

Children's Resource: Vibrant Communities

Resource Outline

SESSION ONE

You matter to God, no matter what [Mark 12:41-44]
How we choose to love and follow Jesus makes us special!

SESSION TWO

God loves me and you and the whole world too! [John 13:34-35]
We can all share God's love.

SESSION THREE

The Kingdom of heaven is like... a football? [Matthew 13:31-35]
Let's make Jesus make sense!

SESSION FOUR

We can make a difference! [Luke 9:1-6]
We can do more when we do things together.

Aim: The aim of these sessions is for children to explore their place in mission and God's big story.

Through these sessions children will explore mission in the Bible and around the world today, as well as discover what it means for them and how they can be a part of it. This is achieved through games, activities, Bible stories, discussion and prayer.

As Global Interaction has a very whole-of-life approach to mission, these sessions can be applied to individuals, families or groups at church, anywhere in Australia or otherwise and still have relevance and meaning. It's not so much about where Global Interaction teams are (although that's cool to learn about as well) but who Global Interaction is, what we do and how we do it. Each of the carefully selected passages, activities and questions is an example of this.

Vibrant Communities

Introduction

How to Use the Material

These sessions have been written for church groups, however, much of the material could be modified for family groups. You may choose to expand sections, add in your own activities, questions and reflections or remove parts.

Use the material as a launching pad for your group. Contextualise it for your church depending on the size, age, maturity, cultural background etc. of the group.

Each session includes seven parts:

1. **Connect** offers an opportunity at the beginning to connect with one another. This includes a game or an icebreaker activity for the purpose of having fun and beginning to think about the session's themes.
2. The **Introduction** is a section to link the game played with the story to come.
3. We then **Explore** the Bible passage by reading it. You are free to choose whether this is done all together, individually or in small groups. It might be helpful to read it more than once!
4. **Discuss** is an opportunity to discuss the story, its themes and concepts and begin to apply it to mission and our own lives.
5. The **Activity** is a chance for a creative outlet. It offers a simple, practical outworking of the concepts the children have been learning about. While you complete the activity, talk about the session content and story with the children.
6. The **Video** is a video that some of our intercultural worker kids have filmed to show us what their life is like. You can watch these in any order. There are also other videos suitable for older children.
7. Finally, we will **Pray** to end the session. You can also pray for the people in the video you watched.

Engaging with Mission all Year

In conjunction with this resource, we encourage you to help the children to connect with Global Interaction's work and teams all throughout the year. The website has a lot of information or you can contact your State Office to connect with workers in your state.

Head to www.globalinteraction.org.au to explore more.

Ideas for Connecting with Global Interaction's Ministry:

- » **Explore** a map and find out more about the country and people
- » **Send** a letter / email to an intercultural worker or their children
- » **Find** a candidate, intercultural worker or ministry to support
- » **Pray** for a particular people group or worker
- » **Subscribe** to resources and intercultural worker newsletters to stay informed
- » **Highlight** global mission and stories from our intercultural teams all year around

If you have any **questions or comments** about this resource or anything else, please get in touch!

Contact: info@globalinteraction.org.au or (03) 9819 4944



Session One: You Matter to God, No Matter What

How we choose to love and follow Jesus makes us special!

Mark 12:41-44

CONNECT

Option 1: Group game - Offering Relay

- » Create two or more teams, depending on the number of children (make sure teams have an equal number of participants)
- » At the starting end, have teams line up. They will each need something to collect their items in (e.g. a bucket, bowl or hoola hoop).
- » At the other end is one big pile of treasure (e.g. fake coins, mini bean bags, balls, etc).
- » Run the relay race either for a specific length of time or until the treasure is all gone. The team with the most at the end wins!

Option 2: Individual Game - Treasure Hunt!

What you need:

- » Lots of fake coins or anything else that's easily hidden, identifiable and you have lots of (at least a few per participant)

What to do:

- » Hide all of the coins and let the children find them.
- » The person with the most when the time is up / when they are all found is the winner!

INTRODUCTION

Leader: In the game we just played, we had to race to get the most coins! The person with the most was our winner. But what if I told you, that even if you had the least amount, you were a winner too? Or what if I said "you're all winners!". How does that work?

We're going to read a Bible story now where a few people give some gifts to God. They give very different amounts! Let's read what happens to them.

EXPLORE

Read together **Mark 12:41-44:**

⁴¹ Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury. Many rich people threw in large amounts. ⁴² But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

⁴³ Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. ⁴⁴ They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on."

Session One: You Matter to God, No Matter What

How we choose to love and follow Jesus makes us special!

Mark 12:41-44

DISCUSS

Recap

- » What stands out to you in this story?

Into the Story

- » How did you feel before when I said “you’re all winners”? To the person who had the most, did that make you feel especially annoyed? How do you think the rich man in this story was feeling?
- » What did Jesus mean when he said that ‘the woman has put in more than everyone else’?

Reflect

This woman loved Jesus very much. She wanted to give Him a special gift, just like everyone else, even though she didn’t have a lot. She loved Him so much, that she gave everything she had to Him! What she gave to Jesus was very important, even though it wasn’t as much as or the same as everyone else. Jesus loved her even more for her generosity. He saw her heart.

People all over the world love Jesus too! We all show our love for Jesus in different ways, but all of them are just as special and important. He loves us all the same! All of us have our own distinct way of showing our love for Jesus, that is unique to us, our culture or family or community. It is always enough for Him, no matter how little you think it is or how different it might seem. You matter to Him, no matter what!

- » What are some ways that you can show your love for Jesus this week?
(E.g. prayer, singing, thanking God for things, helping someone out...)

ACTIVITY

Giving Jars: One way of showing love is to do things for others. Children can work together to think of as many ways that they can ‘give’ to others in the future. They need to be things they can or will actually do. For example: doing the dishes, writing a note to someone, smiling at someone, baking cookies, making their bed, including a friend in a game, etc.

What you need:

- » An empty jar per child
- » Popsicle sticks or small pieces of paper to write on (about 10 per child)
- » Textas
- » Optional: decorate the jars with ribbon, glitter glue or paint

What to do:

- » Write one idea per popsicle stick / piece of paper.
- » Encourage children to take one out each week and challenge them to do the activity listed!

Session One: You Matter to God, No Matter What

How we choose to love and follow Jesus makes us special!

Mark 12:41-44

VIDEO

There are four videos that children of intercultural workers have filmed. These have been created to give kids in Australia a glimpse into life as a kid on the field, and to facilitate opportunities for kids to speak directly to kids. These videos do not align with particular themes and can be viewed in any order.

- » Sydney (10) in **Mozambique**: <https://vimeo.com/518009194>
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For older primary aged children, explore the full intercultural worker update, teen-made and thematic videos: www.globalinteraction.org.au/MMMresources

PRAY

Pray together or in small groups to finish. Read the prayer below and add anything else you want to pray for. You can also pray for the family or country in the video.

Dear Jesus, thank you for creating so many beautiful places filled with lots of amazing people! It's so wonderful that no matter how much I have, how little I have or where I live in the world, you love me just the same. Help me to see other people in the same unique and loving way that you do. Amen.

Session Two: God loves me and you and the whole world too!

We can all share God's love.

John 13:34-35

CONNECT

Charades: Write the following on pieces of paper and scramble up in a bowl. Choose a child to begin. They must act out what's on the paper. The person that guesses correctly gets to draw the next one out and act it out!

- » Hugging someone
- » Reading the Bible
- » Sweeping the floor
- » Watering the plants
- » Writing (a thank you note)
- » Helping put toys away
- » Setting the table
- » Cooking
- » Talking to a friend
- » Praying

INTRODUCTION

Leader: Did you notice anything similar about all of the charades acted out? They're all things that we can do to show that we love someone, such as God or a person in our lives like family and friends. Love is very important to God. Let's read what the Bible says about God's love.

EXPLORE

Read together **John 13:34-35**:

³⁴ "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. ³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

DISCUSS

Jesus spends a lot of time teaching his 12 special friends, who he calls his disciples. That means people that follow and believe in Him! We're Jesus' disciples today.

Recap

- » What the first thing that Jesus tells the disciples (and us!) to do in this passage? (Love one another)
- » What's the reason he gives? Because He first loved us.

Into the Story

- » Jesus told His disciples to 'love one another'. How would you react if Jesus told you that? Do you think it means they weren't doing a very good job at it?
- » They seemed to be doing pretty well. But we can always do better!

Session Two: God loves me and you and the whole world too!

We can all share God's love.

John 13:34-35

Reflect

Love is very important to God! He showed us how much He loved us by sending us Jesus (John 3:16). That's the most special gift anyone in the world has ever gotten! He loves everyone so very much. But not everyone knows about God's love!

In this passage, Jesus is encouraging his disciples to love others as much as Jesus loved them, so that through the disciples people could come to know about Jesus long after he'd gone. We have that same responsibility today! What's really special, is that we can do that in any way, anywhere in the world! All we have to do is love people like Jesus did.

- » What are some ways we can love people like Jesus did, so that we can share God's love all around?

ACTIVITY

A Whole Lot of Love! **Chalk mural of God's love**

- » Can be completed individually or as a group

Create a mural that expresses God's love for us. Think also about how you can share God's amazing love. You might include pictures or encouraging and kind words. You can even create this on a footpath where people will see it!

Examples of things you could draw:

- » Scenes from creation (God loved creating the world!)
- » Jesus doing various things (such as being kind to strangers, healing sick people, feeding hungry people)
- » You and your friends doing things together like playing games
- » Doing activities with your family
- » Playing with pets or other animals
- » Caring for creation by gardening, planting seeds or watering plants
- » Helping out at home doing chores
- » Giving someone a smile, hi-five or a hug

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John 13:34-35

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PRAY

Pray together or in small groups to finish. Read the prayer below and add anything else you want to pray for. You can also pray for the family or country in the video.

Dear Jesus, thank you for sending us Jesus, who showed us how to love. Through him, we learnt about a love that can change people's lives. Wow! Help us to be excited about the story of Jesus and all the amazing things he's done, so that we can help others get excited about it too! Please keep showing your love to us and teach us how we can love others. Amen.

Session Three: The Kingdom of heaven is like... a football?

Let's make Jesus make sense!

Matthew 13:31-35

CONNECT

Pictionary: Choose one child to start. You can draw on a whiteboard, chalkboard or pieces of paper. They can choose one of the following categories and draw something to do with that category.

- » Things you like
- » Things that are useful
- » Places you want to go

The first person that guesses the drawing correctly can go next.

INTRODUCTION

Leader: Have you ever heard the saying 'a picture can tell a thousand words?'. Pictures are a great way to tell stories. We were communicating through pictures in the game we just played. But there's lots of other ways to give information and tell stories too! It's especially important that we are creative with this when we are trying to talk about something new or difficult to understand.

When Jesus told stories, He used words. He talked about new and difficult things sometimes too! But He did this in a special way, so that His listeners could understand: he told parables. These were special stories that used everyday or popular things to help the listener understand harder things. Let's read a story.

EXPLORE

Read together **Matthew 13:31-35**:

³¹ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. ³² Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches."

³³ He told them still another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough."

³⁴ Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. ³⁵ So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet:

"I will open my mouth in parables,
I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world."

Session Three: The Kingdom of heaven is like... a football?

Let's make Jesus make sense!

Matthew 13:31-35

DISCUSS

Recap

- » What is Jesus trying to explain to the people listening?
- » How is He doing that?

Into the Story

- » Why do you think Jesus chose to talk about the Kingdom of God as being like a 'mustard seed' and 'leaven'?
- » Optional: talk about and explain what each of these images means.

Reflect

The story of Jesus is an amazing story! But it can be a little difficult to understand in parts. In this story, Jesus was talking to people 2000 years ago, who lived in a country far from here! Everyone comes from a different background and has different experiences, so different things will make sense to them.

The metaphors of 'mustard seeds' and 'leaven' would have been very meaningful to people in Jesus' day. But not so much to us today! So, when we tell the story of Jesus, we want to tell it in a way that our listeners will understand. Jesus did this with the parables!

This parable helped the listeners understand the Kingdom of God, in ways they could already visualise. If Jesus was here now, teaching us about what the Kingdom of God was like, what imagery might he use? Here are some examples:

The Kingdom of God is like... Disneyland, both are where dreams come true and they are the happiest places many can think of

The Kingdom of God is like... chocolate, because it's amazing and gives you sustenance!

The Kingdom of God is like... a football, because no one knows where it begins or ends!

Now come up with some of your own! If you were to describe the Kingdom of God to your friends, family, church, sporting club, dog, etc. how would you do it? The Good News of Jesus is most effective when we do it in a way people will understand best! That will look different in different situations and with different people (for example we can use things from Pictionary game at the beginning).

Session Three: The Kingdom of heaven is like... a football?

Let's make Jesus make sense!

Matthew 13:31-35

ACTIVITY

Planting Seeds: From tiny little things, big amazing things can grow. Much like the mustard seed in the story! We're going to plant some seeds. As they grow, it will be a visual reminder of growing in our love for God and our understanding of Him.

People all around the world plant seeds. It is a wonderful point of connection between cultures, where we might feel like we have little else in common! This is a great stepping stone to telling people about Jesus in a way that is meaningful to them.

What you need:

- » Seeds
- » Dirt
- » Water

You can plant them in a pot or in the ground!

VIDEO

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PRAY

Pray together or in small groups to finish. Read the prayer below and add anything else you want to pray for. You can also pray for the family or country in the video.

Dear Jesus, there are some interesting stories in the Bible! Thank you that we still have them today, even after thousands of years and tens of thousands of kilometres! Help me to better understand the stories in the Bible about you, so that I can talk to others about you in a way that makes sense and is special to them. Amen.

Session Four: We can make a difference!

We can do more when we do things together.

Luke 9:1-6

CONNECT

Blindfolded Obstacle Course

- » Set up an obstacle course
- » Get children to work in partners
- » One child in each pair will be blindfolded
- » The other child in the pair needs to guide the blindfolded one through the obstacle course, using only their words (no touching) and without taking the blindfold off.
- » For an extra challenge, you can encourage them to try not to touch any part of the obstacle course. This can be as easy or as hard as you set it up!
- » They can both have a turn at guiding and doing the course

INTRODUCTION

Leader: We just completed an obstacle course. Do you think it would have been much harder without someone showing you the way? What do you think would have happened? (You would have bumped into a lot of things!) Things are always easier when we work together. Jesus knew all about this! He made sure that people worked in teams, so that they could look after one another. We can often do much more when we work together! Let's read a story.

EXPLORE

Read together **Luke 9:1-6:**

¹ One day Jesus called together his twelve disciples and gave them power and authority to cast out all demons and to heal all diseases. ² Then he sent them out to tell everyone about the Kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ³ "Take nothing for your journey," he instructed them. "Don't take a walking stick, a traveller's bag, food, money, or even a change of clothes. ⁴ Wherever you go, stay in the same house until you leave town. ⁵ And if a town refuses to welcome you, shake its dust from your feet as you leave to show that you have abandoned those people to their fate."

⁶ So they began their circuit of the villages, preaching the Good News and healing the sick.

DISCUSS

Recap

- » Jesus gave the disciples special abilities that only He could do. What were they?
- » Jesus sent the disciples out in pairs, two-by-two. Why did he send them?

Into the Story

- » Can you think of a time where you did something by yourself that would have been easier with another person?

Session Four: We can make a difference!

We can do more when we do things together.

Luke 9:1-6

Reflect

God has given each of us lots of different skills, gifts and abilities. He invites us to use all of these – but He loves it when we work together! When we work in groups of two or more, things are so much better. We can't do everything ourselves, and thankfully, we don't have to!

- » What are some of your special skills, gifts and abilities? What are you good at or enjoy doing? Try to think of at least 3 or 4!

ACTIVITY

Take Action!

This activity is more time consuming than the other sessions. For a shorter activity, you can just do part 1.

- » Get children into groups with a variety of ages, skills and abilities
- » Choose whether you would like to do this activity in the context of the family home, the church or your local community (pick one).

Part 1: Brainstorm

Ask: What are your favourite things about (home/church/community)?

Ask: If you could, what's something you would change? Come up with as many ideas as you can! Some can be wild and wacky, but some should be practical.

Examples for home:

- » Wanting a bike track to go around the house
- » Wanting more greenery or colour inside
- » Wanting to spend more time together

Possible solution: eating dinner together more regularly

Examples for church:

- » I think kids should be able to play music too!
- » We should have more cake at morning tea after church
- » I wish I knew more people at church

Examples for community:

- » Some people in the nursing home don't get visitors
- » There's no dog park!
- » The local playground could do with an upgrade
- » I don't like the rubbish at the beach or down the street
- » There's lots of homeless people who could do with food and blankets

Session Four: We can make a difference!

We can do more when we do things together.

Luke 9:1-6

Get each group to pick one for the category that you chose out of all the brainstormed ideas. Then, encourage them to come up with a possible solution, including steps to get there. It could look like this:

- » Thing I want to change about (home/church/community)
- » What I want the end result to be
- » How I will get there (steps)
- » Who I need to ask to help!

Part 2: Spend time working together to making the idea more practical and implementing it! If you intend on doing part 2 also, begin with this end in mind.

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PRAY

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Dear Jesus, thank you for giving us the great example of how important it is to work with others. You showed us how to do it with kindness, care and compassion. Help me to better see myself the way I was created – with unique gifts, skills and talents. Help me to see others strengths in this way also! All of us have such an important part to play in your mission of showing the whole world Jesus' love. Thanks for choosing me and using me to be a part of that. Amen!