



JOSIAH - THE KING WHO BELIEVED

God's Incredible Plan • U8#3 1st-3rd Grade • Feb. 22, 2026

Concept

God's leadership is perfect.

Goal

Students will learn that only God's leadership is perfect and therefore he is worthy of our praise and trust.

Passage

2 Kings 21:26-23:30; 2 Chronicles 34,35

Key Verse: "Josiah led everyone in Israel to serve the LORD their God."
2 Chronicles 34:33 (NCV)

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Children's Guide to the Bible</i><i>The Topsy-Turvy Kingdom, Josh McDowell</i> <p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>Unit 8#1 "Divided Kingdom" map</i> <p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>3 blindfolds</i> <p>Learning Activity #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><i>6 two-liter pop bottles w/caps</i><i>1 plastic ball</i>	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Paper Plate Crown instructions, 5/classLarge paper plates, 1/studentMarkers, crayonsScissors

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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All of us lead, whether at work, home, a Bible study, Scouts, or other activities. Teachers lead their students, parents lead their children, friends lead friends. Sometimes children lead their parents and students lead the teacher!

How often do we consider what it takes to be a good leader? Do we take time to learn how to lead well? Do we look for biblical character in those who lead us—or do we follow blindly?

Josiah became king of Judah when he was only 8 years old. Idol worship had infested the land for over 50 years and the Law was lost. In the midst of all this Josiah became the leader of a great revival in Judah, turning the hearts of the people back to the Lord. How did this happen?

When Josiah was 16 years old he decided to follow the Lord with all of his heart. He set his eyes on the best leader of all and he carried out that decision by taking action wherever he could. The idols were destroyed—even in Israel. The Temple was repaired and, because Josiah did the little he knew to do and did it faithfully, God allowed the Law to be found again. Josiah shared the Law with all of the people of the land.

". . . hope is passed from person to person. God-given visions of hope are shared—shared by leaders who see the vision with people who don't. But sharing is more than talk. Hope bursts into flame when leaders begin to act. As they follow their vision, clearly and openly facing the difficulties, God mobilizes the many by the challenging actions of the few"[1]
Because of Josiah's leadership Judah returned to worshipping God alone, as long as Josiah lived.

In this lesson we will discuss leadership and look at the life of King Josiah to see some of the qualities present in good leaders and the positive results they can have. Josiah wasn't a perfect leader. Apparently he neglected to teach his children to love the Lord, because when his son became king he turned the country back to idolatry. Still, there is much to learn from Josiah and much that our children need to learn. They are tomorrow's leaders. Maybe some of them will become great leaders in the decades to come!

[1] John White, *Excellence in Leadership*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1986), p. 48.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

Put an inch of water in each bottle to help stabilize them for the game.

Activity Stations

- **Story – The Topsy-Turvy Kingdom**

- **Instructions:** Read the story to the students and discuss what it is like when people forget about following their leader and everyone lives by different rules. Have them think about the contrast between everyone going their own way with no leader, following a bad leader and following a good leader.

- **What are idols?**

- **Instructions:** Read about idols on p.17 of Children's guide to the Bible. Discuss the definition of idol - "an image that is worshiped rather than the true God". What might be some things people worship or trust in instead of God in their lives today? Today the students will be learning about what King Josiah did about the idols people were worshipping in his day.

- **Craft – Paper Plate Crown**

- **Instructions:** Help the students follow the instructions for making a paper plate crown.
- **Discussion:** As they work, talk with the students about how they will be learning about how King Josiah was a good leader and what made him a good leader!

- **Mission Prayer**

- **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for Oasis Giving campaign.

How would you like to be a king or queen? What would you do? What if you became the king or queen of a country that was having lots of problems and you were only 8 years old? That is close to your ages. Would you know how to be a good leader?

That's what happened to King Josiah! His father was murdered by the officers of the army and he was the next to be king. When Josiah became the king of Judah (show on map), many of the people had turned away from following God to worship idols. His own father and grandfather had turned away from God, worshipped idols and led the people of Judah to worship idols rather than the one true God. They were bad leaders because they led people away from God rather than to God. But Josiah wanted God to be his leader so he turned to the Lord with all of his heart. Our key verse for today is, "Josiah led everyone in Israel to serve the LORD their God" (2 Chronicles 34:33). God had shown that He was a perfect leader. He was always faithful to take care of His people, to give them everything they needed and to protect them from their enemies. But when life was going well, over and over again the Israelites turned away from God. They decided to follow the gods of other countries who were nothing but wood and stone.

Introduction Continued

But every time they chose to trust in these gods rather than the one true God, they weren't wise enough, good enough or strong enough to take care of themselves. Their enemies were stronger than they were and always won the battles. God loved them so much that He wanted them to know that He is the only perfect leader and only He can be trusted. He wanted them to learn to depend on Him only so they would know how much He loved them and that He could take care of them perfectly.

Transition

We're going to learn something about leadership.

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Object Lesson

"Who would you follow?"

Goal: Illustration and results of good, bad and no leadership

Instructions: The 3 teachers will each be a good leader, a bad leader or a "non" leader. Choose three volunteers to be blindfolded and led by a teacher. The good leader will lead the child to a chair and guide him/her to sit down. The bad leader will lead the child to walk into the wall. The "non" leader will give the child no direction.

We are going to show you some different ways people lead. A leader is someone who influences others and goes with or beside him or her to show the way. There are good leaders and bad leaders. And there are leaders who don't lead at all. Watch each situation and decide which the good leader is, which the bad leader is and which leader doesn't lead at all.

Go through the 3 situations.

Which teacher was a good leader? Why? Which teacher was a bad leader? Why? Which teacher didn't lead? Wow! Leaders sure can make a difference. Josiah made a difference in the life of his people. What is our key verse? "Josiah led everyone in Israel to serve the LORD their God" (2 Chronicles 34:33).

Transition

Get a Bible and sit down so I can tell you the rest of the story.

Lesson Lg. Group

Times in Israel were hard because bad leaders had ruled the kingdom for over 50 years. Josiah's father and grandfather had turned away from God to worship idols. And the people of Judah imitated their kings. Idols can't protect us and take care of us. They can't love us. Leaders who love God want God to be their leader. They follow God and lead people to also follow Him.

The king was the most important leader of Judah—kind of like being the president of our country today. Josiah became the king of Judah when he was only 8 years old.

He wanted to be different from the other kings who worshiped idols. When he was 16 he began to turn to God with all of his heart. When he was 20 he began to tear down altars to false gods in places all over Judah. He destroyed the altars so no one could use them again. Then when he was 26 years old he sent people to repair God's Temple in Jerusalem. The people worked hard; during that work the High Priest found **the Book of the Law**, which God gave to Moses. This book of the Law had been missing for years! The priest sent it to Josiah and, when Josiah read it for the first time, he knew how very far away from God the people had turned. They had broken God's laws in many, many ways. Josiah was terribly sad for the wrong things his people had done. So he sent the High Priest and some counselors to a woman prophet, to ask her for wisdom about what God wanted him to do.

God told Josiah some good news and some bad news. The bad news was that God was going to allow enemies to take over their country because the people of Judah had been unfaithful and had worshiped idols. But the good news was that Josiah was sad for the sins of the people and wanted to do God's will. So God would not let the enemies take over the land as long as Josiah lived.

So Josiah called together the leaders and people of Judah and Jerusalem and **read the whole book of the Law to them**. He renewed the agreement of the Lord, promising to keep God's commands and rules with all of his heart and soul. The people listened to Josiah's promise and they agreed too.

Open your Bibles and find **2 Chronicles chapter 34**. Our key verse is 2 Chronicles 34:33, "Josiah led everyone in Israel to serve the LORD their God". Read the whole verse. Josiah was a good leader because he trusted and followed God. The people of Judah lived in peace because they followed the good leadership of Josiah as Josiah followed God's perfect leadership.

Josiah searched for every idol left in the land and destroyed every one he found. He burned them, ground them into powder. Josiah did all that he could do to keep the people from worshipping false gods.

Then Josiah brought back the feasts and laws that God had commanded. These feasts reminded them of God's power and presence with them. Remembering what God had done for them in the past was a good way to help them start to think about Him and trust Him again. They were reminded that God always led them in the right way for their good. One of the feasts Josiah brought back was Passover. Who can tell us why Passover was important? (Allow for response.) Do you remember the amazing things God did to set the Israelites free from their slavery in Egypt? Josiah did and he reminded the people by celebrating the best Passover in Judah since the time of the Prophet Samuel.

Lesson Continued

Josiah was a young boy when he became king of Judah. He decided to follow God with all of this heart and he showed the people how to follow God, too. Our key verse says, “Josiah led everyone in Israel to serve the LORD their God” (2 Chronicles 34:33). Because Josiah chose to follow God, many other people turned to God and learned how to follow Him.

Good News

You can make the same decision even though you are young, just like Josiah. In order to follow God you first must become His child. The wrong things you have done, said, and thought make it impossible to be God's child because He is perfect and cannot be with sin. God knew none of us could ever be perfect, so He sent Jesus to take the punishment we deserve for our sin. To become His child all you have to do is ask God to forgive you because Jesus died for your sin and then you will be God's child forever and the Holy Spirit will lead you as you lead others to follow God.

Jesus is the best leader of all! Once you are a Christian and have a relationship with Jesus, if you follow Him you can help others to know His love and His wonderful promises just like Josiah. God promises that if you follow Him, He will work through you to lead other people to Him.

Transition

Let's all get into small groups for discussion and prayer.

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

- How did God show the Israelites that He was a good leader? How has He shown you He is a good leader?
- Why was Josiah a good leader?
- Who are leaders in your life? (Allow to answer.) What are some good ways you have seen them lead?
- Do you lead anyone? How about friends or brothers or sisters?

Let's take a few minutes to pray and thank God that He is the perfect leader and that He has placed in our lives good leaders who help us turn to God. Let's ask for His help to learn how to follow Him so we can be good leaders for Him.

Transition

Let's play a game to remember how King Josiah tore down all the idols in the land so he could lead the people back to God.

Learning Activity# 3 Lg. Group

Game - “Bowling Down Idols”

Instructions: Divide the class into 3 teams. Set up six two-liter bottles and talk about how these will represent the idols the people were worshipping/ trusting in. The students should take turns “bowling” for their team (2 tries each) until everyone has had a turn. Each bottle knocked down is worth one point.