

BIBLE TEACHING AND WORSHIP GUIDE



FOR THE HOME-BASED CHURCH

Produced Weekly

Jesus Teaches About Service
Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45

Copy this sheet for the Gathering Time, Bible Study, and Worship Experience leaders for the next meeting of the church.

Leaders' Responsibilities:

Important: Each person who will be leading one of the three parts of a session during a Unit of sessions needs to have access to the "Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study". That information is often provided at the beginning of that Unit of sessions. The weekly session "Background" located in the Teacher Preparation is much more specific to that day's study.

1. **The Gathering Time Leader** will gather all of the people together and help them prepare their minds and hearts for a wonderful worship experience before God. His/her responsibility is to introduce the congregation to the theme (content) and the Scripture that will be central to their worship experience for the day.

2. **The Bible Study Leader** will then help the people understand what the Scriptures have to say and teach us about the content of the study for the day. He/she will guide the people to make a general application of the study (ie: How does this Bible study apply to people today?)

3. **The Worship Time Leader** has the responsibility to use the theme and Scriptures to guide the congregation to make personal commitments to God's will for each one in regard to the study for the day. He/she will use others to lead in the music, taking the offering, ministry moment comments, and other activities and parts of the **Worship Time** that can aid in participatory worship.

Prior to this Coming Session:

Gathering Time Leader:

Gather a number of common kitchen, office, or workshop items. (For example: broom, pen and paper, apron, hammer, screwdriver, telephone, driver's licence, etc.)

Also, bring a hand towel.

After each person describes their item (see Gathering Time), re-gather the materials by having each person add the item he or she is holding to make a pile on the towel which

you will place on the floor in the middle of the room. This will then serve as a focus centre for the Bible Study and the Worship Time.

Bible Study Leader:

The youth will require a white board or newsprint with appropriate markers for the Youth Application.

Worship Time Leader:

Music Sources:

“Seek Ye First”. *Maranatha Praise, 3rd Edition*, #243

“Make Me a Servant”. *Maranatha Praise, 3rd Edition*, #236

“Servant of All”. *Maranatha Praise Chorus Book*, #124

“I Gave My Life for Thee”. *Baptist Hymnal (1991)* #606

Gathering Time: (Suggested time: 15 minutes)***Jesus Teaches About Service*****Focal Text**

Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45

Background Text

Mark 9:1-10:52

Main Idea

Jesus taught his disciples that greatness comes only through the kind of humble service exemplified supremely by Jesus himself.

Question to Explore

What makes a person great?

Teaching Aim

To help participants evaluate their lives by the standard Jesus set for greatness.

Gathering together:

As people arrive ask them to choose an item from the collection of implements.

Begin the service by singing a song that speaks about serving others.

Have each person describe one way that the item they have chosen could be used in service to God. After each one offers his or her idea of servant use, ask them to place their item in a pile on the towel which you will have placed on the floor.

First thoughts:**Title (if any)**

It had been a long day for Elisa and the missionaries she had been helping. They had cleaned the apartment recently rented to begin a center for university students to meet, fellowship, and study the Bible. The apartment had not been used for a long time and had not been cleaned after the last tenants' departure. Its location on a downtown street in the huge city made it very accessible to students, but also meant that the diesel

smoke from the many buses which passed had created an oily black film over everything.

In the car on the trip home, Elisa laid her head back on the seat and closed her eyes. Finally, her friend, Barbara, asked if she was tired – a question with an obvious answer. But Elisa answered, “Oh, no Hermana Barbara (my dear sister, Barbara) I’m dreaming of what our student center will be like when we are all finished with cleaning and students are coming to learn about Jesus.

The true servant always sees beyond the mundane task to the glorious plan of God for the work being done. At age 18, Elisa had already learned that important reality about service.

Elisa’s sacrificial service did not end with the cleaning job. She led Bible studies, gave counsel, fixed meals, and other tasks too numerous to mention. Her faithful service made her the obvious choice to be named director of the student ministry when the missionary moved to another area of service. Elisa served in that position for 13 years before leaving the work in the hands of another capable student so that she could devote more time to her tasks as a pastor’s wife.

In today’s lesson, the disciples are still learning that service to God does not mean positions of authority or power. How blessed are those who learn this lesson early in their Christian walk and always see beyond today’s task to the larger picture of God’s work in the world.

Have members share meaningful times of service that brought no earthly reward.

Closing the Gathering Time:

Say: Serving others does not have to be a supreme effort although it always involves some measure of sacrifice. Often it is the little gestures of concern for the well-being of people that prove to have lasting impact.

Take time at this point to mention items of prayer concern for the church, announcements of ministry or activities, and anything else that needs to be shared with or by the congregation. Pray for these needs. Remember to praise God in prayer.

Break time! Take five minutes between sessions. Encourage children to use the washroom so that they won’t need to leave during the Bible Study time.

Distribute youth/adult Bible study outlines or paper for note-taking, if available.

Also hand out the activity sheets for preschool and younger children to use during Bible Study and/or worship.

2

Copy this section for the Bible Study leader.

Note to the Bible Study Leader: Suggested teaching time for the Bible study should be about 35 minutes. Use the “Teacher Preparation” for your personal study during the week before the session. Use the “Bible Study Plan” for the actual session.

Teacher Preparation

Jesus Teaches About Service

Focal Text

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To help participants evaluate their lives by the standard Jesus set for greatness.

Introduction to your personal study:

The world has some distinct ways for measuring "greatness." It usually determines that a great person is someone who:

- has a lot of money
- is blessed with some sort of talent
- is good looking
- has a lot of power.

We should never confuse fame with greatness. Madonna may be one but Mother Theresa was the other. God's standards for greatness are quite different. True greatness is not based on what one receives but on what someone gives.

Background:

Please ask for and read the information contained in the **“Basic Information for Leading the Unit of Study”**, found at the beginning of this Unit. Whoever downloaded this session for you should have that material for you as well.

In these focal passages Jesus taught about the importance of serving others. Mark placed each passage about servanthood immediately after Jesus' predictions of his coming crucifixion and resurrection (9:30-32; 10:32-34). The ultimate act of servanthood, Jesus' sacrifice of his own life, is presented in direct contrast to the selfish attitude of the disciples. While the Son of God was preparing to give his own life on behalf of sinful and undeserving people, the disciples were arguing about who was the greatest. The contrast between the two attitudes is unmistakable.

Focusing on the Meaning:

Mark 9:33-37 – The First Must Be Last

As the disciples were walking along with Jesus, they argued about who was the greatest. This argument was probably started over the fact that Jesus had taken only three of them up the mountain (9:2-13). Up to that point Jesus had not been included in the conversation. They probably would have been embarrassed at the subject if Jesus had been included. But Jesus inquired, **"What were you arguing about on the road?"** The disciples were shamed to silence. Jesus' question was not seeking information but was intended as an opportunity to teach about true greatness. He knew exactly the subject they were discussing – greatness.

"If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." A "servant" washed the feet of the guests when they arrived at someone's house. This was the kind of example of service that Jesus set for his disciples before he was crucified (John 13:1-17). Jesus turned the world's standards of greatness upside down. The world says that someone who rules is greatest, but Jesus taught that a great person is one who serves. The world considers greatness by being at the head of the line or at the top of the ladder, but Jesus taught that true greatness is in willingly going to the end of the line or the bottom of the ladder. The world marks greatness by the number of servants one has, but Jesus marks greatness by how many people one serves. The world measures greatness by how much one receives, but Jesus measures it by how much someone gives. The world says, "Be first!" but Jesus says, "Be last!" The world says, "Be the boss!" but Jesus says, "Be the servant!" A person must set pride aside and serve others in order to be truly great.

Taking a little child into his arms, Jesus said, **"Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me."** In Jesus' day a child had little or no status. A child is helpless and has little worldly influence. A child can give nothing in return, but must instead receive everything he or she needs. To **"welcome"** or **"receive"** means to be concerned about them, to care for them, or to show them kindness. To act **"in my**

name" means to do as he would do, to act for his sake. Those who want to become great in God's kingdom must show loving concern for the weak, the helpless, and the needy. One must be willing to serve others with no thought of earthly reward. To accept the lowly, the outcasts, and the oppressed as Jesus would is a way of accepting both God and Jesus (cf. Matthew 25:31-46). One must care for those that Jesus cares about, even those that the world might consider insignificant and unimportant. But in Jesus' eyes everyone, including the lowly and despised, is precious and important. By caring for the lowly, a person "welcomes" Jesus and God himself.

Mark 10:35-45 – Not to Be Served but to Serve

vv. 35-40 -- The disciples had completely failed to grasp Jesus' heart for service and self-sacrifice. Many times the things our Lord is concerned with are not the same things his people are concerned with. **"Then"** ties this passage to the one immediately before it (10:32-34). Right after Jesus' discussion about what he would suffer on behalf of lost humanity, the disciples were still concerned about their personal position in God's kingdom. James and John asked for a blanket promise from Jesus even before they gave him any specifics. Jesus asked them for more information, and they responded, **"Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory."** The right and left were the two greatest positions of power, and the right hand side of the king was the preferred of the two (cf. 1 Kings 2:19; Ps 110:1). James and John wanted to be rewarded and recognized in Jesus' earthly kingdom (cf. Acts 1:6).

Their request was an audacious one, but Jesus did not rebuke them directly. He sought to teach them that their request showed that they did not understand about Jesus' kingdom, **"You don't know what you are asking."** In God's kingdom, the way to glory is through sacrifice, service, and suffering, **"Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"** "The cup" in the Old Testament many times refers to God's wrath that is poured out on sinful people (cf. Psalms 11:6; 75:8; Isaiah 51:17, 22; Jeremiah 25:15-17, 27-28; et al). "Baptism" literally means, "to be immersed," and Jesus was referring to being engulfed by trouble, pain, and heartache (cf. Job 22:11; Psalms 11:6; 18:16; 42:7; Isaiah 43:2; et al). Jesus would soon experience God's wrath against sin and the tremendous pain of the sins of the entire world (cf. Mark 14:35-36; 2 Corinthians 5:21; Isaiah 53:4-6). Shortly he would go to the cross and pay for sins he did not commit. He would take on undeserved suffering and untold heartache. So Jesus was asking his disciples, "Are you willing to suffer and die on behalf of others as I will?"

The disciples still did not understand the seriousness of Jesus' question, for they flippantly answered, **"We can."** Again, Jesus did not rebuke them but responded that they would indeed suffer and die for the cause of Christ. James was martyred for his faith at the hands of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 12:2), and John suffered for his faith, was tortured, and exiled, and most probably died in prison at the hands of the Romans (Revelation 1:9).

"But to sit at my right and my left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared." The Father had already determined and prepared those places of honour (Matthew 25:34; 2 Timothy 4:8; Revelation 22:12). These places of honour would be bestowed on the basis of Christian character that is shown through faithful and sacrificial service to our Lord.

vv. 41-45 – The other disciples were indignant and jealous over the request of James and John (probably because they did not think of it first!). They wanted the favoured positions themselves. Jesus used the entire discussion as a teaching moment about greatness in God's kingdom. **"You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them."** The world's standards of greatness and authority are well known, the one who has the position or the power is the one who calls the shots. Worldly leaders "lord it over" (exercise absolute rule) and "exercise authority" (tyranny) over those under them. The world's standard of greatness is determined by how many people serve them. **"Not so with you."** Jesus will not allow his followers to follow the world's standards. By wanting the positions of greatness, the disciples were in danger of becoming like the Gentile rulers. **"Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all."** A "servant" waited on tables and washed people's feet. A "slave" was owned by someone else and had no personal rights except those given by his master. Christian greatness is determined by how many people one serves. **"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."** A "ransom" is "the price of release," the money paid to set a prisoner or a slave free. Jesus would soon give his own life to pay for the sins of the world (cf. Isaiah 53:4-12). His death would become the payment so that sinners could be set free. Thus, Jesus set the standard for true greatness. Jesus was concerned for others while the disciples were concerned about themselves. Jesus was willing to give his own life, while his followers wanted to receive a position. Jesus wanted to lift others up, while his disciples wanted to have the positions of highest authority. Even his followers today have much to learn about how to be truly great in God's eyes.

Your Goal as the Leader of this Bible Study:

The Scripture passages today teach of true greatness in God's kingdom. In God's view, a great person is willing to serve others. It is someone who is willing to set personal desires and aspirations aside to lift others up. The world teaches that we should strive to "get ahead," but Christ taught that we should willingly be last. Jesus set the standard for true greatness when he willingly laid down his own life on behalf of others. It is important that we let him determine our priorities rather than let the world set them.

This profound but simple concept is worthy of your best as a teacher of Christ's disciples and those who come to your church to try to understand the implications of faith in our Lord.

For Personal Reflection:

1. **What have I learned from this study?**

2. **What personal experience does this lesson bring to mind?**

3. **What is one action I will take this week to apply this Scripture passage to my life?**

Bible Study Plan (Suggested time: 35 minutes)

Jesus Teaches About Service

Regroup the church after the Gathering Time and break by singing a chorus that young children can relate to—or another praise chorus if your congregation does not have children. Children who go to their own Bible teaching session should stay with the group until after this song. Have the preschoolers and children accompany the hymn with rhythm sticks, maracas, bells, etc. Children who stay with their parents in the Youth/Adult study should have the material on worship as suggested in **The Children's Corner** at the beginning of this **Unit** of studies. (Ask your leader who downloads the studies for those suggestions).

Begin by helping the group locate the Focal Text in their Bibles. Also, share with them the Main Idea to be learned from the Scriptures, and the Questions to be Explored by the group.

Focal Text

Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45

Background Text

Mark 9:1-10:52

Main Idea

Jesus taught his disciples that greatness comes only through the kind of humble service exemplified supremely by Jesus himself.

Question to Explore

What makes a person great?

Teaching Aim

To help participants evaluate their lives by the standard Jesus set for greatness.

Connect with Life:

As the group gathers, ask them to name some of the people that are considered "great" by the world's standards. Then have them name several people that they consider "great people."

After they have called out several names, ask, "What makes a person `great`?" Some may mention things such as money, power, education, etc. State that in today's lesson we will be learning about God's standard for greatness.

Guide the Study:

Have the group open their Bibles to Mark chapters 9 and 10. Explain how Jesus was preparing to go to the cross and how he explained several times about his upcoming crucifixion and resurrection (9:30-32; 10:32-34). Point out how each of today's focal texts immediately follows Jesus' teaching about his upcoming death on the behalf of sinful people.

Have someone read Mark 9:33-37.

Ask: "What were the disciples concerned about?" (Who was the greatest among them). "What did Jesus teach them about greatness?"

Explain from the study notes how Jesus turned the world's standards of greatness upside down.

See if a participant can explain: "What can welcoming a child mean?" (Receiving and caring for those who are weak, helpless, and needy. It means caring for those that Jesus cares about). Be sure to allow for other ideas and opinions!

Have someone read Mark 10:35-40.

Once more point out that Jesus had immediately prior to this taught of his upcoming death and resurrection (10:32-34).

From the story, see if someone remembers: "What were James and John concerned about?" (Positions of importance).

Explain from the study notes the meaning of "the cup" and "the baptism" that Jesus would face, and then how James and John would both suffer for the cause of Christ.

Have someone read Mark 10:41-45.

Ask: "Why would the disciples be angry at James and John?" (Probably because they did not think of approaching Jesus first!).

Have the group give their ideas on this thought: "According to Jesus' teaching here, what are the world's standards for greatness?" (authority, power, position). Point out that Jesus was emphatic that his followers should not follow the world's standards for greatness ("**Not so with you.**").

Ask: "What did Jesus mean by, 'Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all'?"

Probe a little further with: "What was Jesus teaching about God's standard of greatness?" (Greatness is determined by how many people one serves). Point out that Jesus set the standard for true greatness.

Read verse 45 once more. Explain that a ransom was a price paid to set someone free.

Ask: "Who did Jesus set free?" (Sinners who receive him by faith).

Request an answer to: "What was the price that he paid?" (His own life).

Encourage Application:

If you have two or more youth, this is the time to give them the **Youth!!! Take Ten** page and allow them to move away from the adults and apply the lesson by and for themselves.

Point out to the group how important it is to let God determine our priorities rather than the world. Ask them to name some ways that they can do as Jesus would do for others.

Encourage the group to share ideas on this: "Who are some people we can 'serve' and 'welcome in his name' this week?"

Ask: "What are some ways I could personally practice this Christ-like attitude:
at work?
at home?
in our home church?
in the community?"

Have someone pray for God's wisdom as we commit ourselves to put into practice the attitudes and actions we have just discussed.

Take a five minute break to separate the Bible Study and Worship Time. Children may need to use the washroom again before worship.

Youth!!! Take Ten

Bible Study Application for Youth

You may wish to move away from the adults for the final five to ten minutes of the Bible study and help each other as youth to apply the lesson to your own needs.

Jesus Teaches About Service

Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45

A youth will lead the following activity and comments. No adults need to be present. If possible, teens should take turns in leading the application time.

Prior to the session: On a whiteboard or newsprint, draw the following chart but cover the “Servants” side for later use:

	Waiter/Staff	Servants
Hours of Work:		
Work experience:		
Responsibilities:		
People Skills:		
Salary:		
+++++		

Say: Today we are going to write a job description for a waiter/waitress in a busy family restaurant. Here are the categories we will need to outline so employees will know what duties are expected of them.

Have youth describe characteristics for each category.

Then say: Look again at the chart and now let’s create a job description for servants of Christ.

Uncover the word “Servants” and briefly note their responses to the idea.

Worship Time (Suggested time: 30 minutes)***Jesus Teaches About Service***
Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45**Beginning the Service:**

Sing "Servant of All"

Offering:**Praying for the world:**

Ask children in the group to tell how coming to church makes them feel special. What do the adults do to help them feel important? How can they be Jesus' servants?

Say: Jesus set a child on his lap as an example for all of us. We need to honour our children as we worship and help them to feel important in God's kingdom. What song would the children like to sing? (They can sing by themselves or with the older people. Let them choose).

Sharing Guide:

This sharing guide is written to assist the person who directs the worship time to reemphasize the teaching for the day and help guide the congregation to respond to God's call and will for their lives in regard to the scripture studied. The leader may choose to follow the guide closely. Or, he or she may wish to only use it to give direction and a concept for preparing an original message. The leader is free to choose other ways to communicate and share the concepts presented here.

"The Servant of All"

Text: Mark 9:33-36

The events of Jesus' ministry have been happening quickly and the disciples have struggled to understand what those events mean. In Mark chapter 8, the multitude are fed with seven loaves and a few small fish. After everyone had finished eating, the

disciples picked up seven basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. This was the second time the disciples had seen the miracle of the feeding of a multitude with only a small amount of food.

People healed from deafness and blindness led everyone, including the disciples, to be amazed. Peter begins to understand and declares “You are the Christ.”

Jesus also begins to teach about his death and Peter began to rebuke him. Jesus then called the crowd and his disciples to him and speaks the dramatic words of Mark 8: 35-36 ***“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for a man to gain the whole word, yet forfeit his soul.”***

The heady string of events continued with Peter, James, and John accompanying Jesus up a high mountain where Jesus was transfigured- his clothes became dazzling white. Old Testament giants Elijah and Moses were talking with Jesus. Then a cloud appeared and enveloped them and a voice came from the cloud ***“This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!”***

We can certainly empathize with the disciples who must have begun to feel that they were very special to have been a part of all of this extraordinary activity. Somehow, however, they seemed to have missed the words ***“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it.”***

Like the disciples, we forget:

1. That the Lord knows the innermost thoughts we have. In Mark 9:33-34, Jesus asks the disciples ***“What were you arguing about on the road?”*** But they kept quiet because on the road they had argued about who was the greatest.
2. That the way to gain life is to lose it. Mark 8:35-36 ***“For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.”***
3. The rewards of the kingdom are not like the rewards of the world. Mark 9:35 ***“If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last and a servant of all.”***

In Mark 9:36-37, Jesus illustrates this teaching by taking a little child and taking him into his arms, he said, ***“Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me, but the one who sent me.”***

Children, the sick, the weak, and women are among those healed by Jesus. Not highly valued in New Testament society, these groups still struggle to receive notice. Even in today’s highly organized churches, nursery and preschool care are seen as tasks to be done rather than opportunities to welcome Jesus and, by welcoming Jesus, to welcome the God of the universe who sent Jesus.

Call to Commitment:

We still have a long way to go to understand what it means to be first because we are the very last and a servant of all. Examples of faithful service like that lived over a lifetime by Elisa encourage us to want to do better. May we pray for one another that we find opportunities this week to sacrificially serve another person.

Concluding the Service:

Ask all those who are physically able to do so to kneel in a circle and hold hands as the leader prays the following prayer:

“Father, you have tapped us on the shoulder today and reminded us that we are often like James and John who wanted recognition. We want to tell you that truly we would like to be obedient to Jesus. Help us to be willing to set aside our own “wants” and minister to the needs of others. We need to recognize when you are challenging us to sacrifice our time, our financial resources, and our abilities so that others will be blessed. Would you tap us on the shoulder each day and show us when those opportunities come from you? This is our prayer in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen”