are children made to feel welcome in our church? What if they don't know how they are expected to act in the worship service? What if they whisper and pass notes to their friends? What if they wiggle and squirm and disturb our worship?

This is nothing new. Even in the day in which Jesus lived some people were not made to feel welcome. Even Jesus' own disciples sometimes didn't understand that everyone was welcome in the Kingdom of God. One day Jesus was teaching and people were bringing little children to have Jesus touch them. The disciples criticized the parents and told them to quit bringing their children to Jesus. When Jesus heard what his disciples were saying, he was very upset. "Let the children come to me and don't stop them!" Jesus said. "The Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. Anyone who doesn't come like a little child will never enter." Then Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them.

Wow! Jesus sure knew how to make a child feel welcome, didn't he? Can you imagine how those children must have felt when Jesus took them up in his arms and blessed them? Shouldn't you and I make everyone feel welcome like Jesus did?

Dear Father, we want to learn the lesson that Jesus taught us. Help us to make everyone, from the youngest to the oldest, feel welcome in our homes, in our church, in our schools, and in our circle of friends. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

WELCOME MAT RUN: If possible, take all the children outside of the church building and give them certain places that they need to RUN to and then come back to the doorway and wipe their feet on the welcome mat and see how many times the children can take the RUN until the time runs out and the teacher blows the whistle. Each time around the "track area", children must wipe their feet. Tell children the welcome mat will have something to do with our lesson, and it will also let the children run off some energy before classtime!

DRESS UP RELAY: Have children form teams and then take turns at the whistle, to run to the basket that will have clothing items in it. Each child will quickly grab just ONE of the items and run back to the team while wearing that item and not taking it off. When everyone has finished and is wearing one of the items, take a picture of the group and let children know that we'll learn from our lesson today how many different ways that people will look as they come into our church but that ALL ARE PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT. If time allows, start the game over but have each child pick out TWO items of clothing to put on and complete the relay race! Another picture for the children to see later would be fun!

CUT OUT CHILDREN: Give each child a piece of construction paper and fold back and forth like an accordion. Then draw half a person on the outside layer and cut around the tracing withOUT cutting out the front of the foot and not cutting out the hand. When the paper is UNfolded, the children cut outs will be attached. Hang the children on the wall and let the class color the hair and color on clothes, etc.

WELCOME MAT: Provide children with a piece of heavy construction paper and supplies to decorate their own welcome mat. Children can write parts of the Bible verse or LEARNING TO LOVE AS JESUS LOVED, WE ARE ALL PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT, etc. Children could also draw pictures of other nationalities on their welcome mat and take the mats home... or place in front of other classroom doors.

HEART CHILDREN: Give children construction paper and markers and stickers, etc, to draw hearts and then add legs and arms to the hearts and decorate. Write on the "heart children" -- LOVE AS JESUS LOVED, or JESUS LOVED ALL THE CHILDREN, and other ideas from our lesson today as children desire. Hang the "heart children" around the room and have children talk about letting ALL children be part of their circle of friends!

POPCORN CHILDREN: Show the children a bowl of UNPOPPED corn and tell them that stands for all the children in the world. Then pop some corn and tell them that will stand for all the children that the LOVE of Jesus warms their heart because He thinks all children are precious in His sight and they'll BURST OPEN with God's love!!.

NAME TAGS: Let the children cut out name tags in the shape of a heart. Write their name on the name tag and write I AM PRECIOUS IN HIS SIGHT and decorate. Pin the heart name tag to the child's shirt with a safety pin.

THUMBPRINT CHILDREN: Let each child press a finger or a thumb into some colored ink pad and stamp on a piece of paper. Each child can do several thumb prints and then draw different faces on each print with different slanted eyes or kinds of hair, etc and then add arms and legs. Children can write over the top of their thumbprint children -- ALL ARE PRECIOUS IN JESUS' SIGHT!!

SING A SONG: JESUS LOVES THE LITTLE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD

"Let the Children Come"



Theme: Children are welcome at the feet of Jesus - Proper 22 (27) B

Object: None

Scripture: People were bringing little children to Jesus to have him touch them, but the disciples rebuked them. When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it." And he took the children in his arms, put his hands on them and blessed them. Mark 10:13-16 (NIV)

How did you get to church this morning? I imagine that most of you came with your parents. Perhaps others came with grandparents. Some children may have come with aunts, uncles, cousins, or an older brother or sister. Maybe some of you had a Sunday School teacher or a friend who brought you to church. One thing I am pretty sure of -- unless you live close enough to walk to church, someone had to bring you here. I don't think any of you are old enough drive your own car are you? I didn't think so!

I think it is great that someone cared enough about you to bring you to church today. That tells me that they wanted to make sure that you would learn about Jesus and his love for you. Because you are here today, it is possible that Jesus might touch your heart and change your life.

One day, Jesus was teaching his disciples and a large crowd of other people were following him to hear what he was teaching. He was teaching about marriage and divorce and how God wanted them to have happy homes.

As Jesus was teaching, people started to bring their children to him so that he could touch them. The disciples didn't like these children interrupting Jesus and his. They told the people to get the children away. When Jesus saw what they were doing, he was very upset. "Let the children come to me, and do not stop them," Jesus said. "The kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these little ones." Then Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them.

Let us hope that we will always remember that Jesus loved the children and took them into his loving arms. We are thankful for each of you who are here today and thankful that someone loved you enough to bring you.

Dear Father, we love the children just as Jesus loved them and we are thankful that these children have someone who loves them enough to bring them to Jesus. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

"CHILDREN AT JESUS' FEET" GAME: Blind fold children and give them a magazine picture of a child. Tell the child to turn around 3 times and try to pin the child at Jesus' feet picture on the poster board. Children will enjoy trying to pin all the childrens' pictures at Jesus' feet. After the game is over and everyone has had a turn, then let children move their picture around Jesus' feet, if they were not close to his feet. The teacher can draw or cut out a picture of Jesus for the poster board. Write: LET THE CHILDREN COME.

BIBLE VERSE BALLOONS: Portions of the Bible verse can be written on small pieces of paper and stuck into a balloon and have the balloons blown up before class time. The children can each be given a balloon to POP, if desired, and share the part of their Bible verse from the balloon. Ask children what Jesus said about children, after sharing all the parts of the Bible verse.

CONE HAT: Give children card stock paper to cut into a square and roll the paper to form a CONE hat. Let children decorate their hats with stickers, glitter and write JESUS LOVES THE CHILDREN, etc on the cone hat and hole punch each side of the hat and tie a ribbon or string to place under the child's neck.

HAND TRACING: Give supplies for children to trace their own hand on a piece of paper. Color the hand and write one word on each finger of the hand for JESUS LOVES ME VERY MUCH! If children want to cut out TWO tracings of their hands, they can tape the hands together and make a "hand" puppet, to tell our story today.

BIBLE DICE: Let children cut out heavy card stock paper and form into a box, to color and to write ideas from our Bible Story today. Children could also be given a white, small, square box to color, decorate and write ideas from our lesson today such as CHILDREN ARE WELCOME AT THE FEET OF JESUS, LET THE CHILDREN COME, JESUS LOVES THE CHILDREN, JESUS BLESSES THE CHILDREN, etc. Children will enjoy rolling the Bible dice and seeing what each other wrote and colored.

BAG PUPPETS: Let each child color and decorate a lunch bag, to resemble themselves. The mouth can be where the bag folds when the child puts his hand up inside of the lunch bag. Yarn can be glued to the top of the bag for the hair, etc. Have children color the bag like the color of their shirt and add REAL BUTTONS to the shirt. Encourage children to write their own names on the back of the bag. Add craft "eyes" or felt pieces for eyes, as well.

SANDWICH BOARDS: Give children 2 large pieces of poster board to decorate and color, adding words from our lesson today, as children desire. Hang the boards across the child's shoulders to wear as a sandwich board and let children have a parade to other classrooms, if desired, to show that JESUS LOVES THE CHILDREN, or LET THE CHILDREN COME, or CHILDREN ARE WELCOME AT THE FEET OF JESUS!

PLACE CARDS: Give children a small card, that children can fold in half so that it will be able to stand. Children can write, JESUS LOVES _____ and add happy face stickers. Encourage children to take these home and place by their dinner plate each day! If there is time, children could make one place card for each member of their family!