

Jostling for position

 **Mark 9.30-37**

Where we find Jesus spending time with his disciples, trying to teach them about who he is and what will happen to him. But his disciples are more interested in which of them is the most important. Jesus teaches them that being great in God's eyes means making yourself less and thinking about other people more.

Now read **Mark 9.30-37** see p.2 for text.

A note on the passage

Jesus knows the score: he knows what his disciples have been arguing about and he knows that, as humans, we're hardwired to look out for ourselves. How many times have you compared yourself with other people and been annoyed if someone else seems to have more, or something bigger or better than you? But Jesus says that, in God's kingdom, the opposite is true. You want to be important and have the best of everything? Then put other people first, and you will gain a spiritual reward that is beyond anything the world can offer.



Ask yourself: Who or what would you put on the empty plinth in Trafalgar Square?

ORDER

Chat to friends or family members and organise yourselves in order from best to worst (or first to last) in various categories, such as 'best at loading the dishwasher', 'best cook' or 'champion arm wrestler'! Alternatively, organise Prime Ministers over the last 10 years in order from best to worst, or top 10 musicals or footballers – or whatever other category you want to use.



List all the privileges you gain as you get older – more pocket money, playing with friends without adults, staying up later, watching certain programmes, getting a phone, buying alcohol, voting, etc. Now list all the responsibilities that go along with these privileges. How can we use our privileges and status to celebrate and help others?

paper chain

Make a paper chain of people (first cut a strip of paper, then fold it several times – one way and then the other. Draw a person, ensuring the hands and feet are touching the edges. Cut out carefully to keep the chain intact, cutting around the outline and leaving the connected edges).

Unfold the paper chain and, on one side, draw in faces as if the line is moving forwards. On the other side, draw in faces as if the line is moving in the opposite direction (so that the first is last and the last is first). Put your paper chain up somewhere you'll see it to remind you to put others before yourself, trusting that God will take care of you.

ACROSTIC



Take each of the letters in the word 'first' and, for each, think of a word that reflects the qualities of God's kingdom. For example, your first word could be fair.



The next time you have the chance to push yourself forward – when treats are being shared out, when only one of something is left, or when you're arguing about who gets to choose what you watch on TV, remember Jesus' words. When we put others before ourselves on this earth, we store up even greater rewards in heaven.

Choose a version of the passage to read. The first is the ROOTS version for children, the second is the NRSV text which may be suitable for older children, young people and adults.

Jesus was travelling through Galilee with his disciples. As they walked, Jesus explained that he was going to be betrayed, and that he would be killed, but would rise again. The disciples were confused. They didn't really understand what he was saying, but they were too scared to ask him questions. Instead, they began to argue among themselves.

Eventually, Jesus and the disciples arrived at a house in Capernaum. As they went inside, Jesus turned to the disciples and said, 'What were you arguing about on the journey?' They didn't answer because they had been arguing about who was the greatest, and they were very embarrassed. Sitting them down, Jesus tried to explain. 'If you want to be the greatest, you must be prepared to be the least important.' The disciples looked surprised.

He continued, 'You must be a servant to everyone.'



Jesus brought a little child to come and stand among them. He took the child in his arms and said to the disciples, 'Anyone who welcomes little children in my name, welcomes me. And anyone who welcomes me, welcomes God.'

Mark 9.30-37

Did you know?

- Capernaum was a fishing village on the shores of Lake Galilee.
- In Jesus' time, children were extremely unimportant.

Mark 9.30-37 (NRSV)

They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?"

But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."