

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).