

WEEK TWELVE

## THE PARABLE OF THE AMBITIOUS GUEST

### BIG IDEA

*When we let others go first, and don't push ourselves to the front*

**GOD WILL HONOUR US**  
*at the right time*

#### PREP: *(Kids can help!)*

- Find an assortment of placemats.
- Buy a packet of large marshmallows.
- Find or buy a packet of toothpicks.
- Find or buy some red and blue food colouring.
- Organise music to play for musical chairs.

#### WHAT GOES IN THE BOX?

- Marshmallows
- Scissors
- Toothpicks
- Red and blue food colouring
- Paper towels



#### INTRO

The meal table is often a very special place. It is usually the most well-used place in our home, because we eat there each day and it is where we talk and share.

- Put the place mats in the middle of the table.

Let everyone pick their favourite place mat and share the reason for their choice.

- What special meals you have been part of?

**Have you got a favourite chair?**

**Or a favourite place in the house to sit?**

**What happens if someone else is sitting there when you want to?**

We're going to read a story Jesus told about some people who thought they were so important they pushed themselves forward to get to the best place.

But first of all we are going to make something to remind us why we should think before doing something like that!

#### OUT OF THE BOX

- Take out the marshmallows, toothpicks and scissors and give everyone one large marshmallow and two toothpicks.

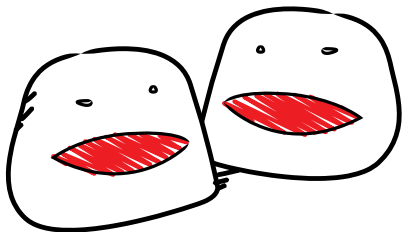
- Put some blue and red food colouring in separate eggcups or small bowls.

*We're going to make marshmallow puppet heads.*

## ACTIVITY

### Marshmallow puppet heads

1. To make the puppet's mouth use the scissors to cut a horizontal slit about one-third of the way up the marshmallow.
  2. Dip the end of one toothpick into the red food colouring and spread the colour in the slit, to make the mouth red.
  3. Dip the end of the other toothpick into the blue food colouring and press it into the marshmallow twice above the mouth, to make the eyes.
- Everyone stands their marshmallow head on the table. While you read, children snack on the spare marshmallows.



## READ

### A parable about being humble

☞ Jesus went on to tell a story to the guests around the table.

Noticing how each had tried to elbow into the place of honour, he said, “When someone invites you to dinner, don’t take the place of honour. Somebody more important than you might have been invited by the host. Then he’ll come and call out in front of everybody, ‘You’re in the wrong place. The place of honour belongs to this man.’ Red-faced, you’ll have to make your way to the very last table, the only place left.

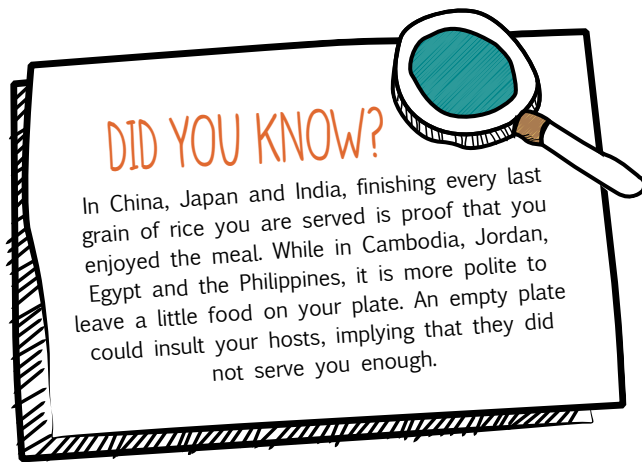
“When you’re invited to dinner, go and sit at the last place. Then when the host comes he may very well say, ‘Friend, come up to the front.’ That will give the dinner guests something to talk about! What I’m saying is, if you walk around with your nose in the air, you’re going to end up flat on your face. But if you’re content to be simply yourself, you will become more than yourself.

“Then he turned to the host. The next time

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you put on a dinner, don't just invite your friends and family and rich neighbours, the kind of people who will return the favour. Invite some people who never get invited out, the misfits from the wrong side of the tracks. You'll be – and experience – a blessing. They won't be able to return the favour, but the favour will be returned – oh, how it will be returned! – at the resurrection of God's people. ))

Luke 14: 7-14 My First Message,  
©Eugene Petersen, NavPress, 1993



EXPLORE

Now take your marshmallow heads and use them to re-tell the story, by squeezing the back of the marshmallow to make it 'talk'. Each person can tell a sentence or two and the next one follows on...

- Now, with everyone sitting around the table, ask these questions:

**Where do you usually sit at the table? Does it change for different occasions?**

**Which seat do you think is the best seat?**

**If we run out of dining room chairs when there are visitors and have to bring in 'other chairs'... who gets those?**

**How does it feel to be told to go to the back of the line?**

**How does it feel to be asked to choose something first?**

**Do you think you should always get the best?**

GAME

**Musical Chairs**

You can use either chairs or cushions. Take away one chair each time the music stops.

Praise the person who made the least fuss when they were counted out.

*When we know that God is looking after us, then we can look after others and put ourselves in the humble place.*

*It can feel hard to give up the best place for someone else, but Jesus wants us to. He knows it is better to choose the way of humility.*

“ HUMILITY IS NOT THINKING LESS OF YOURSELF;  
IT'S THINKING OF YOURSELF LESS. ”

- CS LEWIS -

## PRAY

- Make sure everyone has a seat.

*Dear Lord, please help me to be content no matter where I sit.*

- Change seats and pray it again.

Move a few times into different seats before you all say 'Amen'.

## LIVE

- This week, try sitting at different places at the dinner table, and having different seats. Perhaps you could make a 'special' seat that everyone can have turns using.



## OTHER IDEAS

- Learn a new grace to say at mealtimes.
- Plan a dinner and invite people to share it (especially someone who cannot invite you back). You could make invitations, and decide where people will sit. As you make them, talk about what might be on an invitation if God was inviting you to a feast. Who else would be invited?
- Have an upside down dinner this week – let the children pick what they want from a menu, then give them something more basic instead with a prayer attached e.g. "Dear God, please bring food to those who are hungry, Amen" taped to plates and "Dear God, please help us to help those who are poor and don't have anything, Amen" taped to cups. Let everyone talk about how they felt and link it back to this parable.

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