

WITNESS – Reaching out to others
(Aim for 20 – 30 minutes)

Giving Thanks to God

What has struck you about God today? Thank Him

Praying for one another

Share what you think God has been saying to you as we have looked at this study? Pray for the person on your right.

Praying for our community

If you relate these parables to Hungerford. What do you think God is saying? Let us pray for our community.

MATTHEW

Matthew 18.1– 35

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Life in the Kingdom

Purpose: To discover some of the values Jesus requires as we live in his kingdom. Jesus continues to instruct his disciples. There are similarities between this material and the Sermon on the Mount. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus teaches the essentials of discipleship to those who have just begun to follow him. In chapters 18–20 Jesus prepares to physically leave them in order to lead them from heaven. He tells them what they will need to know in order to lead the church. The central theme of these three chapters is “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?” It begins in 18:1 and continues through 20:20–28, when the mother of James and John requests positions of honor for them.

WELCOME – Breaking the ice *(Aim for 10 minutes)*

In what ways are people of status and social standing treated differently from others?

WORSHIP – Meeting the Lord *(Aim for 10 – 15 minutes)*

THE EXAMEN

1. **Become aware of God’s presence** - take some time to remember that God is present with us in our everyday lives. He has been near to you and with you throughout the events of your day. Invite the Holy Spirit.
2. **Review the day with gratitude** - what are you thankful for?
3. **Pay attention to your emotions** - St. Ignatius emphasised how our emotions can point to the presence of God. Reflect upon how you felt throughout your day. What might God be saying to you through these emotions?
4. **Choose one thing from the day and pray for it**

WORD – Applying the truth
(Aim for 40 – 45 minutes)

Who is greatest in the kingdom of God? How can a subject of the kingdom earn true wealth? These questions dominate the thoughts of the disciples as they approach Jerusalem. They are also important questions for us. How we answer them will directly affect the quality of our discipleship.

1 Read Matthew 18. The disciples want to know who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven (v. 1). How does Jesus' appeal to little children answer their question (vv. 2–5)?

2. Children have little status in the eyes of adults. How can we assume the status of children in our circle of friends and coworkers?

3. Spiritually speaking, the “little ones” are those who humble themselves (“become like little children”) and believe in Jesus. What is Jesus' attitude toward those who cause the little ones to sin (vv. 6–7)?

4. How does Jesus graphically illustrate the importance of dealing with sin in our own lives (vv. 8–9)?

5. How do verses 10–14 further emphasize the value Jesus places on his little ones”?

6. How should the value Jesus places on his “little ones” affect the way we view ourselves and other believers?

7. Greatness in the kingdom is also dependent on living a life of forgiveness and mercy. What guidelines does Jesus give for dealing with those who sin against us (vv. 15–20)?

Why is each step in this procedure important?

8. Forgiving someone once does not always guarantee he or she will not offend us again. How can the parable of the unmerciful servant help us to keep on forgiving (vv. 21–35)?

9. How does this chapter challenge the world's concept of greatness?

How does it challenge your own ideas of value and greatness?

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