When the disciples argued about which of them was the greatest, Jesus called them on it. He completely turned the tables on their perception of greatness and said, “Make yourselves last. Put others first.” Serving the needs of others before our own doesn’t come naturally. Pray for the Holy Spirit to use this session to challenge your kids to say, “Me last,” instead of “Me first.” You’ll know God is at work when you hear a child say, “After you!”

**Bible Focus:** Mark 9:33-37

**Discovery Point:** Jesus wants us to put others first.

**Worship Response:** Kids will serve God as they find ways to serve others.

**Key Verse:** “Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else” (Mark 9:35b).

### A Look at the Session
Mix and match to meet your needs. For more ideas, see “For-Extra-Time Activities” on page 138.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Sequence</th>
<th>What Kids Will Do</th>
<th>Supplies</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Welcome!</strong> <em>(up to 15 minutes)</em></td>
<td>Thumb-wrestle a partner to see who is the greatest.</td>
<td><em>Putting God First: Serving CD or DVD, CD player or TV/DVD player</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Let’s Explore!</strong> <em>(up to 20 minutes)</em></td>
<td>Read clues from last to first as they discover what God says about greatness.</td>
<td><em>Hands-On Bibles, envelopes, “Last to First Clues” handouts (p. 139), modeling dough, paper, pencils, scissors</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Let’s Pray!</strong> <em>(up to 15 minutes)</em></td>
<td>Sing praises to God for the way he puts all of us first.</td>
<td><em>Putting God First: Serving CD or DVD, CD player or TV/DVD player</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Let’s Pray!</strong> <em>(up to 10 minutes)</em></td>
<td>Form a prayer line, and pray for the last person as they move from first to last.</td>
<td><em>Putting God First: Serving CD, CD player</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Before This Session

- Photocopy the “Last to First Clues” handout on page 139, and cut apart the sections. You’ll need one handout for each Bible Crew of four. Fold the sections just below the top line so only the words Step 1, Step 2, and so on, are showing. Put the sections in an envelope, and seal it. On the outside, write, “tsrif srehto tup.”

- Assemble Bible Exploration Kits (one per four or five kids): one Hands-On Bible, one envelope prepared above, enough modeling dough so that each child can have a golf ball-size piece, and two sheets of paper and one pencil per child.

- Review the “After You!” activity next to Mark 9 in the Hands-On Bible.

- **CD/DVD** Cue the Putting God First: Serving CD (1) or DVD (1).

- Huddle briefly with volunteers before the session. Answer questions they have. Encourage them, and pray for the session, the volunteers, and the kids.

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**TEACHER TIP**

Bible Exploration Kits are an easy way to give each group supplies. The Jabber Mat from Group Publishing is a great tool that can be used as a Bible Exploration Kit and as a space for a Bible Crew to gather. Check it out at group.com/jabbermat.
Welcome!

Supplies: CD player or TV/DVD player

1. Play “Into the Bible” (1) as kids arrive.

2. SAY: We’re going to be learning some challenging things from God’s Word today, but first, I have a different kind of challenge for you. Let’s find out who are the greatest…thumb wrestlers. Hold up your thumbs if you’re ready for the challenge.

   Have kids pair up. Show them how to hook the four fingers of their right hand with their partner’s right hand so both hands are clasped tightly with thumbs up. Demonstrate how to pin or hold down their partner’s thumb. Explain that the goal is to pin down the other person’s thumb for five seconds. Give the kids a chance to practice and then signal the wrestling to begin. If time allows, play several rounds alternating partners so kids have an opportunity to win and lose.

3. ASK:
   - How important was it to you to be the winner at thumb wrestling?
   - When do you like to be number one?
   - When is it better to be last than first?

   SAY: It’s fun to challenge one another at being the greatest thumb wrestler. But sometimes it’s better to be last rather than first. Jesus had something to say about that to his disciples. One time, the disciples got into an argument about which of them was the greatest. They quickly learned that JESUS WANTS US TO PUT OTHERS FIRST. Put your thumbs up again if you’re ready for the challenge Jesus gave his disciples.
Let’s Explore!

**Supplies:** assembled Bible Exploration Kits (see page 131)

1. Have the kids form Bible Crews of four or five, and give each crew a Bible Exploration Kit.

   **SAY:** There’s a wrestling match that goes on every day, but it’s not between thumbs. It’s in our hearts. Take out the envelope in your kit, and look at what’s written on the outside. It’s a clue about today’s lesson.

   Give the crews a minute to figure out that “tsrif srehto tup” is “put others first” spelled backward.

   **SAY:** Today, we’re learning that Jesús quiere que pondamos a los demás primero. Es fácil poner a nosotros mismos primero y a los demás último, pero Jesús quiere que hagamos lo contrario. Ella quiere que piensen de manera diferente, se pongan a los demás primero y a nosotros mismos último. Vamos a practicar pensar último en vez de primero mientras exploramos los alabadores.

2. **SAY:** Jesús a menudo usaba objetos al enseñar a otros. En las versículos que vamos a estudiar hoy, usó a un pequeño niño para que su discipulas entendieran lo que él quería que aprendieran.

   Explain that each crew will use the modeling dough in the kit to illustrate the passage, using paper as a base for the sculptures. Starting with the youngest person, have kids each take a sheet of paper and a golf ball–size portion of the dough. then ask kids to open the Bibles to Mark 9:33-37.

   **SAY:** Inside your envelopes are four clues that tell you what object to make with the dough. Each object will be a clue about the verse you’ll then read. Since we’re going to practice thinking last instead of first, begin by finding the last sheet—Step 4.

   Have the kids open and follow the instructions working from Step 4 to Step 1. Explain that they are to read and complete each clue before opening the next. Remind them to read each word backward. If it helps, they can write the clue on the lines below the backward word. To keep things from getting too confusing, let them know that the verse references at the bottom are written correctly and are not backward.

   When everyone has finished, have kids put the modeling dough back in the kits.
ASK:

• What was it like to do something in a way that’s opposite of what you’re used to?
• How is that like trying to do what Jesus told us to do in the verses?

SAY: You did very well reading backward and making some objects to go along with the verses you read. Good job!

3. Briefly review the story, and then

ASK:

• What do you think the disciples said when they were arguing about which of them was the greatest?
• How is Jesus’ definition of greatness different from the way most people think of greatness?
• According to Jesus’ definition, how “great” are you?

SAY: It’s not easy to be greatest by putting others first. It takes practice. That kind of greatness won’t happen without asking God to help us. Let’s stand up and play a game called Me Last to practice putting ourselves last.

Have Bible Crews each form a line behind its oldest crew member, and then call out the following commands:

• The person in your crew who is the oldest is the greatest; that person should go to the end of the line.
• The person in your crew wearing the most white is the greatest; that person should go to the end of the line.
• The person in your crew with the most letters in his or her name is the greatest; that person should go to the end of the line.
• The person in your crew whose birthday is next is the greatest; that person should go to the end of the line.
• The person in your crew with the longest hair is the greatest; that person should go to the end of the line.

ASK:

• What made it easy or hard to put others first in this game?
• How is that like or unlike letting others go first in life?
• Why do you think Jesus wants us to put ourselves last?
• What are some ways you can put others first?
4. **SAY:** Me Last was a fun game, but how do we play it when it counts—in real life? Some things, such as breathing and eating, come naturally to us. That’s not true when it comes to putting others first. We probably won’t think of others more often than we think of ourselves unless we have a plan and continually remind ourselves that 🙇 JESUS WANTS US TO PUT OTHERS FIRST.

Have Bible Crews find the “After You!” activity in their Hands-On Bibles. Have them share their ideas with their crews how they could put others first this week. When they finish, invite them to take a sheet of paper and pencil from the kits and draw a large, open “1” similar to the image in the activity. Have them take the paper home and record what it was like to be last.

**ASK:**

- What person at home can you put first this week?
- What can you do at school to be the greatest the way Jesus wants you to be great?
- What can you do this week to remember Jesus’ definition of greatness?

**SAY:** If you go one whole day putting yourself last and others first, you are on your way to greatness. Keep going. 🙇 JESUS WANTS US TO PUT OTHERS FIRST, so with his help we know it’s possible.

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**Let’s Praise!**

**Supplies:** CD player or TV/DVD player

1. **SAY:** It’s a challenge for us to think of others instead of ourselves, but our great God always puts others first. He does what is best for us every minute of every day. When he sent Jesus to leave heaven and come to earth, he was thinking of us. When Jesus died on the cross, God was thinking of us.

Have the kids stand together to form a circle of praise. Explain that in a circle there is no first or last place. Remind them that everyone is number one to God. He loves each of us the same and none is greater or more important to him than another. Share how God sent
Jesus to pay the price for our sin and be with us forever. Invite kids to make Jesus number one by asking him to forgive them and be their forever friend.

**SAY:** *It should make us feel excited to know that God is always thinking of us, and that he hears our prayers and our praises. Let’s offer our best praises back to him.*

### 2. **PLAY:**
- “Fairest Lord Jesus” (5)
- “Get Up!” (Romans 12:11) (4)
- “Servant of All” (Mark 9:35b) (7)

#### Let’s Pray!

**Supplies:** CD player

1. Have Bible Crews form a line and sit one behind another, beginning with the person who had the last birthday.

**SAY:** *Let’s take turns being first and last as we pray for one another. When I begin the music, pray for the person who is at the end of your prayer line. Ask God to help him or her put others first this week. When you hear the music stop, the person who is first will move to the end of the line and become last. When the music begins again, pray for the new person at the end. When it’s your turn to be at the end of the line, pray for a way that you can put yourself last instead of first this week. We’ll continue until the last person is first.*

2. Pause and play the instrumental version of “Servant of All” (Mark 9:35b) (15) at 20-second intervals until all the kids have rotated through their prayer lines.
High Fives

**Supplies:** none

Remind the kids to think *last* instead of *first* this week. Invite them to say goodbye backward ("doog-eyb") as they high five one another.
For-Extra-Time Activities

**STORY REWIND**

**Supplies:** a video or DVD remote

Have the kids act out the Bible story as if recorded on a video. Invite them to take turns passing a remote as several others portray the story. Have the child holding the remote give directions such as fast forward, play, reverse, and pause. Encourage them to use an imaginary remote this week to remind themselves to pause and put someone else first, and then go forward to serve others.

**U B4 I**

**Supplies:** air-drying dough | resealable snack bags | pencils

Give each of the kids a golf ball–size piece of dough, and instruct them to shape it into three small blocks. Ask them to use a pencil to engrave a U on one block, B4 on another, and I on the third. Have them carefully place the blocks in a bag to take home and set out to dry for several days. Encourage them to use the blocks as a reminder to put others before themselves. “You (U) come before (B4) me (I).”

**HIDING IT IN YOUR HEART**

**Supplies:** small paper plates | pencils

Have someone read the Key Verse, Mark 9:35b, out loud. Give each child a small paper plate, and invite kids to design a Last Place Award. SAY: Being the greatest for God means putting ourselves last and others first.

**The Books of the Bible**

**Supplies:** CD player

Ask kids to read the intro page for any book of the Bible and create a motion for that book. For example, kids could make a motion for rain for Genesis or do a beauty pageant wave for Esther. Play “The Books of the Bible Song” (8), and have kids do all of the motions they have learned.

**Create a Bible Dictionary**

**Supplies:** paper | markers | dictionary

Ask kids to create one or more new pages, each with a new word, for the Bible Dictionary. Ask for ideas of new words from today’s session—greatest and first are two suggestions. Have them write the word on a sheet of paper in fun letters, add a definition, list Scripture references, and make illustrations. Add each page to a three-ring binder and watch the dictionary grow!
## Exploration Handout 13

### Last to First Clues

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 4</th>
<th>STEP 3</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.KRAM NOITSEUQ A EKAM</td>
<td>.ENO REBMUN EHT EKAM</td>
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</table>

**READ MARK 9:33**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STEP 2</th>
<th>STEP 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.EVLEWT REBMUN EHT EKAM</td>
<td>.TRAEH A EKAM</td>
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**READ MARK 9:35**

**READ MARK 9:36-37**
Family Devotion

Bible Focus:
Mark 9:33-37

Discovery Point:
Jesus wants us to put others first.

Key Verse:
“Whoever wants to be first must take last place and be the servant of everyone else” (Mark 9:35b).

Jesus Wants Us to Put Others First

After You!

Read Mark 9:35b out loud a few times so it sticks. Then try this challenge. For one whole evening do what this verse says—put others first. How? Here are a few ideas:

- Let another person go first in picking a place to sit.
- Let others be the first to be served food or drinks.
- Let others choose what movie to watch or game to play.
- Open doors for others.

AT THE END OF THE DAY, write in this space what it was like to be last at things and to put others first.

It may have felt a little weird at first, but putting others first is what Jesus wants us to do. AFTER ALL, THAT’S WHAT HE DID FOR US!

FAMILY CHALLENGE

Read Mark 9:35b together as a family. Eat a meal backward so that dessert is first. Take turns serving one another. Last is not bad—especially when it means dessert is first. Talk about the good things that come when we put others first.

Pray together, and have each person pray for someone else in the family. Don’t stop being kind to each other just because the devotion is over! Keep putting each other first every day!