

DAY 1

JESUS AND THE CHILDREN

(Mark 10:13-16)

Today's Point: Jesus loves me.

Recently, I was at a birthday party for a one-year-old. As the party progressed, the guests took turns holding the baby and talking to her. We were excited for our turn to get a little hug from the birthday girl. We happily gathered to celebrate this gift from the Lord in our lives.

The juxtaposition of our joy and the disciples' attitudes in today's Bible story is stark. While we welcomed the child in our midst, the disciples rebuked the parents who brought their children to Jesus for a blessing. The disciples saw the children as an inconvenience not worthy of Jesus' time and energy. How wrong they were! Jesus became angry at their wrong actions and quickly corrected them explaining that children were welcome in the kingdom of God. Not only are they welcome but they demonstrate how we all must respond to God's gift of salvation—with humility, trusting in the work of our Savior not our own deeds.

ZOOM IN

How can you joyfully welcome children to VBS this week and help introduce them to someone who loves them greatly—Jesus Christ?

DAY 2

JESUS CALMED THE STORM

(Mark 4:35-41)

Today's Point: Jesus is God's Son.

A few years ago, I was at VBS when a giant thunderstorm rolled through our area. The wind blew, the rain poured, the thunder crackled, and the lightning flashed ominously for several minutes while we stood safely inside the building. When I arrived home after VBS, I found a tree limb impaled in the roof of my house. It was a challenging few months of repairs, but the Lord was with me and cared for me in many ways. Now, every time a massive thunderstorm rolls through, I am faced with the choice of whether to have faith in the Son of God who cares for me or to sink into fear.

The disciples were unable to seek shelter while on the Sea of Galilee. When the storm arose, they watched in fear as the waves crested over the side of the boat. While the disciples' fear grew, Jesus calmly slept as the storm raged around them. Despite being in the very presence of the Son of God, the disciples were alarmed and woke up Jesus, accusing Him of not caring for them. Jesus promptly calmed the storm, demonstrating His power over nature as God's Son, and reminded the disciples of their call to trust in God's care.

When faced with storms (literally and figuratively) in our lives, we, like the disciples, have a choice. We can rail against God, accusing Him of a lack of care. Or we can turn to Him, trusting in His care and that He will reveal more of who He is through our difficult times.

This week, remember that your calm, reassuring presence and words will help children learn about Jesus, the Son of God, who has power over all of life's storms.

ZOOM IN

How has God shown His care for you as you faced a difficult storm?

DAY 3

JESUS MET ZACCHAEUS

(Luke 19:1-8)

Today's Point: Jesus knows my name.

I love to stand at the door of our children's ministry and greet kids as they arrive on Sunday mornings. One thing I try to do is welcome kids by name each week. If I don't know their name yet, I quickly glance at their name tag before greeting them. More than once a kid has looked up at their parents surprised and thrilled that I knew their name.

In today's Bible story, a tax collector climbed a tree to catch a glimpse of Jesus. Tax collectors were not liked in Bible times. The Jewish people greatly disliked paying taxes to the Roman government. As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus worked for the very government that the Jewish people felt oppressed by and wrongly ruled over. Imagine Zacchaeus' emotions as Jesus approached the tree, called to him by name, and said it was necessary for Jesus to stay at Zacchaeus' house. Zacchaeus' encounter with Jesus changed his life, and he committed to a life of generosity and restoration.

As you lead children this week, take time to learn their names. When we call a child's name, it is an echo of a heavenly Father who knows their name and the number of hairs on their head.

ZOOM IN

How does it feel to know that Jesus knows your name?

DAY 4

JESUS FED THE PEOPLE

(Matthew 4:13-21; Luke 9:10-17)

Today's Point: Jesus cares for me.

Once at a children's overnight event, our children's pastor ordered trays of chicken nuggets from a popular restaurant. We set the trays out and the kids ravaged every single nugget, only for us to discover that none of the adult leaders had been able to eat any. We quickly made a plan to send a leader to a pizza restaurant to source dinner for the leaders who were chaperoning. Ultimately, everyone was fed, but I'll never forget staring at those empty nugget trays and realizing we still needed to care for our hungry leaders.

A large crowd of people came to see Jesus. The Bible tells us that Jesus felt compassion for the people and began to heal them. Then He taught the people about the kingdom of God. After a busy day, the disciples suggested that Jesus send the people away to find food. They were in a deserted place without the resources to feed a crowd of over 5,000 men, women, and children. The disciples could only see the earthly limitations of feeding the people. Thankfully, Jesus is not limited by what we humans see as limitations. Jesus cared for the people by providing food until everyone was full and baskets of leftovers were collected.

ZOOM IN

Think of a time when you only saw the limitations, but the Lord provided for you. How did God's care in that time help you grow in your faith?

JESUS MADE A SICK MAN WELL

(Mark 2:1-12)

Today's Point: Jesus helps people.

As a young children's ministry leader, I made a massive mistake when planning a major event for Easter. I failed to recruit a clean-up team. The event ended and within 30 minutes, I was the only one left in the entire building. I was dealing with the clean-up well until I realized that I had at least twelve 8-foot wooden tables that needed to be returned to their usual rooms. I tried to pick up one table and move it to the correct room for small groups the next day, but I quickly realized I couldn't do it. I needed help. Thankfully, our custodian was kind and caring when I called him explaining my dilemma, and he offered to take care of the tables when he came in later that day.

The man in today's Bible story had more pressing needs than moving long, heavy tables. Thankfully, he was blessed with four friends who saw his great need and knew the best way to help him was to take their friend to Jesus. When the friends lowered the man through the roof, Jesus cared for both the man's spiritual needs and his physical needs. Throughout His earthly ministry, Jesus continually helped people, demonstrating great care for those in need.

ZOOM IN

What are your current needs or areas that you need the Lord's help? Spend a few moments in prayer, sharing those needs with your Savior who cares deeply for you.