

Recommended Hymn:
"Lord Jesus Christ, the Children's Friend"

Lord Jesus Christ, the children's friend
To each of them, Your presence send;
Call them by name and keep them true
In loving faith, dear Lord, to You.

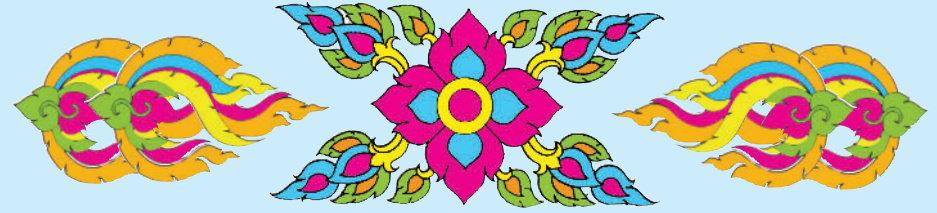
In Christian homes, Lord let them be
Your blessing to their family;
Let Christian schools Your work extend
In living truth as You intend.

For by your Word we clearly see
That we have sinned continually;
But show us too, forgiving Lord,
Your saving Gospel's great reward.

Then guard and keep us to the end,
Secure in You, our gracious friend,
That in Your heav'nly family
We sing Your praise eternally.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and take our sins away. You have blessed us by making us Your children and giving us our church family. Help us to share the Good News of Jesus with people around us who haven't yet heard about Him. Help us to be friends with them, and give us the right words to say so that they may love You, too. Bless the missionaries all around the world, and give them joy in their work. Be with all of us as we share Your love. Thank you for the assurance that You will be with us here, and that You will be with them there. In Jesus' Name we pray. Amen.



"Let the children come to Me..."

Devotion Resources



A project of the Lutheran Heritage Foundation

**Translating and publishing Lutheran materials around the world
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Scripture Reading:

And they were bringing children to Him that He might touch them, and the disciples rebuked them. But when Jesus saw it, He was indignant and said to them, "Let the children come to Me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it." And He took them in his arms and blessed them, laying His hands on them. (Mark 10:13-16)

Let the Children Come to Me

Since the time you were conceived, when your mother carried you inside her tummy, you've been part of a family. You might think, "Wait a minute! How could I be part of the family before I was even born?" But you were.

When you were just eight weeks old – just the size of a kidney bean! – you were already starting to hear sounds. By the time you were 20 weeks old, you recognized your mother's heartbeat and voice. And while you were busy growing inside your mother, the rest of the family was getting ready to welcome you. They might have made a special crib or cradle for you, and they bought cute little booties and T-shirts for you to wear, and soft blankets to keep you warm.

Another family was also waiting for you to be born – your church family. Your Heavenly Father watched over you in the womb, knitting your parts together to make you who you are today. Even then, God knew that you would be His child.

When did you first become God's child? For most of us, it was in our baptism. As the pastor sprinkled the water over your head and baptized you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, God made you part of His family!

For others of us, we became part of God's family when we first heard His Word and learned about Jesus and how He died to save us from our sins. Whenever the Holy Spirit gave us faith, that's when we became part of God's family.

God's family isn't just here at this church/school. No, the Holy Spirit calls children to Him from all around the world, and He speaks to them in their own languages, just like He speaks to you through His Word, printed in the English language. This is God's great gift to us, and we can share it with the rest of the world.

In fact, there's a group of Christian missionaries, called the Lutheran Heritage Foundation, that does just that. They print books about Jesus in many languages for people around the world. Today (this month/this quarter/this year), our chapel offerings will help buy Sunday school materials for children in Southeast Asian countries like Thailand and Cambodia. That way, Asian children just like you can learn that Jesus loves them, too.

One of the Sunday school lessons they will study is our reading for today, when we heard about that special time Jesus called the little children to come to Him. You can probably think of a time when a grown-up has gotten frustrated or angry with you. Well, grown-ups in the Bible's time sometimes got frustrated with kids, too. Jesus' disciples didn't like that the children were interrupting Jesus' important work and tried to keep them out of the way. But Jesus stopped the disciples. "Let the children come to Me," He said. Then, just like the best father in the world, Jesus took the children into His lap, put His strong arms around them, and blessed them. The children weren't in Jesus' way at all; He wanted to be with them.

Jesus wants to be with you, today. "Come to Me," He says. Sometimes our earthly fathers get angry and might even send us away from them. But not Jesus. Even when you've been very naughty and done some bad sins, Jesus will not turn you away when you come to Him. He loves you so much that He took those sins all away from you when He died on the cross. Because those sins have been taken away, someday Jesus will hold His arms open to you, welcoming you into Heaven with Him. And the rest of our brothers and sisters – God's children from all around the world, from Africa and from Asia, from South America and from Australia – they will all be there in Heaven, too: one big family in Christ Jesus.