

Jesus Welcomes Children

Grades
3-4

GREATNESS • LECTIONARY 25 • YEAR B

MARK 9:30-37



25

What's happening in this story?

Jesus turns the world upside down with a new idea of what God's world looks like. The last will be first, and it's all about serving others. As Jesus explains it, the power of the kingdom of God is completely opposite of how the world understands power and why he uses the example of a child. Children are among the most vulnerable and powerless members in society, but those who welcome and serve people without power here on earth exhibit the power that is commended in the kingdom of God.

What does this mean for kids?

Little kids will love this story because Jesus is using *them* to teach that when we welcome someone vulnerable among us, we welcome Jesus himself. Kids will hear they are welcomed into the life of Jesus and that they really matter to him. They can also recognize "Whoever wants to be first must be last" as a radical teaching. Kids are tuned in to who is more skilled, who is older, who is stronger, who has more power. Jesus' turning this idea on its head will make an impression on them.

What is the lectionary connection?

While still early in the academic year, talk with kids about what servanthood looks like in a school setting. Ask kids how teachers serve them throughout the day and how they in turn can practice servanthood toward their peers, teachers, custodians, food service workers, and others—especially those in positions society ranks "last."

AGE LEVEL TIP

Kids pay attention to who is more skilled or more powerful. It is important that they see how Jesus turns this idea on its head by bringing children into the discussion. As is the case now, kids in Jesus' day didn't hold power. At that time, however, children were far less valued than they are today.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Toilet paper tubes (1 per kid)
- Red cellophane squares (1 per kid)
- Rubber bands (1 per kid)
- Small cross
- Sticky notes (3 per kid)

WHIRL SUPPLIES • WHIRL NRSV BIBLES • DVD • WALL CHART • LEAFLETS

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

As kids enter, invite each to think of a number between 1 and 100. Kids try to guess one kid's number as she or he responds with "Bigger!" or "Smaller!" until someone gets it right. Take turns until all numbers are guessed.

Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

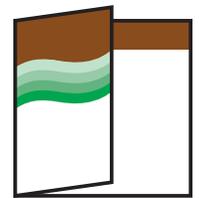
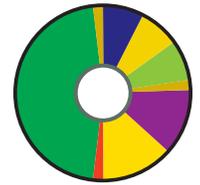
Point out today's date, church season, color, and icon. Invite three kids to write "G," "R," and "8" on the Wall Chart. **What do you think we'll talk about today? The reading is about people who argue over who is the greatest. What does it mean to be the greatest?**

Line kids up, tallest to shortest. Ask them to rearrange the line the other way around. **In God's reign, Jesus turns greatness the other way around.**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

Welcoming unexpected people is part of being in God's kingdom. How can we help people feel welcome at our church? What could you add to the land around this church so it looks welcoming for all, great and small? Find a partner, trade leaflets, and draw a welcoming scene on your partner's leaflet.

Kids might add flowers, plants, welcoming people, a food table, and so on.



Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Name some times when you don't feel like you really matter, when you feel that you're not important. Let's watch as Leo finds out what really makes him great.

View Episode 2, "Director Objector," on the Whirl Year B Fall Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

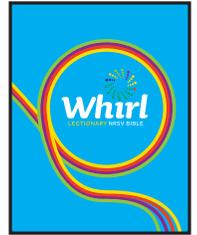
- What is Roxy distracted by when she meets with Leo?
- Why do you think she wants to be the director of the play again?
- When have you been in charge of something? How did it make you feel?
- How is Chet's attitude about being the director different from Roxy's?
- Why is it important to put kids first?



Pass out Whirl NRSV Bibles and help kids find Mark 9:30-37.

Do the Lectionary 25 Preview Activity together on page 1169 and compare responses.

Read Mark 9:30-37 in this creative way together: Invite kids to sit in a circle around a small cross. **This reading is divided into two parts. In the first part, Jesus tells his disciples that someone will *betray* him. That means one of his friends will hand Jesus over to his enemies. The disciples don't understand what Jesus is telling them. In the second part, Jesus unexpectedly starts to talk about children. I'll read verses 30-32. Then (name of a good reader you've invited to read) will read verses 33-37. Follow along as both of us read.**



Ask these questions after you read the story:

- As Jesus and his disciples were talking, what did he say would happen to him?
- The disciples argued about greatness, so Jesus talked about serving other people. How did (name), a great reader, serve us today?
- Jesus knew kids didn't have much power. But he wanted his disciples to see that God welcomes everyone. How do grown-ups in your church help you feel welcome?
- The disciples wanted to fight over who was the *best*. Do you have to be the best at something to be *great*?
- Jesus turned the world upside down for the disciples—first is last and last is first. What does that mean?

BIBLE BIT

In Mark 9:30-37, Jesus tells his disciples he will be killed, echoing Jeremiah 11:19: "But I was like a gentle lamb led to the slaughter."

WATCH IT AGAIN

Have kids act out their best "robot" at the end of the video.

OUR CHURCH

Invite a leader in your church to come in to talk about being a "servant leader."

TODAY'S READINGS

Proverbs 31:10-31 🇺🇸 • Jeremiah 11:18-20 🇵🇳 • James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a
Mark 9:30-37

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. The leaflet square shows four pairs of images. Look at each pair, one at a time, and ask kids to name who or what is the greatest and why.
2. **God looks at the world differently than we do. What greatness might God see?** Look at each pair again. Be sure all kids have a chance to contribute.
3. Pass out a toilet paper tube, a square of red cellophane, and a rubber band to each kid. **Attach the cellophane to one end of the tube with the rubber band to make a “God’s view” spyglass.**
4. **Look at the center of your leaflet square through your “God’s view” spyglass. What message do you see?** Kids looking through the red cellophane will see: You Are Great.
5. **In the area to the right of the child, write one way that you are great—one way you can serve.** Remind kids Jesus told his disciples greatness means serving other people.

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Jesus helped the disciples understand greatness by inviting them to welcome children. Why do you think Jesus used kids as his example? Take time to hear kids’ responses.

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out markers and sticky notes.

People often think power, money, and fame make us great. Write “power,” “money,” and “fame” on the sticky side of three sticky notes (one word per note). Jesus turned this upside down! Ask kids to turn the notes over so they stick on the thrones. Now write “caring,” “giving,” and “serving” on the notes.

Send kids out.

Ask kids to line up again from tallest to shortest. Use a timer to see how fast they can “turn the line around” from shortest to tallest without talking. **In God’s reign, Jesus turns greatness the other way around.**

Pray together: **Say a silent prayer for the person sitting to your left—for good health, success in school, or for something that is worrying that person. When I flash the lights, we’ll all say say, “Amen.”**

Thank kids for just being kids, who remind adults what is really important! Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.