

SUPPLIES: Chairs (one for each child) for musical chairs, boombox and CD (or a phone with your favorite streaming app), a cleared space in the round room for the kids to mingle in for "Guest of Honor" activity

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- For the opening question, I'm going to ask you a question and then we'll go around the circle and say our name and then our answer to the question.
- I'll ask the question and then I'll answer first, ok?
- Here's the opening question: What's an activity or game that you want to win at or be better than anyone else at doing?
- (go around the circle)
- During this summer, we're going to be talking about parables. Parables are stories that can help us better understand an idea. For instance, I could tell you that you have to just try harder. Or, I could tell you the story of the "little engine that could" that shows us what trying harder might look like.
- The parable we're going to hear now is a story about who gets to be honored.
- There are some words in this story that you may not know, so before we hear the story, I want to share some words and what they mean with you.
- To be *honored* means to be praised in front of other people. To be *exalted* means to be lifted up with praise, usually in front of other people. To be *humble* means to be ok with who you are so that you do feel like you have to convince others that you are the best or the greatest.
- Let's listen for what Jesus says about honor.

READ Luke 14:7-11:

7 When Jesus noticed how the guests argued for and chose the seats of honor, he told the people around him a parable. 8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding banquet, do not sit down at the place of honor, in case someone more important than you has been invited by your host 9 because then the host who invited both of you may come and say to you, 'Give this person your place.' If this happens, then in disgrace you would have to take the lowest place. 10 But when you are invited, go and sit down at the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. 11 For all who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted."

ASK

- At the very beginning of the story, what does Jesus see the guests doing? (arguing for a better seat, for a seat of honor)

- In the parable, Jesus tells a story of what happens when the host does not agree with the seat someone chooses and who has to then sit somewhere less honorable. What does Jesus suggest to the people around him that they do instead of argue for the most honorable seat? (sit at the least honorable seat, or the lowest seat)
- If you listened to Jesus and sat in the lowest seat first, what does Jesus say might happen? (the host might invite you to sit closer - which would be a greater honor)

TELL

- The Kingdom of God is wherever we let God be king.
- And parables are stories that Jesus uses to help us learn about the Kingdom of God.
- So when Jesus ends the parable with this line, "For all who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted," he's talking about more than just seating arrangements at a wedding.
- Jesus is telling us that if we're busy exalting ourselves (which is like bragging), if we're so busy convincing other people that we are so important, then we're also too busy to be able to let God be king in our life.
- Then, when we are reminded that God is king and more important than us, we might get offended, or insulted, or upset - and these feelings keep us from listening closely to God and being obedient to what God calls us to do.
- So that's why Jesus is reminding us to

EXPLAIN ACTIVITY

- So we're going to play the game of musical chairs.
- As you can see, we have two lines of chairs, back-to-back, with there being one less chair than there are of us in the classroom. These are the "seats of honor."
- Once I start playing the music, then we'll start walking (and if you want, dancing) around the chairs in a circle.
- Once I stop the music, then we all try to sit down.
- So just like in the story, we're going to be "arguing" for a seat of honor.
- Since there aren't enough chairs for everyone, someone will be left without a seat of honor and will no longer be able to participate in the game.
- That person will stand to the side, and I'll take out a chair and we'll play again.
- We'll go for three or four rounds.
- Any questions?

DO Three or Four Rounds of Musical Chairs

ASK/TELL AFTER THREE or FOUR ROUNDS

- So as we "argue" for seats of honor, what happens to those of us who lose the argument? (they/we get "pushed out" and can't participate)
- For those of us who got "pushed out," how does that feel?
- For those who are left in the game, do you feel like you're winning or at least doing well at the game?
- So now, to demonstrate Jesus' point about how it feels to have the host take away your seat of honor, I'm going to choose four of you who are still in the game and replace you with the four people who have lost their seats.

- (choose four people to step out of the game and have the four people who were out, step back in)
- Alright, let's get back to the game!

Do Two more rounds of Musical Chairs

ASK

- So for those of you who were winning, but were then replaced by the people who had lost their seats, how did that feel? (not fair)
- Did you feel a little bit cheated? (yes)
- Did you feel maybe a little bit of anger towards me? (maybe)

TELL

- And that's what Jesus is trying to get us to understand.
- When we think we're important and doing well in our arguing for seats of honor, and then God tells us that this arguing for honor isn't what God calls us to do, we might feel upset with God and then not listen to God as closely as we might when we're not angry.

(If there's time...)

EXPLAIN NEXT ACTIVITY (Guest of Honor)

- In this next activity, we're going to again "argue" about who is the best.
- We're going to do this by playing paper, rock, scissors.
- You play paper, rock, scissors with one other person.
- When the two of you meet, you say 1, 2, shoot.
- On "shoot" you display a paper, rock or scissors with your hand.
- You display a paper, rock or scissors with a flat hand (for paper), a fist (for rock) or two fingers displayed like you were doing bunny ears (for scissors)
- Paper beats rock, rock beats scissors and scissors beat paper.
- If you tie, then you do another round.
- Once your round is done you go to another person and play again.
- However, there's one other catch.
- When we win, we're going to be moving up in "honor"
- So we all start out as eggs. And as eggs, we walk around and say "waddle, waddle, I'm an egg, waddle waddle."
- Then if you win your "paper, rock, scissors" game, then you get promoted to "chicken."
- As a chicken you walk around flapping your arms and saying, "Bawk, bawk, I'm a chicken, bawk bawk."
- At this point, you can only play other chickens.
- If as a chicken you win, then you become a monster.
- As a monster, you walk around with locked knees and your arms stretched above your head and you say, "roar, roar, I'm a monster, roar, roar."
- At this point, you can only play other monsters.
- If you win as a monster, then you are the "Guest of Honor." There is no greater honor than being the Guest of Honor.

- As the Guest of Honor, you walk around with your nose pointed toward the ceiling, and you say, "I'm the Guest of Honor because I'm better than you are" preferably in a British accent.
- At this point, you can only play other Guests of Honor.
- At any point in the game, when you lose a round of paper, rock, scissors, you have to start all over again and become an egg again.

DO Guest of Honor Game

ASK

- Was it a lot of work getting to be the Guest of Honor?
- And did you get to stay the Guest of Honor for very long?
- So no matter how good you were, at some point, you went back to being an egg, right?
- Doesn't necessarily seem worth it, does it?

TELL

- So what Jesus is reminding us in today's story is that instead of wasting all that time and effort to be the Guest of Honor that instead, we let someone else elevate us to that spot of honor.
- So, I remind you today, that you, me, all of us, are the beloved children of God.
- The more we trust this and live into this truth, the more we know that there's nothing more honorable than being God's beloved child.
- And then, we don't need to try and get more honor.
- This is the good news for today.

CLOSING PRAYER