



Date: _____
Series: Lookin' for a Leader
Summer Year 3, Lesson 2

I Am Valuable to God

Primary Scripture: 1 John 3:1-3

Key Verse: 1 John 3:1, "Consider this: The Father has given us his love. He loves us so much that we are actually called God's dear children. And that's what we are."

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids need approval. They need to feel valued and included. In school, on the playground, or at home children often experience the pain of feeling left out. God approves of us not based simply on our talents, gifts, or popularity. God's approval is given to us through his gift of Jesus. In Jesus, we have forgiveness and power to live a life for him. In God's eyes, we are seen as special shining stars. He sees us as his own dear children through faith in Christ.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: We have God's approval through the death and resurrection of Jesus. He has removed our sin and declares us perfect in his sight.

Jesus in us: We can live in Christ and do those acts of love of which God approves. He loves us for who we are, not just what we do.

Jesus through us: Our self worth is not based on our gifts or talents but God's unconditional love. Because of God's love we can do great things for him.

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols, such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Kids, have you ever been to a sports game where everyone stood up and cheered for someone who did something great? Maybe an athlete scored a winning touchdown with just minutes left in the game.

Have you ever been to an awards ceremony where someone received a special honor? Have you ever watched the Miss America contest or the Oscars on TV?

Which event would you like to win?

Collect a couple brief stories.

Who has done the greatest achievement of all time? (God.)

What did God do that was the greatest achievement? He did the greatest thing for us in sending us Jesus. Jesus left his heavenly mansion and came to live a humble life as a carpenter. He lived perfectly without ever doing anything wrong, yet he was punished and treated terribly. Jesus died a horrible death on a cross. When Jesus gave his life for us, that action guaranteed we could be friends with God forever.

Just like we clap and cheer for people who do great things, when we worship we are using our voices and bodies to tell God we are thankful for the wonderful things he has done for us. Let's do that as we worship today!

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Supplies needed: large cutout star with a masking tape backing

Invite three to five children forward and ask them the following question one at a time. Place the star on each child as they are interviewed.

If you could be a star, what kind of star would you like to be? (Would you like to be a star sports player? Would you like to be a star at a spelling bee? Would you like to be a star performer, dancer, or singer?)

After each child is briefly interviewed, invite everyone to enthusiastically clap for “the star” as he/she returns to his/her seat.

Some people try their whole lives to be stars in other people’s eyes. They want to hear people cheering and yelling for them. There is nothing wrong with wanting that.

If some people feel good about themselves *only* when others cheer for them, how do you think they feel when they are not stars? (They might feel sad. They might even feel like they are not worth very much.)

Let me read 1 John 3:1 to you.

“Consider this: The Father has given us his love. He loves us so much that we are actually called God’s dear children. And that’s what we are.”

Did you know that in God’s eyes you are a star? When you trust God as your heavenly Father and when you trust in the gift of Jesus, you are his child.

Do you know who is clapping for you? Angels in heaven rejoice over you (Luke 15:7). Most importantly, God approves of you. He loves you and he is your heavenly Father. God wants you to know , in his eyes, you are a special star.

But, sometimes we don't act like God's stars. Instead of doing things God wants us to do, we may do things God doesn't want us to do. Is it easy to do things that God doesn't want us to do? Let kids respond. When other people or friends around us do wrong things or encourage us to do wrong things, it can be easy to do those wrong things. Sometimes we might want others' approval more than God's approval.

Think about a time in the past week that you did something for the approval of someone other than God. You knew it was something you shouldn't have done. Maybe you said bad words to impress someone or you said something mean about someone else to make others laugh.

Pause to let the children reflect.

Let's pray to God and tell him about anytime last week that we didn't act like his stars. We can ask for forgiveness in Jesus' name and know that God will still see us as his star. He will forgive our sins and give us a special strength to follow him.

Offer a declaration of forgiveness. Proclaim, through faith in Jesus, that they are children of their Father and he sees them as special stars.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Use the star as a place where the offering is set. Invite the children to bring the offerings forward and place them on the star. Read Philippians 2:15b-16a.

"You will be God's children without any faults among people who are crooked and corrupt. You will shine like stars among them in the world as you hold firmly to the word of life."

We shine like stars as we hold the word of life out to people. By bringing our offerings to the Lord, we help bring the word of life to other people.

Have a child pray a prayer of blessing over the offerings, as they will be used to share God's word with others. Remember to mention the mission emphasis for the month so the children know where their offering is going.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Supplies needed: bite-size candy or small candy bars per child; music, horn, or noisemaker; ball (optional)

Divide the children into groups of five. Play an elimination game such as “musical chairs” in which the children are gradually removed. (See the following options for the elimination game.) The winner of each group receives a prize, such as a candy bar. Say to the rest of the children:

**How did it feel to be left out? In what ways do we feel left out today?
Does God want to leave us out of his family? No, he gave us Jesus.
God made us his own star.**

Distribute candy to all kids as a sign that each child is a star in God’s eyes, and that our “starhood” is a free gift, not a result of something we’ve done to deserve it.

Options for Elimination Game

Option One:

The children can play “One Potato, Two Potato.” The game is simply played by having all children stand in a circle holding out their fists (both fists) while one child counts out, “One potato, two potato, three potato, four. Five potato, six potato, seven potato, more.” While the child says this rhyme, he goes around the circle thumping the fists of the other children on each beat.

The child’s fist that was thumped at the word “more” has to drop his fist. He will now only have one fist in the circle.

As soon as a child has both fists dropped out of the circle, that child is eliminated. The game continues until there is only one child left.

Option Two:

Another elimination game is to pass a ball around a circle while music, a horn, or a noisemaker is playing. When the music stops, whoever has the ball in hand is eliminated.

There may be some other elimination games that the children could tell you about. Have fun using any of the children's ideas.

Bible Reading:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Read 1 John 3:1-3:

“Consider this: The Father has given us his love. He loves us so much that we are actually called God’s dear children. And that’s what we are. For this reason, the world doesn’t recognize us, and it didn’t recognize him, either. Dear friends, now we are God’s children. What we will be isn’t completely clear yet. We do know that when Christ appears we will be like him because we will see him as he is. So all people who have this confidence in Christ keep themselves pure, as Christ is pure.”

Application:

Teach briefly on the following main points.

- 1. God loves us so much that he calls us his children. He makes us his children by giving us Jesus as our Savior. When we trust Jesus, we are his servants. God says, “I have given you Jesus. You are my child.”**
- 2. Sometimes the world doesn’t understand us as God’s children. The world did not understand Jesus either. But when Jesus comes back on the last day, we will all be changed into new heavenly bodies. We will be made perfect and shine like stars in heaven. Everyone can then see that we are God’s children.**
- 3. Because we belong to God, we understand that we have great value in his eyes.**

Application 2:

Show the Max Lucado video, *You are Special*. Available from Christianbooks.com in VHS format (\$9.99) or in DVD from Thomas Nelson (ISBN #14003003435 for \$12.99—book included.)

OR

Read “The Secret of Greatness” from Max Lucado’s *Tell Me the Secrets* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1993).

The emphasis for today’s lesson is not on the theme of greatness, but understanding we have value in God’s sight. Invite the children to close their eyes and listen to the first part of the story.

The story begins with Shannon and her father feeling left out. Shannon then reads the story about the Wemmicks. The Wemmicks’ story may be read in an interactive style. Invite children forward to play Punchinello and the parts of the characters that receive stars. The storyteller can invite the kids to do certain actions as they are described in the story.

The props for the story are six stars and six dots that could be stuck to the children’s clothing. The dots could perhaps be backed with masking tape. As the storyteller reads the story, the storyteller can attach the stars and the dots to the children.

Debrief the children with some questions that might help them make application to their lives.

When do you feel like you have dots placed on you?

What makes these dots fall off?

What can you do to help others who feel that they might have dots placed on them?

How does God put his shining star on you?



Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Let kids tell about times when they've helped others remove the "dots" in their lives. Then ask if any have experienced someone else's love helping them feel like stars.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Thank God for choosing to love us and seeing us as stars. Ask for God's help to help others discover that God wants to see them as stars too

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Supplies:

Power of the Cross:

- large cutout star with a masking tape backing

Learning Game:

- bite-size candy or small candy bars per child
- ball (optional)
- music, horn, or noisemaker

Application:

- video, *You are Special* by Max Lucado—available from Christianbooks.com in VHS format (\$9.99) or in DVD from Thomas Nelson (ISBN #14003003435 for \$12.99—book included)
- “The Secret of Greatness” from Max Lucado’s *Tell Me the Secrets* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Books, 1993)
- six stars and six dots that could be stuck to a child’s clothing (These could perhaps be backed with masking tape.)

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