

Aim of lesson

To help the young people to develop a humble attitude towards God and other people.

Bible background

2 Kings 5:1-19, 1 Peter 5:6-7

Preparation required

You should acquaint yourself with the questions on the students' notes, and you should have read through all the Bible passages referred to.

Think of examples in your own life that illustrate the lessons of humility or pride, and be prepared to share them with the young people.

Suggested outline of lesson

What is humility?

Matthew 11:29; John 13:1-5,

Numbers 12:3, Exodus 32:31-32; Numbers 14:11-20,

Matthew 18:2-4

Discuss these verses and get the young people to decide on a definition of humility. You should come up with something like 'regarding others of more worth than yourself'. It is important to see the distinction between 'of more worth' and 'better'. It is not necessarily a good thing to think you are worse than everyone, and therefore not able to do anything.

Notice in Numbers 14 how Moses not only puts the people before himself, but is more concerned about the reputation of God than of himself.

The young people may have heard of Uriah Heap in *David Copperfield*, and might like to distinguish between true and false humility.

Humility before God

Look at 2 Kings 5:1-16 and Luke 17:7-10

Discuss Naaman's problem and how we too can be guilty of wanting to do great things when we are only expected to do something simple for God. Help the young people to see that we can never earn a place in God's kingdom (Naaman couldn't pay for the cure). All we are required to do is accept God's forgiveness and respond in obedience and service to his love for us.

Bring out the distinction between humility and weakness or cowardice. Naaman was 'commander of the army of the king of Aram. He was a great man in the sight of his master and highly regarded'. He would have been an extremely tough individual, used to demanding obedience from his men.

When he goes to see the king to tell him what the servant girl had said, this was not only an act of great humility but also of bravery. Israel was the enemy of Syria at the time, so this proposal could have caused Naaman a lot of trouble.

Baptism is in itself a humble act of obedience, which can also require some courage.

Think about James 4:3, 6-10, 1 Peter 5:6-7, and Matthew 5:2-5

These verses may prompt some discussion about how we pray to God. Do we tell him what we would like in order to improve the lot of ourselves and others, or should we simply confess the problem and ask him to help?

The Sermon on the Mount is mainly about humility, and this may be a good time to discover that mourning and weeping really mean being willing to confess to God that we are sinners and gratefully acknowledging what Jesus has done for us.

Humility before men

The questions in the Students' notes do not necessarily need written answers, but it will be useful to discuss which points the young people (and you) find difficult, and how you can encourage each other to 'do better'. You may wish to add questions of your own.

Relevance to our lives

The general idea of this lesson is to get the students to think about themselves, both in relation to God and in terms of how they deal with people on a day-to-day basis. Humility is a hard lesson to learn for even the most experienced Christian, so the more thought provoking the lesson, the better.

Prayer

O Father in heaven, my greatest delight, I worship thee for thy wondrous might.
Thou high and lofty one, far beyond creation's farthest star,
Inhabiting eternity - the high and holy sovereign of the sky;
Oh! am I not too low for thee to stoop to visit, and to dwell with me?
Thy still, small whisper answereth, No. Thy desired dwelling is below;
At the contrite sinners behest, mid tears and sighs thou lov'st to rest;
And he who tremblest at thy word in praise and supplication, shall be heard.
All glory be to God, I pray in Jesus Name, my living way. Amen.

(anonymous 18th Century)

Other suggestions for activities

1. Students could write a prayer that the humbled Naaman may have said on his way back to Aram/Syria.
2. Think about Psalm 113; Isaiah 57:14-21; Isaiah 66:2; Matthew 11:25-30.