

# Short Talk

(SHT116a)

**Look at me or look at  
others!**

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## SHORT TALK: “Look at me or look at others!”

<b>Aim of Short talk:</b>	To encourage people to be so secure in Jesus’ love for them that they no longer play the “I’m better than you” game, but instead choose to serve others.
<b>Use of Short talk:</b>	This is a short All Age talk picking out one issue from the Lectionary Gospel reading of the Sunday main service. The talk stands alone and assumes that the Gospel Bible reading may not yet have been read to the congregation. It could be used for example, for the whole congregation before the children go out to their age specific groups, leaving the adults with a full sermon later.
<b>Main themes:</b>	Self importance, Pride, Service, Humility
<b>Biblical references:</b>	Mark 9.30-37
<b>Lectionary:</b>	Year B – The 16 <sup>th</sup> Sunday after Trinity
<b>Before the Service:</b>	Find 2 volunteers and brief them on how you want them to play the “I’m better than you” game. Make sure that out of the 4 questions you choose to use, each volunteer wins 2 of them.
<b>Props:</b>	You need a small table that could act as a “podium.” You also need 2 pieces of paper and 2 pencils

How many of you like playing the “I’m better than you” game?

- Whether we know it or not, I think that we all play it at some point in our lives.

Would my 2 volunteers like to come forward now so that we can play the game for a couple of minutes? *(2 volunteers come forward and stand either side of you)*

[You may wish to use your own questions that fit the volunteers you have better]

Are you ready to play the game?

- My 1<sup>st</sup> question is this: “Who can swim the furthest?” *(Volunteers answer you)*
- So *NB* (Name of volunteer who is best at swimming) is better than *NW* (Name of volunteer who is worst at swimming)
- *NB* come and stand on my podium and enjoy the fact that you can say, “I’m better than you at swimming!”
- OK you can get down now.

My 2<sup>nd</sup> question is this: “Who is best at Maths?”

- We’ll work that out with a spot of mental arithmetic.
- Who can do this sum the fastest? Add 68 to 55. *(Volunteers answer you)*
- That’s right. The answer is 123.

*NB* (Name of volunteer who answered correctly the fastest) come and stand on my podium and enjoy the fact that you can say, "I'm better than you at Maths!"

- OK you can get down now

My 3<sup>rd</sup> question is this: "Who can jump the highest?"

- Let's try that after I count 3...you have to jump as high as you can.
- 1,2,3 jump. (*Volunteers both jump*)

So *NB* (Name of volunteer who jumped the highest) is the best at jumping.

- Come and stand on my podium and enjoy the fact that you can say, "I'm better than you at jumping!"
- OK you can get down now.

And my 4<sup>th</sup> question is this: "Who can spell the word atrocious?"

- Write down your answer on this piece of paper? (*volunteers write down their answer*)

So *NB* (Name of volunteer who spelt the word correctly and if both spelt the word correctly had the neatest handwriting) is the best at spelling / handwriting.

- Come and stand on my podium and enjoy the fact that you can say, "I'm better than you at spelling / writing!"
- OK you can get down now.
- Thank you very much for playing the "I'm better than you" game. Please sit down.

We might not think about it quite as bluntly as that, but all through life you and I can be tempted to play the "I'm better than you" game.

- We may not actually say "I'm better than you" to other people,
- but we can often think it.

When we are at school we might think or say: "I'm better than you at football,

- or gymnastics,
- or reading or something else."

As we get older we might think or say: "I got more GCSE's than you did,

- or I have a fitter body than you
- or I have a better looking boyfriend/girlfriend than you."

As we become adults we might think or say: "I've got a better job than you,

- or a bigger house,
- or a better golf handicap."

We might even carry this awful attitude into our Christian life, looking at other Christians and thinking: "I'm a better Christian than them because I pray for longer,

- make better coffee,
- or bring more people to Christ!"

But what we are actually saying when we think or say: “I’m better than you” (*Jump up onto the podium and stand on it*) is “*Look at me. I’m the greatest!*”

- (*Speak it slowly*) “*Look at me. I’m the greatest!*”

One day Jesus caught his disciples arguing about which one of them was the greatest; playing the “I’m better than you” game.

- Jesus said to them: “*Whoever wants to be the most important must make others more important than themselves. They must serve everyone else.*” (Mark 9:35 Easy to Read Version)
- Listen again.
- Jesus said to them: “*Whoever wants to be the most important must make others more important than themselves. They must serve everyone else.*”

In other words Jesus was saying that the greatest people are not those who say: “*Look at me,*” but those who say: “*Look at others.*” (*Jump down off the podium*)

- Look at the wonderful gifts that God has given to other people.
- Look at how precious other people are to God,

According to Jesus the greatest people are those who serve others,

- and here’s the secret to how we can do that.

If we know in our hearts just how deep Jesus’ love is for **us** then we can be really secure, confident and happy.

- Because Jesus thinks we are great we don’t have to prove to others that we are great and so it is much easier to not play the “*I’m better than you*” game,
- but to build others up and to serve them.

So this week let’s “*look at others,*”

- and find ways that we can serve them.
- That is the path to true greatness because we are following in Jesus’ footsteps.