



A FEW WORDS TO THE LEADER

Because he sent in a drawing of McGee, Nicholas is asked to appear on a local TV game show. As the time for his appearance draws near, Nicholas slowly becomes unbearable to friends and family and even McGee. Finally, Nicholas and McGee (who has also succumbed to delusions of grandeur) confront each other in a clash of egos. Nicholas closes his sketch pad and leaves behind his inseparable companion. At the studio, Nicholas is delighted by the lights and attention and feels certain of victory in the quest for the prize. However, his overconfidence results in a humiliating defeat, vividly illustrating how pride goes before a fall.

Children frequently struggle with pride. While the consequences are rarely as outlandish as those experienced by Nicholas, children do suffer significant difficulties when they allow their opinions of themselves to get out of hand. Pride may show itself in the child in a variety of ways:

- bragging about accomplishments;
- putting down others;
- ostracizing someone who is different;
- refusing to accept information or advice from someone else;
- lacking concern for the needs of others;
- being insecure because of an overemphasis on self;
- being extremely competitive, continually trying to outdo others.

Pride is a difficult emotion to help children handle, because it is not based on something totally bad. It is sometimes just too much of a

KEY VALUE

All of us struggle with pride, especially children who are dealing with feelings of inferiority. Often pride takes the form of bragging or cutting down others. This session communicates the value of being humble rather than promoting oneself.



Materials Needed:

- “A Star in the Breaking” video
- 2-3 large balloons
- Felt-tip Marker
- Large red bow or string
- Print-outs of activities included after the lesson pages.
- Paper and markers for your students.
- Index cards

good thing. We want children to feel confident, but not overconfident; to feel good about themselves, but not to become conceited in their attitude; to find and express deep satisfaction in their accomplishments, but not to boast or to demean the efforts of others. In trying to help children avoid the sin of pride, some have erred to the other extreme, by instilling a sense of unworthiness and pitiful self-effacement. Perhaps in the majority of cases, the "conceited child" is trying to compensate for a low self-esteem. Lacking a healthy strength of character, this child seeks status by investing time and energy to impress others. Sadly, when a child wears a mask to cover up weaknesses from the view of others, barriers are built that block the child from developing the strengths that are really needed. Most commonly, adults and peers react instinctively to boasting in ways designed to "take that kid down a notch or two." As a result, the insecurities are deepened and the cycle continues.

This session will help children identify the damage that excessive pride does to people and the importance of a healthy self-concept in all relationships. This Leader's Guide suggests a variety of learning strategies that can reinforce the impact of the video and help greatly in accomplishing the session's learning objective.



Older Children (grades 3-6) have a more fully developed awareness of other people, but this commonly takes the form of cliques or gangs in which two or more children band together and exclude others. This bonding to special friends is a necessary part of child development, but it becomes destructive when it fosters feelings that "we're better than you." These children also need patient understanding from adults who can guide them away from attitudes of prejudice, disdain, and arrogance.

Younger Children (grades 1-2) are making the transition from the self-centeredness of the infant and preschooler. By age six or seven, most children are just beginning to recognize that other people may view life differently than they do. Often, what appears to be vanity or selfishness is simply the child's immaturity in still thinking the world revolves around him or her. These children need patient guidance, with frequent affirmation for who they are and the efforts they expend.

KEY BIBLE VERSES

When he noticed that all who came to the dinner were trying to sit near the head of the table, he gave them this advice: "If you are invited to a wedding feast, don't always head for the best seat. For if someone more respected than you shows up, the host will bring him over to where you are sitting and say, 'Let this man sit here instead.' And you, embarrassed, will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table!

"Do this instead—start at the foot; and when your host sees you he will come and say, 'Friend, we have a better place than this for you!' Then you will be honored in front of all other guests. For everyone who tries to honor himself shall be humbled; and he who humbles himself shall be honored." Luke 14:7-11

SESSION OBJECTIVE

As a result of this session, children will understand the importance of humility and putting others before themselves.

REVIEW

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY: Have an aide walk across the front of room with a huge colored ribbon tied in a bow around a finger.

LEADER: Hey (name)! What's that tied on your finger?

AIDE: A ribbon!

LEADER: I know it's a ribbon. What's it for?

AIDE: To help me remember.

LEADER: To help you remember what?

AIDE: The Bible verse Nick read on last week's episode of McGee and Me!

LEADER: That ribbon is to help you remember a Bible verse?

AIDE: Sure!

LEADER: Does it work?

AIDE: Of course. Do you want to hear the verse?

LEADER: Well, if you think you can remember it.

AIDE: Of course I can remember it. That's what the ribbon is for!

LEADER: well, let's hear it.

AIDE: OK, here goes! "Never forget to be . . . uh, Never forget to . . . um, Oh no! I forgot whatever it is I'm not supposed to forget!

LEADER: (to kids) Do any of you remember the two things we learned we should never forget? (Prompt kids if necessary. Aide can help in remembering " to be truthful and kind. Hold these virtues tightly. Write them deep within your heart. ")

OBJECT LESSON

Beforehand inflate a large balloon. While it is inflated, with a felt tip pen, draw a simple face with a large open mouth. Inside the mouth letter: "I'm #1." Then let the air out of the balloon.

In front of the children, blow up the balloon enough that the face can be seen. Say something like: "I'd like you to meet a friend who is a real airhead. His name is Ozzy Ozone and he's a pretty nice fellow. Ozzy's main problem is that he can get really puffed up about how great he is. He never misses an opportunity to remind his family and friends about his good grades (add some more air), his terrific athletic skills (more air), his roomful of the latest and greatest games and toys (more air), his good looks (more air) and his general all-around superiority over anyone else he's ever met (more air)! Ozzy thinks he's so great that his friends all love it whenever something happens to let some of the air out (release a good share of air from the balloon). Ozzy's problem is thinking too much of himself, and today we're going to discover the problems that happen when we start thinking we're better than other people.

• *NOTE: Another option is to suddenly pop the balloon when it is fully inflated, explaining that others want to pop our pride when we're inflated with ourselves.*

"A STAR IN THE BREAKING"

Preview the video before showing it to the children. Set the video monitor where it can be easily seen and heard. Practice starting and stopping the playback unit. Advance the tape to the beginning of the episode.

Introduce "A Star in the Breaking" episode of McGee and Me! by saying something like: "In this story a boy named Nicholas and his cartoon friend McGee get into trouble because of pride, and it almost ruins their friendship. It doesn't help Nicholas with his other friends and family members either."

SHOW THE FIRST PART OF THE VIDEO.

ACT ONE: Nicholas is chosen to appear on a TV game show. As the date for the show approaches, both Nick and McGee become increasingly unbearable as they dream of stardom and acclaim. Nick's pride strains his relationships with friends and family members and McGee becomes totally impossible. Ultimately, their expanding egos clash and the two inseparable friends part company.

STOP THE VIDEO AFTER THE MUSIC WHEN THE SCENE ENDS WITH NICHOLAS LEAVING TO GO TO THE STUDIO.



**VIDEO PRESENTATION -
15 MINUTES**

"LET'S TALK ABOUT IT"

Ask children these questions to help them evaluate Nick's and McGee's attitudes and actions and to think through why pride can be so harmful to the individual and to others. With younger children, eliminate questions 4, 5, and 7.

1. What happened? Tell me about what you just saw.
2. How did Nicholas react at first, right after he was chosen?
3. How did his attitude and actions change?
4. What caused the fight between McGee and Nicholas?
5. It's all right to feel good about yourself or about doing something well, but how do you know when you are being conceited—when your pride has gotten out of hand?
6. When are you tempted to brag or to look down on others?
7. What do you think Nicholas might have been thinking as he was getting ready to go to the studio?

If children's comments indicate that any of them did not notice, or misunderstood, some facet of the story, clarify what really was said or done. Avoid the temptation to add "editorial" comments or to draw conclusions during this discussion. At this point your purpose is to help the children evaluate Nicholas's behavior.

If children express conflicting ideas, simply accept the diversity with a comment such as, *"We don't know if Nicholas felt that way, but that could be a reason why pride might become a problem. "*

8. For those of you who haven 't seen this before, what do you think happens next in the story?

Take a few answers to this question, and then say: *"Let's find out. "*

"A STAR IN THE BREAKING"

SHOW REMAINDER OF VIDEO.

ACT TWO: Nicholas arrives at the studio, confident of victory. He is sure he will defeat his unimposing opponent, but he is taken by surprise and suffers a humiliating defeat. This great calamity awakens Nick and McGee to the folly of pride, and Nicholas begins thinking seriously about the true value of humility in contrast with his earlier conceited behavior.

PLAY
Part 2

**VIDEO PRESENTATION-
10 MINUTES**



"WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?"

Print the "Arrow" posters from the PDFs at the end of this lesson. Say something like, "At the beginning of the story, Nicholas read a verse in the Bible that says, "Everyone who tries to honor himself shall be humbled; and he who humbles himself shall be honored."

Hold the "Honor" arrow pointing up, and ask: "What is the difference between the words honor and (flip arrow over so "Humble" points down) humble?" (One meaning of honor is "lifted up" or "make important," while humble means "not proud")

Show the second arrow with "Humble" pointing down. Ask: "What can you do to be more humble and avoid being filled with pride?" (Possible answers: instead of criticizing, look for ways to build others up; admit your mistakes; don't brag; accept advice on how you can improve; realize that God loves you whether you succeed or fail; etc.)

With younger children, use the following yes/no questions when you show "Humble" pointing down. After each question, give the correct answer and explain why.

- *Would a humble person cut others down?*
- *Would a humble person lift others up?*
- *Would a humble person admit her mistakes?*
- *Would a humble person brag?*
- *Would a humble person accept others' advice?*
- *Would a humble person understand that God loves him even when he fails?*

After children respond, point out that trying to honor ourselves and putting others down makes other people not want to help us, and it also makes us feel like we don't need to keep learning and doing our best. As a result, we run into problems. But if we don't try to act like we are more important than other people, they will like us and help us, and we will keep learning and growing.

Ask: "What do you think is the difference between feeling good about something you've done and being proud and conceited about it?" (We cross over into conceit and pride when we seek to take the credit without thanking God for the skills and abilities, and when we seek to impress ourselves and/or others with our accomplishments.)

NOTE: Don't use the last question with younger children.

"PLAYING THE GAME WITH PRIDE"

Explain that you will give the children a series of situations where McGee is accomplishing something. Each time they should tell you what McGee might say if he is honoring himself. Then they should tell you what McGee might say if he is humble and friendly. Here are the situations to use:

- *McGee scores a goal in a soccer game.*
- *McGee gets 100% on a spelling test.*
- *McGee is chosen to sing a solo in the school concert.*
- *McGee's friend wins "artist of the month " at school and his pictures are on the bulletin board.*

NOTE: You may want to give sample McGee comments (negative and positive) to prime the pump and keep them from giving pat answers. For example, in the soccer game, McGee might say: "What a great shot!" (negative) or "It was a team effort—we all worked together. Thanks for the great assist. " (positive). With his artist friend, McGee might say: "I should have won!" (negative) or "Congratulations. I really like your pictures. " (positive).

MEMORY VERSE

Use the following verse for the class to memorize: "For everyone who tries to honor himself shall be humbled; and he who humbles himself shall be honored." Luke 14:11b

Ask for suggestions of gestures the children could make or postures they could take to visualize honoring one's self and humbling one's self. For example, honoring could be visualized by standing proudly, with nose stuck in the air. Humbling could be visualized by bowing to someone and saying, "After you." Choose two actions from their suggestions.

Explain that whenever you say "honor" or "honored, " they should do the "pride" gesture or posture. And whenever you say "humble" or "humbled," they should do the "humble" gesture or posture.

Read the verse slowly aloud, making sure that everyone does the right motions. Next, have them say the verse with you as they stand, sit, etc. Go faster and faster until everyone is laughing.

Read the verse one more time very slowly, with everyone saying the verse and doing the motions in slow motion. With younger children, go very slowly

"STUCK-UP" (8 minutes—grades 1-2)

Copy and cut out a number of conversation balloons from the PDF pages at the end of this lesson. Bring those, pens/pencils, and a roll of masking tape to the session.

Give each child one of the conversation balloons and a pencil/ pen. Tell him or her to write in the balloon something that a stuck-up or conceited person would say.

Note: These children may need you and your helpers to give suggestions and help them spell the words. Their answers should be in very short sentences.

After they have finished, explain that you are going to play a game similar to "Pin the Tail on the Donkey." You will put a piece of tape on the back of their papers. Then one at a time, you will blindfold them. They should walk to the board and stick their saying on McGee's head in the McGee and Me! poster for this lesson.

See who came the closest to McGee's mouth with the conversation balloon. Then discuss the statements they wrote on their conversation balloons.

"THANK YOU" (8 minutes—grades 3-6)

This fun game reinforces giving compliments. (With a large group, use teams.) Put everyone in a line or circle. Explain that this is a contest to see how well they can pass on compliments. The second person should look at the first person and give him or her a compliment (e.g., That's a pretty dress; You have a beautiful singing voice; You color well; You can run fast). Then the first person should say "Thank you." Next, the third person should give the second person a compliment (it has to be a different one). The second person then turns to the first person and repeats the new compliment. The first person says "Thank you" to the second person, and the second person says "Thank you" to the third one. Continue this with each compliment going all the way back through the line to the first person and the "Thank you"s going all the way down to the one who gave the compliment. The messages must go down and back before the next person can start. The game becomes hilarious as compliments are passed down the line (e.g., boys receive compliments initially given to a girl—"That's a pretty dress"!).

NOTE: These activities will reinforce the lesson—choose those that will be most helpful for your group, considering its make-up and size, and most appropriate for your setting.

"HOT SHOT" (6 minutes-grades 1-2, 3-6)

Have paper, pencils/pens, and a wastebasket available.

Give everyone a piece of paper and a pencil/ pen. Tell them to write a situation where they might be tempted to be stuck up, prideful, conceited, or bragging. One at a time, have them read their situations aloud. After each person has read, have him or her crumple up the paper and toss it into the wastebasket.

NOTE: If this would be too personal for your group, have them write a bad effect of pride. Have younger children draw pictures of the situations or effects instead of writing about them.

"VERSE MATCH" (5 minutes—grades 3-6)

Print sheets with verse and statements, as below, from the pages at the end of this PDF lesson. Explain that the group should draw lines from each statement to the verse they think it fits. Then, have them look up the verses to find the right answers. (Remember, various Bible translations use different words.)

- **Romans 12:3** *“Don’t live to make a good impressions on others.”*
- **James 4:6** *“Don’t praise yourself.”*
- **1 Samuel 2:3** *“Be honest in your estimate of yourselves.”*
- **Proverbs 27:2** *“Quit acting to proud and arrogant!”*
- **Philippians 2:3** *“God gives strength to the humble.”*

"SITUATIONS" (5 minutes—grades 3-6)

Distribute index cards and pencils/pens. On one side, have the children write a situation in which they are tempted to brag. On the other side, have them write the name of a person they will compliment that week.

Tell them to keep these cards to remind them not to brag and to give genuine compliments.



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