

Choose God's Way

Theme for Unit 25:
Choosing and
Losing

BIBLE BASIS

The Israelites ask for a king in order to be like other nations (1 Samuel 8—10).

BIBLE TRUTH

God wants us to follow His ways rather than trying to be like everyone else.

MEMORY VERSE

Show me your ways,
O LORD; teach me your
paths. Psalm 25:4.

LESSON AIM

That your students will choose to follow God's ways rather than trying to be like everyone else.

Lesson Overview

1

Life Need (5 minutes)

Conduct a survey to show how people can influence each other's choices.

2

Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

Bible Study: Learn how the Israelites wanted a king so they could be like other nations.

Materials: *Bible Adventures* pp. 2–3, Bibles, “The Land of Kings” Teaching Aid map used in all lessons

Bible Review: List other occasions when the Israelites wanted to be like neighboring nations, then discuss how people today are the same way.

Materials: “God’s Master Plan of Salvation” Teaching Aid time line used in all lessons

3

Bible Application (5–10 minutes)

Write the results of the choices a boy made about following or not following God's ways.

Materials: *Bible Adventures* p. 1

4

Life Response (5–10 minutes)

Memory Work: Complete sentences in order to identify how God shows His people His ways.

Materials: *Bible Adventures* p. 4

Optional Activity: Prayer journal assignment



Understanding Your Students

September brings new experiences to your students. Some of them may be going to a new school. Some students might be new to the community and your church. Others might be adjusting to new family members.

You may have a new job, a new home, or a new family member yourself. You may have a new class of students this week, or this might be your first week of teaching a class on a regular basis. (If so, welcome to the family!)

In the midst of all these new experiences, it's comforting to know that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

Classroom Tips

Here are some ways to get this fall quarter off to a great start.

n Plan a short get-acquainted game. For example, ask students to think of two words that begin with their initials to describe themselves.

n Preparation builds confidence. Glance through the lesson early in the week. When you sit down for your final preparation, jot down notes or highlight sections you want to emphasize in class.

n Posters, attendance charts, or bulletin board displays can make your classroom look fun. The *Upper Elementary Creative Teaching Aids* packet has posters, a map, and a time line you can display.

n Pray for yourself, your students, your fellow teachers, and your church. Ask God to give your class its best year ever!

Understanding the Bible

This week we begin a quarter in which we'll study Israel's first three kings—Saul, David, and Solomon. This unit examines the reign of Saul and his conflict with David. In the second unit we'll study David as leader and king, and in the final unit of the quarter we'll examine the reign of wise King Solomon, David's son. This week we'll discover how Saul became king.

As a prophet, Samuel faithfully followed God in leading Israel for many years. But now Israel wanted a king. The leaders gave their reasons: Samuel was old, his sons were dishonest (1 Sam. 8:3), and Israel wanted to be like other nations, with a king who would lead them in battle against their

enemies (1 Sam. 8:5, 20).

The people didn't realize that they were rejecting God as their king (1 Sam. 8:7). Samuel's warnings of what a king would demand fell on deaf ears (1 Sam. 8:9-19).

Saul approached Samuel because he thought the prophet would be able to tell him where his father's lost donkeys had wandered off to. Samuel not only knew where the donkeys were, but also knew that Saul was the one God had chosen as king. The next day Samuel anointed Saul king (1 Sam. 9:18-20; 10:1).

Saul had no ambitions of being king. When Samuel first told him that he was the "desire" of Israel (a reference to Israel's desire for a

king), Saul protested. Wasn't his tribe the smallest one? Wasn't his clan the weakest?

However, when Samuel was ready to present Saul, Israel's newly anointed king was hiding among the baggage. When some men brought him out of hiding, Saul reluctantly allowed Samuel to announce him as king (1 Sam. 10:20-24).

The people of Israel were following their own ways and not God's in their demand for a king. God let them have what they wanted, but He knew it wasn't what was best for them. When we demand our own way, God may let us have what we want. But we may end up sacrificing His best for us.

Pre-session Activities

Choose from these activities to do as your students arrive.

n Play an ice-breaker game so your incoming students can get acquainted with each other. You might have them guess each other's favorite ball team, place of birth, or middle name.

n Play a sit-down version of follow-the-leader. (The leader can clap, make funny faces, etc.) This could lead into the discussion of how easy it is to want to do what everyone else is doing.

n Save the cover wrap of *Bible Adventures* for Lesson 3, when it will correspond to the Bible story of David and Goliath.

n For Worship Time, use the DisKit from the *Upper Elementary Creative Teaching Aids*. The DisKit provides songs for each unit on a CD, as well as lyric sheets. If you do not have access to a CD player, you have permission to make one cassette tape.

Materials: DisKit, CD or cassette player



1

Life Need

(5 minutes)

n Objective: That your students will evaluate the influence other people have on their decisions.

Start your class with an informal survey. Write a few opinion statements on the chalkboard, such as "Chocolate is the best flavor of ice cream," or "Basketball is more fun than baseball."

I'm going to take a survey. Point to one statement at a time. **I want everyone who agrees with this statement to move to the right side of the room. Everyone who disagrees with this statement move to the left side.**

Give your students a couple of minutes to choose sides. Count the number of students who agree with the statement as well as those who disagree, and write the tallies on the chalkboard. Then ask students to return to their seats. Do the same thing with the other opinion statements.

When your survey is over, ask: **How many of you knew right away which side of the room to move to? What about the rest of you? How many of you waited until you saw someone else make a decision before making up your mind?**

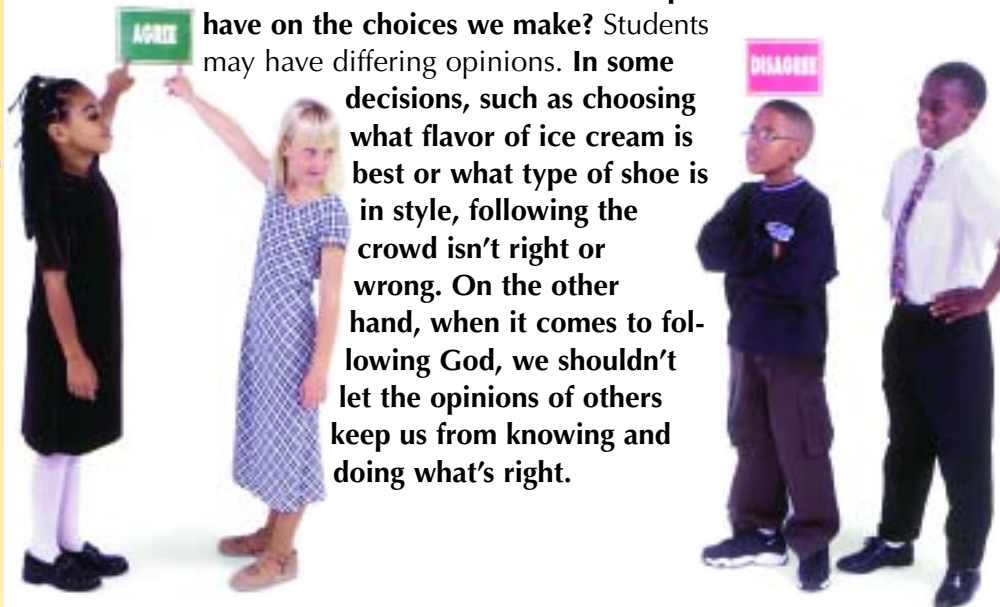
Without putting them on the spot, let your students discuss the influence other people have on their choices. For example, ask how many of them wait to see what their friends are doing before doing something themselves.

Why do you think the opinions of others are so important to us, especially when we have to make a choice? (Many times we want to please our friends, so we do things their way. Also, it's hard to be different. Sometimes it may seem easier to follow the crowd than to think things through for ourselves.)

How much influence should the opinions of others

have on the choices we make? Students may have differing opinions. **In some**

decisions, such as choosing what flavor of ice cream is best or what type of shoe is in style, following the crowd isn't right or wrong. On the other hand, when it comes to following God, we shouldn't let the opinions of others keep us from knowing and doing what's right.





2

Bible Learning (15–20 minutes)

n Objective: That students will understand the importance of following God's ways rather than trying to be like others.

Before class, put up the teaching aid time line, "God's Master Plan of Salvation." Also display the teaching aid

God's Master Plan of Salvation

Old Testament

- Genesis: 1. Where people first live in soil. God plans to send the plan to Noah.
- 2. God plans for salvation to come through the descendants of Abraham.
- Exodus through Ruth: 3. God leads the people out of slavery and into their promised homeland, Canaan.
- 1 Samuel through 2 Chronicles: 4. God's people become the nation of Israel and are promised the Son or Son's line.
- 5. God's people split into two kingdoms, Israel and Judah.
- Ezra through Esther, Malachi: 6. Because of sinning, God's people are conquered as people turned the wrong way from the Son.

New Testament

- 7. Jesus and others to God return to rebuild Israel.
- 8. The Son's choice, to have a descendant of David.
- 9. Jesus practices God's plan of salvation and calls people to follow.
- 10. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, salvation is offered to all who believe in Him.
- 11. After Jesus returns to Heaven, Christ's Church begins to assemble.
- 12. Paul and other Christians spread the Gospel and start churches all over the Roman Empire.



"The Land of Kings" Teaching Aid

"God's Master Plan of Salvation" Teaching Aid

map, "The Land of Kings." Plan to keep the map and

time line up for all lessons this quarter.

Each arrow on the map gives the lesson number and a short description of the event. Cut out the arrows and put them in an envelope. This week you'll need the two arrows for Ramah and Mizpah. Use transparent tape to attach the arrows to the map.

Hand out the *Bible Adventures* leaflets for Lesson 1 and have students turn to pages 2 and 3. Take a few minutes to explain how the Bible study is organized.

Each lesson is enhanced by notes and pictures, that help your students learn about Bible people, places, and customs that relate to the lesson. The Scripture Spotlight includes the Scripture text.

Bible Study

Have students open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 8. Read the introduction.

Choose a student to read the Scripture Spotlight, 1 Samuel 8:4-9. **Why did the people want a king?** (They wanted a king to lead them, such as other nations had. They were worried because Samuel's sons were dishonest; perhaps they thought a king would be a better leader.)

Why did asking for a king displease God? (God had chosen people to be their leaders, through the judges and the prophets. By asking for a king, it showed that they didn't trust God.)

The people of Israel were ruled by judges for many years. The prophet¹ Samuel led Israel until he was old, and then he appointed his sons to judge Israel. But Samuel's sons were dishonest judges and poor leaders.



1 Samuel 8:4-9

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and

came to Samuel at Ramah. They said to him, "You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways; now appoint a king to lead us, such as all the other nations have."

But when they said, "Give us a king to lead us," this displeased Samuel; so he prayed to the LORD. And the LORD told him: "Listen to all that the people are saying to you; it is not you they have rejected, but they have rejected me as their king. As they have done from the day I brought them up out of Egypt until

this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are doing to you.

Now listen to them; but warn them solemnly and let them know what the king who will reign over them will do."

¹In the Bible, prophets like Samuel (also called seers) were men and women who were chosen by God to deliver His message to people.

Why did the people want a king? Why did asking for a king displease God? What would you have done in Samuel's place?

Samuel went back to the people to tell them what God had said.

Read 1 Samuel 8:11-18. What warning did Samuel give the people about having a king? Read verse 20. Why did the Israelites want to be like the other nations?

The people refused to listen to

Samuel. When Samuel told God, God told Samuel to anoint² a king. God chose Saul, from the tribe of Benjamin, to be Israel's first king.

Saul was an impressive-looking man.³ Samuel anointed Saul and then again warned the people about having a king.

Read 1 Samuel 10:17-24. Why did God remind the people of the exodus from Egypt? Why do you think Saul hid? What was the reaction to Saul when the people saw him?

Samuel explained to the people the rules for the king to follow. That way both the new king and all the people would understand them. He wrote the rules down and kept the laws at the tabernacle.



They were unwilling to wait on God's plan.)

What would you have done in Samuel's place? (Allow students to answer freely.)

Read the next sentence. Then ask a volunteer to look up and read 1 Samuel

Think about Israel's history. In what other ways had Israel tried to be like its neighbors? Think about some times when you did things to be like everyone else. Has that led to doing things God's way? Is it always wrong to try to be like other people?

The people of Israel wanted to be like the nations around them. But the popular way was not God's way. The people got their way, but it was not God's way.



³Saul was handsome and showed everyone about 3

remind the people of the exodus from Egypt? (He wanted to remind them of His care and leadership. He led them safely out of Egypt, but they didn't seem to trust Him to lead them now. Instead, they were looking to a man.) **Why do you think Saul hid?** (He may have been shy or felt unworthy of all the attention.) Have students look up 1 Samuel 9:21, which takes place immediately after Samuel has called Saul the "desire of Israel." Saul was surprised to be chosen.

What was the reaction to Saul when the people saw him? (They were impressed because he was a head taller than everyone else. They said, "There is no one like him among all the people." They shouted, "Long live the king!")

Have someone read the transitional statement. Then discuss these questions. **Think about Israel's history. In what other ways had Israel tried to be like its neighbors?** (Help your students think of the times when Israel worshiped the idols of the lands around them. This trend started soon after they left Egypt and continued through much of Old Testament history.) **Think about some times when you did things to be like everyone else. Has that led to doing things God's way?** (Allow for discussion.)

Is it always wrong to try to be like other people? (Allow students to respond. It may be okay when others are a good influence.)

Bible Adventures p. 3

8:11-18 from the Bible. The same student should read verse 20 after discussing this question.

What warning did Samuel give the people about having a king? (Samuel told them that a king would make their sons serve in his army; he would make their children work for him; he would take the best parts of their produce and livestock. Samuel warned that they would cry out for relief from the king's demands and God would not answer them.)

Read verse 20 and discuss this question. **Why did the Israelites want to be like the other nations?** (They wanted a king to lead them in their battles, like the other nations around them.)

Choose a reader for the transitional paragraphs. Then have a student look up and read 1 Samuel 10:17-24 from the Bible. **Why did God**

Bible Review

Have students look at the teaching aid time line and locate the date 1043 B.C. Call on someone to read number 1.

Why do you think the Israelites wanted to be like their neighbors instead of concentrating on keeping God's laws? They were more concerned with what the neighboring nations might think than with what God wanted; they didn't trust God to take care of them; they wanted to pray to gods they could see instead of to the true God.

Why do you think people today follow the crowd in doing wrong things? Do you think they might give some of the same reasons as the Israelites? Let your students respond.



3

Bible Application

(5–10 minutes).

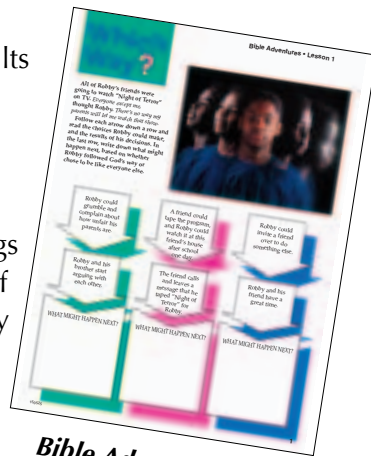
n Objective: That your students will examine

Horizontal lines for writing lesson notes.

Let's look at some choices a boy named Robby has to make as to whether he'll choose his own way or follow God's way.

Have your students turn back to page 1 in *Bible Adventures*. Give the class a couple of minutes to follow the arrows down the rows and write in possible results of the various choices Robby could make.

As time allows, let students share their answers with one another. Discuss the good things that might happen as a result of following God's ways. (If Robby invites a friend over to do something else, they might play a really fun game, or his parents might take them all out for pizza, or they might let him rent a clean, funny video.)



Bible Adventures p. 1

Even if Robby doesn't get extra privileges as a result of going God's way, what are some of the more permanent benefits of following God? (Robby will have a cleaner, healthier mind and will sleep much better if he doesn't watch the horror show. He'll have a happier home, with less tension between himself and his parents. Best of all, he can enjoy a happier relationship with God, knowing that he has been obedient.)

Optional Activity

You may want to continue using a prayer journal as a home activity to help students grow spiritually. You can provide a simple notebook or ask each student to bring one. Step 4 of each lesson will provide a topic for the students each week. Suggest that they write the memory verse in the journal each week and review it daily. Also they can keep track of prayer requests and answers in the journal.

For the prayer journal this week, ask the students to write about any situations when they were tempted to follow the crowd and go against God's way. What choice did they make and why?



4

Life Response

(5–10 minutes)

n Objective: That your students will discover the benefits of following God's ways.

We all may feel a bit like Robby when we face tough choices. We want to follow God's ways, but sometimes we aren't exactly sure what He wants us to do.

Memory Work

Our Key Verse for today is a good prayer to pray when we feel confused about which way to go. Have your students turn to page 4 in *Bible Adventures*. Let a volunteer read the title and introductory paragraph. Ask your students to locate the Key Verse on the page, Psalm 25:4, and then read it together.

Next, give the students time to complete the sentences about how God can show us His ways. If students need some help in finishing the sentences, have them look at the suggestions in the cloud of fire.

Explain that there could be more than one way to fill in each sentence. For example, for the many decisions an upper elementary child faces, obeying his or her parents is following God's ways. A Sunday school teacher helps students discover God's ways by getting them involved in Bible study or prayer. A person's own values can help him decide what is right or wrong and how best to follow God.

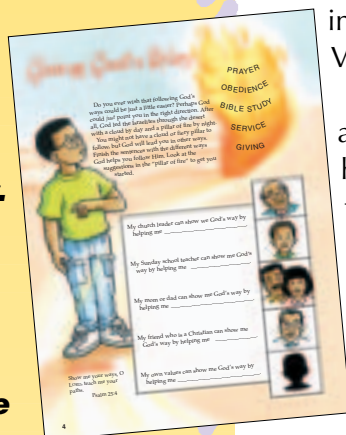
If your time is short, the activity could be done orally with students taking turns finishing the sentences.

Even though there may be many times when we feel that life is extremely confusing, God can lead us as surely as He led the Israelites through the wilderness. If we pray, "Show me Your ways, O Lord," God will do just that. God can lead and guide us in ways we never even thought of.

Some students may be able to share experiences in which they have prayed for guidance and God has sent someone to help them, or helped them make a decision based on His Word.

Closing Activities

Ask your students to bow their heads and think of one area in which they've been going the wrong way by following the crowd. After a moment of silence, lead the class in reciting Psalm 25:4 as a prayer of commitment, asking God to help them know and follow His ways.



Bible Adventures p. 4