

YEAR A | QUARTER 4

4

Talent Turns Toxic

Community
We build positive relationships.

POWER TEXT

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10).

KEY REFERENCES

- 2 Samuel 14:25-15:37
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 72, pp. 727-745
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 4, pp. 103-106
- Student lesson on page 52 of this guide

OUR BELIEFS

- No. 8, The Great Controversy
- No. 7, The Nature of Humanity
- No. 14, Unity in the Body of Christ

OBJECTIVES

The students will:

- **Know** that people accomplish more working together than working alone.
- **Feel** the need to blend their efforts with those of others.
- **Respond** by looking for ways to work with others who share their life purpose.

POWERPOINT

We accomplish more by working with, rather than against, one another.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Absalom, the son of David, is proud of his looks and abilities. He plots against his father and leads out in a revolt against him. Although his story demonstrates the effectiveness of good organization, his treachery splits the country and leads to a civil war—a disruption of peace in the country, in his own family, and in the community of faith.

This is a lesson about community.

Absalom's story teaches that if we work against others instead of with them, our best efforts will not succeed.

Teacher Enrichment

Absalom was the third son of David by Maacah, daughter of King Talmai of Geshur. A cunning and manipulative man, he was capable but utterly unscrupulous and untrustworthy. Except for his sister Tamar, he did not show much love or loyalty to his family. He showed the same patient scheming and relentless determination in planning both the murder of his brother Amnon and the revolt against his father, David.

"Absalom's political strategy was to steal the hearts of the people with his good looks, grand entrances, apparent concern for justice, and friendly embraces. Many were fooled and switched their allegiance" (*Life Application Bible*, Notes and Bible Helps [Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1991], p. 518).

"David's sins took him away from God, but repentance brought him back. In contrast, Absalom sinned and kept on sinning. Although he relied heavily on the advice of others, he was not wise enough to evaluate the counsel he received" (*Life Application Bible*, p. 519).

How well do I work with others? With what specific area do I need God to help me?

Welcome

Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly, and use several minutes to debrief students on the previous week's lesson.

Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful? Which activity was the most fun?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week. (The leader should be familiar with the previous lesson to be able to direct the discussion.) This is also a good time to have students recite the power text.

Have students begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

Program notes

LESSON SECTION	MINUTES	ACTIVITIES	MATERIALS NEEDED
Welcome	Ongoing	Greet students at the door. Ask about their week.	
1 Readiness	10-15	*A. Illustrations* *B. Knot One*	Bibles, paper, pencils, crayons Bibles, entangled pieces of yarn
* Prayer & Praise	15-20	See page 47. Prayer & Praise may be used at any time during the program.	songbooks, world map, pushpins, offering plate/basket
2 Bible Lesson	15-20	Introducing the Bible Story Experiencing the Story Exploring the Bible	Bibles Bibles, three chairs, microphone (or facsimile) Bibles, white/chalkboard, markers/chalk
3 Applying the Lesson	10-15	*Scenario*	
4 Sharing the Lesson	10-15	*Teamwork*	prepared cards
Closing		A. Prayer and Closing Comments B. Reminder to Parents C. Coming Up Next Week	

1

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ paper
- ☐ pencils
- ☐ crayons

Illustrations

Say: **Draw four consecutive small pictures to illustrate the idea that people accomplish more working together as a community than they do working against one another.**

Ask students to share their picture stories and then post them where all can see.

Debriefing

Ask: **What happens when we blend our efforts with others? How can God work through us if we don't? How does He use us together to accomplish His will?**

Say: **Let's say our power text, Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10:**

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10).

Our power point reminds us that

We accomplish more by working with, rather than against, one another.

Accommodations for students with special needs

Allow students with special needs who experience difficulty with this activity to work with a partner who could assist them.

B

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ entangled pieces of yarn

Knot One

Ask students to choose a partner for this activity. Hand out to each student a piece of yarn that was previously entangled and has a knot. One student in each pair will attempt to untangle the yarn while their partner will hold down one of their hands. Give students two minutes to work single-handedly. Next, allow students to use both hands and to enlist the help of their partners to untangle the yarn and to remove the knot.

Debriefing

Ask: **How difficult was it to work with one hand? How easy was it to work with two hands? How much easier was it to work together with your partner for the common goal of untangling the yarn? Did it take you longer to work by yourselves or to work with your partners? How is this like or unlike the way we relate (or ought to relate) to each other as a church community?**

Say: **Let's say our power text, Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10:**

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10).

Remember our power point:

We accomplish more by working with, rather than against, one another.

Accommodations for students with special needs

This activity may be challenging for students with physical disabilities and for those with visual impairments. Consider involving these students in observing, discussing, and answering questions.

Prayer & Praise

Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). If they have given you permission, share one or two special items from students' Bible study during the week. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors.

Suggested Songs

"Make Me a Servant" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 126)
"Side by Side" (*He Is Our Song*, no. 123)

Mission

YOU NEED:
- ☐ world map
- ☐ pushpins

Use *Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults* (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. Using a world map, have the students mark with pushpins the location of the story.

Offering

YOU NEED:
- ☐ offering plate/basket

Say: **One of the objectives for our lesson was to learn the importance of blending our efforts with those of others to accomplish the goals that God gives us. One way we can do this is to "blend" our financial efforts by bringing our offerings to support those around the world. By doing so, we "blend" our efforts with theirs.** Collect the offering at this time.

Prayer

Ask God to guide each student in determining how they may contribute something to the accomplishments of the church family. Close with a prayer for the students' joys and sorrows, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.

Notes

2

BIBLE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles

Introducing the Bible Story

Divide the class into two groups. Assign each group a different song to sing and tell them that when you give them the signal, they are to begin singing at the same time. You probably will not have to follow through with this demonstration very long before the class expresses some confusion over the possibility of singing two songs at once.

Ask: **How did it sound? Why is it important to have a group "singing off the same page"? Today our Bible story is going to show us that it is better to work together than apart. As our power text reminds us:**

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10).

Remember our power point:

We accomplish more by working with, rather than against, one another.

Accommodation for students with special needs

This activity may be difficult for students with auditory impairments. Involve them in observing and discussing.

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ three chairs
- ☐ microphone (or facsimile)

Experiencing the Story

PREPARATION: The week before your meeting, assign the roles of David and Absalom to two adults from your church. Ask them each to study the life of their character as described in 2 Samuel 15:1-12, and be prepared to be guests on a talk show, where they will provide answers as true to the Bible account as possible. Set up your meeting place like a talk show set, with three chairs in the front and the rest of the chairs facing them. You'll need a microphone or something that resembles one (even if you don't have a sound system in your room) and Bibles.

EXPERIENCING: Holding the microphone, say: **Welcome to our show. Let me introduce you to our special guests today. On my right is David, king of Israel. This shepherd's son has done great things. He killed a lion and a bear to protect his sheep, he killed the giant Goliath with a single stone, and he is an accomplished musician.**

On my left is David's son, Absalom. He's already killed a man, he's been in exile for three years, and for five years he did not see his father. He's since been reunited with his father, the king. As you can see, he's one of the most handsome men alive. Let's give a warm welcome to our guests. (Pause for applause.) **Before we begin, let me give you a little more background on these two.**

Read aloud 2 Samuel 15:1-12. Then say: **Absalom is conspiring to take over his father's kingdom. We've asked the two of them to meet here on our show so Absalom can explain why he plans to betray his father, the king.**

Conduct the interview as a typical talk show host. Carry your "microphone" into the audience and encourage them to ask questions and make comments. Keep the interview lively by asking such questions as these that stimulate discussions:

*** Absalom, what have you been up to?**
*** What's the deal with this so-called betrayal plan?**
*** Don't you care about your dad?**
*** What was it like growing up as his son?**
*** David, to what extent do you blame yourself for your son's betrayal?**
*** How do you think your wrong choices have affected your son?**
*** What do you think of your son now?**
*** Do you still love him?**

RESPONSE: Ask the audience:

*** What can be done to restore this father-son relationship?**
*** Is it too late?**
*** What does each character have to do for the relationship to be restored?**
*** What have you learned about restoring your own broken relationships?**

Encourage students to offer strategies for restoring broken relationships in their lives.

CLOSING: Conclude the interview by asking both David and Absalom where their relationship will go from here. Ask each of them to decide whether the solutions offered by the audience could change their relationship.

(Adapted from *The Youth Worker's Encyclopedia of Bible-Teaching Ideas: Old Testament* [Loveland, Colo.: Group, 1994], pp. 117, 118. Used by permission.)

3

APPLYING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ white/chalkboard
- ☐ markers/chalk

Exploring the Bible

List the following texts on the board and divide the students into seven groups, each taking a text. Say: **Based on examples from the Bible, explain why you agree or disagree that God wants His church to be organized and orderly.** Ask: **In what specific ways does God want the church to be organized?**

1. 1 Corinthians 1:10-17
2. 1 Corinthians 6:1-8
3. Acts 2:42-47
4. Acts 6:1-7
5. Joshua 6:1-20
6. Exodus 18:1-27
7. Exodus 35:4-10

Ask students to list specific ways in which they think the church should be organized and orderly. After the groups have had time to prepare, call on them to share.

Read 1 Corinthians 14:40. Say: **Let's say our power text, Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10:**

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10).

Remember our power point:

We accomplish more by working with, rather than against, one another.

Accommodation for students with special needs

Guide students with special needs who experience difficulty with this activity to groups that offer them assistance in participation. Allow these students to share their ideas and comments in ways that allow them to feel comfortable, accepted, and valued.

Scenario

Read the following scenario to the students.

Both Jacqueline and Jean-Pierre are pushing to get their school to adopt a recycling program to help the environment. But they haven't talked together about it, and each feels that the other is trying to take over or to put the other down. So they defend themselves by criticizing each other's efforts every chance they get. And, of course, nothing is really getting accomplished as far as influencing the school to adopt any recycling program.

Debriefing

Ask: **What can Jacqueline and Jean-Pierre do to resolve their differences? What can be done if they learn to work together? How can they work together to accomplish their goals?**

Let's remember to apply the principle we learned from our power point this week:

We accomplish more by working with, rather than against, one another.

4

SHARING THE LESSON

YOU NEED:
- ☐ prepared cards

Teamwork

Invite students to share if they had the opportunity during the past week to serve others using their God-given talents. Ask: **How did you use your talents to help someone in need?**

Before class, prepare small cards, one for each student, by writing on each card an occupation that involves serving (i.e., teacher, physician, nurse, pastor). Duplicate occupations at least three times. Give each person one card. Then say: **You must find all the others who have a card with the same occupation on it, but the only way you can do so is by asking them to describe some of the activities in which they are involved in their occupation (i.e., How do you serve others through your occupation?). When you have found all the others, call out "teamwork."**

Debriefing

Ask: **Was it difficult to find the others in your group? How is this like or unlike the way we find people who share our life purpose, who will work with others to serve God productively? How could you recognize God's voice? How does He speak to you? Whom do you know who needs the good news of God's grace in their lives? How could you work with others to help someone get to know Jesus?**

Say: **Now think of at least three ways you can work with others. Share these with your group members and decide to reach out to others in one of these ways. Let's remember our power point and say it together once again:**

We accomplish more by working with, rather than against, one another.

Closing

Prayer and closing comments:

Say: **Dear God, please be with us as we work together. Help us seek common goals that are pleasing to You. Amen.**

Reminder to parents:

Say: **Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents' Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.**

Coming up next week:

Say: **David grieves the loss of his son Absalom. God wants us to love everyone, even our enemies.**

Notes

Student lesson

Talent Turns Toxic

When your whole family is seated around the dinner table and everyone seems to be talking at once and you want to say something, what do you do? How do you get their attention if you have something really important to say? Here's the sad story about a prince who used deception to get his father's attention.

Absalom had been waiting for two years to talk to his father, King David, and still had not been called. He knew his father had been unhappy with him ever since he had murdered Amnon, one of David's other sons.

Absalom had run away for a time, but was now back in Jerusalem by the king's permission. It was not like old times, though. He was not allowed to live in the palace with all the princely privileges he had once enjoyed.

So he called for Joab, David's right-hand man. But Joab turned away and did not come when Absalom called, even when he called again. Finally Absalom decided to resort to drastic measures and set Joab's field on fire in order to get his attention.

He got it! Joab went in a hurry to see Absalom and asked him, "Why have your servants set my field on fire?"

"Look," Absalom said, "I sent word to you and said, 'Come here so I can send you to the king to ask, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there!"' Now then, I want to see the king's face, and if I am guilty of anything, let him put me to death" (2 Samuel 14:31, 32).

Finally Absalom was able to appear before the king. He bowed before his father respectfully, and his father welcomed him back. On the surface it seemed that everything was better in their relationship, but there were still some big problems.

Absalom had a root of bitterness held deep within his heart. He felt that he had never had the attention he deserved, and now he decided to go out and get it for himself. He hired a chariot and horses and 50 men to run before him as he rode about Jerusalem. He also began to stand in the gate, where people would come from all around the kingdom to bring their legal problems before the king.

"Where are you from?" Absalom would ask in a friendly voice. When they had talked for a while, Absalom would begin his campaign speech. "Look, your claims are valid and proper, but there is no representative of the king to hear you." Then he would add, "If only I were appointed judge in the land! Then everyone who has a complaint or case could come to me and I would see that they receive justice" (2 Samuel 15:3, 4). With that, he would kiss the person affectionately, a custom among men in those days. He really knew how to get people on his side! Soon many of the people were ready to follow him instead of David.

Pretending to go away for a religious sacrifice, Absalom sent spies throughout the land, saying, "As soon as you hear the sound of the trumpets, then say, 'Absalom is king in Hebron'" (verse 10). The bitter root in Absalom's heart was now a full-blown rebellion.

Word of Absalom's rebellion soon reached Jerusalem, where it was swiftly carried to David's servants.

David knew it was time to run. More than 600 people, along with David, left Jerusalem that day, running for their lives. Some remained faithful, such as the Levites, and some rebelled, joining Absalom's forces.

Our world is the stage of the great cosmic conflict between God and Satan. Absalom's rebellion reminds us of Lucifer's rebellion against God. Much like Lucifer, Absalom was not satisfied with his royal status as a son of the king. He conspired to take his father's throne. Vain ambition rooted in selfishness led to rebellion against God's law and leadership, as well as against David's royal leadership. Absalom used his influence to question David's authority and to gradually lead people to disloyalty toward the king just as Lucifer had done in heaven. The great conflict between good and evil reveals significant lessons about God's character of love. In His great love God did not destroy Lucifer but gave him time to regret his sin and return to God. During this time the entire universe could witness God's character of self-sacrificial love in contrast with Satan's pride and selfish ambition that led to his full-fledged rebellion against God. When Satan deceived the first human beings and sin entered into our world, God revealed His infinite love for the human race. He had a plan for our salvation. God promised to send His only Son into our world to save everyone who would believe in Him. All you have to do is accept God's amazing gift. His love will change your life!

KEY REFERENCES

- 2 Samuel 14:25-15:37
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 72, pp. 727-745
- *The Bible Story* (1994), vol. 4, pp. 103-106
- Our Beliefs, nos. 8, 7, 14

POWER TEXT

"Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up" (Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10).

POWER POINT

We accomplish more by working with, rather than against, one another.







Sabbath

DO Do the activity on page 33.

Sunday

READ Read 2 Samuel 14:25, 26 and this week's lesson, "Talent Turns Toxic."

BUILD Think of a way to create 40 building blocks, each with one word from the memory verse written on it (number 40 is for the reference). Arrange them with the words in order so they form an altar, a gate, or a wall. Display your creation where you will see it often. Think about these words all week.

LEARN Begin to memorize the power text.

PRAY Ask God to use the talent He has given you to always do good for others.

Monday

READ Read 2 Samuel 14:27-33.

LIST Make a list of the things that Absalom did that show he knew the importance of planning and organization.

TALK Talk with a friend about how you could be more organized to accomplish some good things for God.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to give you the skills you need to work for Him.

Tuesday

READ Read 2 Samuel 15:1-37.

THINK Think about the gifts that God has given you. Use one of those gifts today to help someone else.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to keep you humble, especially if He has given you impressive gifts and talents.

Wednesday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 14:40.

FIND Look up the words "fitting" and "orderly" in a dictionary. Write two or three synonyms for each word.

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Ask God to help you live your life in a fitting and orderly manner.

Thursday

READ Read Exodus 18:12-19, 24-26 to find out how Moses led 3 million people.

TALK Interview your pastor, youth pastor, Sabbath School leader, or church board chair. Ask them to explain how the verses above apply to your home church.

WRITE Compare a church building to a church family. Write a poem about it. (Example: The different groups of people in my church are like the different parts of the church building. The juniors are like the lights, brightening things up with their energy . . .)

REVIEW Review the power text.

PRAY Thank God for the diversity of people and talents in your church.

Friday

READ Read 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17.

THINK Think about the different gifts and talents in your church from the poem you wrote yesterday. Which of the parts of the church building do you think you are most suited for? List two ways you can actively perform the responsibilities of that part of the building in the next week.

SAY Repeat the power text, Ecclesiastes 4:9, 10, from memory.

PRAY Ask God to give you opportunities to work with others to serve Him with the talents He has given you.