

# SABBATH SCHOOL

## Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

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Level 4 • Unit 4 • Week 4

### BE HAPPY WITH WHAT YOU HAVE

**OBJECTIVE:**

To teach that coveting is a selfish way of life and selfishness is one way of sinning.

**ATTENTION GETTER:**

Prepare in Advance: Buy enough small candy bars or small gifts (suitable for this age group) that are all exactly alike. Wrap each small gift with pretty gift paper and maybe a mini bow. Put all these wrapped gifts inside a larger box and then wrap this large box with pretty gift paper and a fancy bow.

Say: Today we are going to talk about the Tenth Commandment.

Ask: Who knows what it is?  
[If no one knows, continue. If they do know, restate.]

Say: The Tenth Commandment states, "You shall not covet." Coveting can be wanting something that belongs to someone else, or coveting can be wanting more than our share.

Bring out the fancy gift-wrapped box. Hold it up for everyone to see.

Say: Who would like to have this pretty gift? [Most will raise their hands.]

Say: We are going to play a game as we go through our lesson. This present belongs to me, but I am thinking of sharing it with someone in this class. I am going to choose a different person to hold it every five minutes [adjust time according to group size and time limits, or let some of them hold it twice]. Sometime during our class, I am going to give away this present to someone and they can open it.

Ask: Who would like to hold the present first? [Choose a person and let him or her hold it for the first five minutes. As the class continues, keep passing the gift to others to hold. Have an

assistant to help you remember the time and to choose who holds it next.]

Say: I want you to think about having this present and about what might be inside. Think about how you might feel if you don't get to open it and somebody else ends up with the gift.

Now lead into the lesson...

Say: Can a person covet something other than a material item like this gift or food or shoes or some other possession? What else might we covet?

Discuss...

Ask: Can a person covet a position? For example: a position on a team, like wanting to be the pitcher or playing first base, etc.

Say: Let's go to the Bible and see an example of what happened to someone who coveted Moses' position as a leader of Israel.

### **BIBLE LESSON:**

#### **KORAH CAUSES TROUBLE**

Moses was the leader of the Israelites. He led the Israelites out of Egypt and into the wilderness to worship God. Moses was a great leader, but some of the Israelites complained about his leadership. Korah, a cousin of Moses, was bold enough to want Moses' position as leader of the Israelites.

Korah urged his Reubenite friends, Dathan, Abiram and On to help him take over Moses' leadership position. Another 250 men who were well known among the Israelite people supported Korah and his desire to be leader (Numbers 16:1-2).

Korah came face to face with Moses and jealously spoke against him. "Why are you putting yourself in a higher position than the rest of us?" he demanded.

When Moses heard this unfair question, he fell on his face, humbling himself before God in prayer. He needed God's help quickly before things really got out of hand. He was dealing with a big rebellion problem. Sometimes such rebellions can lead to war. He wasn't sure how to answer Korah's questions. He trusted God to give him the answer.

After the prayer, Moses was confident and ready to reply. Moses declared, "In the morning the Lord will show you who His servants are. He will show you whom He has chosen to be the leaders and whom He allows to come into the tabernacle of worship to minister unto the people" (Numbers 16:3-5).

Ask: What other scriptures show us that God did indeed chose Moses to be His servant?

Do: Let students read Exodus 14:31; Numbers 12:7-8; Deuteronomy 34:5 out loud.

Moses told Korah and his men to take pans, known as censers, and put hot coals and incense in them. He ordered the group to appear before the Lord the next day. God was going to choose those who He considered to be His servants (Numbers 16:6-7).

### GOD CHOOSES LEADERS

Moses was very upset by Korah's actions. Moses knew he had not put himself in the position of leadership. God had decided who was leader. Korah had a leadership position in the tribe of Levi. He was responsible for taking care of the tabernacle of worship. It was a big important responsibility, not to be taken lightly. So Moses asked Korah, "Does it seem to you a small, insignificant thing that the God of Israel has considered you special and that God allows you to tend the tabernacle and lets you stand in front of the congregation to serve and minister to them?"

Moses continued to remind Korah of how important Korah's leadership position was in the eyes of God. "God has brought you and your brothers, all of them sons of Levi, in personal contact with all these people. They look up to you already and rely on your advice. Are you now also seeking to be in the position of a priest? Do you want to stand in my shoes?"

Korah had already been blessed with a lot of abilities, gifts and duties. Moses continued, "You and your followers have not come here to murmur against my brother and I, but you strive against the Lord. The murmuring against Aaron and myself are insignificant, but to murmur against God is a serious issue" (Numbers 16:9-11).

Read: Numbers 16:11 "Therefore you and all your company are gathered together against the LORD."

Say: Korah was being selfish. He wanted to be in charge of everything. He wanted the position God had given to Moses. Selfishness leads to coveting and coveting is a sin. It breaks the Tenth Commandment.

### KORAH'S FRIENDS COMPLAIN

Korah's friends didn't hesitate to complain to Moses. They were following Korah's lead in accusing Moses. Dathan spoke up boldly, "You want to kill us in the wilderness, don't you? You have no intentions of leading us to the land of milk and honey. We are all going to perish, every one of us."

"Yeah," Abiram couldn't wait to agree with his friend. "You are not going to give us that inheritance you promised. We'll never see those beautiful green fields and the vineyards loaded with fruit. I think you've brought us to this place to poke out our eyes."

Moses stepped back. He was absolutely shocked at such an outrageous accusation.

Satan was working on Abiram's mind. Abiram continued, "Who are you, to make yourself prince over these people?"

All these complaints made Moses look like a covetous person. Moses certainly had not put himself in a position to be a prince. God had personally trained him in the household of the Pharaoh when he was in Egypt as a young man. Moses had the training to hold a princely position if God chose to give it to him. Moses did not consider himself to be above others. He was only God's humble servant who had been given a big job to do by the great God of Israel. After he fled Egypt, Moses had been trained in humility by working for 40 years in Midian as a shepherd before he met God at the burning bush.

Later that day Moses sent for Dathan and Abiram, but they refused to listen and did not come as he had requested. This upset Moses. Moses even asked God not to respect their offering because they had such a wrong attitude. God again instructed Moses to tell them to come the next day with their censers filled to appear before the Lord (Numbers 16:12-17).

Ask: Isn't it God who has the power to put a leader in charge of a nation? And isn't it God who places His choice in the position of a king, priest or leader? Which scriptures tell us this?

Read: Daniel 2:21; Proverbs 8:16; and Job 12:23-25.

Say: We must try not to throw untrue accusations at others. We must refrain from coveting the position of leadership of another person. Only God can exalt us, provide our needs and put us in a position of leadership over others. It is not wrong to desire a higher position or to better ourselves. It is not wrong to desire and obtain some of the things we like. However, it is wrong to force ourselves into such a position without allowing God to lead. It is also wrong to take things away from another person if they don't belong to us.

#### MOSES PLEADS FOR THE CONGREGATION

The next morning all 250 men took their censers and put fire in them and laid incense on the fire. All those men who were in rebellion with Korah against Moses and Aaron stood before the entrance of the tabernacle and the glory of the Lord appeared to the entire congregation. They were about to get their answer. God was getting ready to show Israel who He had placed in the position to be their leader (Numbers 16:18-23).

The Lord told Moses and Aaron to separate from the congregation. God planned to destroy the congregation with fire. Moses was concerned for the people. He knew the Lord had the power to destroy the whole camp of Israel if He chose to do so. Moses knew too, that not everyone had been involved in the rebellion and so he fell on his face again in prayer. He asked, "O God, if one man sins, will you be angry with all the rest of the congregation?"

Moses and God were good friends. Moses also had good friends among those in the congregation. He wanted to please his friend, the Lord of Israel, who later became known as our friend Jesus. He also wanted to help those people in the camp who had remained faithful and had not rebelled.

After the prayer, God told Moses to tell the congregation to get away from around the tents of Korah, Dathan, Abiram and On. God also told them not to touch anything belonging to them or they too would be guilty of their sins. The Israelites who were obedient to the leadership of God moved away

from the tents. The covetous men stood in the doorways of their own tents with their wives and little ones (Numbers 16:24-27).

#### GOD CHOOSES

Then Moses spoke to them and said, "By this you will know that the Lord has sent me to do His work and that I do not act on my own accord. If these men die a regular death then the Lord has not sent me. But if the Lord causes a new thing to happen that has never happened before, and the earth opens its mouth and swallows them and all their belongings, and if they go down into the place of the dead while they are yet alive, then you will understand that these men have provoked the Lord (Numbers 16:28-30).

No sooner had Moses stopped speaking than the ground under the offenders started to shake and split apart. Earsplitting thunder accompanied the opening of the great crack in the earth. Huge boulders broke loose and tumbled into the earth's open mouth. The earth shook violently as it opened wider and wider directly beneath the offender's feet. It swallowed them alive, along with all of their household possessions, from their cooking utensils to their blankets. Everything slid down the sides of the great opening. Then with a mighty roar the earth closed up again, and it was over. The offenders had gone down alive into the place of the dead known as the grave. The rest of those who were standing there, including the sons of Korah (Numbers 26:11), were greatly frightened. They ran in the opposite direction for fear of the earth swallowing them, too. The 250 men who had offered the incense were scattering away from the scene. Then great flames of fire came forth from the Lord and devoured them (Numbers 16:35).

#### MOSES STILL LEADER

At the end of that day, there was a temporary calm in the camp of the Israelites. God had spared His friends, and His enemies were destroyed. He had indeed shown the people beyond a shadow of doubt whom He had chosen to be the leaders of this great multitude: His humble servants, Moses and Aaron (Numbers 16:31-35). But the congregation of the children of Israel would complain again.

Ask: Was this a warning to the rest of the people that it was a great sin to covet the position of God's leader?

Read: Numbers 26:10.

Ask: Was God merciful in allowing Korah's sons to live?

Read: Numbers 26:11.

State: God made a promise in Numbers 14:31 that the children born to the Israelites would enter the Promised Land. God was keeping His promise to them when he allowed Korah's sons to live.

Summary: God's judgment was not selfish. His purpose was to remove sin from the congregation before it got out of control. His intention was restoring the peace so that He could continue

to develop the nation He had chosen. As we can see, in breaking the Tenth Commandment, Korah, Dathan, Abiram, On and 250 men lost their lives that day. These men did not have to die. They should have been grateful for the positions God had given to them and not jealously coveted the position God had given to Moses and Aaron. It is often Satan who influences our feelings of jealousy and covetousness. We must be on our guard not to allow his influence to take over our minds. We must remember God is the only one who has the power to exalt us and He only can give us higher positions in our lives.

Read: 1 Peter 5:6.

Ask: Has anyone ever greatly desired something that belonged to someone else? Has anyone ever wanted a certain position on a team or wanted to be the first one to be chosen for a game? What did you do to insure that you would get what you wanted? After reading this lesson, how will you treat others who might get to be first or get a better position on the team instead of you?

#### **LESSON APPLICATION:**

Prepare in Advance: Copy cartoon (see end of lesson) for each student. Buy sheets of stickers with small colorful letters, enough for about two sheets of letters per student. The teacher may want a few extra letter sheets for the double letters which they may run out of. Have crayons available for the students to color cartoon if there is time.

Hand out cartoon page to each student.

Pass out two sheets of colorful letter stickers.

Have students apply letter stickers in blanks at bottom of page to spell, "You shall not covet."

At this point—halfway into the activity—stop the activity and see who is holding the pretty gift.

Say: OK, boys and girls, before we finish our project, let's let [child's name] open the present.

Do: Let the child open gift. Inside the gift box are enough small gifts to give one to each child. Choose someone else to hand out the gifts.

Ask: Did anyone feel like they really wanted to have the big pretty box?

Say: Isn't it nice that everyone goes home with a gift instead of just one person?

Say: Don't open the little gifts now. You can open them after Sabbath School. Right now we are going to finish our art activity.

Discuss the cartoon situation while you are doing this activity.

Ask: Do you think this boy is coveting this cake? Do you think he ate the first piece? Do you

think he wants more than his share? Is it possible he might be an only child? If he is, is he honoring his parents by not thinking of them? Do you think he might have brothers or sisters? Is he thinking of them? Can you see that it is important to think of others and not of only yourself?

After kids have pasted all the letters for "You shall not covet" at the bottom of the cartoon, let them paste the letters "The Tenth Commandment" at the top of the page if they want to.

Optional: Many children like to draw cartoons. If there is time, let the students draw their own version of the cartoon.

**MUSIC:**

Sing "Joyfully Sing and Praise God!" from the United Church of God hymnal, page 13.

**MEMORY VERSE:**

Exodus 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; ...your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Say: Could someone please tell me what "covet" might include...

Ask: Does anyone know how we can overcome the sin of covetousness?

Discuss: Include these points:

We must stop thinking only of ourselves. Think of other peoples' needs, desires and wishes (Romans 12:10).

Practice being content with what we have (Philippians 4:11).

Be thankful for all things (1 Thessalonians 5:18).

Have class repeat memory verse together several times.

# THE THANKFUL LIST

The best weapons against covetousness are love and being thankful for what we already have. So stay out of the covetous trap and list 10 things that you are thankful for and list five ways that you can show love and concern to the people that are around you daily. Ask Mom and Dad to help you think of these things if you can't think of all of them.

## I'm Thankful For...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

## I Show My Love to Others By...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

# *family activity*

**THE POINT:**

To gain a deeper understanding of what coveting means and how to overcome it.

**FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:**

Complete "The Thankful List" activity. As a family discuss the things each of you are most thankful for.

Take some old magazines and cut out pictures of some of the nice things that your family already has. This will show how we need to be thankful for those things we already possess.

To learn to get our minds off ourselves, visit a family who might be less fortunate than yours and take a small gift to them. Suggestions for a gift could be a flower from the garden, some cookies that you baked together or a small fruit basket. Or you might spend some time making a special card together and send it to a lonely person.

**MEMORY VERSE:**

Exodus 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house; ...your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."



*“Mom! Can I have this last piece of cake?”*

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