

# Kids Can Be Blessed

Session	Theme	Kids Dig the Bible	Kids Create	Kids Move
Kickoff	Be-attitudes	Matthew 5:1-10 Jesus' Beatitudes can change our attitudes.	Beatitudes mobile; poster; Bee-attitudes; Bee snack	Charades; Beatitudes memory game; Opposite attitudes; Rhythm game
1	Blessed are the poor in spirit	Matthew 5:3 Luke 18:9-14 We need God.	Blessing bank; Kingdom of heaven wands; Frog craft	Taste station; Emptying relay; What's in your heart
2	Blessed are those who mourn	Matthew 5:4 John 11:32-45 We can comfort each other.	Joy in sadness painting; Sadness symbol; Teardrop puzzle; Praying hands	Attitudes and rewards; Taste station; Comfort station; Mourning tree; Carrying a burden
3	Blessed are the meek	Matthew 5:5 Numbers 12:3 Matthew 11:29 We can be strong through our gentleness.	Nature rubbings; Prayer box; Humble pie	Telephone; Taste station; Nature scavenger hunt; Bubbles
4	Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness	Matthew 5:6 Luke 14:12-14 We can work for what is right in the world.	Hunger for justice placemats; Food chain; World of enough	Ball toss; Taste station; Back-to-back; Musical chairs; Sanctuary game
5	Blessed are the merciful	Matthew 5:7 Matthew 18:23-35 We can show mercy and kindness.	Random acts of mercy; Giving tree; Health or school kits; Soup mix in a jar	Taste station; Shoe scramble; Service project; 70 times
6	Blessed are the pure in heart	Matthew 5:8 Matthew 6:9-15 Psalms 51 We can have pure hearts.	Detective glasses; Prayer pockets; Colored prayer stones	Taste station; Balloon sweep; Clean heart dance
7	Blessed are the peacemakers	Matthew 5:9 1 Samuel 25:14-28 We can work for peace.	Friendship pins; Stone art; Visions of peace; Peace braid	Order them up; Taste station; Act it out; Hula hoop race; Back and forth volleyball
8	Blessed are those who are persecuted	Matthew 5:10 Matthew 5:38-48 We can be strong during hard times.	Be strong bands; Worry munchers; Cross mosaic	Memorization beads; Taste station; Be bold tag; Praise God all the time
Closing Celebration	Blessed to be a blessing	Matthew 5:3-10 Genesis 12:2-3 We can bless others.		

## **KIDS CAN BE BLESSED**

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# Getting Started

## About the Theme

*Kids Can Be Blessed* invites you and children to learn about attitudes and behaviors that lead to blessings, as outlined by Jesus in the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes highlight ways to live in God's kingdom, and lead to blessings and right relationships with others and with God. During the sessions, children learn to rely on God in their daily lives, during times of happiness and even during times of sadness. They will discover how to live prayerful and peaceful lives. Children will learn that following Jesus' words as written in the Beatitudes is an alternative path where we can bless others with our generosity, forgiveness, and mercy. As we bless others, we are also blessed as our needs are met by others and by God.

## About the Children

This curriculum is for six to ten year old children, but can be adapted for other ages. What are these children like? If you are a parent or teacher, you know that children come in all shapes and sizes. Each one is unique. God's creativity is imprinted upon each child. **As you get to know the children as individuals, remember that children**

- learn in different ways
- learn best by experiencing, seeing, discovering, and doing
- have differing reading abilities
- are beginning to develop abstract thinking skills
- like to move around and be active
- respond well to loving and caring adult models they can trust and follow
- like to have friends and be friends
- can be exclusive in their friendships and often have a best friend
- have a strong sense of fairness, of right and wrong
- are already in relationship with God, even though they may not have language for their relationship
- are beginning to ask questions and need a safe environment to do so
- thrive when treated with love, respect, and compassion.

## About the Leaders

Children's experiences of faith are memorable due in part to the leaders who guide them. **Leaders who work with children**

- model God's love, forgiveness, and care for everyone
- are mature youth or adults who always act as adults
- do not see themselves as buddies to the children, but guides
- love children
- are energetic and enthusiastic
- have a passion for peace-making
- have good conflict resolution skills
- see that children are safe at all times.

### Gifts of Leadership Needed

- **Music:** Choose songs and lead the singing.
- **Kids Explore:** Tell Bible stories and lead in faith conversations.
- **Kids Create:** Decide on the craft activities that will be offered; gather materials, and work with the children on a handcraft that they will take home with them. Find helpers to work with children or lead a group if you plan more than one activity.
- **Kids Move:** Lead the games and talk about how they fit in with the theme.
- **Group leaders:** Adults or mature youth whose main role is to build relationships with a small group of children (up to 10 children per group).
- **Memory tutors (optional):** An adult who is willing to work one on one with children to learn memory verses.
- **Prayer pals (optional):** An adult is matched with each child to pray for each other. Invite the pals to join you for the closing celebration.

## About the Session Format

### The curriculum

- is geared to children in grades one through five
- can be used with multiage groups or separate into younger and older groups
- can be adapted for kindergarten children or junior youth
- includes plans for 45–60 minute sessions
- includes time for gathering, singing, Bible story and discussion, crafts, and games
- includes ten complete sessions: kick-off session to introduce theme, eight Beatitude-related topics, and a final celebration event
- includes resource/reference pages with ideas for opening and closing activities, memory verses and tips for memorizing, snacks, book list, additional craft ideas, service projects, and how to manage unwanted behavior
- includes lots of suggestions for crafts and games for each session.

### Suggested times during each session

#### Kids Cluster (5 minutes)

- suggestions for early arrivals, singing, memory review

#### Kids Explore (10 minutes)

- introduction to theme, Bible story, reflection, and conversation starters

#### Kids Create and Kids Move (20-35 minutes)

- suggestions for activities, crafts and/or games

#### Closing (5 minutes), optional

- gathering time ideas for closing blessing and ending rituals

# Session I

## Blessed are the poor in spirit

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Children can learn to rely on God in their everyday lives. They already know that they rely on adults to care for them. Even though they may feel small in society, in God's kingdom they are great. They can readily give and receive God's love. They can learn to pray to God at any time of day. To be poor in spirit means an attitude of humbleness and recognizing our dependency upon God. When we are poor in spirit, we have room for God's spirit to enter our lives.

### BIBLE TEXTS

Matthew 5:3; Luke 18:9-14

### FAITH CHALLENGE

We need God.

### ADVANCE PREPARATION

- Read through the entire session, and decide what you will do.
- Set up the room/space for the various activities.
- Gather props for the story: robe, cloth bag with money.
- Practice telling the Bible story.
- Gather supplies for the activities you choose to do.
- Prepare a snack (see p. 13).

## Kids Cluster

1. **Plan an activity for the early arrivals.** Check page 6 for ideas.
2. **Welcome the children** and gather for a time of singing (p. 8). Be sure to include action songs, familiar songs, favorite songs, and new songs.

# Kids Explore

1. **Sing the theme song “Blest are they” (page 8).** Sing verse one and the chorus. Say a simple prayer.
2. **Introduce the theme of the day:** We need God.
3. **Open the Bible to Matthew 5:3.** Practice saying today’s beatitude together. Use the ideas on page 11 to help with memorization.
4. **Talk about the Bible.**
  - What does it mean to be poor in spirit?
  - Why will people be happy when they are poor in spirit?
  - What is the kingdom of heaven?
  - How can we show that we are poor in spirit?
5. **Turn to Luke 18:9-14.** This story is a biblical example of needing God’s help. Jesus told this parable to people who trusted in themselves rather than in God. They thought that they were better than others. Being “poor in spirit” can mean relying on God for our daily strength instead of on ourselves. It means loving ourselves and others, and being willing to serve others.

## Tip

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Have the children act this story out as you tell it. This will help them to remember it better. Ask for two volunteers to be the Pharisee and the tax collector. Consider giving out simple props like a robe for the Pharisee and a cloth bag of money for the tax collector.

Two men went to the temple to pray. One was a Pharisee and the other was a tax collector.

The Pharisee stood by himself. He prayed like this: “God, thank you that I am not like the other people. I am not a thief. I am not even like this tax collector. I fast and pray twice every week and I give generously of the money that I make.”

The tax collector was standing far away. He looked sorrowful and his hands were beating his chest. He prayed like this: “God, be merciful to me! I am a sinner.”

Jesus said, “The tax collector went home justified and happy. The Pharisee didn’t. Everyone who exalts themselves will be humbled, and everyone who humbles themselves will be exalted.”

# Kids Create

## BLESSING BANK

(INDIVIDUAL)

Children will make a blessing bank filled with ways to bless others over the following week.

**Materials:** empty boxes, colored paper, markers, glue sticks, scissors

- Decorate the box to make a “blessing bank.”
- Decorate cards or slips of paper with ways that they could bless others. For example: “Rake leaves.” “Help make dinner.” “Tidy up.” “Visit a neighbor.” Make at least seven blessing cards.
- Put these cards into the bank.
- Each day of the week, children can draw a card from their bank and complete the blessing described on the card.

## KINGDOM OF HEAVEN WANDS

(GROUP)

Children can have fun making these treats, imagining what special wands would look like in the kingdom of heaven.

**Materials:** bamboo skewers, colored sprinkles, mixing bowl, mixing spoon, baking sheet, star cookie cutters, 3 T / 45 ml margarine or butter, 40 large marshmallows, 6 cup / 1.5 L crisped rice cereal

- Mix melted marshmallows and butter.
- Stir in crisped rice cereal.
- Press onto a baking sheet.
- Cut the bars into star shapes using cookie cutters.
- Insert a bamboo skewer into each star. \* Shake colorful sprinkles onto each side.

## FROG CRAFT

(INDIVIDUAL)

When we are poor in spirit, we learn to “Fully Rely On God” (FROG). Children will make these frogs to remind them to trust in God for their needs.

**Materials:** green tempera paint, black tempera paint, white tempera paint, pie plate for paint, paint brushes, paper, markers

- Make two hand prints on the paper using green paint. These will be the frog’s feet.
- Paint a large green circle for the frog’s body.
- Paint two white oval shaped eyes above the body.
- Use black paint to make a mouth, nostrils, and pupils.
- At the bottom, use a marker to write “Fully Rely On God.”

### Tip

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The extended craft ideas on page 15 can be used each session.



# Kids Move

## TASTE STATION (INDIVIDUAL)

**Materials:** small slices of dill pickle, cups, pitcher of water

- Eat a piece of dill pickle.
- Taste the sour pickle and suggest that this can remind us that it is not always easy to recognize that we need God's help.
- Take a sip of water and think of what the kingdom of heaven is like.

## WHAT'S IN YOUR HEART? (GROUP)

Children will play this simple game to reinforce the things that should be in our hearts.

**Materials:** ping-pong ball, large cup, words on small pieces of paper: love, peace, hatred, fear, joy, kindness, patience, impatience, meanness, unloving

- Place the papers printed with words into the cup.
- Children will take turns trying to throw a ping-pong ball into the cup from a short distance away.
- If a child gets the ball in the cup, he/she pulls out a word from the cup.
- The child decides whether that is a word that describes something that should be in our hearts.
- Keep the words that have been used out of the cup. Continue until all of the words have been used up.

## EMPTYING RELAY (GROUP)

This game can be used to teach the message of the first beatitude. We are poor in spirit when we empty ourselves so that God can fill us.

**Materials:** four small buckets, foam packing peanuts, two long-handled spoons, two blindfolds

- Play a relay game in which the object is to be the first team to empty a bucket.
- Provide each team with two small buckets.
- Fill one bucket with packing peanuts or other material and set it at one end of the playing area.
- Place the empty container at opposite side of the room, at the starting line.
- Give each team a long-handled spoon and a blindfold.
- The blindfolded player must follow the directions shouted by teammates to direct him or her across the room to the correct bucket.
- Once there, the player removes a scoop from the bucket, returns to the team, and deposits the spoonful into the empty bucket.
- After teams have completed a rotation or time limit, the team who has emptied their bucket the most wins the game.

### TIP

If the weather is agreeable, go outside and play an emptying relay using buckets of water and sponges. Dip the sponge in the water and carry it back to the start, where it is squeezed out.

### Closing

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For closing ideas, see  
page 7.