



Who Is the Greatest?

(based on Mark 9:33–37)

Jesus was walking with his friends to the town of Capernaum.

It was a long walk, and along the way some of the disciples began to argue with each other.

They didn't want Jesus to hear them, so they walked slowly behind him.

"I am the greatest disciple," boasted one of Jesus' disciples.

"You are not," exclaimed another. "I listen better and do far more to help. That makes me the greatest disciple."

"No way," said another. "I must be the greatest disciple because Jesus asks for my help all the time."

"You are all wrong," said another one. "I have been following Jesus since the beginning. I am the greatest disciple."

The argument went on for some time. Eventually, they arrived in the town of Capernaum and stopped to rest. When they were all settled, Jesus spoke to the disciples. "What were you arguing about on the way here?"

There was complete silence. The disciples all looked at the floor because no one wanted to answer.

Jesus knew what his friends had been arguing about. "Come with me," he said. "I have something to show you."

Jesus walked over to where some children were playing and said, "If you want to be really great, you must look after others and help them."

Jesus reached out and picked up a child. "Even the children and those that seem the least important are great in God's eyes," he said. "Whoever welcomes a child in my name welcomes me. And whoever welcomes me welcomes God. That is God's way, and that is how we should live."



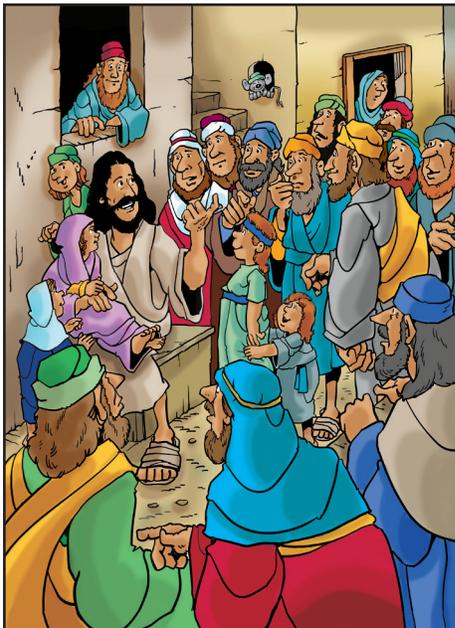
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Wonder with your children what makes a great person. The media glorify famous actors, sports figures, and others. They aren't always the best examples. Help your children think of people who are great because of their care for others.
- Read *A Baby Sister for Frances* by Russell Hoban (Harper Collins, 2011) or watch the YouTube video "A Baby Sister For Frances, A Children's Story, read aloud Written by Russell Hoban" (bit.ly/BabySisterForFrances, 9:35). Wonder together about loving, even in difficult times.



Responding to God's Grace

- Using blocks or other materials, build a city. Make sure to include buildings that serve others. Some ideas are a hospital, a school, and a food pantry. What can your family think of?
- If you have a family pet, talk about the difference between pets and people. Who serves whom? Does your pet get your meals, or do you get meals for your pet? Does your pet take you for a walk, or do you walk your pet? Who is first and last, you or your pet?
- Teach your children to hold the door for other people, letting others go first.
- Wonder together how everyone in the family can offer to serve the others. Try a few ideas and recognize how the action is serving another person. Talk about how it feels to serve others.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Invite your children to set up an activity in which they serve you, such as a tea party or a meal, or in which they invite you to go first, such as playing a game. Talk about how it feels to serve or let another person be first.
- Pray this prayer:

Thank you, God, for welcoming us. We want to live in your way. Help us to welcome others. Amen.

Note: bit.ly web addresses are case sensitive.