

LIFE OF CHRIST
from the gospel of
Matthew

LESSON 32

WHO IS GREATEST?

**MATTHEW 18:1-11;
19:13-15**

Life of Christ

Who is Greatest?

Matthew 18:1-11; 19:13-15

Younger Verse

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." Matthew 19:14

Older Verse

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me. . . The kingdom of heaven belongs to people like them." Matthew 19:14

Lesson Goals

Learn that Jesus loves children very much
Understand that we need to have humble hearts
Recognize that God wants all people to be His children

Welcome Time

Do you and your friends ever have contests to decide who is the best at something? We all like to be the best at something. Today, we will learn what Jesus says about who is the greatest.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible before teaching it. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

We have learned a lot about Jesus so far. Can you remember what we talked about last week? Jesus showed that He has power over evil. He healed two men and a little boy who had evil spirits.

Today we will learn that Jesus loved children. He told His disciples that they needed to be like little children.

For some reason, the followers of Jesus started thinking about who was the most important in His kingdom. So they asked Jesus, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of Heaven?" What do you think Jesus said? Did they really think He was going to give them a list of names?

Jesus called a child to Him. He showed the child to His friends. He told them that they needed to change their attitudes. He said that they needed to have the attitude of a child if they wanted to be with Him in Heaven! Wow! That must have really shocked His followers!

Jesus then went on to say that the greatest person in His kingdom is the person who becomes **humble**, like a child. A humble person doesn't think they are better than others. They think about others first. Children know that they have to depend on their parents and teachers to take care of them. *We need to depend on God for what we need.*

Then Jesus talked to the people about how to treat children. He warned them not to cause harm or hurt children. He wants to protect children and keep them safe. He told them how important children are to Him.

A little bit later, some parents brought their children to Jesus. They must have known Jesus loved children. The parents asked Jesus to bless and pray for their children. But the disciples got mad. They thought Jesus was too busy and important to spend time with children! They tried to stop the parents from bringing the children to Jesus. But Jesus told His disciples to let the children come to Him. He reminded them that God's King-

dom belongs to people with hearts like children. Then Jesus blessed the children.

When we invite Christ into our lives, we become God's children. This means we know that God is our Father. He loves us, provides for our needs, and takes care of us. And as His children, we must obey God and follow His teachings. We don't need to think too highly of ourselves. Instead, we can thank God for blessing us with all the good things in our lives. We need to remember that without God, we wouldn't have anything.

Jesus wants *everyone* to be a child of God. He says that God doesn't want anyone to be lost (Matthew 18:14). We can always feel special to Jesus, because He loves us!

Review Questions

1. What did the disciples ask Jesus? (Who was the greatest in his kingdom)
2. How did Jesus answer them? (You must become like a child to enter God's kingdom.)
3. Why did some parents bring their children to Jesus? (So He could bless them and pray for them)
4. Did Jesus take time to bless the children? (yes)
5. How does a person become like a child? (by being humble; depending on God to take care of them; obeying God as their Father)

Prayer Time

Thank God that He can be our Father when we accept Him into our lives. Pray that we will depend on Him and obey His commands.

Life Application

Help kids understand that we don't have to make ourselves feel important, because we can know that we are special to God. Find passages in the Bible that talk about how much God cares for us. Read Psalms 139. It talks about how God formed us, made us, and knows everything about us. He even thinks about us all the time!

When we know that we all have a place in God's family, it helps us feel good about ourselves AND others. We don't have to compare or compete. We can just be who God made us to be.

Planning for Next Lesson
The Unforgiving Man
Matthew 18:21-35

Preschool Lesson for Who is Greatest?

Sing, “Jesus Loves the Little Children.”

Today we will learn that Jesus loved children. He told His disciples that they needed to be like little children.

One day, Jesus’ friends asked Him, “Who is the most important person in Heaven?” Jesus called a child to Him. He showed the child to His friends. He said that they needed to be like a child if they wanted to be with Him in Heaven! Wow! That must have really shocked His followers!

Jesus meant that we have to trust God to take care of us. God is our Heavenly Father. We are His children. We need to do what He says. He tells us to love God and each other. That makes God happy.

Jesus doesn’t want us to worry about who is most important. He loves ALL of us!

A little bit later, some parents brought their children to Jesus. They must have known Jesus loved children. The parents asked Jesus to bless and pray for their children. But the disciples got mad. They thought Jesus was too busy and important to spend time with children! They tried to stop the parents from bringing the children to Jesus. But Jesus told His disciples to let the children come to Him. He reminded them that God’s Kingdom belongs to people with hearts like children. Then Jesus blessed the children.

When we ask Jesus into our hearts, we become God’s children. This means we know that God is our Father. He loves us, provides for our needs, and takes care of us. And as His children, we must obey God and follow His teachings.

We can always feel special to Jesus, because He loves us!

Pray, thanking God that He is our Heavenly Father. Ask Him to help us obey Him.

Sing this song to the tune of “Are you sleeping?”

Jesus sat upon a hill
with His friends, with His friends.
All the little children
wanted to see Jesus
So they ran, so they ran.

“Stop the children, stop the children.”
said the men, said the men.
Jesus said, “I love them,
and I want to bless them.
Let them come. Let them come.”

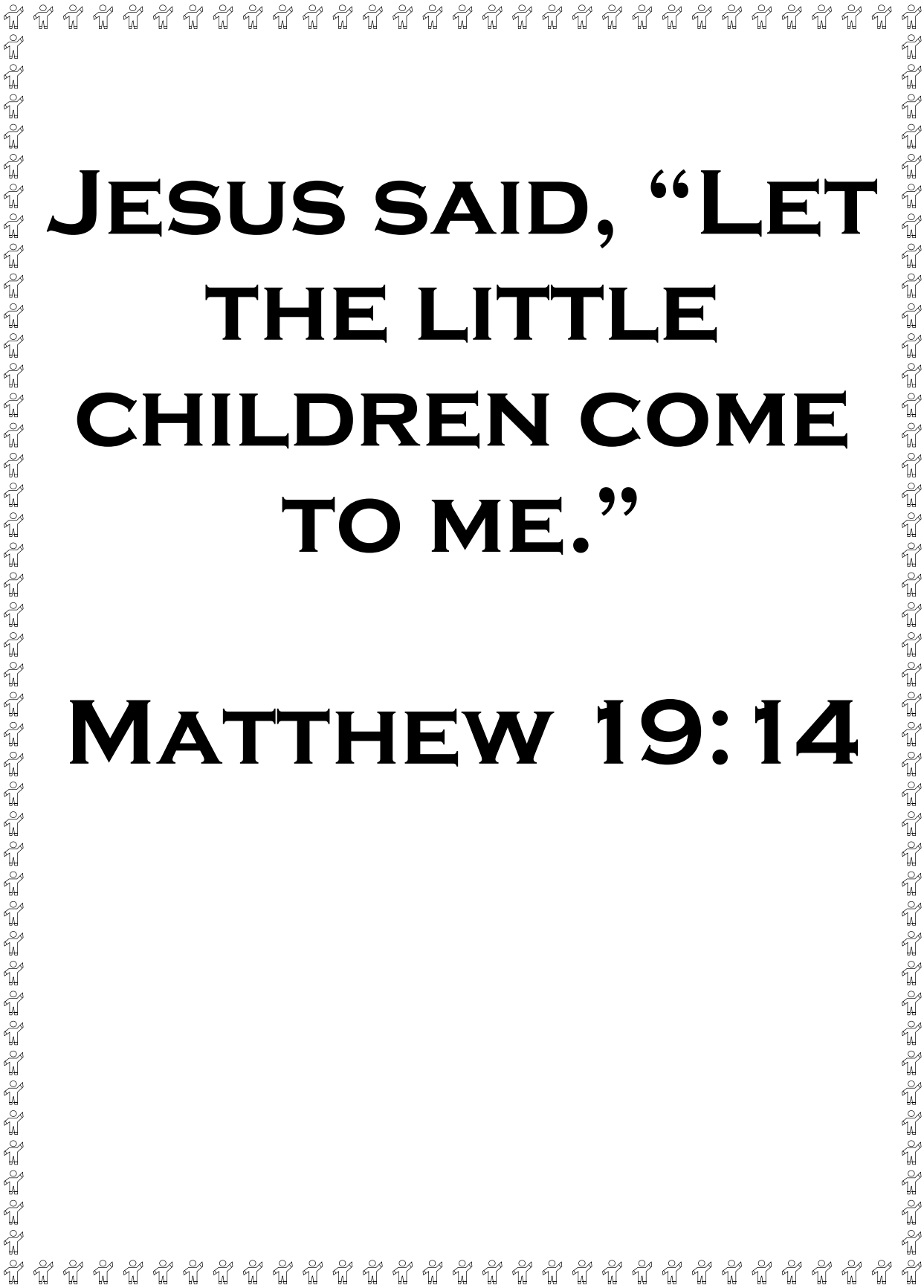
Hands-on Activities for Who is Greatest?

Have kids make a line from youngest to oldest. Talk about how Jesus loves all children. They are so important to Him.

Make a picture frame magnet. Glue craft/popsicle sticks into a square frame. Have kids decorate the frames with markers, stickers, or fun material. Write “I Am God’s Child” at the top of the frame. If possible, bring magnets to attach to the back of the frame. Tell them to put their picture in the frame and place it on their refrigerator. Every time they see it, they can remember that God is thinking about them!

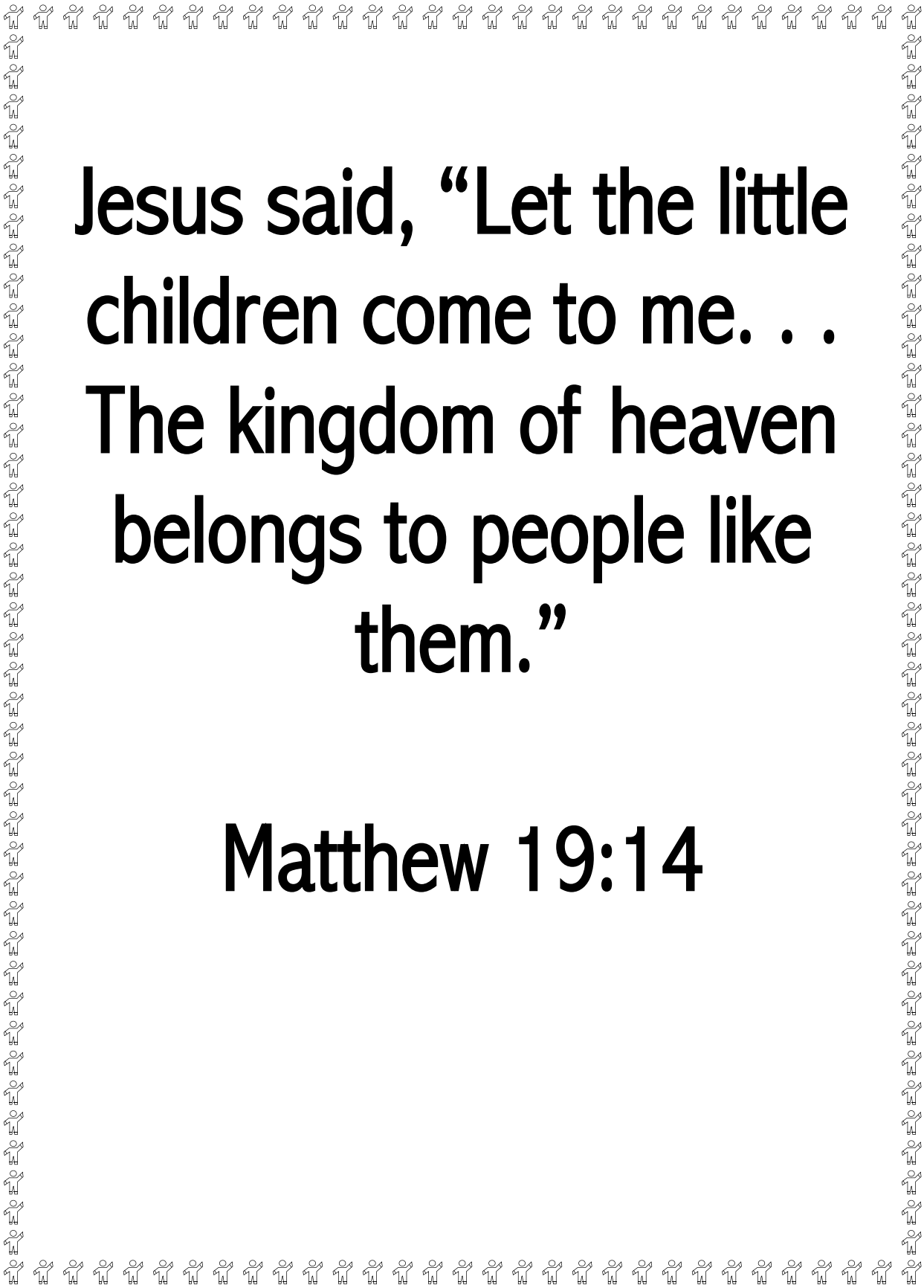
Make a stop sign with construction paper. Have kids act out parents bringing their children to Jesus. Have the disciples hold up the stop sign. Then Jesus says to let the children come to Him, and gives them a big hug!

Play a form of “Red Light, Green Light” to help the kids understand the story. Bring a green piece of paper (for the green light) and a red piece of paper or a stop sign (for the red light). Explain to the kids that they will tiptoe forward when they see the green sheet and tiptoe backwards when they see the red sheet. Share that the children were going to Jesus (hold up a green light) when Jesus’ friends told them to go away (red light). Jesus saw this and asked them to come (green light). Play several times or take turns in letting kids hold up the sheets of paper.



**JESUS SAID, “LET
THE LITTLE
CHILDREN COME
TO ME.”**

MATTHEW 19:14



**Jesus said, “Let the little
children come to me. . .
The kingdom of heaven
belongs to people like
them.”**

Matthew 19:14

T T G O N C T D T R A Y
D H R S I H L E S D J W
T O B E L I K E T H E M
D D T V I L O N N I S M,
N S N O P D H E H E U O
D E A L H R I W A F S U
W S T I M E R P H A I N
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T S O M S H S E T E O A
I L P H O N T R I O H I
H U M B L E E R L J W T
C H I L D W O R L D S J

Jesus	loves	children
we need	to be like them	most
important	child	humble

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H	U	M	B	L	E	E	R	L	J	W	T
C	H	I	L	D	W	O	R	L	D	S	J

Jesus	loves	children
we need	to be like them	most
important	child	humble