

Lead on ...

(for children aged eight to twelve – *with italicised noted for adaptation for children younger than this, who do not yet have adequate reading skills*)

This is a series parallel to the 'Lead on..' Bible workshops. Often we underestimate our children's ability to grasp spiritual concepts, if presented simply. The following notes are for the leaders of children's groups, to guide them through the Lead on .. series, so that our children too may be encouraged and equipped on the ConneXions journey.

The adult 'Lead on..' notes are also referred to for more background.

Each session's material is presented to encourage group interaction – as children have the opportunity to grapple with their own impressions, ideas and questions they will come to discover the Truth for themselves. It is important that an atmosphere of trust, confidentiality, acceptance and respect is nurtured; as we all, regardless of our age, only share our personal stories and our challenges, in an environment where we feel SAFE.

If possible also include something to eat and drink at the beginning or end of the programme. Building relationships and getting to know each child as an individual is one of the most important aspects of discipleship – well captured in the expression, 'I don't care how much you know, until I know how much you care.' Preparation beforehand is essential. In every age group there are 'visual learners' (who learn best through having something to engage visually) and kinaesthetic learners (who learn best by doing) – so the group leader is encouraged to include a variety of ideas as suggested.

It is recommended that a modern translation is used, so that the children can easily understand and read the text.

Notes may be printed off / photocopied as needed.

Val Mullally

(For more information on parenting/ working with children see www.pacerparenting.com)

Lead on Session One

Being a leader by helping others

Aim: To think about what Jesus showed us about being a leader

Preparation: Collect pictures for warm up activity.

Slips of paper with the prepared readings highlighted and name tags of the disciples, (see 'Looking at the Bible' below.)

Felt tip pens and paper for activity. (*Use broad non-permanent markers or wax crayons for pre-readers.*)

Introduction:

If children do not already know one another, take a few minutes to introduce yourself and for every child to say his /her name.

(With young children make this into a game by encouraging the group to repeat each child's name and clap with you – one clap on each syllable in the name – repeating each name twice.)

Explain that over the next few weeks we are going to be taking time to think about how God wants each of us to be the best we can be and what the Bible has to say about that.

Warm up Activity: Famous People

Before the session, collect a selection of pictures of famous characters (e.g. television characters and celebrities) that the children will relate to, especially child heroes, such as Bart and Lisa Simpson.

Ask children to choose one picture and to say if they think this person is a good leader or not / and why they think so.

(Be aware that young children's concentration span is short – so move quickly through this activity, always acknowledging each child's contribution, whether we agree with their thinking or not. If children sense that they are only accepted for giving the 'Right' answer they will not feel free to share their honest opinions and the things that they are grappling with. We can always make comments such as 'That's an interesting thought.' / 'I never looked at it that way.' / 'Thank you for telling us your thoughts.')

Explain that today we will be thinking about some of Jesus disciples (his followers) who wanted to be important.

(Help children realize that when they are with friends or family there are time when they too are leaders – so what we are learning is for children too and not just grown up leaders).

Looking at the Bible:

Preparation: (Have prepared copies of the Bible passage with the words of Jesus highlighted on one, the words of James on another and the words of John on another, and the words of the narrator highlighted on a fourth copy. Also have ready either stickers or name tags with the name of Jesus written on one and the name of one of the disciples written on each of the others.)

Explain that we are going to read a short piece from the Bible about when Jesus was with his disciples and they started having an argument about who was most important.

(If you are working with pre-readers, instead of role-play, use some simple puppets of the characters and present the story in the form of a simple puppet show). Keep Jesus' answer very simple - let him explain that if we want to be leaders like Jesus we have to be people who help others – not people who boss others around.)

Ask children if they can remember the names of Jesus disciples and show that name tag as they recall correct names. Explain that you need three children to volunteer to read the pieces that are said by Jesus, James and John (Explain that these two were brothers). Put the relevant nametag on the volunteers and give them the copy of the Bible passage that has their words highlighted. Explain that you will be the narrator and read the story and the volunteers will read their words, that are said by Jesus, James and John. Ask the other children to pretend to be the other disciples, and imagine how they would be feeling when they heard this discussion.

Read the passage: Mark 10: 35-40.

Discussion:

* What did James and John want Jesus to do?

Ask other 'disciples' how they are feeling when they hear James and John asking Jesus to make them more important.

After brief discussion, ask children to take their nametags off and put in a pile – explain that we were only pretending and that we can now let go of any angry feelings we had about James and John. (As children have put down name tags, ask them to shake their hands –to shake off any cross feelings, then to look around at the other children in the group and give them a smile. N.B. De-roling is very important as otherwise participants can have difficulty letting go of the feelings they have experienced during the role play.)

Now suggest that we can look at whether the other disciples felt the same as the children did when they were doing this role-play. Read Mark 10:41.

Now read Mark 10:42-45. *Read Mark 10:42-44 for younger children.* Then discuss:

* What does Jesus tell the disciples?

* How do you think the other disciples felt now?

* How do you think James and John felt now?

* Think of all the leaders (even Mum and Dad are leaders at home) you know and choose one who you think is a good leader. Do you think this leader is the sort of leader Jesus is talking about?

(With pre-teens you may explore what is meant in verse 45).

* Can you be a leader like Jesus wants us to be leaders?

(Ask children to give practical examples of how they can lead by helping others during the week).

With younger children, sing and act out 'The Grand Old Duke of York. Ask children if they think the Grand Old Duke of York was a good leader if he kept the men marching all day and all night. Would his men like that? Why? If he were a good leader what would he do?

Activity: Provide one large sheet of paper and felt-tip pens for each child to draw around the shape of his/her outspread hand. Ask them to write in a few words that describe how they will choose to be 'servant leaders' like Jesus this week within their hand shapes. Encourage children to take these home and put somewhere they will be seen to remind them.

(With younger children the leaders may have to help them write in the words they wish to say.)

Conclusion: Use the children's hand outlines to encourage them to say 'one line prayers' asking God to help them be his 'servant leaders'.

(Or the leader may say a brief concluding prayer, using the children's words).

Lead on ... Session Two Encouragement

Aim: To think about how everyone can be an encourager, no matter what our age.

Preparation: prepared booklet (see conclusion); puppets

Warm Up Activity: Seat children in a circle. (With group maximum of about eight – split into two groups if there are more). Give each one a pencil or pen. Explain that today we are going to think about how we can all encourage others. Give each child a long narrow strip of paper, (about 15 by 60 cm). Ask each child to write his/her name along the very bottom of the width (short edge!) of the paper. Then instruct children to pass paper to the child sitting on their right. Each child then is asked to write a few words (in small writing as strip of paper must have space for every child to write on) - saying something you like about the child whose name is at the bottom. (Make them aware that we are not only talking about what people look like but more importantly we also want to think about things like, being kind, generous, brave, thoughtful, etc) Then instruct children to carefully fold over a small piece of the paper so that what they wrote is hidden and to pass the paper onto the next person. The process continues – with each child writing a kind comment about the child whose name is at the bottom of the paper – until the paper has circulated back to the original person. When children have their own pieces of paper back in their hands, they are asked to open it and read what the others have said about them. Give children a couple of minutes to savour the comments and then ask them how they feel when they read good things about themselves. Explain that today the group will be discussing how important encouragement is and that we all need it.

(With pre-readers create and present a puppet show for them with two characters talking about the children in this group – making sure that each child is mentioned by name – affirming some positive attribute about them. Do take time to think this out carefully beforehand so that you can make a clear, positive and sincere comment on each child – to leave any child out would defeat the purpose of the activity; as at least one child would feel very discouraged if they weren't noticed!)

Sing 'Thank you Lord for this fine day.' Encouraging children to create new verses of things we can say thank you to God for.
Mention that we all like it when people notice what we do and say thank you. God likes us to say thank you too!

Looking at the Bible: Explain that today we are going to look at the importance of encouraging one another. *(Ensure that children understand what 'encourage' means!)*

Tell story of Barnabas, the encourager. (See blue box on p.13 –14 of 'Lead on...' notes. *The younger the children the simpler and less detailed the story needs to be.*

Discussion: Have written in large words: 'Let us encourage one another.' Hebrews 10:25.

Read these words together and discuss why they think the Bible tells us this.
Ask children how they feel when somebody says something kind to them that makes them feel encouraged. If the sense of joy/ warmth in our hearts is not mentioned by children, use words to describe this yourself. Then explain that the word 'encourage' comes from the French language; that 'coeur' is the French word for 'heart'. So when we encourage people we 'give them heart'.
Ask children why they think encouragement is important.

Activity: Ask children to break into small groups of about three and to create their own short skit giving examples of 'how not to encourage' / 'how to encourage'. (Creating the same situation each time but with different endings.) Use these to discuss how the characters felt. (Help children to realize that both the encourager and the encouraged person feel better when we look for the good in a situation. (As a leader ensure that you set the example by encouraging them in their attempts!)

(If children are shy – try letting them use puppets to create their story!)

Conclusion:

Discuss ways in which we can encourage people we know. E.g. giving them a smile, saying thank you, telling them how we feel when they do something kind, sending a card, an e-mail or phoning them to say we are thinking of them. Help children to recognise that we are never too young to be encouragers!

Provide each child with a sheet of paper or small booklet with each day of the week written upon it. Ask them to draw in a smiley face for each time when they remembered to give encouragement this week and to bring these back next week.

Ask each child to bring a matchbox with as many different things in it as they can fit in!

Lead on ... Session Three

Feeling afraid but choosing to be brave

Aim: To help children realise that feelings of fear are normal when we face new challenges.

Warm up Activity:

Ask children to write their names on their matchboxes and put in a certain place to be used at the end of the session (and DON'T FORGET to do this!)

Sit in a circle and encourage each group member to finish the sentence 'I feel scared when ..' It will be helpful if the leader sets the example by starting the activity with her own sentence.

At the end of the activity briefly discuss that everyone, even grown ups, feel afraid sometimes. Sometimes our feelings of fear are important to keep us safe. (Ask children if they can think of a few examples and how our feelings of fear could be helpful to keep us safe e.g. if a fast car is coming towards you will move out the way).

Looking at the Bible:

Explain that even grown ups feel anxious, or even afraid, when they have to do something new.

Tell children that today we will think about a beautiful queen, who felt very afraid but who chose to do the brave thing. (Use Lead on ... booklet page 20 re: Queen Esther as a base to create a story.

(In preparation read Esther 2 – 8., but focus on the key aspects of Esther's bravery, even though she was afraid, saving her people).

With younger children bring along dressing up clothes and props to recreate the story, after the initial telling, with the leader taking the part of narrator and encouraging the children to role-play the story, with a leader taking the role of narrator. Involve all the children in some way.

Discussion:

1. Have you ever been called into the headmaster's (or headmistress') office? How did you feel?

(Encourage a few children to share their experiences).

2. Imagine how Queen Esther must have felt going to the king, when she knew that if he felt cross he might tell the soldiers to kill her?

3. What would have happened to all her people if she hadn't been brave?

4. What happened because she was brave?

Activity:

Provide A3 sheets of paper, rulers, felt tip pens and crayons. Encourage children to make a comic strip of the story. (If time is very limited the group may choose to create a comic

strip of the story by each person doing one picture and then taping these together in correct order.)

With pre-readers, draw a single picture about the story.

Conclusion: Ask children to take turns to show the contents of their matchboxes. Use the opportunity to give encouragement to children (for remembering / for trying/ for thinking of unusual items / for collecting many items).

Talk about how important some of these particular items in the matchbox might be – even though they are little. Help children to recognise that even though they may be *little* / smaller than the adults, and even though they may feel afraid sometimes, God has a plan for them too!

Encourage them to think of some way they can tell someone that God loves them this week – even though they may feel a little scared to do this. (Only do this if you can ensure that there is a reliable carer/ parent who will support the child in this plan).

Lead on ... Session four

God wants us to keep close to Him

Aim: To understand that God wants us to keep close to Him.

Preparation: Equipment for memory verse (see Activity below).

Copies of memory verse for younger children, written in clear script.

Warm up Activity:

Provide large sheets of paper and large, fat wax crayons (so that children can work quickly). Ask children to sit comfortably and still and to close their eyes so that they can use their imaginations. Lead them through the following visualization.

Sit quietly and feel your breath coming in and out of your body.

In and out – in and out. (PAUSE)

Imagine that you are a tree.

What sort of tree are you?

Very large or small?

Do you have leaves? What are the leaves like?

Do you have any thorns or flowers on you?

Are there other trees or plants close by, or are you alone?

Does anyone live in your branches or underneath you?

Are you planted near a river?

What else is near you?

Are you happy where you are?

Keep the picture of your tree in your head.

When you are ready open your eyes and look at me.

When children have opened their eyes ask them to take about five minutes to draw their trees. Encourage them not to talk until they have finished, so that they can think about their pictures and what they were imagining.

When they have finished, encourage them to talk in pairs or threes, telling each other about their pictures.

(With younger children, have enough leaders for the children to share about their pictures groups of twos or threes).

Looking at the Bible:

Remind children about talking about fear last week. Explain that sometimes bad or sad things happen in our lives. The Bible tells us that God encourages us to be like strong trees, planted by a river. (Read Psalm 1:3)

Discussion:

Take the verse phrase by phrase and discuss with children what it means and how we can be like 'trees by the river':-

Talk about how the tree sucks up water from the river, which passes through the trunk to keep the leaves strong (so they don't wither/ *dry up*).

What if there was a great big hole in the trunk of the tree so that water couldn't get to the leaves?

What if the tree said 'I don't want to be near the water'- and went off to live in the desert by itself?

Use this image of the tree to help children recognise how important it is that we keep near God.

Ask children how we keep near to God. E.g. prayer, reading our Bibles, coming to this study group/church

Each one of us is different – just like all the pictures of the trees are different, but God loves each of us and has a special job for each of us in our lives. (Encourage children to think how each type of tree is different (e.g. apple trees give fruit, a fir tree keeps green for Christmas!))

Activity:

In advance prepare a large tree shape with each word of the verse written on a separate 'leaf'. Have these stuck on the tree with blu-tak and then help the children to learn this as a memory verse, repeatedly taking off a couple of 'leaves' at a time, until the children can say the whole verse, even though the tree is bare. (*With younger children add to the fun of this by asking them to pretend to be a strong wind and to 'blow' off the leaves at each interval*).

Conclusion:

Encourage children to take their pictures of trees home and to put it up somewhere in the house to remind them that no matter what we are like, we need to keep near to God.

With older children encourage them to write the memory verse underneath the picture.

With younger children you could have copies of the verse to be glued onto their pictures.

Encourage children to share with somebody at home what they learnt from the session today.

Lead on ... Session 6

Calling God's People to Celebrate

Aim: To encourage children that God wants us to celebrate that He is a good and loving God!

Preparation: Read the 'Lead on..' notes for this session, so that you are aware of the theology of celebration. The aim is for the children to have a good time – but we also want them to realize that God wants them to celebrate!

Create a surprise party! Have the room decorated for a festive occasion – balloons, streamers, party hats, etc. Have a large cheerful banner with the word CELEBRATE! on a focal wall.

Have some celebration food ready, but if possible have this out of sight initially, so that children are not distracted by it.

(Make sure you have checked if any children have allergies and where necessary ask the parent's advice regarding diet so that you can provide a treat for every child).

Warm up Activity: Have an OTT (over the top!) time of celebratory praise to God, including some of the children's favourites. If you do not have a skilled musician perhaps some of your church's worship team could come in to support you this week.

Alternatively there are some excellent Children's Praise CD's available.

If any of the children play a musical instrument, try to include them in part of the music.

Use lively action songs, musical instruments such as bells and tambourines and if possible make streamers or flags, which the children can use for some of the songs. (A streamer is easily made by threading several long pieces of ribbon through themselves, around one edge of a large wooden or plastic curtain loop).

Looking at the Bible: At an appropriate time in the celebration, read Psalm 33:1-4.

(Ensure that the reader conveys the mood of Celebration!)

If possible have Bibles or copies of the passage for the children to follow the verses are being read.

Discussion:

How does God want us to sing to Him? (v.1)

Do you think God wants only grown-ups to praise Him?

What musical instruments do we hear about here?

Do you think that God likes us to use other musical instruments too?

Do you think we only need to sing the hymns from the hymn book when we are in church? (v. 3) (If your church uses hymn books, discuss that some of the hymns in the hymn book are very beautiful and we sing them because they help us to think about God - but God likes new songs too!)

Does God want us to be very quiet when we celebrate Him? (v.3)

(With pre-readers, you could create a puppet show with two characters having a conversation about the party today and what they heard in the Bible passage. Prepare this in advance, using the questions above to create the line of thought presented.)

Puppets are fun but they are also a powerful teaching tool – don't miss the opportunity to help children grasp spiritual truth!)

With older children, you could also use the following questions.

Look at verses four – five to see WHY we celebrate.

If we feel His love here today – how do you think God would like our lives to be when we go back home and to school?

Do you think we can only celebrate God's goodness out loud or in our hearts as well?

How?

Activity: Enjoy the feast!

With young children, if there is enough time, play some traditional party games, ensuring that everyone feels included.

With older children, if there is time, you could divide them into groups of three to five and encourage them to prepare a song, rap or playlet to present to the group.

Alternatively, provide materials for the children to create bookmarks with the word CELEBRATE – Psalm 33:1-4.

Conclusion: Choose a suitable praise or worship song and close with prayer, so that the children leave with their attention focused on God.

Lead on ... Session Seven

Working Together

Aim: To help children to recognise that it is important that we help one another by working together.

Preparation: Each child will need a desert spoon.

Set up the room with chairs for children to sit in pairs directly opposite each other, about 60 cm apart, (either across tables or on a floor) – so that bowls of food can be placed in the centre between them.

Have ready bowls with a tasty snack that needs to be eaten with a spoon- perhaps a mix of rice krispies, smarties or other small chocolates and small pieces of dried fruit. Or otherwise a bowl of jelly, ice-cream and/or custard.

(ENSURE THAT FOOD IS SUITABLE FOR ANY CHILD WITH ALLERGIES).

Puppet dressed to look like Moses (as a young man). If possible have a microphone to use as a prop.

Suitable props for children to use to create drama of the Bible story of Moses.

Warm up Activity: Prepare as detailed above.

Seat children opposite one another in pairs. Tell them that we have a tasty snack but there are two rules – they must eat with the spoons and they may not bend their elbows.

(With young children before approaching the table, talk about the body parts we can bend (e.g. elbows / knees. Have children name and touch one of these body parts at a time and experiment with moving their bodies without bending that body part).

(Let children experience mild dismay at this task. Hopefully some of them will recognise that the only way to eat is to feed each other. Drop hints if necessary!)

After the fun of eating, ask children what we can learn from the activity - say a short prayer thanking God that we can help one another.

Looking at the Bible: Have a leader 'interview' the Moses puppet – who describes his experience in getting others to help him lead. (Exodus 18:13-27)

Discussion:

1. What was it that Moses was doing?
2. Why was he doing it?
3. Why didn't it make sense to do it alone?
4. Are there times when we also need to help one another?

(Refer to the warm up activity – also talk about times like getting ready for the session and clearing up afterwards – encourage the children to help you and thank them for their efforts).

Activity: Encourage the children to create a drama of this story of Moses. Discuss that it's important that every child has something to do. (Try to let the children take the

leadership of this activity – they learn by doing. However if there is conflict or you are aware some child is unhappy / feeling left out – then gently encourage the group's awareness to the problem and encourage them to come up with a creative solution).

If possible arrange for the children to act out their drama to the parents (perhaps in church the following Sunday). Get permission to do this before suggesting it to the children. If all the audience are not working through the same series, briefly explain to the adults the aim of the activity.

Conclusion: After creating the play, discuss with the children how they felt when they were working together. (If any 'negative' feelings are expressed it's important to listen to these, acknowledge how the child feels and to ask the group if there is any way we could make sure everyone feels good about the activity. Problem solving is an important skill in leadership!) Help them to recognise that as they created the story / discussed what to do / roles / what to wear etc. they took turns in leading.

End in prayer, thanking God that He wants us all to help with leading.

Lead on ... Session Eight

We are all special!

Aim: To realise that God has a special place and special jobs for each one of us.

Preparation: Using spatulas or lolly sticks, with a card picture glued onto the top of each. You will need a foot, hand, ear, eye, mouth and head. Create a set of 'puppets' with these.

Prepared sheets of paper to make into cards, pairs of blunt-nosed scissors, crayons, felt-tips, coloured paper, small attractive remnants of material, lace, ribbon, etc. glue sticks.

Warm up Activity: 'Create a story.' Sit in a circle. The leader explains that she will begin a story and then we will all take turns to add on, the person sitting next to her to go next and then following round the circle till everyone has had a chance. The leader begins an exciting story. S/he says a few sentences, builds the picture quickly and then stops half way through a dramatic moment (e.g. 'and there stood ...').

The next child says a sentence or two – and then the story is taken up by the following child – until all have had a chance. The initiating leader then draws the story to a quick and satisfying conclusion.

Discuss how each person added something different to the story. Each one of us is different and we add something different in life that is special.

Looking at the Bible: Create a simple 'puppet show' based on 1 Corinthians 13: 12-30. With older children, continue by reading Romans 12: 4-8

Discussion:

Help the children to discuss what was the message that the 'puppets' were telling us:
Are we all the same?

Imagine if we all looked exactly the same and were good at doing the same things – how would that be? Why?

Is one job more important than another?

Guide children to see that we all need to work in harmony, like each part of the body. Discuss how it is hard to get on with what you want to do if you have a stone in your shoe or a thorn in your foot. If one part of the body isn't working as it should, it affects the rest of the body.

Encourage the children to identify what they are good at, reminding them that each thing is important. (Before the session, make sure you have spent time thinking of the qualities of each child, so that you can encourage them at what they have to offer, if they have difficulty identifying for themselves what they are gifted at. Even a friendly smile is a very important gift that can help others to feel welcome!)

Prayer: Give thanks to God for the gifting of each one (naming specifically). Ask Him to help us use our gifts to be a blessing to others.

Activity: Ask the children to suggest a particular mini-project, which you as a group could undertake to be a blessing to others. This might be a small project for a particular charity or mission, or choosing to prepare a song, banner or something else within the church. Plan how each one will be involved. (You might need to take a session to prepare this. Ensure that any project has the blessing of your church leadership and that you have dealt with any safety/ insurance/ parents' permission issues.)

Use the rest of the session to create cards that can be used as a blessing, an encouragement or as a 'thank you', related to the project you hope to do. (Or the cards could be the project in itself).

Conclusion: Encourage each child to show the group the card s/he made. Express how each one is different / unique / special in its own way because God has made each one of us unique/ different /special.

Lead on ... Session Nine

Doing things God's way

Aim: To encourage children's awareness that each one of us has to make choices to do what we know is good and right, even when it isn't easy.

Preparation: You will need a blackboard and chalk, or flipchart and broad marker pens. Also have prepared strips of thin card to make bookmarks and felt-tips, scraps of coloured paper, paper doilies, etc. Provide paper punch and thin wool to decorate, plus clear contact paper.

Warm up Activity: 'If I could have anything I wished for I would wish for ...' encourage each child to answer.

Looking at the Bible: Start the story by saying that today we will be looking at a man who wished for a rather strange thing.

Using Nehemiah 1-4, create a story of Nehemiah choosing to do the right thing (even though this wasn't easy). *The younger the children the shorter and less complicated the story needs to be.* For a story to work well it needs to be thoroughly prepared – including the beginning and the end. Keep to the key points and tell it as an exciting adventure story. (You may want to use dressed up dolls to represent the key characters).

Discussion: Ask children whether they thought that Nehemiah had an easy job. Why? Discuss particular challenges he had to face. (E.g. leaving the comfortable place he had in the palace, persuading the people to help, getting enough food, building materials, making a plan to deal with the enemy, encouraging the people when they were tired and upset. Make a list of these.

(Try to ask questions that will encourage the children to think and identify these things for themselves – much more learning comes from having to think through issues ourselves than from just being given the answers. You may need to remind them of particular parts of the story to help them identify what he had to do).

Then ask the children what Nehemiah needed to be like, to be a good leader. E.g. 'Do you think it was easy to ask someone as important as the king that he wanted to go away? So he needed to be ...' List the qualities that the children suggest. (E.g. wise, brave, patient).

Ensure the children understand the word 'qualities'.

Ask children to think of someone who has been a good leader to them. Explain that this might be as country leader, or a hero on TV but it could also be a teacher, a parent, somebody at church. Encourage them to share in pairs, taking a minute to tell the child sitting next to them about the leader they chose and then the other child telling of their choice.

Then remind the children of Nehemiah's qualities as a leader, discussed earlier. Ask them to tell the group qualities that they can see in the leaders they chose. List all these qualities on the blackboard / flipchart. Ask how we feel when somebody leads us well. When children have finished making their suggestions, read through the list on the board and ask children if they agree that these are the qualities of a good leader.

Then explain to the children that each of us is 'a leader of one' – each one of us has to 'be a leader to ourselves'. 'You are the only person who is with you wherever you go.' God wants to guide us, just like he guided Nehemiah – but we have to choose how we will lead ourselves – we can be bad leaders and grumble at ourselves or we can be good leaders who encourage ourselves and help us make good /wise choices. How we talk to ourselves on the inside makes all the difference!

Activity: Remind children that today will be the last session of our work on 'lead on' encourage them to read through the list of leadership qualities and to think of at least three qualities that they think they are good at or would like to get better at . Provide materials for making bookmarks. Ask the children to decorate the bookmarks to keep for themselves, by writing in bright colours the three or more qualities that they chose for themselves. Encourage them to decorate the bookmark and when they are finished, help them to cover it with clear contact paper for protection. They may also like to write the date on the bookmark.

With poor readers / writers create bookmark with a positive image (e.g. sunflower, smiley face), rather than using words.

Conclusion: Sit in semi-circle with each child holding his / her bookmark. Encourage children to put the bookmark in their Bible or other favourites book, as a reminder of the sort of leader they choose to be. Say a short prayer, which reflects on today's learning, encouraging children to be positive 'leaders of one – or more'!