

Who Is the Greatest?

Theme

True greatness comes in serving others

Object

Book: "The Rainbow Fish" (You should be able to find this book in your local bookstore or library.)

Scripture

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." He took a little child and had him stand among them. Taking him in his arms, he said to them, "Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me." Mark 9:35-37 (NIV)

Have any of you ever read "The Rainbow Fish?" This book is about the most beautiful fish in the ocean. His scales were every shade of blue, green, and purple with sparkling silver scales mixed in. He was very beautiful, but he was also very selfish and self-centered. He was so beautiful that he thought he was too good to play with the other fish in the ocean.

One day a little blue fish asked Rainbow Fish for one of his beautiful, shimmering scales -- but he refused. Because of his selfishness, he was very unpopular with the other fish. He was not only the most beautiful fish in the ocean, he was also the loneliest fish in the ocean.

He told Starfish about his problem and Starfish sent him to talk to a wise old octopus. The octopus told Rainbow Fish that if he wanted to be happy, he should give one of his beautiful scales to each of the other fish. Rainbow Fish just could not imagine giving away his beautiful scales.

Once again, the little blue fish asked for one of Rainbow Fish's scales. He hesitated for a moment, but finally pulled off one of his scales and gave it to the little blue fish. When the other fish saw the little blue fish with a shiny scale, Rainbow Fish was surrounded by fish asking for one of his shiny scales. Before he knew it, he had given away all of his shiny scales except for one. Suddenly he realized that although he was no longer the most beautiful fish in the ocean, he was happier than ever before.

This story reminds me of something that Jesus said to his disciples. One day He heard his disciples arguing about which of them would be the greatest in God's kingdom. Jesus said to them, "If you want to be first, you must be last and you must be the servant of all." He then put his arms around a little child and told his disciples, "If you welcome one of these, you welcome me; and whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one that sent me."

Sometimes we think the most important thing is to be the first, to be the most beautiful, to be the smartest, or to be the GREATEST! That isn't what Jesus said. He said that the most important thing was to think of others first and ourselves last. If we want to be great in God's sight, we should seek to be a servant rather than seeking to be served.

Dear Jesus, help us to remember that to be the greatest, we must be willing to be the least.
Amen.