

Jesus Welcomes Children

Grades
5-6

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 this age know what it feels like to be first—and last. Invite them to share their stories, and they will know they are welcomed and loved by you!



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Permanent marker
- White paper
- Pencils
- Markers

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Whiteboard or mural paper
- Dry erase markers
- Highlighters

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

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Never underestimate the power of a welcoming smile! As kids arrive, greet them by name with a smile and a high-five. Ask them to think about great people and write their names on the mural paper with a permanent marker or whiteboard with dry erase markers.

Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

Point out today's date, church season, color, and icon. **We are still in the green season—the Season after Pentecost. It is a long season when we can grow in our understanding of Jesus. Today's theme is greatness, and Jesus' definition of that word surprised his disciples and turned their world upside down.** Ask a volunteer to use a permanent marker to write "great" upside down on today's date. **Have you ever met anyone who turned your world and your thinking upside down?**

Invite kids to introduce themselves and answer the question of the day. **Have you ever been upside down? How did it feel? Today we hear about Jesus turning things upside down.**

Pass out leaflets and pencils.

Look at the images on the leaflet and discuss what makes each of them great in our culture. Invite kids

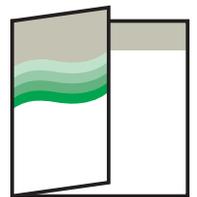
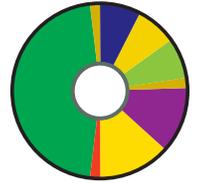
to draw another object that makes them think of greatness. **How do you think Jesus described greatness?**

Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video. **Raise your hand if you've ever been a leader of something. What did you do?** Take time to hear kids' responses. **In today's video, we'll discover how Chet and Roxy handle leadership.**

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

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- **Why was Roxy so distracted while talking with Leo?**
- **Roxy didn't understand why Chet was chosen to be the director. Why do you think Chet was chosen instead of Roxy?**
- **How did Chet treat the cast? How did he treat Roxy?**
- **Leo was really happy when Roxy noticed his robot. Why?**
- **Sometimes being great means we think about others first. What will you do differently if you think about others first at school? At home? At church?**



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: Do a readers’ theater reading of the text twice through. The first time, kids read a verse at a time standing on a chair, using their “I am super-great!” voices. The second time, kids read a verse at a time on their knees with their “I am here to serve you” voices. Debrief the experience—talk about what it was like to read with different voices and postures.



Jesus often talked about countercultural things his disciples didn’t understand. Jesus turned the disciples’ world upside down in this story by telling them that in God’s kingdom, the people who are great will be the people who serve others, and not the people with power. And in God’s kingdom, kids, the most often ignored, are great.

Invite the kids to use highlighters on verses 35–37 and write something in the margin (“Jesus loves kids,” “Kids matter,” etc.).

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- Who was Jesus talking with in this story?
- Who is the greatest, according to Jesus?
- Where do you really feel like you belong and matter?
- Talk about a time someone served you. What did they do for you? What did it feel like?
- How might we, as people in our church, serve people who welcome in most places?

BIBLE BIT

Jesus uprooted the traditional idea of power when he said that to be great you have to be the servant of all.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Watch how Roxy’s attitude about Chet’s role as director changes throughout the episode.

OUR CHURCH

Kids can practice being last instead of first when they get refreshments at church. Challenge them to wait until everyone has their food before they grab the donuts and drinks!

RESPOND 10

Open leaflets and pass out markers.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. In two minutes, on the pink side of your square, list some of the things you enjoy doing. Use a different color for each item. Often, the things we enjoy doing are the things we are really good at! Maybe you're good at sports; maybe you like meeting new people; maybe you love playing percussion instruments; maybe you love playing with little kids.
2. Now, take one minute to find a partner. Find someone you don't know very well!
3. Introduce yourself to your partner if you don't already know them, and tell them all the things you're good at.
4. Then ask your partner for ideas about how you can use your talents to serve others. Turn the square upside down and write their ideas in the blue column.
5. After three minutes, prompt kids to switch to talk about the other person's talents.
6. Gather again as a large group and take three minutes for pairs to share what they are really good at, and one way they can serve others doing it.

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

All of us have different abilities and interests we enjoy *and* can use to serve others. Jesus challenged the disciples to be servants and to be okay with being last instead of first. How can you serve others who normally serve you at home? At school? At church? At your activities? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Return to the leaflet panels and pass out pencils.

Challenge yourself to serve someone who usually serves you (a teacher, a bus driver, a parent, a custodian, etc.). Write down your idea by the robot and hang it up in the classroom to remind yourself of the servant challenge.

Send kids out.

Give kids thirty seconds to get themselves in birthday order. Invite each kid, youngest to oldest, to share something they learned about someone in the group today that they didn't know before.

Pray together: **Jesus, thank you for turning the world upside down, challenging us to be last and servants of all. Help us serve others in your name every day. Amen.**

Thank kids for thinking about how they can serve others every day. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.