

Aim: To consider how the things around you influence you.

Resource: Great Stories for Kids, Volume 3 by Jerry D. Thomas, © 1999, Pacific Press Publishing Association, p. 79-112 "The Mystery of the Missing Reindeer." This story has 5 excellent points for avoiding trouble with friends. I recommend you have the book available to summarise the story or at least its 5 points for this lesson.

Have you ever wondered why the Israelites didn't obey God all the time? Any ideas?

It's really easy for us when we are reading about them to think that they were very stupid for forgetting so soon, and to say "If I had been an Israelite, I would have followed God, and listened to Moses."

(Note to teacher: Exodus 7:7 says Moses was 80 when they left Egypt; therefore the Israelites had been slaves for more than 80 years. Ex 1:6 says Joseph and his brothers all died in Egypt. Moses was the son of Amram, the son of Kohath, the son of Levi, a half-brother to Joseph)

Moses was 80 years old when they left Egypt, and the Israelites were already slaves when he was born. So all the children, the young people, and most, if not all, of the adults had spent their entire lives in Egypt.

Maybe they played with the Egyptian children; they saw the Egyptians worshiping their strange god-statues that often had a human body with the head of an animal, like the cat, cow, hawk, ram, bull, lion, crocodile and many more. Have you seen pictures of Egypt? (See <http://www.historyembalmed.org/egyptian-gods>)

Many of the Israelites had forgotten about the God of Abraham; they hadn't known Joseph, they'd forgotten how God led them to Egypt during the famine. And then they were busy all the time, working as slaves for the Egyptians. It's possible that many of them were not taught about God as babies or children; they didn't grow up learning about and obeying God.

Many of them probably didn't have a personal relationship with God, they were just following Moses, and so when they had problems, they immediately complained to Moses.

Did you know that the things you learn as a child will affect you for the rest of your life?

Read Proverbs 22:6 (Train a child...)

This verse is very important; the things that happen to you as a child, the things that you see, hear and do, all affect who you will become as an adult. That's not to say that an adult can't change – but it is a lot harder.

Have you ever heard of the saying "garbage-in-garbage-out"?

Everything you read, you see or hear, goes into your mind, even if you know it's not true, your brain still remembers it.

Have you ever found that when you try to forget something you can't stop thinking about it?

When you put "garbage" into your brain, by watching things that are untrue, violent, mean, bad, or things of Satan, it affects your brain and will eventually make "garbage" come out. – Like the Israelites not trusting God and complaining.

Are there things that your parents won't let you watch, listen to, or do? What reason do they give you?

Read Philippians 4:8 (Whatever is pure...)

Whenever we do something or watch or listen to something, we should ask ourselves, "What would Jesus think about this? Would Jesus watch it?" And if we avoid the "garbage" and only put good stuff into our brains – then we will have a lot less "garbage" and a lot more goodness in our lives. It will be a lot easier to be more like Jesus.

What about your friends? Would the things they do and influence you to do, be considered pure or garbage?

At the beginning of this term you may have read the story from Great Stories for Kids Volume 3 by Jerry D. Thomas, ©1999, Pacific Press Publishing Association, "The Mystery of the Missing Reindeer." – The steps in this story can help you have a positive influence on your friends; helping you to keep your life and what you see, hear and do pure.