



DEEPER BIBLE

How Can Our Children's Ministry Be More Welcoming?

[15 min]

Supplies

- Bibles*
- paper
- pens

Dig Into the Bible

Say: **Today's Bible story isn't the first time people in God's family had to learn to be more welcoming. When Jesus was walking around on earth, people brought kids to him. But Jesus' friends—including Peter from today's Bible story—told the people not to bring the kids. Let's see how Jesus responded.**

Read Matthew 19:14. Then have small groups discuss the following question.

Ask: • **What's one thing you can learn from what Jesus said?**

Say: **One thing I learned from this verse is that Jesus loves children! God's family welcomes people, and that includes children.**

Here at [name of your church or children's ministry], we try to make sure you all feel welcome. But I wonder if you can help me figure out: How can our children's ministry be more welcoming? Let's dig in to that.

Dig Deeper

Give each small-group leader a pen and a piece of paper. Encourage them to take notes on kids' ideas as you go through this experience.

Walk kids through evaluating your ministry one sense at a time. Lead kids into the hallway and then re-enter the room, imagining they are entering for the first time. In their small groups, have kids discuss these questions.

Ask: • **What do you see that makes you feel welcome?**

• **What do you see that makes you feel unwelcome?**

• **What would you *like* to see to make you feel even more welcome?**

Take kids back out into the hallway and re-enter the room, asking the same questions but with what kids *hear*. Try again with what kids *feel* and, finally, with what kids *experience*—what happens when they typically enter the room.

Collect notes from small-group leaders. Spend time later on evaluating how their ideas could reshape your ministry to make everyone feel more welcome.

Say: **Thanks for those great ideas! It's important that kids feel welcome when they come here. Jesus welcomed children, and God's family welcomes people. That includes people of all ages, races, and backgrounds! And *you* can be part of welcoming people when new kids come to our church!**



HIGH-ENERGY GAME

Clip Catapult

[10 min]

Supplies

- paper clips
- disposable spoons
- buckets (1 per small group)
- upbeat music (optional)
- music player (optional)

Tips

- Don't have disposable spoons? Try jumbo craft sticks instead.
- You can purchase downloadable music and other items to enhance your DIG IN program [here](#).

Catapult Paper Clips

Say: **Today we're considering how God's family welcomes people. Let's pretend paper clips are people and see how many we can welcome into a bucket.**

- Have small-group leaders give each child a spoon and a small handful of paper clips.
- Have small groups each stand in a half circle, facing a bucket that's 8-10 feet away. (It can be closer if needed for your space.)
- Kids will use their spoons as catapults and will try to launch paper clips into the bucket.
- To catapult the clips, kids will place one paper clip at a time into the spoon and then flip the handle to launch the paper clip. If needed, demonstrate for kids.
- To make the game even more challenging, kids will hop one space clockwise after each launch.
- If you'd like, play music as kids play.
- When kids run out of paper clips, count how many they collectively made into the bucket.
- Play again and challenge them to beat their score from the first round.
- Have kids sit for small-group discussion.

Talk About It

Ask: • **How would you rate our success in this game?**
• **How successful do you think *you* are at making new people feel welcome at church or in your friend group? Explain.**

Say: **We might need a little more practice welcoming paper clips into a bucket. But it's much more important that God's family welcomes people. We can be sure to invite everyone to be in God's family and help new people feel welcome when they come to our church.**