

Putting God first


Bible verses:

1 Kings 16:30–33; 17:1
 Ahab king of Israel


Aim:

To explore what the Bible says about idols,
 and why we choose to put God first


Today's fruit:

Self-control



In today's session we meet a king and queen who refused to follow God.

King Ahab and Queen Jezebel chose to worship idols instead of God. But the prophet Elijah followed God faithfully and delivered his message. These stories help us understand why God should be first in our lives and how we can love him with all our heart, soul and strength.

Self-control is when we choose to make a good decision, like putting God first instead of other things we might like.

Each child will need:

- Memory verse wristband
- *Hearts* handout – three designs with/without Bible verse
- Coloured paper strips wide/long enough for a sentence and glue sticks
- Pens/pencils
- *Explore It ideas* handout

You will need:

- To create a large-scale 1–10 or use the *Scale* handout
- *Interests* handout
- Blu Tack or tape for the pictures (optional)
- Fruit of the Spirit poster: *Self-control* – download from **Salvationist**

 Start it**Say:**

Today we're going to spend some time thinking about what is important to people in our world today, and what is important to us.

Create a large 1 to 10 scale on the wall/floor with 'Not Important' at 1 and 'Most Important' at 10; or use the *Scale* handout.

Show the children the pictures from the *Interests* handout – keeping the Baal card for later. You may wish to reduce the number used or add different topics. For each picture discuss:

- Where do you think most people would put this on the scale?
- Do you agree, or would you place it somewhere else?

This discussion should highlight that everyone has different interests and priorities.

Let the children take turns placing the pictures on to the scale. Once they have been discussed, then talk about the choices and which one should really take top spot in our lives as Christians.

Say:

Lots of things are important to us, and that's OK! However, the Bible tells us that God should be the most important person in our lives. Today we'll see what happened when King Ahab decided to put someone else in God's place.

 Sing it**Say:**

Our story today is all about King Ahab, a man who refused to follow God's way. We're going to sing a song that reminds us that, as Christians, God is the only king in our lives.

Song

'King of me' (official lyric video) by Rend Co Kids (2:19)

 Share it**Say:**

After King David, there was a long line of kings who succeeded him in two kingdoms – Israel and Judah. Their stories fill four books in the Old Testament of the Bible. But not one of these kings followed God in the way that they needed to, and many of them made other gods more

important in their lives. The nation of Israel, that was once so strong under God's leadership, lost its way and ended up split down the middle. Today's story is found in the first book of Kings during the reign of King Ahab.

Read:

'So Ahab son of Omri became king of Israel. This was during Asa's thirty-eighth year as king of Judah. Ahab ruled Israel in the town of Samaria for 22 years. Ahab did many things that the Lord said were wrong. He did more evil than any of the kings before him. He sinned in the same ways that Jeroboam son of Nebat had sinned. But he did even worse things. He married Jezebel daughter of Ethbaal. (Ethbaal was king of the city of Sidon.) Then Ahab began to serve Baal and worship him. He built a temple in Samaria for worshipping Baal. And he put an altar there for Baal. Ahab also made an idol for worshipping Asherah. He did more things to make the Lord, the God of Israel, angry than all the other kings before him.'

(1 Kings 16:29-33 *ICB*)

Ask:

- What did we find out about King Ahab and Queen Jezebel in this Bible reading?
- Was God important to them? Explain how you know.
- Where would King Ahab and Queen Jezebel place God on the 1 to 10 scale? Ask one of the children to place the 'God' label on the scale.
- Where would King Ahab and Queen Jezebel place Baal on the 1 to 10 scale? Ask one of the children to place the 'Baal' label on the scale.

Say:

King Ahab and Queen Jezebel made another god, Baal, their main idol. They even built a special altar for him.

Ask:

What is an idol?

Say:

An idol is anything that we put in God's place – it could be a statue, a person, or even something like a hobby or a video game.

The word idol has two main meanings according to the dictionary:

1. a statue or an image of a god which is used as an object of worship.
2. someone who is loved and respected to a great degree – a hero.

Ask:

- What kind of idol was Baal to King Ahab and Queen Jezebel?
- Was he an image of a god that they worshipped, or a hero they loved and respected?

Say:

King Ahab and Queen Jezebel made Baal an idol because they placed him above the true God in their lives. Although it is good to have people that we admire, like the second meaning of the word idol, no person or thing should take a higher place in our lives than God.

Say:

The other character who is about to join our story knew that God was the most important person in his life.

Read:

‘Now Elijah was a prophet from the town of Tishbe in Gilead. Elijah said to King Ahab, “I serve the Lord, the God of Israel. As surely as the Lord lives, I tell you the truth. No rain or dew will fall during the next few years unless I command it.”’

(1 Kings 17:1 /CB)

Ask:

- What do we find out about Elijah in this Bible reading?
- Was God important to him? Explain how you know.
- Where would Elijah place God on the 1 to 10 scale? Ask one of the children to move the ‘God’ label on the scale. Hopefully, the children will place God at number 10!
- Where would Elijah place the ‘Baal’ label on the scale? Hopefully, the children will place Baal at number 1.

Say:

In our next session, we will find out what happened when Elijah tried to tell the people, including King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, that by worshipping Baal they were serving the wrong god.

Watch the beginning of the following clip to find out more.

Video

God’s Story: Elijah by Crossroads Kids’ Club (5:01)

Watch 0:00–1:19 ‘When the king heard Elijah’s message, he was furious.’

(To be continued in the next session.)

Ask:

- Why was King Ahab furious?
- What do you think will happen next in the story?

Say:

We’ll find out more in our next session.

Remove the ‘Baal’ label from the scale but leave the label for ‘God’ at number 10. This will remind the children of his place in our lives.

 Action it

Display the memory verse and give each child a wristband.

Memory verse

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.’

(Deuteronomy 6:5 *NIV*)

Say:

This month’s memory verse is one of the most important verses in the whole Bible! It reminds us that God is not just important: he should be the most important person in our lives.

Give each child a sheet from the *Hearts* handout and ask them to write the memory verse in the centre. Depending on your group, you may want to write the Bible verse in advance or use a sheet with it already included.

Ask the children to think about things they love or spend time doing – you may want to refer back to the pictures in the Start It activity. Provide colourful strips of paper for the group and invite them to write one thing that is important to them on each strip. They can then glue the strips around the edge of the heart and decorate it.

Discuss with the children how it’s good to have things that are important to us, but God remains at the centre of all we do.

Say:

God loves you very much, and he wants to be at the centre of your life. When he’s first, it helps us to enjoy good things in the right way and make wise choices. Your heart will help you to remember to love God first in your life and place him at the centre.

Display the *Self-control* sign.

Say:

Loving God with all our heart, soul and strength means choosing his way, even when other things call for our attention. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, we can show self-control and make wise choices that help us to keep God in the centre of our lives.

**Pray it****Say:**

You’ve made a heart to remind you that God is at the centre of your life. Let’s spend a few minutes being still, asking him to help us love him first and show self-control in the choices we make.

Ask the group to find a place to lie down quietly on the floor and close their eyes. The clip is over four minutes long – there is no expectation that the children will lie quietly for this amount of time!

Listen

‘Be the centre’ Kids (lyric video) by Shout Praises, video by Camwin128 (4:39)

When you feel the group is losing concentration, lower the music and close your time together in prayer, asking Jesus to be the centre, and most important part, of everyone’s lives.

Explore it

Remember to send home the *Explore It ideas* for children and families.



Putting God first

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.



Bible verses:

1 Kings 16:30–33:17:1



Aim:

To explore what the Bible says about idols, and why we choose to put God first



Today's fruit:

Self-control



Reflect

Find a quiet space and read this month's memory verse:

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.'

(Deuteronomy 6:5)

Write the verse on a piece of paper and decorate it however you wish. Stick it somewhere you will see it every day this week. Each time you see it, ask God: 'Help me to love you first today.'



Share

Chat with the people at home about the things that are most important to each of you.

- What are the top three things you all care about the most?
- How could you show that God is number one in your home and in your life together?



Song for the week

'King of me' (official lyric video) by Rend Co Kids (2:19)



Memory verse

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.'

(Deuteronomy 6:5 NIV)