

**Focus:** Take care of the poor

**Materials:**

Prayer Altar: Cross, Candle, Chasuble on stand (priest's vestment) and Altar Cloth  
CD-America's 25 Favorite  
Bible: In lesson  
Ping Pong Ball

**Gathering** (children find/sit on a carpet square)

Say: *Good Morning everyone, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. Last week we talked about being kind and loving to everyone so that we can enter the kingdom of heaven. This week Jesus tells us that we are to take care of those who are unable to care for themselves. Jesus had a special place in his heart for the poor and he asks us to do the same.*

**Opening Prayer**

Together we make the Sign of the Cross (do in reverse so children can mirror).

Say: *Now let's put our hands together and bow our heads.*

*Let us pray.*

*O loving and caring God, You care for those who are poor and hungry.*

*Help us to show your love and care for others. In the name of Jesus we pray.*

*Amen.*

**Song/Movement**

*There is Power in the Name of Jesus*, track: 19, from America's 25 Favorite

Play music, encourage children to stretch or move to the music (clapping, stamp feet march in place to the beat), turn to each other and shake hands, saying hello, etc. Have children sit on their carpet squares when finished.

There is \_\_\_\_\_, in the name of Jesus. (3x)  
There is \_\_\_\_\_ in that wonderful name.  
Power, Glory, Healing

There's Salvation in the name of Jesus (3x)  
There's Salvation in that wonderful name  
(3x) –to fade.

**Memory Verse**

Say: *Now let's take a moment together to learn a verse from the bible.*

*In God's heart everyone is important.*

Have the children repeat the verse after you a couple of times.

Say: *God loves everyone the same. God's love is like a great banquet or feast. There is enough for everyone and God keeps pouring out his love. As God's people, we share that love with others and help them know how much they are loved. Imagine you are standing in a pool with your family. Is there more water for some and not for others? God's love is like that. It's all there for everyone to have. We need to make sure the everyone knows how much they are welcome into God's Kingdom of love.*

## Gospel Story

Say: *Today we are reading from the Gospel of Luke.*

Have children make sign of the cross on their forehead, mouth and heart saying. *“Lord, open my mind, my lips and my heart so that I may learn it, speak it and love it.”*

**Read:** None, pp. N/A,

Some people acted like they were more important

[Hands on hips, nose in the air.]

than others.

[Sweeping hand indicating the crowd.]

Jesus said:

[Chatty hand, thumb against fingers.]

“If you are invited to a wedding banquet,

[Use fingers to eat imaginary food.]

do not sit in the place of honor.

[Hands on hips, nose in the air.]

In God’s heart,

[Point heavenward.]

everyone

[Sweeping hand to include everyone.]

is just as important as you are.

[Point to each of the children, one at a time.]

If you host a lunch or dinner,

[Use fingers to eat imaginary food.]

do not invite only people who can pay you back.

[Pretend to open a wallet and hand out money.]

God loves us more than we can ever return.

[Cross hands over your heart.]

Invite the poor,

[Pretend to pull out your pockets, showing nothing is there.]

and those whom no one else loves.

[Shake your head sadly.]

If you love them,

[Extend serving hands.]

and they cannot pay you back.

[Shake head sadly.]

but God.

[Point heavenward.]

Will smile at you.”

[Use fingers to trace a smile on your face.]

After the reading say: *The Gospel of the Lord*

Children respond: *Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ*

**Discussion Starters:**

- *Why does Jesus tell his followers a story?*
- *What does the story say about where to sit at a party?*
- *Why is it best to take the lowest place?*
- *What does Jesus tell his followers about caring for those who can't pay us back?*
- *Who does Jesus tell us to take care of?*

**Reflection on Reading:**

*In today's Gospel Jesus uses a story to teach his followers about being unselfish and to be caring for the needs of others. Jesus tells a story about being invited to a wedding banquet. The story makes it clear that it is best to sit at the lowest place instead of the place of honor. God gives honor to those who are unselfish.*

*Jesus also tells his followers to welcome those who are poor and rejected by others. God blesses those who welcome the poor and the outcast. It's important to love everyone. It's easier to love and do nice things for people who love and do nice things for us, but love is more than doing what feels good. Love is a choice we make to treat others with kindness and respect. When others are sick, lonely or don't have what they need, God wants us to love and help them.*

**Gospel Activity**Activity 1:**Lines and Circles:**

Line up all the children, one behind the other in a line. (may need multiple lines)

Ask: *"Who is first and who is last?"*

Have everyone turn and face the opposite way.

Ask again: *"Who is first and who is last?"*

Still lined up one behind the other, ask the children to hold hands.

Ask: *Is it comfortable to hold hands this way?*

Walk the line into a circle, with everyone facing inward. (may need multiple, concentric circles)

Ask again: *"Who is first and who is last?"*

Have the children hold hands.

Ask: *"Is this more comfortable than when you were standing in a line?"*

Say: *This is how God's kingdom is. God's kingdom is more like a circle than a line because no one worries about who is first or who is last because God loves everyone completely.*

(If using Activity 2, have the kids sit down in a circle)

Activity 2:**"God Loves Us Ping Pong Toss"**

The object of this game is to include everyone.

Seat everyone in a circle. Remind the children that God loves all of us, not just some of us.

One person tosses (or rolls) the ping pong ball to someone across the circle and says: "God Loves You!"

Then that person tosses the ball to another person and repeats the verse—God Loves You! No one should get a 2nd turn until everyone has had one toss. Everyone should take care to make sure everyone is included.

Can continue with more rounds if there is time—make sure there would be time to do everyone again. Alternate verses: God blesses you. We love you. God cares about you.

Complete the weekly bulletin as a group-let the children color them if there is extra time

### **Closing Prayer**

(Children respond: "I Believe!")

Ask: *Do you believe in God, who loves everyone and invites everyone to his kingdom?*  
*Do you believe in Jesus, who was always unselfish and gentle and brings honor to the poor?*  
*Do you believe in the Holy Spirit, who helps us to be kind to and respect all God's children?*

### **Sending Forth**

Say: *This week we can honor and give glory to God by making sure we let others go before us. Jesus wants us to always remember that everyone is important to God as you are important to God and we should treat them that way.*

### **Lining Up/Closing Song**

Play "*I've Got Peace Like a River*" track 4 from America's 25 Favorite while children put away any materials and lineup. Hand out weekly bulletins. Remind them it is important that they return to their family quietly so that we may all listen and pray together in church.