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## The Least is the Greatest

Children's Sermon from Mark 9:30-37

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"Me first!" This is a cry that is likely heard by anyone working with children. Kids are often short on patience, and can also be a bit competitive. This message communicates to them the principles that Jesus taught, which turn our ideas of greatness upside down. Discussing this Gospel passage with kids emphasizes to them how dependent we are on God, who is truly the greatest. We encourage children to rely on the Lord and seek to serve others, rather than vying to be the best.

**Law/Gospel Theme:** Viewing life through a lens that is always reward/punishment based orients us to think that gaining recognition or repayment is an ideal goal. When we think about the Law, we might be tempted to somehow earn our own way into close relationship with God. This passage reminds children of the importance of serving, rather than surpassing others. It emphasizes our true dependence on God. Jesus commended little children as those who should be received well. We ought to be childlike in a sense of knowing that we are helpless without the saving blood of Christ.

**Optional Materials:** Pictures of great sports stars or famous figures.

**Bible Passage:** Mark 9:30-37

**More Teaching Ideas:**

- Watch the video of this [children's sermon lesson](#) and the related [Bible craft ideas](#)
- Compare our full [Mark 9:30-37 Sunday School lesson](#)
- Compare the [children's sermon for rfour.org](#)
- Compare another [Least Shall Be Greatest Bible lesson for kids](#)

**Message Note:** As with most messages, the details of how you choose to communicate this are adaptable and should cater to timing as well as to your audience and student needs. Use your judgment and ideas to best serve students.



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## The Least is the Greatest (Mark 9:30-37) Children's Sermon

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*Greet children, and begin the conversation with discussion of the "greatest"...*

Hello, children of God!

There is a term that I've heard a bit lately, and perhaps you have, too... it's hearing people called the "GOAT." Have you heard that before? In this case, it doesn't mean calling someone a barnyard animal. When we say someone is the "GOAT", it actually stands for "Greatest of All Time." Normally this refers to people in sports. Can you think of any figures you've heard connected to that term? (*Hold up a few pictures of sports or musical stars who might be in a very well known or very winning category*).

What makes these people so awesome? Usually we recognize these figures as "heroes" because they have won a lot of awards or games. They might be top competitors in their category. To get where they are, they probably worked hard and practiced a lot. We celebrate achievements and give these "greats" recognition or awards or repayment. We honor people who have risen to the top and become the "greatest."

What do you think it takes to be great as a disciple of Jesus? How can we become the "GOAT" of Christ followers? This is something that the disciples of Christ were asking. In fact, they were arguing about it in the Gospel passage we are looking at today. Jesus had been teaching and describing things that would happen to Him. A few of His disciples had been arguing about who was the greatest. They might have been trying to figure out how to identify the "best" among them. But Jesus turned their conversation upside down. He told them that to be first, they must become last.

What does this mean? Jesus wanted His disciples to be humble. Striving to be "the best" is not always best. Greatness does not depend on political power or talent, but on putting others first. We are made to serve one another and help each other.

Jesus also wanted to remind His disciples (and us) that we depend on Him for all we have. While He was talking, Jesus took a small child. Kids back then were not seen as very important, and people often did not pay much attention to them. But Jesus told His followers that if they welcomed children, and gave attention to those who did not have as much status and esteem, they would truly be doing His work. Welcoming kids would be like welcoming Jesus Himself.

In a way, we are like children because we depend on God for all we have. We might think of ourselves as “great” sometimes, or try to become that way. But all that we have and all of who we are is in Christ. We aren’t great because we can slam dunk a basketball or throw a football. We are great in God’s eyes when we follow Him and recognize HIS greatness. We can pray for strength, and recognize that it comes from the Lord.

Why don’t we say a prayer to God right now?

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## Prayer:

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(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

YOU are truly the greatest

Help us to think less of ourselves

And more of you

Help us to serve one another.

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

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## Bible Verses/story to Reference:

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*They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he did not want anyone to know, 31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, “The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise.” 32 But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him. 33 And they came to Capernaum. And when he was in the house he asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” 34 But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. 35 And he sat down and called the twelve. And he said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” 36 And he took a child and put him in the midst of them, and taking him in his arms, he said to them, 37 “Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me, receives not me but him who sent me.” -[Mark 9:30-37](#)*



Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Every week she writes new [Sunday School lessons](#), [Bible crafts](#), and [children's sermons](#).

Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

My name is Tony Kummer (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. It is my personal honor to share these resources with churches around the world.



[Reader donations](#) and your support at [The Sunday School Store](#) fund these free materials. Please keep us in mind when you are choosing your next children's ministry curriculum.

If you enjoy our material, be sure to [sign-up for my free email newsletter](#) called "Sunday School Works!" Every Tuesday, I send the latest new lessons, crafts, and coloring pages in print-friendly format to make your lesson planning easy.

May God continue to bless your ministry!

*Tony Kummer*