

# 12-6-09 EGCC Middle School Class

Theme: Switching Places

## OPENING ACTIVITY

- We're going to do some Mad Libs
- All of you are going to help me write a story.
- But I'm not going to tell you what the story is about.
- Instead, I'm going to ask you for a certain type of word, like a noun or an adjective or an adverb.
- You tell me the word and I'll write it in.
- Once I have all the words I need, then I'll read out-loud the story that we all helped to write.

**DO** 2 or 3 Mad Libs

## TELL

- In Mad Libs, sometimes the words we chose were funny, but other times they didn't make much sense, right?
- And this is because words have specific meanings to us and if we start switching them around with each other, things get a lot more confusing, right?
- Today we're going to talk about and look at how as people, we sometimes get confused in our minds and put God in the place of people or put people in the place of God.
- We're going to start by looking at a story from First Samuel, chapter 8.
- A little background first:
  - After the Israelites were led out Egypt, they eventually settled in a land called Canaan, most of that land we now call Israel.
  - When they settled, they did not have a king, but they did have a ruler. Moses was the first ruler. Then Joshua. The book of Judges names and tells the stories of many of these rulers over the Israelites.
  - Samuel sometimes gets called a prophet, but he was also a ruler over the people of Israel.
  - The story we're going to read now is about how the people of Israel decided they wanted to be a country and be like the other people around them and have a king.

## **READ** 1 Samuel 8:1-22

8 When Samuel became old, he made his sons judges over Israel. 2 The name of his firstborn son was Joel, and the name of his second, Abijah; they were judges in Beer-sheba. 3 Yet his sons did not follow in God's way, but turned aside for money; they took bribes and undermined justice.

4 So all the elders of Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah, 5 and said to Samuel, "You are old and your sons do not follow God like you do; appoint for us, then, a king to govern us, like other nations." 6 But when they said, "Give us a king to govern us," Samuel was displeased. So Samuel prayed to the Lord, 7 and the Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to the voice of the people in all that they say to you; for they have not rejected *you*, but they have rejected *me* from being king over them. 8 Just as they have done to me, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. 9 Now then, listen to their voice; however—you shall solemnly warn them, and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them."

10 So Samuel reported all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. 11 Samuel told them, "These will be the ways of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and make them into soldiers and servants. 13 He will take your daughters to be beauticians and cooks and bakers. 14 He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards. 15 He will take one-tenth of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to the people he likes better than you, like his officers. 16 He will take your best servants, and the best of your cattle and donkeys. 17 You will be like slaves to your king. 18 And in that day you will cry out to God because of your king, whom you have chosen for yourselves; but the Lord will not answer you in that day." 19 But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel; they said, "No! We are determined to have a king over us, 20 so that we also may be like other nations, and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles." 21 When Samuel had heard all the words of the people, he repeated them in prayer, asking what he should do. 22 The Lord said to Samuel, "Listen to their voice and set a king over them."

## **ASK**

- In verse 6, Samuel is displeased. In verse 7, from God's response, it sounds like Samuel is displeased because the people are replacing him. But God says that's not the case. Who does God say is being replaced as king? (that God is being replaced)
- Why do the people want a king? (verse 5 because Samuel's sons are corrupt; to be like other nations; verse 20: to have someone govern them and lead them into battles)
- What does God say will be the "consequences" of the choice of replacing God with a human king? (verses 11 – 18)
- Are you surprised that God lets them make this choice?
- In verse 18, why would the people cry out to God (because they would realize that God is a better king than their king)
- What do you think – Did the Israelites make the better choice? Why/Why not?

## TELL

- So that story helps us to see how, as humans, we sometimes replace God with a human.
- Now we're going to watch a clip where just the opposite happens: A human replaces what humans do with God.
- Let's see what happens.
- But first some quick background: The main character, Bruce, is a tv journalist and just found out on air that he didn't get a promotion. Bruce then acted badly on live tv in response to this news. The clip starts with Bruce being fired from his job at the tv station.

## WATCH clip of Bruce Almighty

## ASK

- So who fired Bruce? (Humans)
- Who beat Bruce up? (Humans)
- Who peed on his tv? (the dog)
- Who's not ok with his mediocre job, apartment, and life? (Bruce)
- So even though humans and the dog are the ones doing things to Bruce, who does Bruce think is at fault? (Bruce thinks it is God's fault)
- Do you think Bruce's experiences are similar to verses 11 – 18 (like having things taken away, crying out in anger/anguish, etc)?
- If God were King of those other people in the movie and of Bruce, do you think Bruce would have had those same experiences? (most likely not)
- But yet Bruce blames God...what is Bruce not understanding? (that humans are the ones in charge, not God – God is not in charge because God allows us to make that choice).

## TELL

- In the scripture story, the Israelites want a human to be king over them instead of God.
- In the movie, Bruce *thinks* God is responsible (like a king would be), but it is really human actions that are making Bruce miserable.
- In order for God to be in charge, we have to choose to let God be in charge.
- This means we choose to seek God's guidance and then we choose to do what we understand God is calling us to do.
- Maybe we don't want to find out what God might ask us to do because we're afraid God would ask us to do something we really don't want to or couldn't do.
- But both the scripture story and the Bruce Almighty clip shows us that the alternative to God being King is that other human beings become King in place of God. This alternative often then results in a life that is...mediocre at best.

...if there's time

**Journal** (write about one or more of the following...)

- Do I blame God for anything? If so, what?
  - If I think about today's lesson, is God to blame for these things I wrote down or am I putting humans as king in place of God.
- What are some areas in my life where I am king?
  - What are some areas in my life where adults in my life are king?
  - Of these listed areas, what are some areas in my life that I would like to have God be my king instead?