

## Aim of lesson

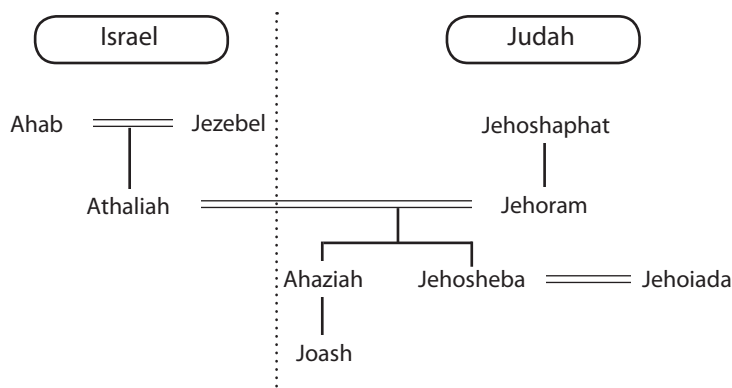
To examine the good and bad influences around us and to recognise that we still have responsibility for the way we choose to take.

## Bible background

2 Kings 11; 12; 2 Chronicles 22:10-12; 23; 24.

## Outline of lesson

The early life of Joash was shaped by his family tree:



### Jezebel's daughter

In the last lesson we saw how Jehu killed Jezebel, her son (Joram, king of Israel), and her grandson (Ahaziah, king of Judah). However, her wicked influence was not completely destroyed. Jezebel's daughter, Athaliah, was the mother of the dead king of Judah, Ahaziah. She set out to slaughter the whole royal family, including her own grandchildren, so that she could be queen and rule the land herself.

### A brave young aunt

This plan of Athaliah was thwarted by another woman. Jehosheba, the sister of the slain king (possibly the daughter of Athaliah herself, or perhaps the daughter of another wife of the previous king) rescued the youngest of the royal princes and hid him to save him from death. The boy was only a baby at the time, and was hidden for six years in the temple. Jehosheba chose the temple because she was married to Jehoiada the priest. Until young Joash was seven, he was brought up by his aunt and uncle in the temple. Jehoiada was a godly man who taught his young nephew to respect God.

### A new young king

Read with the class 2 Kings 11 to see the precautions Jehoiada the priest took to protect the young king from his wicked grandmother, while he is secretly proclaimed king. 2 Kings 11 also includes the death of Athaliah after she discovers that her grandson has been proclaimed king, and considers it treason.

### Repairing the temple

While Joash was still a young king he was influenced by Jehoiada, see 2 Kings 12:2. Joash decided to repair the temple. By the time he was thirty, very little had been done and he decided to change the system. He put his energy and thought to this work of repairing the temple of the Lord which had been his sanctuary as a young child, see 2 Kings 12:6-16.

### After Jehoiada's death

After Jehoiada died, Joash lost the good influence in his life. Read with the class 2 Chronicles 24:15-22 to see how the princes of Judah became a bad influence on Joash. In the last year of his life Joash ordered the death of the son of the man who had saved his life and guided him for so many years. A sad end after such a good beginning.

### Influences on our lives

Ask the class to use the workbook to summarise the life of Joash, and to consider the good and bad influences in his life.

The class can also discuss and note in the workbook good and bad influences in their own lives. It is important to bring out from the example of Joash that although people can influence us for good or evil, ultimately we make our own decisions.

## Digging deeper

### Two other young kings

This section considers the influence of their mothers on the lives of Manasseh and Josiah, two other young kings, and compares them with Jesus when he was growing up.

## **Relevance to our lives**

You may like to ask the class to interview one older person each during the week to ask them what or who has influenced them most in their life and in what way. This kind of activity can be useful in encouraging your class to get to know the older members and forge links which can develop into positive influences in the lives of the young people.

## **Prayer**

'Lord, help us to listen to the good influences in our lives and walk away from the bad ones.'

The class could write their own prayer to thank God for the good influences in their lives.

## **Other suggestions for activities**

- The class could write a dramatic conversation between Jehosheba and Jehoiada after they had rescued the baby Joash.
- The class could prepare a newspaper of the time of the coronation of young king Joash.
- The class could make a poster illustrating influences for good and influences for evil. Remind them to include some statement to say 'It is up to you to choose'. Influences cannot be used as an excuse for doing wrong.