

Challenge Otherring

MARK 10:13-16

4



GOAL

Using the story of Jesus welcoming little children, youth learn to identify and challenge othering.

- A Art
- AM Active/Movement
- AT Abstract Thinking
- C Conversation
- CT Concrete Thinking
- D Drama
- G Game
- M Music
- QC Quiet/Contemplative
- S Service
- T Technology
- X Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Dear God, cleanse my heart and guide my words as I teach your children. Help us all to be more like you. Amen.

THIS SESSION

Part of welcoming all people is to challenge practices that seek to unfairly exclude people. That is, it is insufficient to simply not discriminate against people; we must actively challenge instances of discrimination and oppression. In this session, youth will learn what it means to other people and develop strategies for resisting and challenging othering.

THE BIBLE STORY

We see in Mark 10:13-16 that, as a crowd gathers around Jesus, he begins to teach. People bring little children to Jesus so that he can touch and bless them, but the disciples will not let them approach. Seeing this, Jesus rebukes his disciples and tells them to let the children through. Jesus teaches that, in order to receive the kingdom of heaven, one must adopt a childlike spirit. Then, Jesus takes the children in his arms and blesses them.

Jesus leads by example and directly challenges the disciples' attempts to other little children who were not valued culturally as they are today by most people. He encourages the disciples to see themselves in the children—or perhaps to see the children in themselves—as seeing people with empathy allows us to resist othering.

CONNECTIONS WITH YOUTH

Othering may be a new concept for youth, and acknowledging differences among people may be uncomfortable for them. This session will help them overcome anxiety around diversity and inclusion of others.

SESSION PREPARATION

- If you have a member of your church that uses sign language, consider having them spend some time teaching the phrase “God welcomes all.”
- Depending on the options you choose:
 - “Game about Power and Privilege” (p. 30): Resource Pages 2 and 3 include “dollars” that will need to be cut out ahead of time. Consider printing on thicker paper.

Welcoming all is a practice as simple as saying a word of greeting to everyone we encounter, no matter if they are a stranger or a family member, every time we meet. Consider modeling this to youth by greeting each by name every time they arrive.



GETTING STARTED

WHAT MAKES ME SPECIAL

QC

As youth enter, welcome them and invite them to take a piece of paper and a pen. On their piece of paper have them respond to the prompt, “Some things that make me special are . . .”



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or more options.

CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

AM CT

Designate two areas of the room—a *yes* corner and a *no* corner. Explain that you will read a statement. If the statement applies to them, youth should proceed to the *yes* corner. If the statement does not apply to them, youth should go to the *no* corner. Try to end the game with a statement that will land all of the youth in the *yes* corner. Below are some suggested questions for the game. Feel free to come up with your own or adapt these to fit the characteristics of your group.

- ➔ Do you have brown hair?
- ➔ Is your favorite color purple?
- ➔ Do you have a brother?
- ➔ Does your name have the letter A in it?
- ➔ Do you get sad when you get hurt?
- ➔ Were you born in the United States?
- ➔ Were you born in the state of (*name of state*)?
- ➔ Do you like sports?
- ➔ Have you traveled on a plane?
- ➔ Are you a child of God?

OTHERING DEFINED

C CT

Ask if anyone knows what it means to other someone. Explain that othering is classifying a person or group as “not belonging” or “not one of us.” When we do this, we view the other person or group in a negative manner while viewing ourselves positively. Although sometimes othering is very blatant, many times othering can be very subtle. A few examples of othering are stereotyping, ignoring a person’s ideas or work, and excluding a person or group from activities. Be sure to emphasize that othering is not simply pointing out differences among people. Othering specifically involves excluding people from access to material and social resources.

Have a dialogue about othering. Consider these questions for discussion:

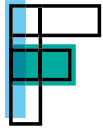
- ➔ Have you ever been othered? Invite them to share if they wish.
- ➔ Have you ever othered someone else? Invite them to share if they wish.
- ➔ What are the implications of othering? Why do we do it? What is the result?

SIGN LANGUAGE

T AM

Internet-connected device

Watch a short video demonstrating how to communicate the phrase “God welcomes all” in American Sign Language (bit.ly/FMWelcomeASL).



FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

REENACTING THE BIBLE STORY

D AM C

Bible

Invite volunteers to reenact the Bible story found in Mark 10:13–16. The cast will include Jesus, disciples, children, and parents. Encourage actors to have fun while maintaining the general structure of the Bible story.



If you have a limited number of participants, one person can play the role of disciples, children, and/or parents. If you have more youth, consider having someone act as the narrator of the story by reading the story from the Bible while other participants act out the story.

Invite youth to ask questions or tell what the story brings up for them.

Consider one or more of these discussion prompts:

- ➔ Why did people bring children to Jesus?
- ➔ Why did the disciples want to send the children away?
- ➔ How do you think the children in this story felt when they were told to go away? What about their parents? How do you think they felt when Jesus welcomed and prayed for them?

THE QUALITIES OF CHILDREN

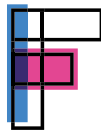
C AT CT



You may wish to make this an individual activity by inviting youth to write these qualities on a piece of paper.

Ask youth what they think Jesus meant when he said, “Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it”? Together, list the qualities children have that make them more amenable to enter God’s kingdom. Although youth had very little social standing in those days, Jesus says that we should all be like children.

Discuss: What do Jesus’ words teach us about showing compassion and hospitality to members of marginalized groups?



FINDING THE PRACTICE THEN AND NOW

Choose one or both options.

Internet-enabled device

THE BLUE EYE/BROWN EYE EXPERIMENT

T C

Watch a video about Jane Elliott's infamous "Blue Eyes, Brown Eyes" experiment (bit.ly/FMBlueEyes, 6:51). Then, have a discussion about the video:

- ➔ What happened when one group of children was given superior status?
- ➔ What happened to the group that was treated as inferior?
- ➔ What does this teach us about othering?
- ➔ What should we do when we see someone being othered?

Resource Page 1

CHURCHES INVOLVED IN SOCIAL JUSTICE

C CT

Review Resource Page 1, which depicts churches and clergy participating in demonstrations to protect groups of people who have been othered. Are the youth aware of these actions? What do they know about these demonstrations? Have they participated in some sort of demonstration before?



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

Resource Pages 2 and 3

GAME ABOUT POWER AND PRIVILEGE

G AT



If you have a larger number of participants, you can simply use multiple copies of Resource Pages 2 and 3 to ensure each person has at least four Power and Privilege dollars.

Randomly distribute "Power and Privilege dollars" to youth. On each "dollar" is a hypothetical attribute or resource that confers some level of power or privilege. Explain that you will read a series of scenarios in which a person or group is being othered. After you read a statement, invite youth to respond to the scenario using their Power and Privilege dollars. Encourage them to be creative as they think of how they might use their Power and Privilege dollars to challenge othering. Sample scenarios are included below, although you may wish to add or modify scenarios to fit your group.

- You see a kid being bullied because of their appearance.
- A family in your neighborhood lost their home and all of their possessions in a fire. They are now homeless.
- There is a student in your class who recently moved to the United States from another country. Your teacher, in front of the entire class, mocks the way the student speaks.
- During family dinner, an adult relative makes a racist joke.
- You and your friend sign up for the robotics team. You make the team, but your friend does not. You later learn that she wasn't selected because the team captain did not want too many girls on the team.
- A friend discloses that they have been kicked out of their church's youth group because they are lesbian.

- Your congregation takes steps to try and modernize the church, but some elderly members of your church express concerns about not being able to use technology.
- A classmate's parents have been detained by immigration police. Your classmate fears their parents are about to be deported.

After concluding the game, have a brief discussion about using one's privilege to challenge othering. Emphasize that standing up for what is right will often cost us something.

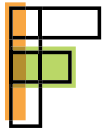
STANDING AGAINST OTHERING



Have a discussion about the importance of speaking up and standing up when we see someone being hurt by others. Invite youth to recall a time when they stood up for someone or when someone stood up for them.

Discuss:

- ➡ How did it feel to have someone advocate for you?
- ➡ Why did you stand up for another person?
- ➡ What did you learn from the experience?
- ➡ How would you act differently, if at all?



FOLLOWING JESUS

Invite youth to respond to each sentence you say, saying: "Help us to be more like you." Lead the group in the following litany:

Leader: Dear Lord, we acknowledge that you have commanded us to show hospitality.

Group: **Help us to be more like you.**

Leader: As you have welcomed us, we welcome all people.

Group: **Help us to be more like you.**

Leader: For the times we've failed to see the humanity of others, forgive us.

Group: **Help us to be more like you.**

Leader: We promise to challenge othering and to stand up for what is right, even if it costs us dearly.

Group: **Help us to be more like you.**

Church Involvement in Social Justice



Protests against the installation of the Dakota Access oil pipeline that was run through the tribal lands of indigenous people and had the risk of poisoning their water

Article: bit.ly/FMStandingRock

Image source: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Stand_with_Standing_Rock_SF_Nov_2016_04.jpg



(Photo credit: George Martell/The Pilot Media Group)
All photos available under a Creative Commons license, Share-Alike, Attribution-required.)

Demonstrations at the US/Mexico border against our nation's immigration policies that target Latino/a Americans by separating immigrant children from their parents and making it hard for them to gain citizenship

Article: bit.ly/FMNoEstasSolo

Image source: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/bostoncatholic/13564010433>



Participation in parades and demonstrations to celebrate and advocate for LGBTQ+ rights

Article: bit.ly/FMApologizeAntiLGBTQViews

Image source: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Capital_Pride_Parade_2017_\(35002437100\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Capital_Pride_Parade_2017_(35002437100).jpg)



(Photo by Vlad Tchompalov on Unsplash)

Christian leaders proclaiming "Black Lives Matter" in the wake of continued violence against black people by police

Article: bit.ly/FMResistWhiteSupremacy

Image source: <https://unsplash.com/photos/gzVgFhovsPO>

Power and Privilege Dollars

POWER AND PRIVILEGE
Education
DOLLARS

POWER AND PRIVILEGE
Education
DOLLARS

POWER AND PRIVILEGE
Being a man
DOLLARS

POWER AND PRIVILEGE
Being a white person
DOLLARS

POWER AND PRIVILEGE
Wealth/money
DOLLARS

POWER AND PRIVILEGE
Large home
DOLLARS

POWER AND PRIVILEGE
Wealth/money
DOLLARS

Power and Privilege Dollars

<p>POWER AND PRIVILEGE</p> <p>Being Christian</p> <p>DOLLARS</p>	<p>POWER AND PRIVILEGE</p> <p>Being popular</p> <p>DOLLARS</p>
<p>POWER AND PRIVILEGE</p> <p>Having a family friend who is a lawyer</p> <p>DOLLARS</p>	
<p>POWER AND PRIVILEGE</p> <p>Speaking up!</p> <p>DOLLARS</p>	
<p>POWER AND PRIVILEGE</p> <p>Speaking up!</p> <p>DOLLARS</p>	<p>POWER AND PRIVILEGE</p> <p>Access to technology/internet</p> <p>DOLLARS</p>
<p>POWER AND PRIVILEGE</p> <p>Having a good relationship with an authority figure</p> <p>DOLLARS</p>	