



Lead by Serving

(based on Matthew 20:20–28)

The disciples traveled with Jesus as he went from town to town. Jesus was their teacher. The disciples were learning how to follow God’s loving ways like Jesus did.

Two of the disciples were brothers. Their names were James and John.

One day, the mother of James and John came to see Jesus with her two sons.

“When you are made the ruler of the world,” she said, “please let my two sons rule with you. One of them can sit on your right and the other can sit on your left.”

“It isn’t my job to decide who will sit in those places,” replied Jesus. “God has already decided who will rule the world. God will tell us when the time is right.”

The other disciples were furious with James and John.

“It’s not fair!” they exclaimed. “Why should you be given the choice places next to Jesus? Why should you rule? We are Jesus’ friends too. We have just as much right to rule the world as you do.”

Jesus called them all together.

“You know how great leaders in the world like to boss everyone around?” Jesus asked. “They want everyone to bow down to them. They want everyone to do as they are told.”

The disciples nodded.

“Don’t act like them,” continued Jesus. “If you want to be a great leader, you must help others. If you wish to be a ruler, then you must look after everyone. Look at me! I did not come to boss people around. I came to give my life in order to give life and freedom to many people.”

The disciples were beginning to understand that Jesus was a different kind of leader. They realized that they had to be like Jesus. So they went out with him every day and learned how to be good leaders by being good helpers.



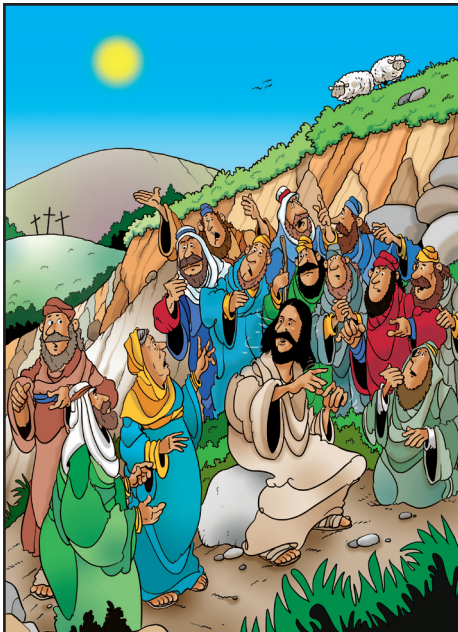
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your family members—imagine and wonder.
- Spend a few minutes identifying ways you have been serving the people at school, in your group of friends, or in your family.
- Let your family members take turns pantomiming acts of service. Try to guess the action being shown.



Responding to God's Grace

- Think of new ways to serve people at school, at work, in a group of friends, or in your family.
- Set aside a bulletin board or sheet of poster board. Make a booklet of service acts your family can offer. Write or draw one service act on separate sheets of paper. Staple the sheets together into a booklet and trade booklets with others in your group or family. When an act of service is performed, tear that page out of the booklet and put it on the bulletin board or poster.
- Practice serving others by holding the door and letting them go first, or by offering to help carry things. Talk about how good it feels to serve others.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Have a “Service Jar.” Place an empty jar in a visible spot. When someone in the family does an act of service, put a marble, or other small object, in the jar. As the jar fills, celebrate this visual reminder of service.
- Invite family members to share what the service of others has meant to them.
- Pray this prayer each day this week:

Thank you, God, for helping me learn how to serve. Amen.