

LESSON SNAPSHOT

BOTTOM LINE:

He who wants to be first in God's eyes must be the servant of all!

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will learn why it is important to be humble.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 Samuel 24:1-7. David spares Saul.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Do not set foot on the path of the wicked or walk in the way of evildoers." - Proverbs 4:14 (NIV)

Put each word of the memory verse on a card. Have the kids rearrange the cards and put the words in order.

SUMMARY:

To get ahead and win at checkers, you have to jump over your opponent's pieces and become king. Many people think that jumping over others is the way to get ahead in life, but Jesus tells us that the last will be first and the first will be last. He who wants to be first in God's eyes must be the servant of all!

SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Teach us to be humble so that other people can see Jesus in our lives.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

EASY AT HOME OBJECT LESSON

ITEM NEEDED:

A checker set

How many of you like to play checkers? Can someone explain to me how you play, and how you win?

Have one of the kids come up and demonstrate.

Checkers is a lot of fun to play. It's a much easier to learn than chess, and much less complicated. There's only one kind of game piece on the board. They all match, and they all move the same way. They can move one space per turn, or they can jump multiple opponents.

Jumping your opponent isn't an option if you want to win. That's the whole object of the game. But there's only so far these single checkers can move because they can only move in one direction.

Put the second checker on top of the first.

But make that checker a king, and you can jump backwards and forwards, all over the board. You become much more powerful than an ordinary checker, and you gain a big advantage over your opponent. The world we live in believes in gaining that competitive advantage. You need to get ahead. You need to work harder and achieve more. And yes, our world believes that a little cheating is okay if it gets you where you want to go. Jesus taught us another way. He said the last would be first and the first would be last. He didn't just say these words; he lived them. He left his throne to live as a poor carpenter's son. Instead of dwelling in the houses of the rich and powerful, he went to the sick and the needy and he became their servant. He died on a cross for all our sins, and rose to new life, reclaiming his throne in Heaven.

In Jesus' kingdom there will be no jumping others to get ahead. Jesus set the example for us, and he expects us to follow it. Instead of jumping others, we need to be serving others. Instead of trying to get ahead, we must put ourselves last.

He who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted. Don't try to get ahead on your own. Be the servant of all, and let Jesus give you the seat of honor in his kingdom!

FAMILY GAME TIME

KING ME!

ITEMS NEEDED:

A full set of checkers pieces (12 red, 12 black)
Two tables

INSTRUCTIONS:

Set the tables 15-20 feet apart. Put six red and six black pieces on each table.

Have 2 players start at one table. The players will race to the second table and get a checker piece. They will race back and get another piece, which they will stack on top of the first. Players will continue shuttling between tables and stacking their checker pieces.

Players are NOT allowed to cover the stack with a second hand. They must carry their stack in one hand and keep the stack from falling over. As a result, the longer the race goes, the slower they'll need to go in order to keep their stack from falling.

If either racer loses control and drops his checkers, the race ends and the other is declared the winner. Otherwise, the race continues until one player has collected all 12 piec-es of their color in a stack.

VARIATION:

Cut the number of checkers to six each for younger kids.

WHAT'S THE POINT?

Games are about coming out on top, but God wants our lives to be about putting others first. Be humble as he is humble.

FAMILY BIBLE LESSON

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INTRO

How many of you have seen the musical Annie? Annie is a rags to riches story about an orphan girl who finds herself living with the richest, most powerful man in America, Oliver Warbucks. There's a funny scene in the play where Warbucks tells Annie the secret to his success: "You don't have to be nice to the people you meet on the way to the top if you don't plan on coming back down again!"

It's a funny line, but unfortunately we see it happen in real life. We see this attitude of jumping over others in every walk of life. We see it in sports, where athletes are willing to use dangerous drugs to give themselves a competitive advantage. We see it on TV all the time in politics, where grown men and women will constantly attack each other to prove they need to be in charge. You'll see it when you grow up and get a job, where people will lie, cheat, and steal to get ahead. WWE legend Triple H says when he entered the wrestling business he was given one piece of advice: You can either make friends in this business, or you can become a star and make money.

If you haven't seen it in school, you will. Sports will become more and more competitive. So will your classes. You'll be competing with your fellow students for class rank. You'll compete against them and kids from other schools for scholarships. There are only so many opportunities available for each group of students, and the question soon becomes, "What are you willing to do to get ahead?"

It's like a big game of checkers. The way to get ahead is to jump over everyone until you reach the end. Then, and only then, will you be king!

If there was ever a man who had a "right" to jump over someone ahead of him, it was David. David, you may remember, was chosen by God to become king, even though Israel already had King Saul. As David grew up and became popular,

FAMILY BIBLE LESSON

Saul became jealous. David was forced to flee for his life and hide from Saul in the caves outside his homeland. Then one day, something amazing happened.

READ 1 Samuel 24:1-7

MAIN POINT

Can you believe David? The man who wanted to kill him, the only man between him and his destiny, walks into his cave to use the bathroom. But David didn't lay a hand on him.

What would Oliver Warbucks say to David? What would Triple H say? Do you think Triple H would have been satisfied to cut the corner of Saul's robe and let him live?

Triple H might have joined David's men and said, "Kill him!" But David's actions show that he lived by a different standard. I think David would have been more inclined to listen to the words of Jesus.

READ Mark 9:35b

What a contrast! Jesus, the Son of God, tells us that if we want to get ahead, we have to make ourselves the servant of all. Can you imagine Triple H carrying the gym bags for new wrestlers? Can you imagine him helping to set up and tear down the ring? Of course not! But that's exactly what Jesus says we must do if we want a place of honor in his kingdom.

Jesus wasn't just saying this to be mean, or to be contrary. He was telling us to do exactly what he did. Paul sums it up in his letter to the Philippians.

READ Philippians 2:5-11

DRIVE IT HOME

When we get to Heaven, Jesus is going to ask what we did. He's not going to ask us how much money we made, how many cars we owned, or whether we were ever WWE champion. He's going to ask, how many mouths did we feed? How many people did we clothe? How many people did we introduce to Jesus?

Becoming a servant takes a willing heart. It means we need to be willing to stop what we're doing and lend a hand, without complaining or expecting pay back. We need to be generous with our time and our money. We need to be unselfish about helping others and be willing to share the spotlight with others.

FAMILY BIBLE LESSON

There's nothing wrong with pursuing success or championships. God wants us to strive to be the best at whatever we choose to do, and there are plenty of successful people who use their wealth to serve God by serving others. What God doesn't want is for us to play checkers with the people in our lives. He doesn't want the Triple H or the Oliver Warbucks' way of thinking to be our way of thinking. He who wants to be the greatest must become the servant of all.

Like Jesus, we need to lay down our lives in service to others. We need to remember how Jesus left his throne to become a servant to the poorest of the poor. Like Jesus, we must be willing to become the servant of all and put ourselves last.

CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Teach us to be humble so that other people can see Jesus in our lives.

In Jesus' name,

Amen

LESSON DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

ICEBREAKER

Have you ever had to wait a long time in line for a movie, a ride, or something fun? What was it, and was it worth the wait?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read 1 Samuel 24:1-7

Why was David hiding in the cave?

What did David's men want him to do when they saw Saul enter the cave?

What reason does David give for not killing Saul?

Read Mark 9:35

How does Jesus say we can become the "first" in his kingdom?

What are some ways we can encourage one another to live as servants the way Jesus taught us?

SIMPLE PRAYER

Dear God,

Forgive us for the times when we try to get ahead and hurt someone in the process. Teach us to be like you, to put others first and ourselves last, and let your light shine through us.

*In Jesus' name,
Amen*

LESSON REVIEW GAME

Who was hiding in the cave in today's story?

DAVID

Why did Saul end up in the cave?

HE HAD TO GO POTTY

Why didn't David kill Saul?

SAUL WAS GOD'S ANOINTED KING

What does Jesus say we need to do if we want to be great in his kingdom?

WE MUST BECOME THE LEAST; BE HUMBLE

How did Jesus set an example for us in becoming less?

HE LEFT HEAVEN TO BECOME HUMAN AND DIE FOR US

CRAFT ACTIVITY

Have the kids create finger puppets or stick puppets (with popsicle sticks) of David and Saul so they can re-tell the Bible story.