

Bibles4Children

Providing God's Word for the most receptive
and least reached in the world!

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The Greatest in the Kingdom *by Phil Disney*

Jesus and his disciples had just arrived in the town of Capernaum. This would be their last tour of Galilee before beginning their final journey into Jerusalem... it would be the last for Jesus before the cross.

Having settled down for the evening, Jesus decides to discuss a topic he overheard his disciples arguing about on the way. The subject was not unusual. It had surfaced before — typical for a group of guys continually vying for position and establishing the pecking order.

The issue? “Who is the greatest?”

An event leading up to this argument had pretty much sealed it for Peter, James and John. They had been invited to accompany Jesus to the mountain where he revealed his divine essence. All three had

seen his face shine like the sun in brilliant Deity as he was transfigured before them.

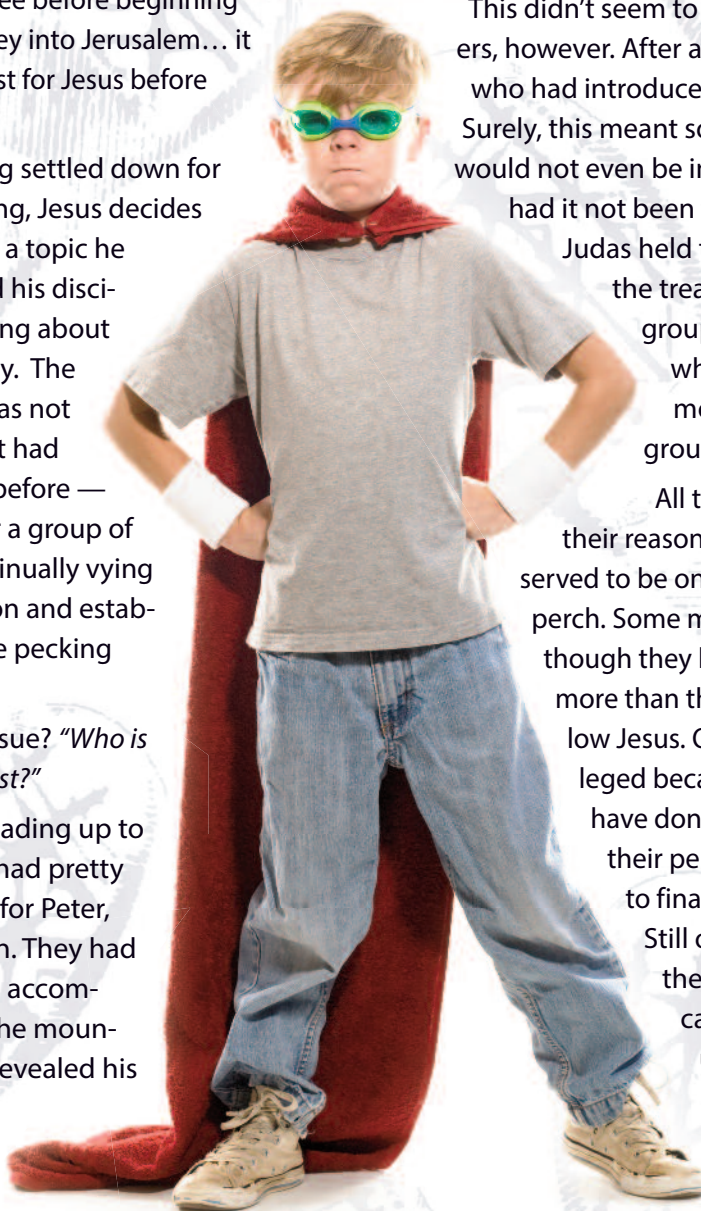
This didn't seem to satisfy the others, however. After all, it was Andrew who had introduced Peter to Jesus. Surely, this meant something. Peter would not even be in this position

had it not been for him. And Judas held the “bag.” He was the treasurer of the group. And the one who controls the money, controls the group, right?

All the disciples had their reasons why they deserved to be on the highest perch. Some may have felt as though they had sacrificed more than the others to follow Jesus. Others felt privileged because they may have donated more of their personal resources to finance the group. Still others justified their advantage because they had used their influence to attract

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more attention and larger audiences to Jesus. Others would not admit their pride and stoop so low as to engage in such a conversation — that, in itself, gave them a leg up on the competition, right?

The more this argument continued, the more it expanded beyond the limits of the group. No longer were they content with who was the greatest among them. By the time they had reached Capernaum, it had extended into the realm of the eternal.

"Who is the greatest — in the Kingdom?"

Again, each disciple had good reasons to believe they sat atop the heap. But each one also understood the heart of Jesus. The disciples knew Jesus hated the subject in which they were engaged. When confronted, their silence affirmed the arrogant nature of their conversation. And each had a pretty good idea of how their leader would respond to all the bickering.

As usual, Jesus gathered his disciples close — typical whenever he wanted to discuss something important. But this wasn't a discussion. Jesus was making an announcement. Once and for all he was going to settle this argument. He was about to reveal the identity

A collective sigh of relief filtered through the group. Each disciple nodded in agreement. Each man still believing he had a legitimate shot at the title.

of the one who would hold the title, "The Greatest in the Kingdom."

Anticipation fills the room as Jesus speaks. He begins with a qualifying statement, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and servant of all."

A collective sigh of relief filtered through the group. Each disciple nodded in agreement. Each man still believing he had a legitimate shot at the title.

But then Jesus does the unexpected. He gazes beyond the twelve and focuses on the smallest person in the room — a little boy playing in the corner. It was Joseph, the youngest son of their host family.

A typical dirty-faced, tussle-haired, eight-year-old boy, Joseph, was the object of per-

petual motion. His main objective before bedtime was rooting out the lizard living in the crack of the north wall. His older sister hated lizards and Joseph made it his goal to annoy and scare her with them at every opportunity.

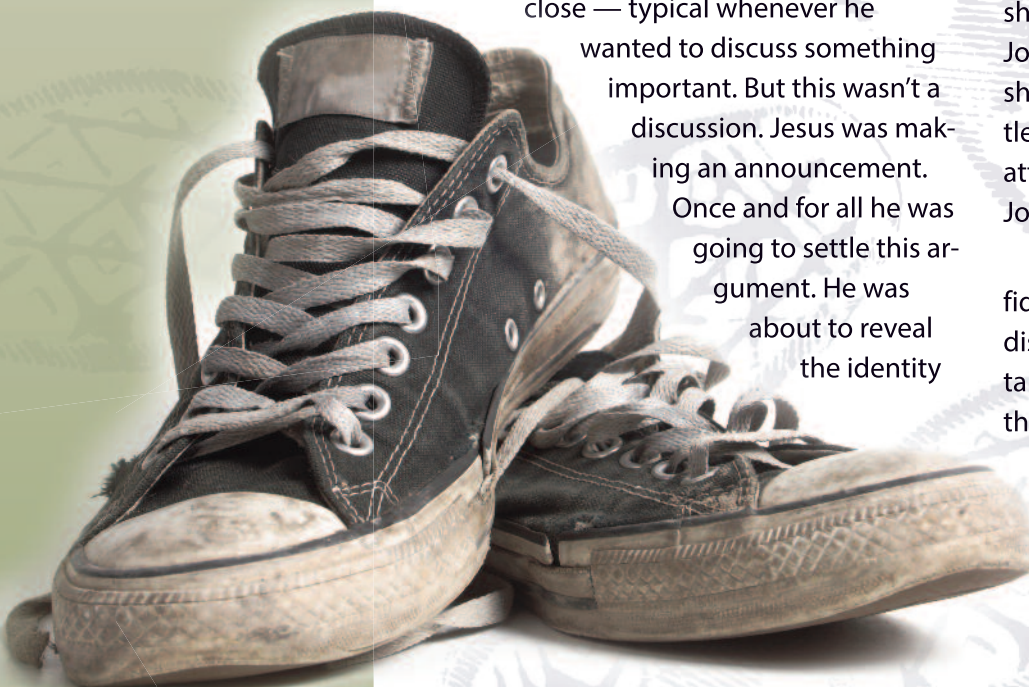
Jesus gently summoned him, "Joseph? Joseph, would you come over here for a moment? I want you to help me. I want you to show these guys something." Eager to help, Joseph runs to the Savior. He is anxious to show off the prize contained in his chubby little fingers — its tail wiggling in a desperate attempt to escape his grip. Jesus stands Joseph right in the middle of the group.

Jesus is silent. He gestures towards the fidgety little boy. His eyes slowly scan each disciple. Jesus then reaches down and gently takes the boy into his arms. Joseph realizes that this has nothing to do with his lizard.

And the disciples realize that this has nothing to do with them.

His words are harsh, but profound, "Unless you change and become like

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Abigail Winford

"We Have to Help People Get There"

Six-year-old Abigail Winford recalls her Bibles-4-Children VBS experience

attendance at the Central Baptist Church Vacation Bible School in Warner Robins, Georgia this past Summer. Bibles-4-Children was presented as the featured project. Children in attendance were encouraged to bring gifts each day to raise funds for Bibles to be produced and distributed to children who are unreached with the Gospel. ***By the end of the week, the children had raised over \$2500.***

On the first day of the event, Phil Disney, President of Bibles-4-Children, challenged the children by playing a game that illustrated the need for the Scriptures among the world's Bibleless people. The game dramatically showed the difficulties people have of understanding spiritual truth and salvation without a Bible in their own language. Two children were blindfolded and given 30 seconds to navigate their way to five stations that represented important truths that are found in the Bible. One child was left alone as the entire group of children shouted out directions. The other child had someone representing the Bible taking him by the hand and guiding him to each station. The obvious "winner" was the child who had the "Bible" as his guide.

When asked about the game later that evening, six-year-old Abigail Winford recounted, in detail, the entire presentation. She said, "We have the Bible, but many kids don't have the Bible. So, we need to take the Bible to them so they can read it!" She re-told the object lesson of how everyone was yelling directions to one kid and trying to

steer him to the stations and how it didn't work. She said, "But dad, when a kid came and walked by the other kid's side, even though everybody was yelling, he lead him in the right way." When her father asked, "What's important about that?" Abigail responded, "***We have to help people get there.***"

VBS Director, Laurie Lane Hood, also recounts the event, "What a privilege to have Phil Disney come and speak to the children at our VBS! He did a great job of demonstrating for the kids what it's like to 'walk in darkness.' He helped them understand the difference their offerings could make in the lives of children just like themselves. His passion for reaching the world for Christ is contagious and I pray we all caught what he has! Thanks for coming!"

VBS Teacher, Connie Custer, also commented, "The kids really enjoyed the game that Phil played with blindfolding a person and everyone trying to lead them to the person

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Phil Disney speaking to VBS children



VBS Children bring their offering for Bibles-4-Children



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representing Jesus without them being able to see. Phil then told us, 'That's what it's like for children without a Bible in their own language!' It was a great illustration.

My kids even remembered it later in the week."

VBS worker, Marchien Ballard, stated, "I especially liked how Phil involved the children. He definitely captured their atten-

tion and helped them see the great need children have around the world for Bibles in their own language."

The week ended with the boys and girls bringing enough pennies, quarters, nickels and dimes to provide over 500 Bibles and Bible storybooks to children living in the unreached regions of the world.

Way to go kids!

If you would like more information on how your church, school, VBS, Sunday School, or organization can partner with or participate in a Bibles-4-Children event please call 866-807-7676 or visit our website at www.bibles4children.com.



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little children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Now comes the anticipated announcement, "Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom."

Did they hear him correctly? "This pint-sized, dirt-monger is the greatest?!"

Jesus continues, "Whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. And Peter, since you are probably the one who started this whole argument, if you

or anyone else causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, you would be better off tying a large rock around your neck and going for a swim in the ocean! Am I clear?"

When we think about who Jesus could have mentioned within the category of "Greatest in the Kingdom" several

names probably come to mind: **Abraham**—the one referred to as the "Father of our Faith" and through whom God's redemptive program was introduced. Or, **Moses**—the great leader and liberator of the Jews from 400 years of slavery. How about **David**—the beloved King of Israel and who the Bible describes as a "man after God's own heart"? And there are any number of great prophets—**Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Elijah**, etc. Perhaps **John the Baptist**—of whom Jesus Himself says in Luke 7:28 "I tell you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet *the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.*"

Instead of mentioning these or any number of men and women who we would consider great in the Kingdom, Jesus places a little child in our midst and tells us, "Unless you become like this, you won't even *enter* the Kingdom much less be the greatest!"

When asked who is the greatest in the Kingdom, Jesus simply points to a child and says, "Here, take a look. ***This is greatness!***"



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