

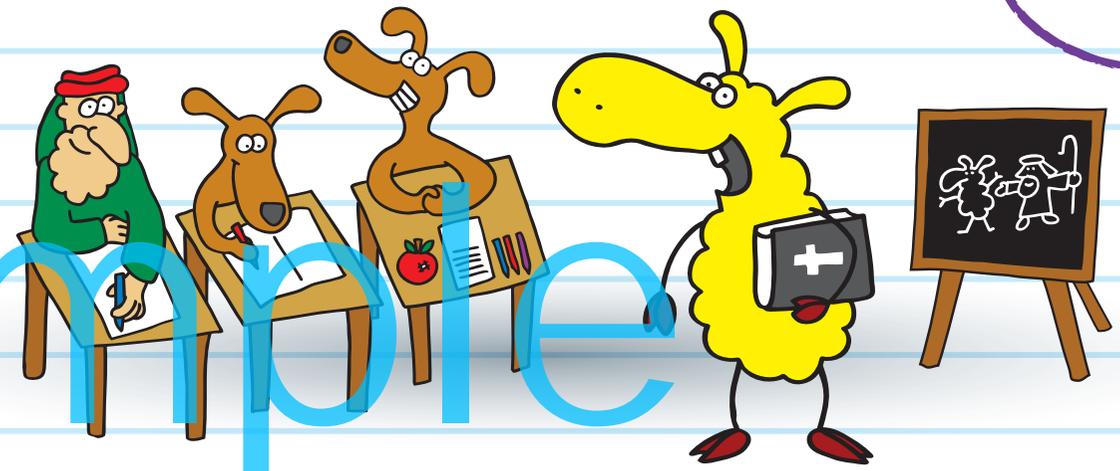


SHEEP DOG SCHOOL™

Jesus and the Children

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Sample



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Introduction



Hi, friends, Cecil the Sheep here.

I've been reading this brilliant book called Jesus and the Children. Apparently Jesus said, "God's kingdom is for the kids!" Amazing! I thought he would have said, "God's kingdom is for the sheep!" What's more, Jesus told the disciples that anyone who wants to enter the kingdom of God must receive it like a little child ([Mark 10:15](#)). I'm keen to be part of God's kingdom and I'm sure you are, too. So, let's find out what is so special about kids that they get the royal treatment when it comes to the kingdom of God. My theory is that children get special treatment because they are so cute, innocent, trusting, gentle, good, pure, and humble. Then again, those of you who've been shopping with a two-year-old may beg to differ. You'll find the story of Jesus and the children in [Mark 10:13-16](#), [Matthew 19:13-15](#), and [Luke 18:15-17](#). Let's jump into the Bible and see if we can discover what's so special about kids.

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History & Geography



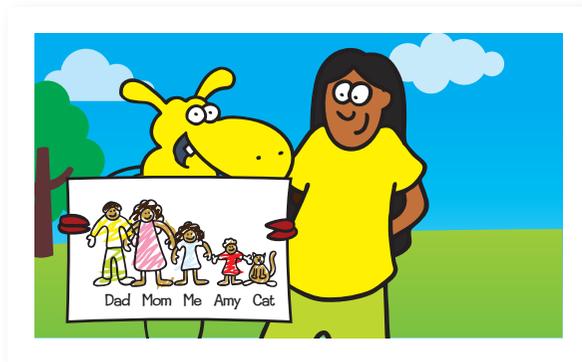
The Jewish people deeply valued their children as a gift from God. Children were part of the original blessing in [Genesis 1:28](#), and when the people sang praises to God, they thanked him for their kids ([Psalm 127:3–5](#), [Psalm 128:3–6](#)). Each child began their intimate relationship with God while still in the womb [Psalm 139:13–16](#). When each baby boy was eight days old, they were circumcised as a sign of belonging to the people of God ([Genesis 17:9–14](#), [Leviticus 12:3](#), [Luke 2:21](#)). All children were taught God's commandments ([Deuteronomy 6:4–7](#)), filled with God's stories ([Psalm 78:1–7](#)), and participated in the worship festivals ([Exodus 12:25–27](#)). The Jewish people knew a thing or two about embracing children in the kingdom of God.

Here's a sobering statistic—in Jesus' day, many babies died before they were a week old, and only half of all children reached the age of ten. Girls were married in their early teens, and boys were married in their mid to late teens. In Jesus' day, kids grew up fast—if they were lucky enough to grow up at all.

Wow! I've made a stunning historical discovery: skateboards were only invented in the 1950s! I thought children had always ridden skateboards. I wonder if there are any other differences between life for your kids and children back in Jesus' day. Let's talk to the children blessed by Jesus in [Mark 10:13–16](#) and find out.

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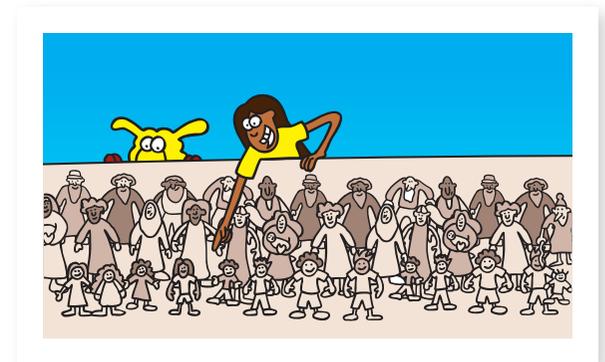
Interviews



Hello, young lady. One of the girls who read my Cecil the Lost Sheep book sent me this lovely picture of her family. Could you please draw me a picture of your family?



What! That can't be a family! Where is everyone? Where is Grandpa and Grandpa's brothers, and the great-aunts, and all the uncles and cousins and second cousins and the servants and the servants' children and brothers and everyone else?



Here is a picture of my family. That's me down at the bottom with all the other kids.

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Master Class



1. Kids Need the King!

I've got it! God's kingdom is for the kids because — kids need the King! The children in the first century, even those with loving parents, were weak, vulnerable, and helpless.

Children were vulnerable— most did not reach adulthood. Children were powerless. While many of your kids will choose everything from whether to be a firefighter or a doctor, to the topping on tonight's pizza, the children in the first century had little say in what happened to them. Decisions were made by the head of the household. When the disciples argued over who was the greatest, Jesus spelled it out for them : "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last." Then to drive home the point, he took one of the 'very last,' a small child, and had him stand at the centre of the power-hungry disciples ([Mark 9:33–37](#)). Children were on the bottom rung in the family and society.

Each of the children helped by Jesus in the Gospels was as weak and helpless as you could possibly imagine. Jairus's daughter was dead ([Mark 5:35](#)) and the Canaanite woman's little girl was demon-possessed ([Matthew 15:22](#), [Mark 7:25–26](#)). These poor kids couldn't even ask Jesus for help. They were in a more desperate state than the man with leprosy ([Mark 1:40](#)) and blind Bartimaeus ([Mark 10:46–48](#)), who could at least cry out to Jesus for mercy. The reason why children receive the royal treatment when it comes to the kingdom of God is precisely because they are weak, vulnerable, and helpless . Kids need the King!

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Teaching Tips



1. Room for Kids in the Church

My fellow champions for the children: a great way to teach children that 'God's kingdom is for the kids' is to create space for children at the centre of the action. Ask this question about each area in the life of your church: "How can we find room for a child to grow in faith and ministry alongside the adults?" Children have often been shuffled out of the church. Let's see where we can shuffle them back in!

As you enter church on Sunday morning, ask yourself, "Is there room for a child to be one of the ushers welcoming people to worship?" As the music begins, ask, "Is there space in the choir for some children? Could there be a child among the song leaders? Is there room in the worship band next to an experienced musician for a budding eight-year-old guitarist or keyboard player?" Scripture reading, collecting the offering, participating in prayer, and lighting candles are just a few things children can do well. This approach can create space in the church for children in a way that is welcomed and supported

by the grown-ups. That's Sunday morning. Now what about room for a child in your mission groups, leaders' meetings, and outreach programs?

2. Room for Everyone: All-Age Worship

Do you ever have 'all-age worship' services in your church? They're plenty of fun, allow the congregation to experiment with new ways of including children in worship, and express the truth that, "God's kingdom is for the kids and grown-ups, too." Grab the pastor, the worship coordinator, a few kids, and start planning. When the pastor laments, "But where will I find sermon material that is relevant for both children and adults?" then — tell the pastor a Lost Sheep story!

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Activities



Purchase the Activity Book from the Lost Sheep Shop!

[DOWNLOAD](#)



1. The Skaterator

X-perience X-treme kingdom X-citement with the Skaterator. Kids can build a classic, or custom-fit their Skaterator from a range of riders, and radical sayings.

[DOWNLOAD](#)



2. Kids Around the World Stick Together!

God's kingdom is for all the kids, so kids need to stick together. There are a number of excellent mission agencies that can enable your girls and boys to get along side children around the world. Your kids can fund an immunisation clinic for babies in Africa, purchase school books for a class in Cambodia, or even start a petition for a new playground in your community. Train your children in kingdom living while supporting kids outside of your church or school.



3. Kids! Grown-ups! It's Play Time in Church!

If you really want to have lots of fun, use Jesus and the Children as a play in church or at school. Here is the fun twist: include adults and children as actors, but mix things around so some of the children's parts are played by adults, and vice versa. What seems like just a fun twist is actually a powerful way of questioning how people are 'type-cast' in church. If a child can play the role of an adult in a play, maybe a child can fill what has been assumed to be an adult's role in church.



4. Bonus Activities

Download the file below. These are great activities for the classroom including bookmarks for kids to cut out, mazes, and pictures of Jesus to colour!

[DOWNLOAD](#)

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Proverbs 31:14-18 CEV

She is like a sailing ship that brings food from across the sea. She gets up before daylight to prepare food for her family and for her servants. She knows how to buy land and how to plant a vineyard, and she always works hard. She knows when to buy or sell, and she stays busy until late at night.

Matthew 15:21-28 CEV

Jesus left and went to the territory near the cities of Tyre and Sidon. Suddenly a Canaanite woman from there came out shouting, "Lord and Son of David, have pity on me! My daughter is full of demons." Jesus did not say a word. But the woman kept following along and shouting, so his disciples came up and asked him to send her away. Jesus said, "I was sent only to the people of Israel! They are like a flock of lost sheep." The woman came closer. Then she knelt down and begged, "Please help me, Lord!" Jesus replied, "It isn't right to take food away from children and feed it to dogs." "Lord, that's true," the woman said, "but even dogs get the crumbs that fall from their owner's table." Jesus answered, "Dear woman, you really do have a lot of faith, and you will be given what you want." At that moment her daughter was healed.

Matthew 19:13-15 CEV

Some people brought their children to Jesus, so that he could place his hands on them and pray for them. His disciples told the people to stop bothering him. But Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and don't try to stop them! People who are like these children belong to God's kingdom." After Jesus had placed his hands on the children, he left.

Matthew 19:14-21

Just then a man came up to Jesus and asked, 'Teacher, what good thing must I do to get eternal life?' 'Why do you ask me about what is good?' Jesus replied. 'There is only One who is good. If you want to enter life, keep the commandments.' 'Which ones?' he enquired. Jesus replied, "'You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honour your father and mother,'" and "love your neighbour as yourself." 'All these I have kept,' the young man said. 'What do I still lack?' Jesus answered, 'If you want to be perfect, go, sell your possessions and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'

Mark 1:40 CEV

A man with leprosy came to Jesus and knelt down. He begged, "You

have the power to make me well, if only you wanted to."

Mark 5:35 CEV

While Jesus was still speaking, some men came from Jairus' home and said, "Your daughter has died! Why bother the teacher anymore?" Jesus heard what they said, and he said to Jairus, "Don't worry. Just have faith!" Jesus did not let anyone go with him except Peter and the two brothers, James and John.

Mark 7:24-30 CEV

Jesus left and went to the region near the city of Tyre, where he stayed in someone's home. He did not want people to know he was there, but they found out anyway. A woman whose daughter had an evil spirit in her heard where Jesus was. And right away she came and knelt down at his feet. The woman was Greek and had been born in the part of Syria known as Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to force the demon out of her daughter. But Jesus said, "The children must first be fed! It isn't right to take away their food and feed it to dogs." The woman replied, "Lord, even dogs eat the crumbs that children drop from the table." Jesus answered, "That's true! You may go now. The demon has left your daughter." 30 When the woman got back home, she found her child lying on the bed. The demon had gone.

Mark 9:33-37 CEV

Jesus and his disciples went to his home in Capernaum. After they were inside the house, Jesus asked them, "What were you arguing about along the way?" They had been arguing about which one of them was the greatest, and so they did not answer. After Jesus sat down and told the twelve disciples to gather around him, he said, "If you want the place of honour, you must become a slave and serve others!" Then Jesus had a child stand near him. He put his arm around the child and said, "When you welcome even a child because of me, you welcome me. And when you welcome me, you welcome the one who sent me."

Mark 10:13-16 CEV

Some people brought their children to Jesus so that he could bless them by placing his hands on them. But his disciples told the people to stop bothering him. When Jesus saw this, he became angry and said, "Let the children come to me! Don't try to stop them. People who are like these little children belong to the kingdom of God. I promise you that you cannot get into God's kingdom, unless you accept it the way a child does." Then Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them by placing his hands on them.

Mark 10:15-27 CEV

As Jesus was walking down a road, a man ran up to him. He knelt down, and asked, "Good teacher, what can I do to have eternal life?" Jesus replied, "Why do you call me good? Only God is good. You know the commandments. 'Do not murder. Be faithful in marriage. Do not steal. Do not tell lies about others. Do not cheat. Respect your father and mother.'" The man answered, "Teacher, I have obeyed all these commandments since I was a young man." Jesus looked closely at the man. He liked him and said, "There's one thing you still need to do. Go sell everything you own. Give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come with me." When the man heard Jesus say this, he went away gloomy and sad because he was very rich. Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "It's hard for rich people to get into God's kingdom!" The disciples were shocked to hear this. So Jesus told them again, "It's terribly hard to get into God's kingdom! In fact, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into God's kingdom." Jesus' disciples were even more amazed. They asked each other, "How can anyone ever be saved?" Jesus looked at them and said, "There are some things that people cannot do, but God can do anything."

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