

## Lead by Serving

(based on Matthew 20:20–28)

The disciples traveled with Jesus as he went from town to town. Jesus was their teacher. The disciples were learning how to follow God’s loving ways like Jesus did.

Two of the disciples were brothers. Their names were James and John.

One day, the mother of James and John came to see Jesus with her two sons.

*I wonder, “Why did James and John’s mother go to see Jesus?”*

“When you are made the ruler of the world,” she said, “please let my two sons rule with you. One of them can sit on your right and the other can sit on your left.”

“It isn’t my job to decide who will sit in those places,” replied Jesus. “God has already decided who will rule the world. God will tell us when the time is right.”

The other disciples were furious with James and John.

*I wonder, “Why were the disciples so mad at James and John?”*

“It’s not fair!” they exclaimed. “Why should you be given the choice places next to Jesus? Why should you rule? We are Jesus’ friends too. We have just as much right to rule the world as you do.”

Jesus called them all together.

“You know how great leaders in the world like to boss everyone around?” Jesus asked. “They want everyone to bow down to them. They want everyone to do as they are told.”

The disciples nodded.

“Don’t act like them,” continued Jesus. “If you want to be a great leader, you must help others. If you wish to be a ruler, then you must look after everyone. Look at me! I did not come to boss people around. I came to give my life in order to give life and freedom to many people.”

*I wonder, “How would Jesus lead without bossing people around?”*

The disciples were beginning to understand that Jesus was a different kind of leader. They realized that they had to be like Jesus. So they went out with him every day and learned how to be good leaders by being good helpers.

