



The **GOD** HUG!

Children's Story

Year B, Proper 22

Title: The God Hug
Author: Stephen Plenert
Church: Springstein Mennonite Church, Winnipeg, MB
Text: Mark 10: 2 - 16, (13-16)
Theme: Jesus wants adults to receive the Kingdom of God as little children do.
Needed: Colouring supplies

Gathering Activity:

Warmly invite the children to come forward for the children's story. Encourage them to settle into a comfortable listening position and then to imagine themselves right onto the lap of Jesus for this part of the worship service. Once a spirit of holy listening has established itself in your hearts, continue with: "Do you ever wonder what God is like? I sometimes do. Even though I believe in God, I haven't actually seen God walking or driving or golfing. So, since I can't actually see God, I read the Bible to find out what God is like. One of the best places in the Bible for finding out what God is like is its stories about Jesus. Today, we will be hearing what Jesus has to say about children." Open your Bible to Mark 10:13 and read out the section title, "Jesus Blesses Little Children." Then retell the text as follows:

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Story:

In today's Bible reading, it says that people were bringing children to Jesus. That's good. But, some of the other people around Jesus wanted to stop them. That's not so good. I wonder why.

Maybe they thought Jesus was too busy. Maybe they didn't think children were important enough to take up Jesus' time. Maybe they wanted to spend time with Jesus and didn't want others to get the chance.

But Jesus wasn't too busy. He stopped what he was doing. He wasn't pleased with his friends.

He scolded them, "Why are you stopping the children from coming? Children are supposed to come to me! EVERYONE is supposed to come to me. Why would you want to stop them?" And then do you know what Jesus did? He bent down and took the children in his arms. He gave each one of them a blessing hug! What a nice thing to do! Let's imagine being there and getting that blessing hug. And that's not all. Then, he looked at the grownups who had tried to stop the children from coming to him and told them to learn to love him like the children did. I guess the children must have hugged Jesus back.

And you know what? Jesus shows us what God is like. God's love overflows. God loves children as if he were picking them up and hugging them. Or picking them up and giving them a piggy back ride. Or picking them up and reading them a story. Or picking them up and telling them how great they are. Or knowing how real children's love is.

God wants people of all ages to come and receive God's overflowing love and to love God back. God wants us to trust him enough to sit on God's lap and hug God back. And to love the people and things God loves. As God's children, we get to be like God, too, and love people, whether they are children or grown-ups, and whether we are children or grown-ups!

Prayer:

Thank you, Jesus, that you have such a great, big, friendly love. Help us feel and share that love in our church family. Amen.

Wondering questions:

- I wonder how the grown-ups felt when Jesus told them to learn to love him like the children did.
- I wonder what it was like to sit on Jesus' lap and feel his hug.
- I wonder how we can bless people with our hugs and love today.
- I wonder what our church could learn about loving Jesus from you if you drew pictures about that during the rest of the service.

If any of you are willing to do that for us, pick up some colouring supplies after we pray. Then give me your pictures after the service and I'll put them up for the grown-ups to learn from.