

Challenging the Leader

March 29, 2020—Lesson 5

Background Scripture: Malachi 3 • **Lesson Scripture:** Malachi 3:1-4, 6-12

Key Verse: “I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.” (*Malachi 3:6*)

Lesson Objective: The students will begin to understand how to be leaders who please God.

Materials Needed: *Middle Elementary* student books, Bibles (NIV), pens, pencils, index cards, crayons, markers, coloring pencils, scissors, ten (10) to twelve (12) tennis balls, a bucket, an instrumental praise music CD and CD player. (**Optional:** whiteboard; construction paper; Older Children’s Resource Kit [attendance chart and lesson 5 materials].)

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BEGINNING THE JOURNEY



✂ If you purchased the Older Children’s Resource Kit, post the attendance chart and purchase stickers (such as stars) to place on the chart. Also, gather any materials that may be needed for any of the activities for this lesson prior to class (found in the Teacher’s Guide of the Resource Kit).

✂ Prior to class, clear the center of the classroom for ease of movement. Also, place the bucket filled with the tennis balls near the center of the classroom.

Welcome and Worship

Welcome the students and their parents or guardians to the classroom. Provide time for them to get situated. Acknowledge any visiting students. Open the class with a weekly check-in, letting students who desire to do so give a praise report or prayer request. Then pray or ask a volunteer to lead the class in prayer. Complete the roll call and then collect any offerings the students or any others may have brought.

Opening Activity

The students will participate in a “Receive It” activity.

Gather the students into the cleared-out center of the room. Ask for a volunteer to stand in the center of the room. Have the student hold out his/her arms. Tell the student that he or she has to try to catch all the balls in the bucket. Slowly pour the bucket of tennis balls into his/her arms. Count the number of balls the volunteer actually catches. Gather the balls back into the bucket and begin again with another volunteer. The person who catches the most balls at one time wins!

Discuss with the students how God promises to open the windows of heaven and pour out more blessings than they can receive!

Say: Today’s lesson is about how God was preparing the people for His return. He promised to cleanse the people so that their offerings were acceptable to Him.

Discuss with the students why God had turned away from His people. Help them to understand how God’s return would bring blessings to the people.

Prepare the students for the Bible story.

BIBLE VOYAGE



The Bible Story

Always encourage your students to bring Bibles (New International Version) to class. Have extra Bibles available for classroom use.

You may choose to read today’s Scripture passage to the students from the Bible first. Then, using the student books, let volunteers take turns alternating reading different paragraphs of the Bible story aloud.

Challenging the Leader

In today’s Scripture lesson, God was preparing the people for His return to His Temple. When He returned, He would be like a blazing fire or a strong detergent that whitened clothes. He would *purify* (cleanse) the Levites like precious metals. They would bring their offerings to Him and He would accept them as it had been done in the past.

Because the Lord God is always good, the descendants of Jacob (God’s people) were not destroyed. They had turned away from God. He wanted them to turn back to Him and He would return to them. But they wondered what they were doing that was displeasing to God.

They had cheated God by not giving back to Him some of what He had given them, known as *tithes*. They were cursed because of this. God wanted them to bring their tithes to the storehouse so there would be enough food in the Temple. Then He promised to pour out blessings from heaven so great that they would not be able to collect them all. God promised to

give them abundant crops and grapes that would not wither and fall from the vines. People would say they were blessed.

After reading the story, ask the following questions:

1. What did God promise to do for the people? (*He promised to pour them out a blessing too large to be collected.*)
2. What had the people done to anger God? (*They had robbed God by cheating Him of their tithes and offerings.*)
3. How was God returning to the Temple? (*He was returning like a strong blazing fire or a strong detergent to make them clean again; help the students understand these analogies.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

The Right Places for the Words

Give the students pencils and provide time for them to complete the activity in their student books. Assist as needed. After they complete the activity, review the answer aloud.

Completed Verse: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty.”

The Contemporary Story

Read the story to the class, or let the students take turns alternating reading different paragraphs/sentences of the story aloud.

No One Would Believe It!

“Aww, aren’t you just so cute?” Whitney’s older cousin Felicia said. Her family was visiting from out of town for her grandmother’s birthday, and Whitney was excited to talk to Felicia. Her cousin was smart and beautiful, popular at school, and the nicest person she knew. Whitney wanted to be just like Felicia when she got older.

“Thanks, Felicia!” Whitney replied. “Do you want to play with my new drawing set I got for Christmas last year? It has a bunch of cool pieces.”

“I think that would be a lot of fun,” Felicia said with a big smile on her face. “Let me go call my friend first, and I’ll be right back.”

Whitney waited for fifteen minutes before she started to wonder what happened to Felicia. She decided to go find her, but when she did, she could not believe her ears.

“I don’t want to be here for this birthday party . . . my little cousins are so annoying!” Felicia groaned into the cell phone.

The things that Felicia said hurt Whitney’s feelings. Whitney could not believe that the cousin she looked up to was not the nice person she thought she was.

Then, discuss the following questions:

1. Why was Whitney excited? (*She was getting to hang out with her cousin Felicia, whom she admired.*)
2. What did Whitney learn about Felicia? (*Felicia did not want to be around her family after all—especially her younger cousins.*)
3. What do you think would be a good way for Whitney to bring up her feelings to Felicia? Or do you think she should just leave it alone? (*Responses will vary.*)

Exploring the Story in Ruby’s Lab

Say: As you listen to Ruby, think about what she says. After we read this section, we will go back and discuss her statements and observations.

Let one or two students read Ruby’s words aloud. Discuss Ruby’s words with the students. Help the students understand the importance of today’s lesson and the importance of showing kindness to others.

Mining for Words

Give the students pencils and provide time for them to complete the activity in their student books. Assist as needed. After they complete the activity, let any volunteers who wish to do so share their work with the class. You may offer some words that the students may not have thought of. Word lists will vary; only accept words that can be found in the dictionary.

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Ask: Why was God upset with the people? How long had the people been cheating God? What did God promise to do for the people if they obeyed? (*Pause for responses and brief discussion.*)

Lead the class in a reminder of the main points from today’s lesson. Take the time to answer any remaining questions that the students might have. End the class session with prayer.

Challenging the Leader

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Background Scripture: Malachi 3 • **Lesson Scripture:** Malachi 3:1-4, 6-12

Key Verse: “I the LORD do not change. So you, the descendants of Jacob, are not destroyed.” (*Malachi 3:6*)

Lesson Objective: The students will hear about the importance of being a leader that pleases God.

Materials Needed: *Upper Elementary* student books, Bibles, pencils, pens, star stickers, index cards, markers, crayons, copier paper, coloring pencils, tape. (**Optional:** Older Children’s Resource Kit [lesson 5 materials].)

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BEGINNING THE JOURNEY



✂ If you purchased the Older Children’s Resource Kit, post the attendance chart and purchase stickers (such as stars) to place on the chart. Also, gather any materials that may be needed for any of the activities for this lesson prior to class (found in the Teacher’s Guide of the Resource Kit).

✂ Prior to class, clear the center of the classroom for ease of movement. Also, think about and list various situations in which the persons involved are required to wait for results and outcomes. The following scenarios are some starters: (1) *A new video game comes out tomorrow; it will take all of your allowance to purchase the game.* (2) *Your mom puts a fresh batch of cookies into the oven; they won’t be ready for fifteen (15) minutes.* (You may come up with some of your own scenarios, if you would like.)

Welcome and Worship

Arrive 15-20 minutes prior to class for planning and setup. Greet the students by name as they enter the classroom. Introduce yourself as the teacher and your assistant (if applicable). Make each student feel welcome and comfortable. When guests are in attendance, have the class say, “We’re glad you’re here with us today.” Ask for a volunteer to open the class session with a prayer. Collect any offerings the students may have brought and take attendance. (*Optional:* The attendance chart found in the Leadership Resource Kit for Older Children may be posted to keep attendance, placing a star sticker on the chart for each student every day of his or her presence in class.)

Opening Activity

Put a strip of tape down the center of the room. Ask the students to stand on the right side of the line. You will read each situation you have listed, and the students should decide if the outcome is something worth waiting for. If

the students are willing to wait, then they should move to the other side of the line. (Upon each action, discuss the decisions made.) After each situation, ask the students to return to the right side. Continue in this manner with each scenario as time permits.

Discuss with the students how in today’s Scripture text, Malachi gave the Israelites a promise from God, but it took four hundred years for the promise to be fulfilled.

Prepare the students for the Bible story.

BIBLE VOYAGE

Have extra classroom Bibles (New International Version) if possible. For those who may not have a personal Bible, try to provide a checkout loan procedure whereby the students return the Bibles every so often so that they can then be rotated out to other students.

Let the students take turns alternating reading the lesson Scripture and different paragraphs of the Bible story aloud.

Challenging the Leader

In today’s Scripture passage, God sent a message to His people through the prophet Malachi. This was God’s message (in essence):

I am going to send a messenger ahead who is going to prepare the way for me. All of a sudden, the Leader you have been waiting on will enter the Temple. When He comes, will you be able to survive His appearance? He will be like a blazing fire or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes.

I am the LORD, and I haven’t changed. That is why the descendants of Jacob haven’t been destroyed. Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have failed to obey My commands and you have not done the things I told you to do. Return to Me, and I will return to you.

Malachi reminded the people that God wants us to choose to obey His rules. Giving some of our money to God’s house

is a way to worship Him. God said that those who were not giving their tithes and offerings to God's house were robbing Him. To give a *tithe* is to give one-tenth of our money to God. God made everything, so everything we have belongs to Him, including our money. God promised blessings, more than the people could count. He also promised to protect their crops from bugs and that their fields would produce a lot of fruit. When that happened, other nations would see them and call them blessed.

Ask: Whom did God say He would send to prepare the way before Him? (*A messenger.*) What did God say the people were doing? (*Robbing Him of their tithes and offerings.*) What did God promise to do if the people began to tithe? (*He promised to bless them.*)

FUN EXPEDITIONS

The Contemporary Story (Part 1)

Let the students take turns alternating reading different paragraphs of the first part of the contemporary story aloud.

Project “Leadership” (Part 1)

“Mom, we have a social-studies project and I need some help. We have to create a presentation on a good leader,” Brianna said.

“That sounds like a great project. Who are you thinking about?” Mom asked.

“I can’t make up my mind. There are so many good leaders. I’ve also found some bad ones,” Brianna said.

“That’s true. The best way to choose is to pick someone whom you would like to follow,” Mom suggested.

“I love the ideas of Nelson Mandela. I like Rosa Parks too. She is an example that one person can change the world,” Brianna said.

“Those are both good choices. Seems like you have a decision to make,” Mom commented.

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (first section)

Let students volunteer to read the information in this section aloud. Allow time for the students to respond to and discuss any questions that are posed.

The Contemporary Story (Part 2)

Let the students take turns alternating reading different paragraphs of the second part of the contemporary story aloud.

Project “Leadership” (Part 2)

“Brianna, you only have a few days left before your project is due. How is it going?” Mom asked.

“I took your advice and chose someone I would like to follow,” Brianna replied.

“Well, are you going to tell me who it is, or do I have to guess?” Mom asked lightly.

“The person I chose has all the qualities of a great leader. She is honest, works hard, and she is a role model not just for her family but for the community she lives in as well,” Brianna explained.

“Sounds like you did your research. I’m proud of you. But you still didn’t tell me who you chose,” Mom said.

“I couldn’t think of a better leader, so I chose you, Mom,” Brianna gushed.

Ask: Who are some leaders you might choose to write a report about? Why did Brianna choose her mother as a leader to discuss? What leadership skills do you have? How are you using them? (*Pause for responses and discussion.*)

Exploring the Story with Nicholas and Cornelius (second section)

Let students volunteer to read the information in this section aloud. Allow time for the students to respond to any questions that are posed, offering insight as deemed necessary.

Complete the Scripture Verses

Allow time for the students to complete the activity in their student books. Assist as needed. After the students complete the activity, review the answers aloud.

Answers: (A) 6; (B) 4; (C) 1; (D) 2; (E) 3; (F) 5; (1) “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house.” (2) “I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me.” (3) “Return to me, and I will return to you.” (4) “Then all the nations will call you blessed.” (5) “See if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.” (6) “I the LORD do not change.”

ENDING THE JOURNEY

Gather the students together for a moment of reflection before ending the class. Take a few minutes to review the Key Verse from today’s lesson. Lead the class in a brief discussion of the key points from today’s lesson. Take the time to answer any questions that the students might have. Ask for a volunteer to end the class session with a prayer.