



Lesson One

Obey God Even When It Is Hard



Growing as a Teacher

Scripture

1 Samuel 13:1–14

Bible Truth

Saul disobeyed the Lord's command and it cost Saul his kingdom.

Lesson Aim

To know that when we are disobedient we can turn to Jesus for forgiveness and help.

When we look at Saul's life, we discover that, in some ways, he was like us. He began his spiritual journey with great promise, he responded well to the task before him and he credited God when things went right (1 Samuel 11:11–15). However, it wasn't long before his shortcomings surfaced. In the midst of tough circumstances, an impatient and short-sighted Saul turned away from God and took matters into his own hands (1 Samuel 13:8–14). How often have we tried to push God aside with our particular brand of I'll-do-it-my-way rebellion? Sadly, Saul's pattern of willful disobedience continued, and he paid an enormous price for his moral and spiritual failures.

By comparison, the example of Jesus is a wonderful encouragement to us. Prayerfully meditate on Philippians 2:5–11. Contrast Saul's rebellion with the perfect obedience and humility of Christ Jesus. What can we learn from Saul's mistakes? How can we be more faithful disciples of our Lord?

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As you get ready to teach the children this quarter, pray that you will be able to show them by word and deed the joy of living in godly obedience. Pray that your students will learn to turn to Jesus for power to obey, for forgiveness and for help when they stumble.

Bible Background

Before Saul went up against the daunting Philistines, the prophet Samuel told the king to wait until he arrived to offer the sacrifice. God's law governed the way Israel went to war, and God promised to be with his people when they faced an army greater than theirs (Deuteronomy 20). The law required that a priest speak to the army before it went into battle, encouraging the soldiers to trust in the Lord. But as Saul watched his army fall apart before his eyes, he became impatient and offered the sacrifice himself in Samuel's absence, thereby disobeying God and his Word. Besides breaking the law by doing the priest's work, Saul showed his rebellion toward God by disobeying Samuel, God's mouthpiece.

The troubled king not only failed his first test of obedience, he continued to turn away from God, and his disobedience resulted in personal and national disaster (1 Samuel 13–15).

Memory Verse

"If you love me,
you will obey what
I command."
JOHN 14:15

Lesson One at a Glance

Step	Minutes	Children's Activities	Supplies (complete list, p. 11)
1 Welcome	5–10	Watch a Pete Puppet skit and play Pete's version of <i>Simon Says</i> . (The puppet can be made from the insert in the TA Pack or you may use your own puppet.)	<input type="checkbox"/> Pete Puppet* <input type="checkbox"/> Bag of candy
2 Bible Time	15–20	Hear how the prophet Samuel confronted King Saul's disobedience, and learn about Jesus' obedience.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 1a King Saul* <input type="checkbox"/> Optional: Bible-times clothing
3 Memory Verse	5–10	Play <i>Kid Command</i> to learn John 14:15. Make a memory verse cube.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 1b John 14:15* <input type="checkbox"/> Zip-lock bag <input type="checkbox"/> SA 1 John 14:15 cube** <input type="checkbox"/> Tape or glue <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors
4 Activities	10–15	Do activities that identify ways to love God and obey him, even when it is hard.	<input type="checkbox"/> At Home 1** <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils <input type="checkbox"/> Markers or crayons
5 Final Focus	5	Talk about being obedient in the week ahead, asking God for help.	

Total time: 40–60 minutes

* Younger Elementary Teaching Aids Pack
 ** Younger Elementary Student Activities Pack



Enrichment

Have available a Bible, a children's Bible storybook and a Bible dictionary for children. Ask the students to find out all they can about King Saul. Tell them to look at 1 Samuel 13 and 15. Have them make a list of all the good things Saul did and a list of all the bad things he did. Which list is longer? Ask them to tell their classmates what they found out about Saul.



Younger Elementary Vol. 2 Songbook

All the songs for this quarter and the entire year are in the Songbook (included in the Fall Teacher's Kit).



Practical Preparation

Check the **Supplies** column in the chart above and gather the items you need from the **Teaching Aids Pack** and the **Student Activities Pack**. After the lesson, store **TA 1a King Saul** and **TA 1b John 14:15** in a large zip-lock bag. Tear TA 1b along the perforated lines. **Pete Puppet** will be used in several lessons this quarter, so keep him handy as well. *Note: Pete Puppet can be made from the insert in the Teaching Aids Pack (includes instructions) or you may use your own puppet.* You also will need a bag of candy to help you teach this lesson, and have pencils and crayons or markers available for the children to use.

Before class, practice the *Pete Feels Sick* skit found in **Welcome**. Also, be very familiar with the Bible story, told from Samuel's point of view, found in **Bible Time**. If you wish, you may use your own words when doing the skit or telling the story. If you do, be sure to include all important points mentioned in the skit and story.

Make one **SA 1 John 14:15 cube** ahead of time to show the children. If there's not enough time for the students to make their cubes in class, they can assemble them at home.



Welcome

5–10 minutes

Set a bag of candy on a table in front of you and have **Pete Puppet** welcome everyone to class. Turn Pete toward you as you begin the skit.

Pete Feels Sick

Pete: **May I have a piece of candy?**

Teacher: **I'll gladly give you—and your classmates—one small piece after lunch.**

Pete: **Oh, I can't wait. Please let me have it now. Please!**

Teacher: **I'm sorry, Pete. You'll have to wait. I need to speak with a parent now, and when I'm through, lunchtime will be over, and then you may have your treat.**

Pete: *(sighs)* **Okay—I guess.** *(Move Pete toward the bag of candy and pretend that he's getting into the candy without you knowing, eating several pieces. Then look at Pete and notice that some candy is missing.)*

Teacher: **The bag of candy is half-empty! Do you know where the missing treats are, Pete?**

Pete: *(groans)* **Yes, I ate them. They looked so good, and I couldn't wait to have one, and once I tasted them. . . .**

Teacher: *(interrupts)* **You just kept going.**

Pete: **Yes. Now everyone will be mad at me because there is not enough candy to go around.**

Teacher: **You're right, your classmates won't have a treat because you took their share.**

Pete: *(groans again)* **My stomach hurts. I feel sick!**

Teacher: **Eating too much candy can make you feel ill. I am sad that you disobeyed me, Pete.**

Pete: **Me, too! Now I am sick, sorry and stuffed!**

Ask children to name things that may happen when someone disobeys. For example, a child who plays in the street could get hurt, or someone who experiments with matches could get burned. Help children understand that sad and hurtful things can happen to them and their loved ones as a result of not obeying. Tell the children that today they will hear a story about someone who thought it would be okay to do things his own way, and what happened when he did.



Bible Time

15–20 minutes

Gather the children around you and open your Bible to 1 Samuel 13. Place the Bible on your lap or on a table beside you. Speaking to the children from the Scriptures will remind them that God's words are



For early arrivals, prepare a “mystery sack” by filling a paper bag with items children might use to show that they are obedient to parents and teachers. Have students take turns closing their eyes, pulling out an item and telling who might instruct them to use that object.

Suggested objects

Parent:

- Dust cloth
- Dish towel
- Paper napkin
- Bath towel
- Toothbrush

Teacher:

- Pencil
- Ruler
- Notebook
- Eraser



Simon Says

If there is time, play Pete Puppet's version of *Simon Says*. Have students stand facing Pete. Tell them to obey his commands that start with the words “Pete says. . . .” Besides commands to hop, skip, touch knees, reach for the ceiling and so on, you may want to add a few tricky commands to show students that obeying isn't always easy. For instance, Pete says, “Wriggle your nose, pat your stomach and draw circles with your other hand on your head, all at the same time.”



Something Extra!

To add interest, you may wear Bible-times clothing—a bathrobe, and a towel for headgear will do—as you tell the story from Samuel’s point of view.



From the Bible

The Bible story is found in 1 Samuel 8–13.

Each Teaching Aid (TA) has the lesson number in the upper-right corner.



Keep TA 1a for Lesson 13.

important and that the stories are true.

My name is Samuel, and I am a prophet and a judge. I have quite a story to tell you about King Saul.

Some time ago, the people of Israel complained that I was too old to be their prophet, a man who gave them directions straight from God. So they asked me to give them a king. I asked God to tell me what to do. He said to warn the people that having a king would make their lives harder, not easier.

But the people of Israel did not listen to me. They demanded a king. They wanted someone to lead them and fight their battles, a king just like their neighbor kingdoms had. So I prayed again, and the Lord told me to go ahead and give them a king.

When I found Saul, I knew he was the one God had chosen to lead the people. Saul was tall and handsome, and I took a jar of oil, poured some on his head and made him the first king of Israel, just as the Lord had said to do. Then I presented Saul to the people, and everyone shouted, “Long live the king!”

At first, Saul did a good job of leading Israel. He won his first battle against the Ammonites, and he praised God for it. He listened to my advice and told the people to do the same. After a couple of years, though, everything began to change.

The powerful Philistines gathered nearby, ready to attack Israel. They had thousands of soldiers, chariots and horsemen. King Saul’s troops were afraid when they saw their mighty enemies. You’ll be surprised at what happened next—the Israelites were so scared they hid in caves and holes, among the rocks, and in pits in the ground! Some Israelites even ran away!

Now I had told King Saul to wait for seven days, at the end of which I would come and make the sacrifice to the Lord before his people went into battle. As religious leader, this was part of my job. God had commanded that only the priests should give offerings to God. Saul waited seven days, and when I didn’t show up, he became very impatient and fearful. His soldiers started leaving, and Saul decided to light the fire and make the sacrifice himself. When he finished with the altar and the offerings, I arrived. Saul ran to meet me, and he gave me a quick salute. *Show the children TA 1a King Saul, the picture of Saul and Samuel at the scene of the offering.*

I was angry at what Saul had done. I wanted to know why he had disobeyed the Lord’s command. He said that the soldiers were running away, he believed that the Philistines were getting ready to fight, and since I hadn’t arrived, he thought that he should make the offering to the Lord himself. I was disappointed and sad at Saul’s words and actions. If he had chosen to wait—if he had chosen to trust and obey God—he would have continued to be the king of a great nation. But instead, Saul foolishly chose to disobey, and he lost the kingdom God had given him. And I, Samuel, had to tell him the bad news. . . .

Read I Samuel 13:13–14 to the class.

Tell the children that Saul continued to disobey God, and this made God unhappy. Say Even though Saul did not obey God, I want to tell you

about someone who obeyed God perfectly. He never sinned, and he always did everything God told him to do. Listen to what the Bible says about him. *Read the following portion of Philippians 2:8 aloud from your Bible: “. . . he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!” Then ask the children who this person is. Conclude this step by saying Jesus obeyed God perfectly. He died on the cross so that we who disobey and do other wrong things can be forgiven. He also helps us to obey when we ask him. Isn't that great news?*



Memory Verse

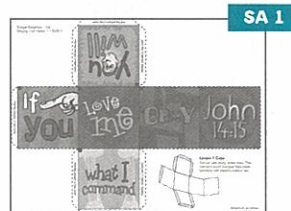
5–10 minutes

Show the children TA 1b John 14:15. Display the pieces (see sidebar, p. 7) and point to each word as you read the verse aloud. Have the children say John 14:15 again with you. Be sure that the children understand what the word *command* means. Ask your students to suggest ways that we can show our love for God. (*We can thank him for loving us, obey his commandments, memorize his words to us and confess our sins when we do things that are wrong.*)

To help them learn the memory verse, play a game of *Kid Command* using TA 1b. Children can take turns leading this game. Tell the children to close their eyes. Remove one TA 1b shape from the display and then have them open their eyes and say the verse. Continue until all the shapes have been removed from the board. Then distribute the shapes to different children and see if they can put them on the board in order. When finished, put the John 14:15 pieces in a zip-lock bag; you will use TA 1b again in Lessons 2, 4, 8 and 12.

Hand out SA 1 John 14:15 cubes, scissors and glue or tape. Show the children how to cut out the cube and fold each panel and flap. Then tape or glue the cube together. Reinforce with tape on the outside, if necessary. Encourage them to put the cubes in their rooms at home and say the Bible verse when they see the cubes each day. Beginning readers can ask for help from older siblings or grown-ups.

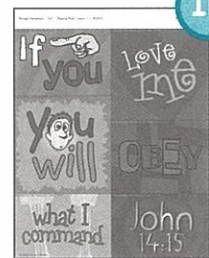
If there's not enough time for the students to make their cubes in class, they can assemble them at home.



Teaching Tip

Bible stories are often filled with emotions. Joy, pain, anger, sadness and excitement are important, just as the events are important. Besides the words themselves, your voice, face and body language are tools you can effectively use to show Samuel's actions and feelings, the excitement and fear of the Israelites, Saul's impatience and so on.

1b



Other Ways to Use the Cubes

If the cubes are too difficult for your students to assemble or you want to vary what they do with them, here are some alternate suggestions:

- **Make a mobile.**
 1. Cut out each square.
 2. Use yarn and tape to string together the squares.
- **Make a booklet.**
 1. Cut out each square.
 2. Put the squares in order and tape them together to form a strip.
 3. Fold the strip accordion-style.
 4. Tape the first and last squares together to form the spine of the booklet.



Personal Touch

The back of *At Home 1* is a letter to the parent. Sign your name at the bottom for a personal touch. Consider copying the Master Plan (p. 4) and sending it with *At Home 1* or mailing it home with a note.



Planning Ahead

Part of being an effective teacher means being prepared. Spend time on *Growing as a Teacher*. Study the Bible story and text, and try to anticipate questions the children might ask. Be thoroughly familiar with each lesson step. The lesson will flow smoothly if you know what you are doing at a given time and where you are going next. And remember, another important aspect of being prepared is being on time.



Items to Send Home

- At Home 1*
- SA 1 John 14:15 cube

4

Activities

10–15 minutes

Give each child a copy of *At Home 1*. Make sure that there are pencils and crayons or markers for everyone. Read aloud the title and directions for the part(s) you choose to do.

As the children work on *It's Best to Obey* and *I Will Do What Is Right*, ask them to think of ways they can respond to the situations and be obedient to God. **Say Obeying God is not always easy. Sometimes we want to be mean to a friend who is being unfair, or we don't feel like being a helper, or we can't imagine forgiving a room-wrecking brother! But today we learned that we can follow Jesus, and choose to obey God and do the right thing even when it is hard.** Ask children to tell about a time when it was hard for them to obey God. Remind them that when they have been disobedient, they need to ask Jesus to forgive them and to help them obey.

5

Final Focus

5 minutes

Remind the children that King Saul chose to turn away from God, and God punished Saul for his disobedience. Remind them also that the Bible says that if we love Jesus, we will do what he tells us to do. Have the children join you in a circle for prayer. If they wish, children may say sentence prayers, asking God to help them obey him this week. You may close this time, thanking God for what the class has learned from the life of Saul, and thanking him that Jesus can help his children to be obedient.

When they are ready to leave, make sure the children have their *At Home 1* papers and **John 14:15 cubes**. Encourage them to show their papers and cubes to their parents. As a treat, you may wish to give each child a piece of candy from Pete Puppet's leftovers!