

**Date:** 9-23-18

**Theme:** Who Is Greatest?

**Scripture:** Mark 9: 30-37

**Materials and Preparation:**

- a. You need 5-8 sheets of paper for use in Game 2.
- b. Bring seven copies of the skit to class (one for each of the teachers and 5 for the players). See page 3 below for the skit.
- c. Prior to class, locate costumes for the skit (in the resource room). Bring a selection of costumes and let the students choose theirs. Costumes are needed for the following four roles: Jesus, Peter, James, and John. (You might also consider bringing something special for the narrator to wear, e.g., a hat or vest.)
- d. Bring at least five balloons for the “Balloon Bop” activity.
- e. The New Revised Standard Version of today’s Bible text is copied for your convenience on page 4 below; it may be of interest to you as background information.

**Vocabulary Words:** disciple, arguing, emperor

**Objective:** To help the students understand Jesus’ teaching that *to be great is to serve others*.

**Opening:** Read the Lord’s Prayer together (suggestion: have students take turns reading a line or two from the prayer).

**Activity 1:**

Game 1. Stand up, lift one foot up off the ground and hook one arm under your knee to keep that foot up. If your foot touches the ground or you lean on something, you’re out. Ready? Go! [Play the game twice, with the winner receiving cheers and a round of applause.]

Game 2. Team up (2 per team). Make a ball out of a piece of paper by wadding it up. Stand 6 feet apart. Throw the ball back and forth. If either team member drops the ball, the team is out. Ready? Go! [Play the game twice, with the winning team receiving cheers and a round of applause.]

**Reading:**

Questions: Can you name any people who are great? What makes a person important? [Encourage responses from each of the students.]

Read: Mark 9: 30-37 (*Whirl Story Bible* or *Spark Story Bible*).

To understand this passage better, let’s try it as a skit.

**Activity 2:** *Skit: Who Is Greatest?* (see page 3)

Remember to have seven copies of the skit on hand.

Have the students perform the skit at least three times, with different students playing different roles each time.

Next ask: How does Jesus' idea of who's great compare with most people's idea of who's great? Is winning what makes a person great? Being smarter? Faster? More famous?

**Activity 3:** Balloon Bop (a cooperative game)

1. Show the students how to keep a balloon in the air by lightly tapping it. Let them try this briefly with a partner.
2. Now, have the students form a circle and hold hands.
3. Drop one balloon into the circle. The students are to keep the balloon in the air by tapping it with hands, arms, heads, shoulders, or knees (no feet)—*all the while continuing to hold hands*. (To do this, the students will have to work cooperatively; they must move together or else lose connection.)
4. Time the students: how long can they keep the balloon in the air? (If the balloon hits the floor or the students break connection, record the time and start over. Let the students play several rounds.)
5. Take note of students who are cooperating well and encouraging others to do so. Point out how these helpful actions are needed in order for the group to do well in keeping the balloon aloft. (In much of life, being helpful helps everyone "win.")

**Closing:** Jesus says that being great is a matter of serving or helping others. What are some ways you could help your parents, brothers, sisters, friends (or others) in the coming week? (Have each student give an example.)

Offer a short prayer asking that God would bless the students in their efforts to help others in the coming week.

**Offering:** Have volunteers perform the skit for the congregation. (Suggestion: rehearse the play one more time before performing it before the congregation.)

### Skit: Who Is Greatest?

**Narrator:** Jesus chose 12 disciples. (A disciple is a follower or student of Jesus.) Three of the disciples were named Peter, James, and John. One day Peter, James, and John got into an argument.

**Peter:** Hey guys, have you noticed that I am the best disciple of Jesus? I'm always the first to understand what he says. I'm really smart.

**John:** Oh, give me a break, Peter! You may be the first to speak but all you say is blah, blah, blah. I'm the only one who really listens to Jesus.

**James:** Stop! You're both wrong! I'm the greatest disciple. Everybody knows that! I'm also a super nice guy, if I do say so myself!

**Jesus:** Sounds like you are having quite a discussion. What are you talking about?

**Peter:** Nothing much, really.

**John:** Aw, shucks. We were just talking.

**James:** Well, I guess, I mean, it's hard to explain . . . .

**Jesus:** Guys, I heard what you were talking about: Who is greatest? And I understand. We all want to be strongest, smartest, fastest, best looking, most famous, and so on. But do you know who is really greatest? It's the person who thinks about other people, and about what they need, and who tries to help them. That's true greatness.

**Teachers:** The New Revised Standard Version of today's Bible lesson is copied here for your convenience, as helpful background information. (The NRSV stays much closer to the original Greek text than does the *Whirl Story Bible* or the *Spark Story Bible*.) I do not recommend having the students read from the NRSV but it may be of interest to you.

**Mark 9:30-37 (NRSV)** <sup>30</sup> They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; <sup>31</sup> for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." <sup>32</sup> But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him. <sup>33</sup> Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" <sup>34</sup> But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. <sup>35</sup> He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." <sup>36</sup> Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, <sup>37</sup> "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."