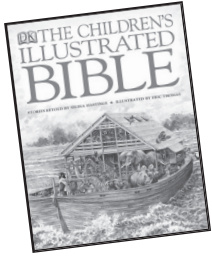


Ordinary Time, Proper 8



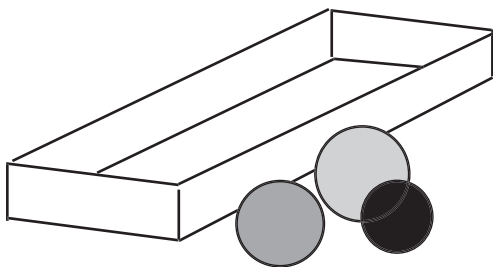
The Children's Illustrated Bible
pages 246, 213

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes God who sent me. Those who give these little ones a cup of cold water because they are my followers will be rewarded.

—Matthew 10:40–42 adapted

The disciples argued about who would be the greatest in heaven. Jesus brought a child into their group and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else. And anyone who welcomes a little child, as you would a stranger, also welcomes me. For anyone who welcomes me welcomes God who sent me.”

—Mark 9:33–37 adapted



Jesus Welcomes Kids

Share Jesus' messages about welcoming children from Matthew and Mark and in *The Children's Illustrated Bible*, page 246.

Welcoming others is one of the most important calls of Jesus, who was a friend to people from all cultures, ages, and genders. Welcoming children was a true sign of being a follower of Jesus, because children were not very important in Jesus' culture. But Jesus told his disciples to welcome children just like they would welcome strangers, who were often given the best seat in the house, fed, listened to, and helped along their way. Discuss:

1. Do people welcome you wherever you go?
2. What can you do to make yourself more welcome?

Have kids role-play welcoming others. Kids take turns knocking on the classroom door. Others greet them, welcome them in, offer them treats or a drink of water, ask them about themselves, what their interests are, and invite them back.

Create a cheer to welcome others. Follow this format and insert your own church name. Add cheer routines such as hand motions in the shape of letters.

W - E - L - C - O - M - E

Welcome to our community!

The kids are cool!

Welcome to our Sunday school!

I Am Loved

Invite kids to talk about times they have felt very loved and welcomed, by family, friends, their school, their church, or wherever. Then ask them to talk about a time when they have made another child feel welcome. Play the kids' favorite games to help them feel welcomed and loved.

Follow Jesus

Kids have played marble games since Jesus' time as shown in *The Children's Illustrated Bible*, page 246. Have kids bring their marbles or provide marbles to create marble art.* Give each kid a shoebox lid with a sheet of paper taped to the bottom. Kids put drops of paint (various colors) in the center of the paper.

Then, putting their marbles in the lid, challenge kids to try to roll their marbles in a straight path from one end to the other. Instead, the marbles will create “trails” of paint, creating a swervy line. After kids are done, have them carefully take the marbles out and wash them off.

Discuss:

1. Why didn't the marbles move in a straight line?
2. It is difficult to move in a straight line. Does taking a different route also make a pretty picture?

As much as we try to follow Jesus, sometimes it is difficult. But Jesus doesn't expect us to be perfect; he only wants us to try. And look what a beautiful painting we create when we try!

*Adapted from *The Children's Worker's Encyclopedia of Bible-Teaching Ideas: New Testament*, page 100.



Color this “Welcome” mat.

Write WHO is welcome under the word “Welcome.”

Whoever welcomes you welcomes me,
and whoever welcomes me welcomes
God who sent me.

—*Matthew 10:40 adapted*

Welcome