

Jotham vs. Abimelech | Judges 9

Abimelech hired a worthless men to kill his brothers and make himself “king”. Abimelech is like the selfish loves we have from birth that try to rule over our lives. Selfish loves find support from selfish ideas. For example, if we want something badly we may make up reasons why it’s okay to have it. Jotham, Abimelech’s brother who spoke the parable of the trees, is like our conscience. Conscience is the noble truths from the Word that guide our actions.



Selfish feelings and thoughts try to overthrow true ideas, just as Abimelech got rid of his brothers. They may suggest that a true idea is not true, or that we should trust our gut-instincts and not think too much. This activ-

ity explores the conflict between conscience and selfish impulses.

Materials Needed

Jotham vs. Abimelech Scenarios

Directions

1. Choose one student to be Jotham (conscience) and one to be Abimelech (selfishness).
2. A parent or teacher chooses one *Jotham vs. Abimelech Scenario* to read aloud, e.g. You see a cookie sitting on a counter.
3. Invite “Abimelech” to give a selfish response to a question, e.g. “Nobody will know if I eat this cookie.”
4. Invite “Jotham” to counter with a response from truth, e.g. “That cookie does not belong to me, I should leave it where it is.”
5. Encourage “Jotham” and “Abimelech” to give at least 3 different selfish and true responses to each scenario. Discuss as a group.
6. Select a different scenario and repeat the activity. If you are working with a group, choose different students to be “Jotham” and “Abimelech”.
7. *Option:* For active students, try playing this as an arm or thumb-wrestling activity. The idea would not be to wrestle based on strength, as is usually the case, but based on whichever idea is uppermost in the conversation at that time. When “Jotham” is talking, he is “winning”. When “Abimelech” is talking, he is “winning”. This will help bring home the inner struggle we experience in our minds during these situations.

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These scenarios are examples of common situations people face. A teacher or student will choose one scenario to read aloud. A student acting as “Jotham” (conscience) and a student acting as “Abimelech” (selfishness) will give a response to the situation. Continue to give responses at least three times for each scenario. Not all situations are clear-cut. To think more deeply, ask the questions conscience helps us answer—”Is this true, kind and useful?”

1. You see a cookie sitting on the counter. Nobody is around.
2. You find a lot of money in a public place.
3. You’re out for a walk and feel too lazy to put your apple core in the trash.
4. You’ve run out of time to write a required poem for homework. You see a poem in a book you could copy and hand in.
5. You are in a rush to get to school. Your mother insists you brush your teeth before going. You put toothpaste in your mouth so if your mom checks she will smell the toothpaste.
6. You accidentally let a dog outside. An adult asks angrily who let the dog escape.
7. Your parent asks if you’ve done all your homework. You haven’t, but you’re doing something fun and don’t want to stop.
8. A friend has done something stupid that he’s embarrassed about. You think it’s funny and want to tell your other friends.
9. You are told to clean up a mess in your room. A friend invites you to do something.
10. Something exciting happened. You want to tell your friends. They are too loud and won’t let you talk.
11. Someone took something of yours without asking.
12. You are first in line. Someone cuts in front of you.
13. It’s your turn to help with the dishes.
14. You forgot to do your homework. Your teacher asks you where it is.