

12 inspiring leadership lessons from the Bible

Characters

Instructions: Cut up and distribute the summary cards without providing the headings– the ‘ leadership lessons’.

In small groups or pairs, students read the summary card and extract the leadership lesson that can be learnt from the character’s story. With the class, students read the story and share their leadership lesson. The original headings can then be shared in discussion. .

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1. In Genesis 6, God is very sad and disappointed about the wickedness that has overtaken humanity. Reluctantly, he decides to wipe out the human race and start from scratch. Noah, however, is the only one who has been good. You know the story. God tells him to build an ark that will save him, his family, and animal life. As he is boarding the ark, God says to him, “for you alone I have seen to be righteous before Me in this time.” Literally the whole world was doing what was wrong. But did that stop Noah from doing what was right? Not a chance!

Adapted from : Doug Rice & 12 Most.com

1. Noah: Leaders do what’s right even if they are alone

2. God approaches Abraham in Genesis 12 and tells him to “Go forth from your country, and from your relatives and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you.” In other words, Abraham is instructed to leave his comfort zone and march onward into uncertainty. As leaders it can be hard to take risk when we don’t know what is going to happen in the future! Great leaders are okay with not knowing the future, because they know the truth: the promised land awaits them.

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2. Abraham: Leaders welcome the unknown

3. The story of Joseph beginning in Genesis 37 is powerful. The guy had a pretty tough life. He was sold into slavery by his jealous brothers. His father was told that he was killed by a wild animal. He was framed by his boss’s wife and was thrown into prison. He interpreted the dream of a prisoner who was released and restored to his position, but the guy forgot about him. In the end, though, Joseph became the leader of all Egypt—second only to the Pharaoh himself. When there is a famine, he is then able to save his family from starvation. He tells his brothers when he sees them again that, though they meant to harm him, God made it happen so that Joseph was in a position to save them. Leaders have a vision that keeps them going through difficult times.

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3. Joseph: Leaders bounce back from tough situations

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4. Yes, it's true. God has to be very convincing in order to get Moses to take action in Exodus 3. He at first gives excuse after excuse as to why he isn't the right guy for the job. When he finally does answer though, Moses, approaches Pharaoh and boldly passes on the important message: "Let my people go." The Israelites, Moses' native people, had been made slaves by Egypt and Moses was the one chosen to lead them to freedom. When the time came, Moses was willing to step up and lead.

Adapted from : Doug Rice & 12 Most.com

4. Moses: Leaders stick up for their people

5. In Joshua 24, after leading his people into a new land, Joshua offers the Israelites the option to either A) serve the God who they had always served, the one who had brought them into the land or B) serve the gods of the surrounding lands. "But as for me and my house," Joshua says, "we will serve the Lord." All the people answer together, that they will pledge their allegiance to God. Because they believe in Joshua's leadership, they follow Joshua's example. He doesn't have to threaten or boss them around; he just inspires them by his example.

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5. Joshua: Leaders rule by example rather than by just bossing people around

6. Everybody knows this story. In 1 Samuel 17, the Israelites are being defeated by the Philistines and their 9-foot tall giant—Goliath. Goliath teases the Israelites and challenges them to send him one man and, if that man should defeat him, the Philistines would become their servants. David, a small shepherd boy who will not even fit into the armour he is provided, volunteers. When Goliath mocks him, David says, "You come to me with a sword, a spear, and a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord." With that, he takes a stone, slings it at Goliath's forehead, and knocks the giant to the ground. In other words, you can face any challenge as long as you have are sure of what you believe in and stand strong.

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6. David: Leaders are not afraid of giants

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7. In a vision Isaiah has in Isaiah 6, God asks who he should send as a prophet to His people. Isaiah responds, "Here am I. Send me!" Leaders don't wait to see if anyone else is going to step up when something needs done. They take initiative. They are first to raise their hands. First to stand. First to speak up. First to make decisions. Leaders are always ready to take the plunge at a moment's notice.

Adapted from : Doug Rice & 12Most.com

7. Isaiah: Leaders rise to the occasion

8. Many of us know the story of Daniel in the lion's den. Daniel, in Daniel 6, is a highly admired government official. The people he worked with became jealous. Trying to get rid of him and knowing that he is a religious man, they convince the king to write a rule saying that prayer can be made to no god except for the king. Once the rule is made, Daniel continues on praying and giving thanks to his God just like he always did. When he is caught, the people at his work tell their king and he is forced to throw Daniel into the den of lions. The next morning, the king finds Daniel alive. The lions had not harmed him. The point? Daniel's faith in his God is what made him great in first place. Knowing this, he would not back down, no matter what happened to him. Great leaders follow this example and stay strong in what they believe, no matter what happens.

Adapted from : Doug Rice & 12Most.com

8. Daniel: Leaders stay determined

9. John the Baptist, in Matthew 3, is baptizing people and preaching about the coming of Jesus. When an over confident, bragging group of religious officials come for baptism only because they think it is a popular thing to do and not because they actually want to change and listen to his message, he tells them he thinks they are not being sincere. Leaders aren't afraid to call it like it is. Leaders have what it takes to be honest with the people they come in contact with.

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9. John the Baptist: Leaders aren't afraid to call it how it is.

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10. One of the most powerful events in the life of Jesus is when he washes his disciples' feet in John 13. When he is finished, he says to them, "You call me teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, the Lord and teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." Jesus, of course, isn't just talking about feet. He's talking about servant-leadership. Great leaders focus on serving and helping those who follow them. Great leaders serve others.

Adapted from : Doug Rice & 12Most.com

10. Jesus: Leaders are servants

11. Peter, the most well-known disciple of Jesus, denies even knowing Him three times while Jesus is being crucified. Jesus had predicted he would do it, though Peter insisted he would never deny Jesus—even to the death. When the rooster crows (what Jesus said would happen), Peter realizes what he had done and cries bitterly. In Acts 2, we see Peter giving the first sermon after Jesus's ascension into heaven—to a crowd of thousands of people when he had previously denied Jesus in front of just a few days earlier. Leaders don't become discouraged when they fail. They don't sit around, sad in self-pity and give up due to the mistake! They pick themselves back up and continue on. Leaders do better next time.

Adapted from : Doug Rice & 12Most.com

11. Peter: Leaders recover from failure

12. Paul, throughout his life recorded in Acts, is a very enthusiastic individual. As a Pharisee, he violently opposes the spread of Christianity, going out of his way to see Christians imprisoned. When Jesus appears to him in Acts 9 and changes his mind, he becomes equally enthusiastic about the truth of Christianity. Paul travels across all of the known world, spreading the message about Jesus and establishing churches everywhere he went. Leaders are driven by a sense of purpose. There is no place for apathy in the life of a leader. Leaders always care...and care deeply.

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12. Paul: Leaders are passionate for what they believe in