

Ordinary Time, Proper 20

Heritage Day



The Children's Illustrated Bible

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—Mark 9:33–37 adapted

Near to God

Jesus said to put children first. Read the story in Mark 9:30–37 and in *The Children's Illustrated Bible*. Sometimes the disciples were eager to learn everything Jesus taught them. Other times they argued about who would be the greatest. Jesus told them that whoever wanted to be first should go last and be a servant. He used a child as an example of those who are the smallest, most fragile, most in need of help. Jesus said that being a disciple means putting the weakest members of the community first.

One at a time, have kids identify what each is the greatest at (fastest runner, best listener, has the best toys). Be sure that everyone is the "greatest" at something. Luckily, in God's eyes, we can all be the greatest. If we used Jesus' method, we would say, "How can I help my parents clean the house?" Read James 3:13, 17, 18; 4:8. It's easy to think the greatest is the one who did the best or came in first, but God says the real winners are those who _____. (Have kids list the statements they heard in the scripture reading.)

Sometimes kids need to put others first, when there are others who have greater need. Discuss: Have you ever helped an older person, a young person, or anyone who needed your help? Then you were doing what Jesus said.

Kids Are Coming!

Place a chair inside a circle made of rope. Choose someone (a youth or adult) to depict Jesus. Jesus may sit on the chair or stand. Choose two kids to be "disciples," while other kids stand around the circle. This is the story of Jesus and the children, and the goal is for the children to get to Jesus. When the signal is given, kids lift the rope and try to sneak under it. But if a disciple tags you, you must sit down where you are tagged. Only Jesus can reach over to free you. The goal is for all kids to get to Jesus, but the disciples will be busy trying to keep them away. Every new round, choose new disciples.

Discuss after: How did it feel to try to get to Jesus? Why would the disciples want to keep you from getting to Jesus? Do you ever feel like something keeps you from getting close to Jesus? What? What things can you do to be closer to Jesus? (study, pray, help others, etc.)



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Make a list of things you can do to be closer to Jesus.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____