



**Mennonite
Church
Canada**

Resource Centre

Taking Charge

Children's Story

Cycle A, Proper 22

Title: Taking Charge
Author: Harold Schilk
Church: Lethbridge Mennonite Church, Alberta
Text: Matthew 21: 42-44
Theme: God comes to all kinds of people, inviting them to do God's will, by serving or leading others.
Needed: A Bible

Wondering Questions:

- I wonder why it is so tempting to let your friends go ahead of others.
- I wonder how Cybil felt when she was asked to be a leader, even though she was tiny.
- I wonder whom God will call to be a leader from this group of children.

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Gathering Activity:

Invite the children forward by asking them to join you in a quick round of "Follow-the-Leader". Thank them for their participation and ask them if they thought you were a fair leader. How can we tell that leaders are fair? Encourage them to settle into a comfortable position so they can listen and participate deeply in this important part of the worship service. Once they are settled, explain that God wants people to treat others fairly, but that today's Bible story is about more than being fair. It is also about how God sometimes surprises us by God's choice of leaders. The ideas for this story came from Matthew 21. (Show and/or read the children Matthew 21: 42-44)

Story:

Billy was a strong, tall boy. He liked to play all kinds of sports. Since Billy was a few inches taller than most of the other children in the classroom, he was someone people naturally looked up to. Given this, it wasn't too much of a surprise when the teacher, Mrs. Anderson, asked Billy to be hall monitor. Being hall monitor meant Billy

was to help his classmates line up, take turns entering the washroom at the start of recess time (when too many want to go in all at once) and to take turns using the school's three swings. It was a simple job. The idea was to make sure that everyone got a chance and everyone got a turn.

Unfortunately, it didn't work out that way. Billy thought that his friends should benefit from his hall monitor job. And so... when it came time to line up and go to recess, Billy let his friends push their way to the front of the line. When it came time to play on the swings, Billy allowed his friends to go first. Also, instead of a five minute turn, they were allowed to swing for almost ten!

It felt good to be able to give special favours to friends. It felt good to be able to make up the rules. The other children, however, who were pushed aside and lost their place in line, or who had to wait an extra long time before they got to swing, didn't think that Billy was doing a good job. In fact, they thought that Billy was doing an awful job!

Do you agree?

How do you think the children felt?

What do you think they might do?

And what do you think the teacher did when she noticed what was going on?

She asked Billy to stop being hall monitor and gave the position to Cybil, who happened to be one of the smallest girls in the class. That surprised many children, because Cybil was tiny. Everyone had to look down at Cybil! But, Cybil was fair. She didn't let her friends push ahead or take extra long turns. In fact, Cybil had a very good sense of timing! Billy and his friends didn't want to listen to her at first, but everyone else (including Mrs. Anderson) did. And so, when everyone else followed Cybil's directions, recess became a better time for all. Soon everyone (including all of the big boys) respected Cybil. They found that Mrs. Anderson's new hall monitor was good at being in charge, even if she was small.

Prayer

Thank you, God, that Jesus showed and taught us good ways of being in charge. Thank you for picking leaders others wouldn't choose. Please help us be fair, whether we are in charge or not. Amen.

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