

KINDERGARTEN

God Loves Us



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Dedicated to St. Julie Billiart, foundress of the Sisters of Notre Dame, in gratitude for her inspiration and example

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Note to Families



As parents, you have a sacred trust. You are the primary religious educators of your child. God calls you to nurture not only the physical life of your child but also the life of grace he or she received at Baptism. This responsibility requires that you grow in your own faith and that you share your faith with your family. Here are some steps to deepen your relationship with God and with your family this year:

- Set aside a time (about 15 minutes) and a quiet place for private prayer each day. Read the Bible, Bible commentaries, or spiritual books, and listen to the Lord speak to you. Respond to him.
- Set aside a time for family prayer each day, preferably at mealtimes.
- Celebrate the Eucharist on Sundays or Saturday evenings as a family, if possible. Children learn much from your example of prayer.
- Make reconciliation, forgiving and being forgiven, a part of family living. Celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Penance) regularly.
- Attend adult faith formation programs scheduled in your parish.
- Involve your whole family in service projects for the Church and civic community.
- Proudly live out your faith at home, at work, in the neighborhood, and in the world.

In addition to experiencing God's love in your family, your child will learn more about his love through the religious education program.

The first-semester kindergarten program, *God Loves Us*, is designed to make the children aware of God's love through the many good and beautiful persons, events, and things he has placed in their lives. Each chapter leads the children to appreciate their uniqueness and to sense God's presence in all the wonderful things around them.

The second-semester kindergarten program, *We Love God*, continues the themes of the first semester. It also leads the children to a greater desire to love God in return through their prayers and acts of kindness for others.

The family page of your child's book, located on the last page of each chapter, briefs you on what your child learned in class and offers suggestions for living the message in your family. Since the children's text contains the message, you are encouraged to read it over with your child each week. However, it is advisable not to read chapters to your child until after they have been presented in class. Each unit ends with family feature pages to further nurture your faith and to provide activities to do at home.

The reverse side of this page lists 10 ways that you can nurture your child's faith. Post it on your refrigerator or keep this list handy where you will see it in the course of your day.

May God continue to bless you and your family, and, in the words of Saint Paul, "may he give you the power through his Spirit for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith." (Based on Ephesians 3:16)

Ten Principles to Nurture Your Child's Faith



1. Listen with your heart as well as with your head.
2. Encourage wonder and curiosity in your child.
3. Coach your child in empathy early. It's a building block for morality.
4. Display religious artwork in your home. This will serve as a steady witness that faith is an important part of life.
5. Gently guide your child to a life of honesty.
6. Whenever appropriate, model for your child how to say, "I'm sorry."
7. Eat meals together regularly as a family. It will be an anchor for your child in days to come.
8. Pray together in good times and bad. Worship regularly together as a family.
9. Be generous to those who need help. Make helping others an important focus of your life as a family.
10. See your child for the wonder that God made. Communicate your conviction that your child was created for a noble purpose—to serve God and others in this life and to be happy with God forever in the next.



Welcomes Are Good

Jesus welcomed little children.

Ni hao

Hello

Buenos
Días

Bonjour

Jambo



Scripture

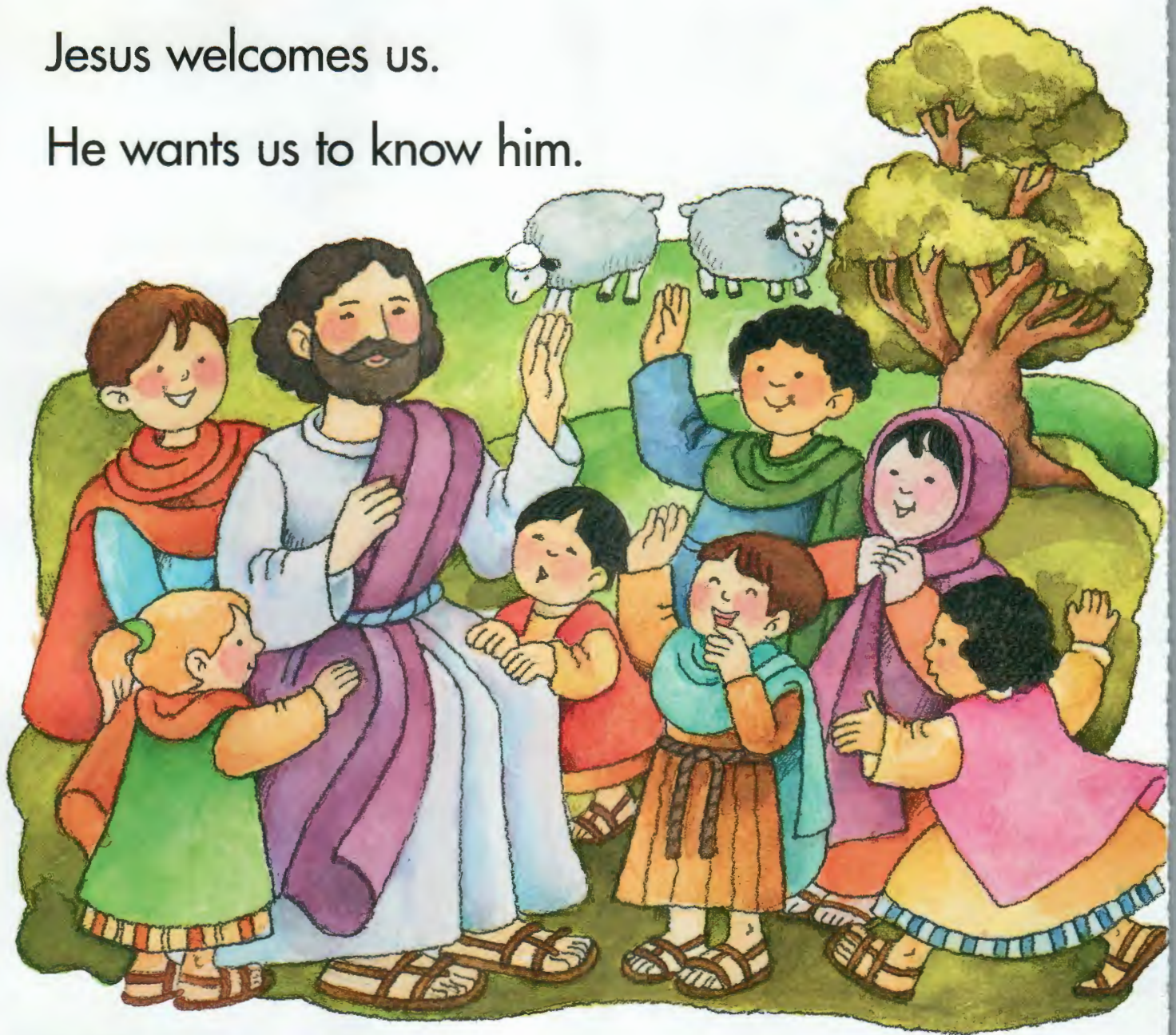
He said, "Let the children come to me."

Based on Mark 10:14

Jesus loves children.

Jesus welcomes us.

He wants us to know him.



Jesus loves us.


Others welcome us.
We welcome others.




Try This



Look at the pictures of people
showing welcome.

Circle them. 

Think about how you might
welcome others today. 



To be near God is . . . good.

Based on Psalm 73:28

Welcomes in Families



The Lesson Your Child Learned

When we welcome other people, we also welcome Jesus into our lives. In this chapter, the children were encouraged to reach out to others and make them feel welcome. They learned that Jesus loves and welcomes children and that he wants them to know him.



Living the Lesson

Can you recall your first day on a new job or at a new school? How about the first time you met your prospective in-laws? Do you recall how awkward everything seemed until someone made you feel welcome? You can probably still remember the people who first made you feel at home in those situations.

Hospitality, the act of welcoming others and making a place for them, is not only good manners; it's a religious act as well. Jesus made it very clear that those who fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, and welcomed the stranger were, in fact, caring for and welcoming Jesus himself.

This week, think about the welcomes you give and the welcomes you receive. Pay particular attention to how welcome you make your child feel, especially when life is busy and you are facing many demands. Realize that the first gift we're meant to give the children in our care is to receive them well—as the unique and wonderful people God made them.

—Tom McGrath, author of *Raising Faith-Filled Kids* (Loyola Press)

Bringing the Lesson Home

- Ask your child to tell you what he or she learned this week. Read with your child the pages that were sent home. Go over the activity on the back of this page together.
- Children learn hospitality by modeling the acts of welcoming they observe among adults. As parents, we teach these things because we wish to teach our children good manners. Hospitality is about manners, and it is also a Christian value. Take advantage of opportunities to teach your child to greet visitors politely and to offer simple gestures of hospitality, such as taking coats and inviting guests to be seated.

