



Faith Adventures Youth Resource

Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond.

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR

Title: Mark 9: 33-37 - Who is the greatest?

Theme: Me first

Contents:

Introduction	1
Together	2
Experience	3
Explore	3
Express	5
Handouts	8

Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Rounding off our monthly theme of "It's Not Fair" we focus on Jesus' followers who were jockeying for position.

Jesus and his friends were heading back to Capernaum where they were staying – probably in Peter's house. They had witnessed many things (we know some of the stories) since leaving Mount Tabor where a few of Jesus' closest friends had witnessed The Transfiguration.

Maybe these closest friends thought they were more important than the rest of the disciples – we don't know – but our Bible passage tells us they were arguing about who was the greatest among them. Rank and status was as important then as it is now – it decided who sat where at mealtimes and who had access to Jesus.

In this session we will be exploring the value that is put on different people and how that can seem unfair. Be aware of how the children you work with are 'seen' at church. How are they treated? Where do they fit in? What status are they afforded?

Together – prayer and games

Let's start our time with God and each other well

Use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen

Alternatively, you may join with the Widgit prayer found in the Faith Adventures: Children together or else the Lord's Prayer found at the end of this session.

Active game - Minute to win it Olympics

Have some fun finding out who the greatest is for different games. Run it as a tournament with a chart showing who the greatest was at each game. Keep the games to a strict 1 minute to keep a fast pace and not take too much time. Games could include, Tug of war, arm wrestling, thumb war, Rock paper scissors. Remind the group that not everyone is great at everything but we can all be great at something. Present prizes for those that came last. It's not fair but makes the point and gets them talking.

Quiet game – King of the jungle

Arrange all players in a horseshoe shape, facing the centre.

The player at one end of the horseshoe is the King of the Jungle.

Each player chooses a unique animal sound (no duplicates allowed). The King of the Jungle is always the lion (roar!).

Go around the group so everyone can practice their sound a couple of times.

The aim is to climb your way up the horseshoe to claim the King of the Jungle spot!

The King of the Jungle starts by making their animal sound, followed immediately by another player's sound. Example: "Roar – Meow."

The player whose sound was called must quickly respond with their animal sound, followed by someone else's. Example: "Meow – Quack."

No one may pass back to the person who just passed to them.

If a player hesitates too long or makes a mistake, they must move to the end of the horseshoe.

When this happens all players between the mistake-maker's old spot and the end slide forward one position.

Each player takes on the animal sound of their new seat.

If the King of the Jungle messes up, everyone shifts forward and swaps animal sounds!

Play for a set time or until you decide to stop. The person sitting as the King of the Jungle at the end is the winner.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to The Living Translation

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark%209%3A33-37&version=TLB>

You may wish to research different versions of this reading on www.biblegateway.com

Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

³³ And so they arrived at Capernaum. When they were settled in the house where they were to stay, he asked them, “What were you discussing out on the road?”

³⁴ But they were ashamed to answer, for they had been arguing about which of them was the greatest!

³⁵ He sat down and called them around him and said, “Anyone wanting to be the greatest must be the least—the servant of all!”

³⁶ Then he placed a little child among them; and taking the child in his arms he said to them, ³⁷ “Anyone who welcomes a little child like this in my name is welcoming me, and anyone who welcomes me is welcoming my Father who sent me!”

The Living Bible copyright © 1971 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Listen:

We are the champions by Queen

<https://youtu.be/d5GkgVhFeZY?si=nbf5OZoQ3O8pmPzp>

Hall of fame by The Script https://youtu.be/3Kxf2dHIDpQ?si=-B_4JYaKoRThKB2t

Waymaker by Michael W Smith https://youtu.be/3Kxf2dHIDpQ?si=-B_4JYaKoRThKB2t

Questions for discussion

As you listen to the following songs, consider what they are saying to you about what it means to be great.

- How does this match what Jesus was saying about greatness and what he showed us in the way he lived?
- Is it ok for a Christian to want to be great at something?

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

Starter activity.

This passage is not the only time within the Bible where there was a discussion about being the greatest, share Matthew 20:22-28, with the group. What else does the Bible tell us about Peter, James and John? List the traits of the three disciples. Then discuss as a group which of them was the greatest disciple and why.

As individuals, they will choose different opinions. Chat with the group about how everyone sees things from their own perspective based on experience and personality.

Continue to explore the theme by having mock elections to choose a Monarch for the day. Each person says "I think you should pick me because..." name one reason.

The leaders keep a note of the traits and help with ideas for those present if they are unable to think of anything for themselves. Once everyone has given their reason either the group or the leader decides who will be Monarch – then have a quick fun coronation.

As soon as the coronation is over, remind the group that this is exactly what the disciples had been doing, they had been arguing over who of them was the best, the greatest. Jesus takes the opportunity to let them know that they were missing the point, that we are to serve others.

Jesus was seen as great, he did amazing things; he was talking about God's perspective on greatness.

- Can you think of times when Jesus was a servant to others?

Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.

From the Creators of **Toy Story**



Monsters Inc (2001) – The Scarer competition

<https://youtu.be/XBqwXEiVhik?si=5AJvhHn-rSgKXXwG>

In this clip we see Randall and Sulley competing to be the best scarer. Each monster has different gifts and skills, but who will win? In the passage the disciples were competing with each other, arguing about who is the greatest. What sorts of things do you think they were telling each other about their skills and reasons they were great? What do you think Jesus would have said was great about each one?

Group discussion

- What would politics look like if politicians didn't want to be important?
- Why were the disciples ashamed of what they had been talking about?
- Explore love languages, what people 'need' to feel valued, what is your love language?

Personal reflection

- When you think that life isn't fair to you, is this because you think you are more important?
- Is there a difference between someone who is great and someone who is important?

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Praying together

Prayer Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session, or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

One voice: Jesus, You asked Your friends what they were arguing about. They were embarrassed—because they'd been fighting about who was the greatest. But You didn't praise power or popularity.

You showed them a child and said, "If you want to be first, be the very last, and the servant of all."

All: Lord, we want to follow Your way, not the world's way.

One voice: We live in a world that says: Be impressive. Be important. Be first. But You teach us to be different. You call us to be humble, to serve, to love without expecting praise.

All: Help us care more about people than popularity.

(Pause for 10–15 seconds of silence)

One voice: Jesus, sometimes we care too much about how we look to others. We chase approval. We want to be noticed. We feel pressure to be liked, to stand out, to be "great."

All: Lord, forgive us when we focus on ourselves instead of others.

One voice: Help us remember that You see greatness in small things— In kindness, in listening, in helping, in welcoming someone who feels left out.

All: Teach us to be the kind of people who lift others up.

One voice: Give us courage to serve without needing to be seen. To follow You, even when it's hard. To be okay with being last, if that's where You want us.

All: Jesus, help us be humble like You. Amen.

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

What is greatness? Who is Great?

The phrase "Some are born great, some achieve greatness, and some have greatness thrust upon them" is a famous line from Shakespeare's "Twelfth Night" (Act 2, Scene 5). It looks at three separate ways that people can become 'great'.

But Jesus, although he was born great (the Son Of God), might also be said to have achieved greatness (by dying on the cross and having lots of things written about him) and had greatness thrust upon him – by virtue of having followers and disciples that listened to everything he said – as we still do now.

And yet Jesus didn't seem to want 'greatness'. He wanted to serve. There are many examples of Jesus being servant-like in the gospels. How many can you find? What did Jesus' servant-hood look like and how was it received by those he served?

Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today? If not here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the "conversation starter" questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. **I wonder if people can ever be happy coming last?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT, Resources (jpit.uk) *Commitment for Life* cforl.co.uk
- Try letting others go first – in the queue at the shops, canteen at lunch, to get the first biscuit or cake, to use the toilet first, etc – how does it feel to let them go first?

Thank you for exploring the **Mark** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on www.bit.ly/FACT_FB

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread

and forgive us our sins As we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

