



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON OUTLINE

TAKE THE LEAD

THE BIG IDEA

Everyone can be a leader.

THE BIBLE

Deborah: Judges 4;
(Psalm 130)

THIS WEEK AT A GLANCE

LARGE GROUP TIME

- MUSIC** | Lead with Praise
- ACTIVITY** | Follow Which Leader?
- ACTIVITY** | Build-a-Parade
- QUESTION** | What Makes a Leader?
- SCRIPTURE** | Judges 4
- THE BIG IDEA** | Everyone can be a leader.
- VIDEO** | Take the Lead, Episode 1
- STORY** | Leader, Me?
- ACTIVITY** | Lead By Example
- SCRIPTURE** | Psalm 130
- REFLECTION** | Makings of a Leader
- ACTIVITY** | Parade Prep
- MEMORY VERSE** | Puzzled Verse
- PRAYER**

SMALL GROUP TIME

- DISCUSSION**
 - Why did Israel have judges?
 - What message from God did Deborah tell Barak?
 - How was the commander from Canaan defeated?
 - Read Psalm 130:3-4. How can you tell from today's Bible story that God forgives?
 - In your own words, what is a leader?
 - Do you like being a leader? Why or why not?
 - Can you think of some ways God might want you to be a leader?
- ACTIVITY** | Sash of Honor
- MEMORY VERSE** | Micah 6:8 (NIV)



WEEK 1

HACKS FOR PRETEENS

TAKE THE LEAD

BY ASHLEY SIDER

HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES FOR PRETEENS

In children's ministry, you've got a wide range of ages you need to engage every week, but preteens tend to get overlooked, so here are a few adjustments you can make to this week in order to keep your preteens more engaged.

QUESTION | What Makes a Leader?

Give groups a large piece of paper to trace a body and fill in the body with words and pictures of qualities of a great leader.

SCRIPTURE | Judges 4

Communicate with a few older kids beforehand and ask them to play different parts in the skit! Encourage them to practice online using Zoom or another safe remote meeting app. Or, give them a few minutes to work on the script together during another activity that's happening in the room.

ACTIVITY | Lead By Example

Have the entire group blindfolded except for one kid. Let that kid direct the group to line up in the correct order by the assigned category. Select different kids to lead each round.

ACTIVITY | Sash of Honor

Encourage students to also include words from the Makings of a Leader activity that share about what makes them a unique leader!



WEEK 1

HACKS FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

TAKE THE LEAD

BY EUGENIA LEE

HOW TO HACK THIS SERIES FOR KIDS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

In children's ministry, you've got a wide range of ages you need to engage every week, but kids with special needs tend to get overlooked, so here are a few adjustments you can make to this week in order to keep your kids with special needs more engaged.

GENERAL TIPS

Working with Balloons. Some kids with special needs have sensory processing issues. Simply put, it means that their sensory system is either over- or under-sensitive in the areas of vision, hearing, touch, taste, smell, and/or balance. Balloons can stimulate almost all senses. Kids who seek sensory input will find ways to use balloons to meet their own needs. Make sure you have a place to put balloons away when they're not being used.

Setting a schedule. Having a clear schedule sets expectations and creates the sense of safety for kids with special needs. Make a visual schedule with words and/or pictures for students to follow along. Making it a checklist also helps. Schedules often help the whole class. Try having a schedule posted at where everyone can see it, if you have a group of students who may need more guidance for behaviors. Or, have the schedule specifically for your students with special needs to refer to.

STORY | Leader, Me?

Kids with special needs may not have had as many opportunities to be a leader. Help the kids with special needs to build on their leadership skills by giving them a chance to lead you. Invite them to lead the way in worship, in an activity, or something else that they know how to do! Be a follower, let them teach you, and cheer on their leadership!

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 130

When kids with reading difficulties show interest in participating in reading aloud activities, be creative and encourage their participation (e.g., Have them echo your reading, say verses with sign language, use gestures and hand movements, draw a picture, etc.).

MEMORY VERSE | Puzzled Verse

Print out the memory verse graphic and cut them up into pieces to create a physical puzzle for kids to solve. Jigsaw puzzles are one of the go-to free time activities for kids with special needs.

This may be a great resource to keep it handy. Having an activity that is easily accessible for them to engage in when they're overwhelmed or frustrated is an excellent way to divert them from focusing on negative feelings and behaviors. Other activities might include Lego, cause and effect toys, musical toys, fuzzy balls, play dough/putty, picture books, and so on.



WEEK 1

ELEMENTARY LESSON GUIDE

TAKE THE LEAD

THE BIG IDEA

Everyone can be a leader.

THE BIBLE

Deborah: Judges 4;
(Psalm 130)

LARGE GROUP TIME

WHAT? *What are we talking about today?*

MUSIC | Lead with Praise

- Welcome, friends! We are starting a new series today called, "Take the Lead," which is basically a month-long parade!
- **Have you ever seen a parade?** The best thing about a parade is that it's so joyful – everyone is smiling, waving, clapping, and generally having a good time.
- Every parade has a leader! And this month, we are going to learn how to follow God as our leader and become great leaders ourselves! Let's kick off our own parade by celebrating God!
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Lead the kids in a time of worship with songs about our God who leads us! This week, lead the kids in creating a conga line around the room. Consider adding these songs to your playlist:*
 - "[Greater Than My Fears](#)" by Kids on the Move
 - "[Echo](#)" by Elevation Worship (motions by Covenant Kids)

ACTIVITY | Follow Which Leader?

- This month, we are going to hear about epic leaders from the Bible and the God who led them. Now, a leader is not a leader if no one is following them! Let's play a game that shows what that means.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write an action on each of the ten index cards (e.g., run in place, jumping jacks, touch your nose, hop around, do a dance, push-ups, etc.). Call up three volunteers and show them the card. Discreetly pick one of the volunteers to be the “real leader” who does the motion on the card. The other two have to make up something else to do. The kids will choose who the “leader” is by following the motions of one of the three volunteers.
- **Was it easy to guess who the real leader was?** It felt pretty random, right? The leader could have been anyone!

ACTIVITY | Build-a-Parade

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** You can play this game with Phase 10, Uno, or regular playing cards, but make sure to use only the number cards. Pass out one card to each kid and tell them not to reveal it to anyone. Tell the kids to pick a partner and show each other their cards. The person with the lower number has to go stand behind the higher card holder, making a train. Then, they go off to challenge another person, and if the person in the front wins again, the challenger joins their train. If they lose, everyone has to line up behind them. In the event of a tie, have the person in front go to the back of their line, and have the next players compete. Play until you’re left with one train!
- Even though there were many leaders near the beginning and we were all over the room, we ended up with only one leader left to follow!

QUESTION | What Makes a Leader?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Prepare paper streamers and give one strip to each kid. Instruct the kids to write their answers on the streamers and then hang them around the room!
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Give groups a large piece of paper to trace a body and fill in the body with words and pictures of qualities of a great leader.
- **In your opinion, what are some things that every leader says, does, or has that makes them a great leader?**
- These are some great descriptions of leaders. But we are going to find out today that not all leaders have the same traits, and sometimes, the greatest leaders are not who you’d expect!

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | Judges 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show this video to introduce the kids to today’s Bible story in Judges 4. Recruit an adult volunteer or two to help you further recap today’s story through this short skit. You might want them to dress the part, too!
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Communicate with a few older kids beforehand and ask them to play different parts in the skit! Encourage them to practice online using Zoom or another safe remote meeting app. Or, give them a few minutes to work on the script together during another activity that’s happening in the room.
- Many parades give someone the title of “grand marshal,” who is the leader of the parade. Usually influential, popular, or heroic leaders are given that honor. Our grand marshal for today is . . . Deborah! And guess what? She’s here today! Please welcome Deborah and Barak!

- **Deborah:** Hi, I'm Deborah! I am a judge and a prophet for the people of Israel.
- **Barak:** And you can call me Barak! I follow where Deborah leads.
- **Deborah:** Well, not always!
- **Barak:** That's true. I try to, but sometimes I doubt myself. Ugh . . . if I had followed your lead and fought the Canaanites in the first place, maybe I could have finished off that menace, Sisera, myself!
- **Deborah:** But you said you wanted me to come with you so that particular honor went to my girl, Jael.
- **Barak:** Ooh! She is fierce! The way she tricked Commander Sisera and then. . . you know.
- **Deborah:** Yup. Aren't you glad she's on our side?
- **Barak:** Mmhm. And Deborah here is also fierce! Because we listened to her, we had peace in the land for forty years!
- **Deborah:** You bet we did!
- **Barak:** The thing is, a lot of people underestimated Deborah because she is a woman – back in those days, women just weren't given a fair chance, especially in leadership positions. But boy, did she prove them all wrong!
- **Deborah:** Well, I can't take all the credit. Sure, being a female judge and prophet wasn't an easy gig, but because God was with me, I was able to help our people through some tough times. I hope that's something all of you can remember, too.
- **Barak:** That's right. It doesn't matter if you think you're too young, too shy, or too different. Any one of you can be a great leader with God's help!
- **Deborah:** Alright, it's time to go now. Thanks for letting us talk with all of you today! Say bye, Barak.
- **Barak:** See ya, everyone!

THE BIG IDEA | Everyone can be a leader.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *This is a variation of Hangman with parade balloons! String ten helium-filled balloons and weigh it down with a parade-themed object (e.g., toy trumpet, truck toy, popcorn maker, etc.). On a dry erase or chalk board, draw as many spaces as the letters in today's Big Idea. Have the kids guess the letters, and if they choose a letter that is not in the Big Idea, cut one of the strings. See if they can guess the Big Idea before all the balloons float away! If you don't have balloons, use the dry erase or chalk board to draw a person holding ten balloons. Erase a string each time they guess an incorrect letter.*
- You saved the parade by figuring out today's Big Idea: **Everyone can be a leader.**

VIDEO | Take the Lead, Episode 1

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's [teaching video](#).*

STORY | Leader, Me?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Share a story about a time when you were selected to lead something when you didn't think you were the right choice. Or share a story about a time in your life when you wanted to be selected to lead something and you weren't. Why did you want to be picked? How did it make you feel when you were passed over?*
- Deborah was a fierce and brave leader even though she was not what a typical leader looked like in her day. Barak also showed that he could be a great leader when he led the Israelite army to go up against Sisera and his 900 chariots, even though he seemed a little hesitant at first.
- We don't have to look or act like what we think leaders look like in order to lead in great ways — we just have to follow God's lead and do as God does! **Everyone can be a leader.**

ACTIVITY | Lead By Example

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Line up the kids and tell them to stand in order, based on categories you give them. The challenge is to do it without saying a word or touching each other, and finding creative ways to communicate instead. Also, they can't just let one person do all the sorting. Some of the categories can be: birthday, age, grade, height, alphabetical order of first name, etc.*
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Have the entire group blindfolded except for one kid. Let that kid direct the group to line up in the correct order by the assigned category. Select different kids to lead each round.*
- **What did each of you do to lead yourselves through this activity?**

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 130

- We have prepared a special Bible reading parade for you today that relates to today's story about Deborah.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Get a wagon, scooter, or something else kids can sit on and be transported across the room. Select four volunteers, and assign them two verses each to read aloud. Position two kids on each side of the room. Instruct the first kid to read while being wheeled across the front of the room by a leader. Once they reach the other side, they hop off, and the next reader hops on and reads the verses that follow, while the leader wheels them to the other side. And so on. Tell all the rest of the kids to wave to each reader. Say the following like a parade commentator in between each reading.*
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** *When kids with reading difficulties show interest in participating in reading aloud activities, be creative and encourage their participation (e.g., Have them echo your reading, say verses with sign language, use gestures and hand movements, draw a picture, etc.).*
- Now that was Psalm 130 verses one and two, read by [Name of kid]. Remember in today's Bible story how the Israelites were suffering under the king of Canaan? I'm sure they prayed a similar prayer to God to rescue them.
- What a wonderful reading of verses three and four by [Name of kid]. These verses say that God doesn't keep track of things people do wrong. The people of Israel in today's story had turned away from God many times, but when they prayed, God forgave them and heard their prayers!

- [Name of kid], you made verses five and six come alive! When we pray to God, sometimes God doesn't answer right away, but that doesn't mean God didn't hear us . . . we just need to wait.
- And closing out this Psalm parade is [Name of kid]'s reading of verses seven and eight. Once the people of Israel won against Canaan, they put their trust in God once more, and they had peace in the land!

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

REFLECTION | Makings of a Leader

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a Makings of a Leader printable. In the circles around the outside of the paper, tell them to write positive words that describe themselves. Then, ask them to swap papers with another kid. Make sure to have leaders walk around and help the kids come up with ideas so that no one's paper is blank. Once finished, tell them to cut out their "banner" and tape it on to a dowel rod.
- Remember today's Big Idea is that **everyone can be a leader**. That means everyone here can lead in some way.
- Look at your friend's paper. Using the words they wrote to describe themselves, **what are some ways you think they can lead?** Write your idea in the blank space in the middle and return the paper to them.
- Not everyone is meant to lead in the same way, but God made us all to be leaders in some way. Take your paper and put it up somewhere in your home to remind you that you can be a leader, too!

ACTIVITY | Parade Prep

- Every parade has fun dances! Let's see if we can make one of our very own.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Divide the kids into small groups and assign a leader or preteen to each group. Make sure each group has a way to play this [video](#) (choreography for "You Lead" by Jamie Grace). Designate each group to learn only a small chunk of the song by assigning portions of the song to the groups. The groups will work on this each week and present it at week four.

MEMORY VERSE | Puzzled Verse

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Upload the Memory Verse graphic provided in your programming folder to an online jigsaw puzzle maker like this [one](#). Open the puzzle on a device that is connected to a projector and tell the kids to take turns putting the puzzle together one piece at a time. Once assembled, read it together out loud a few times.
 - ✂ **SPECIAL NEEDS HACK:** Print out the memory verse graphic and cut them up into pieces to create a physical puzzle for kids to solve. Jigsaw puzzles are one of the go-to free time activities for kids with special needs. This may be a great resource to keep it handy.

PRAYER

- Dear God, thank you for showing us that being a leader doesn't mean we have to fit into any box or category. Help us to lead in places that we can by listening to you and doing what is right. Give us opportunities to be the kind of leader that leads others to the ultimate leader – you! Amen.

SMALL GROUP TIME

DISCUSSION

- **Why did Israel have judges?**
- **What message from God did Deborah tell Barak?**
- **How was the commander from Canaan defeated?**
- **Read Psalm 130:3-4. How can you tell from today's Bible story that God forgives?**
- **In your own words, what is a leader?**
- **Do you like being a leader? Why or why not?**
- **Can you think of some ways God might want you to be a leader?**

ACTIVITY | Sash of Honor

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Give each kid a three-inch-wide piece of ribbon – long enough to be worn as a sash – and set up alphabet stamps that spell “LEADER” in bowls of acrylic paint. Tell the kids to stamp the word on the bottom half of their ribbon, vertically or horizontally. Alternatively, you can provide stencils and paintbrushes. Once dry, kids can drape their sash over their shoulder. Help fasten the ends together at their opposite waist with a safety pin.
 - ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Encourage students to also include words from the Makings of a Leader activity earlier that share about what makes them a unique leader!
- Sashes are usually worn by pretty important people in a parade. Today, that important person is you! There's no telling all the amazing ways you can lead with God on your side. After all, **everyone can be a leader!**

MEMORY VERSE | Micah 6:8 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Practice this month's memory verse with the signs (a combination of SEE and ASL) we've provided.