

Aim of lesson

To show how powerfully the discovery of God's word can change a life.

Bible background

2 Kings 21; 22; 23:1-30; 2 Chronicles 33; 34; 35.

Outline of lesson

References

The references given in the Bible Background are basically the same narrative given in both Kings and Chronicles. They also include the background to the life of Josiah in the life of his grandfather Manasseh and his father Amon. You may not wish to use all the details of these lives in the lesson.

Six Years Old

By reading 2 Chronicles 33:20-25 and 34:1, the class can see that when Josiah was six years old, his grandfather Manasseh died.

Manasseh had been king for 55 years. Manasseh was the son of Hezekiah, so the class can see how the lesson relates to the previous lessons on the time of Isaiah.

The workbook has an imaginary page from Josiah's diary while he was six and before his grandfather died. This is not to suggest that Josiah kept a diary or that he could write one at the age of six! The pages of the diary are to help the class see the events in Josiah's life. In order to consider what Manasseh might have said to his young grandson, read with the class 2 Chronicles 33:1-13. Discuss what advice Manasseh might have given to his young grandson after his long experience with idolatry and his punishment and repentance.

Eight Years Old

At the age of eight, Josiah's father was murdered and Josiah was made king. The class can imagine what his thoughts might be at that time. They could look again at the reading from 2 Chronicles 33:21-25.

Age Sixteen to Twenty

2 Chronicles 34:1-7 is the background to this section of Josiah's life. Note that though Josiah is king of Judah, the remainder of the people from the northern kingdom of Israel are included in the area he governs (see v6 and 7). The kingdom is often referred to as Israel again at this time.

Ask the class to note the hold that idolatry had on the land when reading of all that had to be destroyed.

Age Twenty Six

2 Chronicles 34:8-32 contains the background to this time in Josiah's time. Note that although Josiah had been a good king in many ways up to this time, yet reading God's word had a powerful effect on him (see v19, 26-28). The lesson for us here is that just living a good life according to our own ideas or the advice of others is not sufficient. We too need to read God's word for ourselves and obey what he teaches us therein.

Digging deeper

Josiah's Bible

This section looks at what 'the book of the law' was, how Josiah should have been made to write it out when he first became king, and how we should respect what we have in the Bible.

Relevance to our lives

The lesson from the life of Josiah about reading God's word for ourselves is a good opportunity to discuss personal Bible reading. Ask the class to talk about when they read and how they can best understand what the Bible says.

Prayer

'Thank you for the Bible.'

The class could write a prayer that Josiah might have said after hearing the words of the Book of the Law.

Other suggestions for activities

- This lesson could begin a newspaper of the time of Jeremiah since he begins his work as a prophet in the thirteenth year of Josiah.
- The class could think about the responsibility we have to teach our children to serve God. Proverbs 22:6; Deuteronomy 11:18-19; 1 Samuel 3:13. How do you think you will do this when you grow up?
- The class could draw the family tree of Josiah, his three sons and grandson, using 2 Kings 22:1; 23:30-31; 23:34-36; 24:6-8, 15-17.