

The Greatest in the Kingdom

2026-05-11 • PASTOR MATT ROSE



Matthew 18:1-6

FOR THE LEADER

These questions help you run the conversation. They are not your study. Get into the passage yourself first, because your group needs what God taught you, not just a list of questions. These also lean on Sunday's message, so a few will not land for anyone who missed it. Watch it before you lead.

WHAT THE MESSAGE WAS ABOUT

The disciples asked Jesus a status question: who is the greatest in the kingdom? Jesus answered by standing a child in front of them. Become like this child, he said. Pastor Matt read the child's total reliance as the whole picture. Kids trust big because they have nothing to fall back on. What usually kills that trust is the security we pile up as adults. Ten spies looked at the promised land and saw giants. Joshua and Caleb looked at the same land and saw promise. The second half of the passage is a warning: do not be the reason a new believer stumbles.

To get started

- What did you believe was possible when you were young that you would hesitate to say out loud now?

Looking back at the message

The word 'children' in this passage means new believers, not only actual children. Make that clear early.

- 1 Pastor Matt admitted that the more stability he builds, the more carefully he weighs what God might ask of him. Where do you see that pattern in your own life?
- 2 Pastor Matt described his early years as a believer, when everything he read in Scripture seemed to speak directly to him. What was your version of that season, if you had one?
- 3 Pastor Matt listed steps people resist: serving, greeting at a door, talking about faith at work. Which of those made you wince, and why that one? OPTIONAL

Looking at the passage

Read Matthew 18:1-6 aloud. Verse 6 is severe; do not soften it or rush past it.

- 4 Read Matthew 18:1-4. The disciples ask who is greatest. What does Jesus do and say in response?
- 5 Look at verse 4 again. What specific quality of a child does Jesus name?
- 6 Verse 6 is a hard sentence. Jesus says drowning would be better than causing a little one to stumble. Who is being warned here, and about what?
- 7 In Numbers 13, twelve spies explore the same land. Ten see giants and two see promise. What made the difference between the two reports? OPTIONAL

Bringing it home

Stability is not the villain. Pastor Matt said as much. Keep that balance.

- 8 Pastor Matt said stability is not wrong unless it pulls you away from God. How would you know if yours had crossed that line?
- 9 What is something you have built, a career, a reputation, a savings account, that you would find hard to hold loosely?
- 10 Verse 6 applies to anyone whose behavior makes faith harder for a newer believer. Where could that happen without anyone meaning it to?
- 11 Somebody invited you into faith, or kept inviting you. What did they do that actually worked? OPTIONAL

The group together

Pastor Matt described children inviting other children and shaking off rejection.

That is the picture for this section.

- 12 Kids invite friends to church without ever calculating the odds of rejection. What do adults add to that math that gets in the way?
- 13 What could this group change so that a brand new believer would find it easy to walk in rather than intimidating?
- 14 Every group develops its own insider language over time. What do we say here that a new person would find hard to follow?

BEFORE YOU FINISH

What would you ask God for if you still expected what you expected when your faith was new?

You might pray about

- For a trust that has not been trimmed down by experience
- For the newest believers around us and what they need from us
- For anything we have built that has quietly started to rule us
- For eyes to see promise where we have been counting giants