

## Bible background

1 Kings 21

## Aim of lesson

To show that wanting the possessions of others can lead us into all kinds of wrongdoing.

## Preparation required

You will need scissors, colouring materials and either sellotape or a stapler.

## Suggested outline of lesson

1. Begin by asking one of the children if you can borrow one of their belongings, a pen, book or cardigan for example. When you have the item ask the class what you should do if someone offers to buy it from you. Point out that it is not yours to sell, however much you are offered, and that the potential buyer would have to accept that. Introduce Naboth and describe his work in his vineyard. Explain, simply, that the vineyard was part of land that belonged to God and that Naboth was not in a position to sell it (Leviticus 25:23) just as you cannot sell the item you have borrowed.
2. Remind the class of Ahab, wicked king of Israel, and explain that he decided he wanted Naboth's vineyard because it was close to his palace. Help the class imagine the meeting between the haughty king, sure he will get his own way, and the honourable vineyard owner who would not break God's law. Talk about Ahab's reasonable-sounding offer and Naboth's firm reply. Ask them how they would have answered if they had been Naboth.
3. Find out whether the children have ever gone off to their bedrooms, sulking and refusing to talk or eat because they could not get their own way. They will probably be surprised when you tell them that the king of Israel could behave in the same childish way. Introduce Jezebel, his equally wicked wife and describe their conversation and her reaction to it. Instead of telling him to forget about the vineyard she thought up an evil plan to obtain it that involved forgery, bribery, deception and murder. Explain her plan, as simply as possible, to the class.
4. The plan succeeded; describe Ahab's unquestioning pleasure at the news that the vineyard was his, and his immediate visit to it. At this point discuss the morality of Ahab and Jezebel's actions. Although neither had thrown a stone, both were guilty of murder. Point out that Ahab knew of Jezebel's wickedness yet he did not enquire into her methods of obtaining the vineyard, either before or after the deed.
5. Ask the children what they think God would have thought of Ahab and Jezebel, and see if they can guess whom God chose to tell them of their punishment. Describe Ahab's consternation when confronted by Elijah in the vineyard and summarise God's punishment, the total destruction of Ahab's family and the violent deaths of Ahab and Jezebel. Only go into as much detail as you consider suitable for your class, remembering that they are only infants. Describe Ahab's shamed reaction and God's modification of the punishment.
6. Do the activity sheet by colouring the small pictures, cutting them out and then sellotaping or stapling them together in the correct order of events.
7. Teach the song 'Naboth had a vineyard'.

## Alternative activities

1. Take some grapes for the children to taste (seedless if possible!) or some grape juice to drink.
2. Do some role play based on Naboth working in his vineyard, preparing the soil, planting, watering, weeding, harvesting, pruning etc.
3. Before the lesson make a pairs game from two sets of the activity sheet pictures mounted on small cards. Play the pairs game with the class, helping them to remember where the pictures are and getting them to talk about what is happening in each picture.

## Relevance to the children's lives

This whole tragedy came about because Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard. Explain the meaning of coveting and discuss the sort of things the children might covet, what they might do to get them and why that would be wrong.

## Prayer

Help the children make up a prayer thanking God for what they have and promising not to sulk if they cannot have something they want.

## Verse

'You shall not covet your neighbour's house.' Exodus 20:17.

## Song

**Naboth had a vineyard** (Tune: *I had a little nut tree*)



Naboth had a vineyard  
Ahab wished to buy  
When he couldn't have it  
It made him moan and sigh.  
The queen had Naboth murdered  
To please the sulking king.  
But then Elijah told them  
They'd done a wicked thing.

*Music: Traditional.*