

TRUE GREATNESS

by Kenton Miller and Carol Duerksen

KEY VERSE:

He [Jesus] said to them, "But not so with you; rather the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like one who serves." (Luke 22:26)

FAITH STORY:

Luke 22:7-30

FAITH FOCUS:

Jesus sends some of his disciples to a room to prepare for the Hebrews' annual Passover feast. The disciples followed his specific instructions and then gathered with the others to partake of the meal with Jesus. Jesus broke the bread and shared the cup, stating that they symbolized his upcoming sacrifice for them. Jesus told the disciples that one of them would betray him, and they immediately began to wonder who it would be. A dispute also arose among them as to who was the greatest, but Jesus intervened and said that the greatest would be the one who humbles himself in service to others.

SESSION GOAL:

To help students understand true greatness as defined by Jesus.

SESSION OBJECTIVES:

By the end of this session, the students will:

- Study the Last Supper and the dynamics going on between Jesus and the disciples.
- Discuss what Jesus said about true greatness.
- Think about what it could mean for them to be "truly great."

MATERIALS NEEDED AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- 1 Bibles for each student
- 2 Chalkboard or dry erase board
- 3 Paper and pens
- 4 An assortment of magazines and newspapers
- 5 Scissors
- 6 Large poster board and glue
- 7 Markers
- 8 A painting of the Last Supper. If you don't have one in your home or church, check your local library. You can also search online for it (type in "The Last Supper painting") and either order a poster or print it off and make copies for students. You should either have a small print for each student or a large painting so all students can study it at the same time.
- 9 A candle

SESSION OUTLINE

FOCUS: (7–10 minutes)

Invite students to look through the newspapers and magazines, cut out pictures of heroes, and glue them to the poster board.

Then discuss: *What makes these people heroes? What characteristics do they possess? What did they do to make them a hero?*

CONNECT: (5–7 minutes)

Ask students to circle everyone on the poster whom they think God would consider to be a hero. Discuss why God would define some as heroes and others not. What is God's definition of a hero?

EXPLORE THE BIBLE: (10 minutes)

Hand out Bibles to students and ask them to turn to Luke 22:7-30. Read it together as a group, then ask students to look through the passage again and tell you who the heroes are—the people who are great—in this story. Questions to discuss and record on the chalk board/dry erase board:

- What makes them great?
- What is Jesus' definition of greatness?
- How does Jesus respond to the argument about who's the greatest?
- How does Jesus feel about the disciples?
- Which verses point out that Jesus is both chiding and affirming the disciples?

APPLY: (10–15 minutes)

Hand out paper and pens. Ask students to study the Last Supper painting, and to make notes on what they think is going on in this painting. Who is saying what? Have fun—put words into the mouths of the people in the painting!

Optional: Arrange students around the table like Jesus and the disciples are in the painting, and act out what is being portrayed in the painting.

Ask students to study the painting again and decide which person at the table most represents them and why, and write that down on their paper. Ask them also to reflect on the following questions (you may want to write them on the chalkboard): Assure them that this is personal and they won't have to share it with others.

- Where do you get your own feelings of self-worth (greatness)? Through sports? Music? Academics? Appearance? The car you drive? The person you date? The clothes you wear? The kids you hang out with? Your possessions? Your roles in school or youth group?
- When and where in your life are you a servant?
- What do you think Jesus might say to you about your "greatness"?

RESPOND: (10 minutes)

Place the candle in the center of the table and turn out the lights. Ask students to listen quietly as you slowly and thoughtfully read verses Luke 22:24-27 to them from the Message translation:

Within minutes they were bickering over who of them would end up the greatest. But Jesus intervened: "Kings like to throw their weight around and people in authority like to give themselves fancy titles. It's not going to be that way with you. Let the senior among you become like the junior; let the leader act the part of the servant.

"Who would you rather be: the one who eats the dinner or the one who serves the dinner? You'd rather eat and be served, right? But I've taken my place among you as the one who serves.

Ask students to spend a few moments in silent prayer and meditation, asking God to be with them as they consider what it means for them to be "truly great" and to be a servant to others. If your class is comfortable with praying out loud, invite them to pray for each other. If not, close with your prayer for the class.

INSIGHTS FROM SCRIPTURE:

In preparation for this session, read the different accounts of the Lord's Supper to familiarize yourself with the events that took place. This includes the passages in Matthew 26:17-30, Mark 14:12-26 and John 13:1-30. Take particular notice of the example of Jesus' servitude in the washing of the disciples' feet as told in John 13. The cultural relevance of that act at that time was that it was normally performed by the servant of the house, not the master. Jesus was known as the master to the disciples but he took on the role of a servant when he washed their feet. Jesus did this to prove his love for his disciples and to demonstrate humility. Jesus continued to invite his disciples into communion with him by his acts of service to them, and he tells them in Luke 22:15 how eager he is to share the Passover feast with them. This feast is a parallel to his ultimate act of servitude by his death on the cross. The wine and the bread represent his body being broken for us all. In Luke 22:16, Jesus talks about the coming Kingdom in which he will renew the friendships that were established by all those that have partaken of the bread and cup with him. This is that great and glorious day when he invites us back into his wedding supper to commune and have fellowship with him.

(Rev. 19:9)

WORKS CITED:

"Matthew Henry's Commentary," e-Sword version 7.1 computer software. Rick Myers, <http://www.e-sword.net> 2004

NIV Study Bible. Grand Rapids, MI. Zondervan Publishing House. 1995