

# Fuller inclusion (Mark 10:2-16)

**Jesus' blessing of the children and re-centering them in the midst of the community serves as a sort of Pride parable.**

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After hearing Jesus' teaching on marriage, many churchgoers will be mindful that 2025 is the 10th anniversary of the *Obergefell v. Hodges* decision granting LGBTQ marriage equality in the United States. Many will also be anticipating their own 10th anniversary of official marriage.

Although traditions vary, this can serve as an opportunity to remind congregations that many churches and denominations are committed to supporting same-gender marriage and have provided liturgical resources expanding the mini-liturgy of Jesus in the gospel of Mark.

To take just a few examples, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has published [a marriage service supplement](#) that offers inclusive language for all couples who seek to be married within the church. Just this year the Episcopal Church's House of Bishops began [adding an inclusive marriage rite](#) to the Book of Common Prayer. The Presbyterian Church (USA) publishes [Inclusive Marriage Services: A Wedding Sourcebook](#).

Given how triggering it may be for some to hear in worship an apparently gender-essentialist and non-inclusive description of marriage, reading from these core resources in our denominations can appropriately shift attention to the spiritual joys

inherent in a more inclusive understanding of marriage.

Although Obergefell established LGBTQ marriage equality, many disability advocates point out that marriage in the United States still is not fully equal. Millions of Americans with disabilities still cannot marry without risking access to life-saving health care. As just one example of the disability rights' campaign to make marriage truly inclusive, the Marriage Equality for Disabled Adults Act would eliminate requirements that what the law calls "disabled adult children" should remain unmarried in order to receive lifetime benefits and health care through Social Security.

Notably, this campaign for disability inclusion resonates with the shift in today's pericope from Jesus' instruction on marriage and divorce to his welcome of children. Because in some senses current laws continue to treat disabled Americans as children even when they're adults, Jesus' blessing of the children and re-centering them in the midst of the community serves as a sort of Pride parable: now that LGBTQ marriage equality has been won, it can be an impetus to see that we are invited by Jesus to full inclusion and to expand such wins to those who are still excluded.