



THE WELCOME MAT (Children's Story/Parable)

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“He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives the one who sent me. Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward. And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple, I tell you the truth, he will certainly not lose his reward” Matthew 10:40-42 (NIV).

[Bring one or more large front door welcome mats to show the children, as well as an invitation to any special event you may have planned for visitors following the main service.]

“Good morning! Have you ever seen one of these? Where have you seen something like this? Usually we'd see a mat like this outside the door to our home, wouldn't we? What would we use this for?”

“Well, for one thing, it is placed outside your door as a sign to let people know that they are welcome in your home. There are a lot of ways to welcome someone into your home. What kinds of things do you do or does your mom or dad do when folks are coming to visit? Do you clean the house? Do you change the sheets on the bed? Do you make special food?”

“When I have people who come to visit my home, I want them to feel welcome. I might make a special meal or ask them what they would most enjoy doing when they are visiting me. I might offer them a drink of water or show them around my house. If they have small children, I might prepare a special play area with toys they especially like. How important is it to make people feel welcome when they visit our home?” “What about in our church, God's house? What can we do to help visitors feel welcome and want to come back to His house?”

“Do we speak to those people who are visiting our church that we do not know? What if the people who visit us don't dress like us or talk like us? How do we make sure to plan ahead so they will know they are welcome? What about in Sabbath School? Can you look for new faces and then ask their name or even invite them to sit next to you in your class? Those are all ways to put out a welcome mat at God's house and really mean it.”

“Jesus said, ‘He who receives you receives me.’ This verse helps us to understand that if we do not welcome others into God’s house, it is the same as if we are refusing to welcome Jesus. We wouldn’t do that, would we?”

“So look around today. Find someone that you think might be a visitor. One ‘welcome mat’ we can put out today is to go ask their name and tell them yours!”

Or if you have a special meal/program planned following church, encourage the children to go and give them a previously printed invitation to that event.

“Let’s put out the welcome mat – and let’s be sure that we mean it!”

“Dear Father, help us to remember that when we welcome others to our house and Yours, it is the same as welcoming you. Amen.”