

Initiative or Passivity

Two Lessons in the “Character Building from the Bible” Series of Good Work Habits
Developed by Every Child Ministries, a Christian mission for the forgotten children of
Africa

Definitions:

Initiative (the positive character trait) is seeing a problem or an opportunity and doing all you can about it as God enables you. In other words, it is always actively looking for opportunities to do something positive and then using the opportunities God gives you.

Passivity (the opposite negative character trait) is the habit of not looking for opportunities or seeing problems as unsolvable obstacles that you can do nothing about. It is the habit of not doing anything to use opportunities and not doing anything to solve problems.

Classroom posters to show what this means:

Work pro-actively.

Be a self-starter.

See what needs to be done and do it without being told to do so.

Make yourself useful in every situation.

Look for ways to do good and do it!

Bible Memory Verse for these two lessons on Initiative:

Galatians 6:10 “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.”

Gal 6:10 (NKJV)”

Ephesians 5:16 “Redeeming the time, because the days are evil.”

Eph 5:16 (NKJV)

Song to go with these lessons: (Listen to the tune on cassette tape)

Want to be a big winner? Well—

IN-ITI-ATIVE (3 times)

Initiative wins every time!

Look around. What needs to be done? (3 times)

Just get busy and do it!

Initiative! (Shout)

Don't wait now. Don't wait to be told.

Don't wait to be begged. You might get too old.

You can see what to do now

Just open your eyes

Initiative wins every time.

Initiative! (Shout)

Lesson 1 King David Looks for Ways to Help Build the Temple

Bible Story from 1 Chronicles ch 17, ch 22, 28:11-12, 2 Chronicles 2:1, 5, 3:2, 5:1, 7:1.

Lesson Aim: At the conclusion of this lesson my students will know that David did all He could to prepare to build a Great Temple for the glory of God. In the same way, God wants us to look for opportunities to do good and use every opportunity He gives us.

Introduction:

Story: Kotoko dreamed of being a football star. He liked to play football, and he was very good. He was so good that a football recruiter heard about. The recruiter worked for a big university. His job was to find young people who were very good at football and who also worked hard in school and in life. He had the authority to offer such young people a scholarship. This meant they would play for university football team, and they would go to university—for free! What an opportunity for Kotoko! This was his big chance!

The recruiter came to Kotoko's town. He watched Kotoko play football. He agreed that he was very good. The next day he went to talk to Kotoko's teachers and to watch him in school. He asked the teachers how hard Kotoko worked in school. They had to hang their heads. They could not think of a good answer to give. The truth was, Kotoko did not make much effort in school.

The recruiter decided to watch Kotoko at home. He came to Kotoko's house as a guest. Kotoko still did not know he was a recruiter for the University. The recruiter watched Kotoko with his family. All the other family members were working hard to prepare the meal, but Kotoko did not offer to help. When he dropped something on the floor, he did not try to pick it up himself. Instead he ordered his little brother to do it.

The next day Kotoko found out that the visitor was a recruiter. He was very excited. He felt sure he was going to get a scholarship. But the recruiter left that afternoon without offering him a scholarship. He never did get to go to University. He got angry at the recruiter, so he never even finished secondary school. He never became a football star. He felt angry about that, so he refused to do anything. He never got a good job. He was poor his whole life. Kotoko always felt he had been cheated. But had he been cheated, or did he cheat himself?

Transition to the Bible Story: Kotoko's story reminds me of a man in the Bible who had a big ambition. He wasn't able to do the thing he wanted to do, but his reaction was very different from Kotoko's. This man was King David, and we find his story in the Bible in 1 Chronicles ch. 17.

Main Points in the Bible Story:

Character Building from the Bible Lesson:
Initiative or Passivity?



1. David wanted to build a house for God. 1 Chronicles 17:1

- He wasn't just sitting around waiting for something to happen. He was thinking of what he could do to bring honor to God. He had a good idea—build a beautiful Temple to honor God.

2. At first Nathan the prophet (his spiritual advisor) thought it was a good idea. 1 Chronicles 17:2

(Action: Have everyone shake their heads “Yes.”)

3. That night God told Nathan He did not want David to do this. 1 Chronicles 17:3-6

- This must have been a disappointment, but God had a reason that we will learn later. Often in life we face disappointments and setbacks even when we are trying to do the right thing.

(Action: Have everyone shake their heads “No” and say “No, not you!”)

4. God told Nathan to tell David that He (God) would build a house for him (David) (meaning a family) 17:7-11, especially the end of verse 10.

- David's family would be the key in eventually fulfilling his dream.

(Action: Repeat rhythmically with dancing, “You won't build a house for Me. I will build a house for you. It will be a family!”)

5. God said David's son would build the Temple for God 17:12

- David would not build the Temple, but his son would build it.

(Action: Repeat rhythmically like rap: “When I build you a family, your son will build a house for Me.”)

6. David responded by worshipping God and accepting His decision. 17:19-20

(Action: Have all the students bow as if in prayer, saying “OK, Lord, whatever You say.”)

7. Even though David could not build the Temple, he looked for ways to help. He prepared many wonderful materials so that his son Solomon could build it. 1 Chr. 22:2-5, 28:10.

- He had stones cut for the Temple (22:2), had nails, doors and other hardware made (verse 3), cut lumber (verse 4), and made abundant preparations (verse 5).

(Action: Divide students into three groups. One pretends they are cutting stones. The second pretends they are sawing lumber. The third pretends they are making preparations by storing up the things David has made for the Temple.)

8. David found other ways to help. He helped by encouraging his son Solomon to build it. 1 Chr. 22:6-19. He received the plans from God and gave them to his son Solomon. 1 Chronicles 28:11-12.

- He shared his vision for a magnificent Temple with his son Solomon, explained why he could not build it (he was a man of war, but God said His house should be made by a man of peace). He charged his son to build the Temple.

(Action: Repeat rhythmically: “I couldn’t do it, but you, my son, do it!” You might also have two students act out this part, one being David on his deathbed and the other Solomon as a young man.)

9. David’s dream came true. After his death, Solomon used the materials his father had prepared to build a magnificent Temple for God. 2 Chronicles 2:1, 5, 3:2, 5:1, 7:1.

- Solomon built the Temple and finished it.
- He prayed to dedicate it, and the glory of God filled the Temple.

(Action: Have students repeat rhythmically: “The Temple was amazing! Wow!” Action: Have students wiggle their fingers down through the air to show the glory of God filling the Temple.)

Points to Re-emphasize as you close the story:

- David took initiative in seeing a good thing to do and trying to do it. He desired to build a beautiful Temple to honor God.
- However, God said David’s son would be the one to build it. This was a setback.
- David still showed initiative rather than passivity. He did all he could to prepare for the Temple.
- The Temple was built after David’s death using the materials he prepared for it. His dream came true.
- God wants us to use initiative—to look for good things to do and do all we can to achieve them.

Learning Activity (Game):

Give several students a card to show the class. On the front of each card is a picture of a student. On the back is a story to read to the class. The student may read the story or may hold it up for you to read it. The story tells whether the student shows initiative or passivity. If they vote that he shows initiative, they shout in unison, “Initiative! Initiative! Winner! Winner! Winner!” If they vote he shows passivity, They chant in unison, “Passive! Loser! Woe is me! Nothing much good ever happens to me!” (The answers are in a small envelope at the bottom of each card.) If the student is passive, they should tell what the student can do to show more initiative.

Stories for the cards:

Matilda would love to be a good cook like her mother. She watches her mother prepare the family’s meals, but she never offers to help.

(Passive. She can develop her cooking skills by showing initiative and offering to help her mother prepare the meals.)

Kwame wants to be a diplomat or work for the United Nations. He found out that a teacher in town knows French. Every chance Kwame has he visits the teacher and begs him to teach him a few phrases. Even when the teacher asked him to fetch firewood in exchange for the lessons, Kwame did it gladly.

(Initiative! Kwame will be a winner because he is using the opportunities he has to learn as much French as he can. Later on, when he has a chance to take French in school, he will do well because he started early to learn what he could. Knowing French will help Kwame get into university and someday get the job he wants.)

As **Adjo** walks to school every day, she notices all kinds of trash lying on the ground. Adjo never bothers to pick it up because it isn’t her job.

(Passive. Adjo’s village never gets any neater because like Adjo, everyone else also feels it isn’t their job to pick up trash. Worse, she is developing a habit of looking at a need and walking by without doing anything about it. Adjo only does what she has to—nothing extra. Nothing extra good ever happens to her either.)

Adjei finds maths challenging and difficult. It takes him a long time to do his assignments, but he always completes them and does his very best. He refuses to copy someone else’s work because he wants to learn to understand what he is doing.

(Initiative! Adjei never found maths easy, but he passed his exam because he had worked so diligently instead of taking the easy way out by cheating. Adjei was able to go on in school and his classmates respected him because they knew he was not a cheater.)

Mary wants to be a writer. She is trying to prepare for that by reading all the books she can. She does not have enough money to buy books of her own, but she borrows books from teachers and community leaders. She is always careful to take good care of them and to return them on time.

(Initiative! Mary is showing initiative by doing what she can to prepare herself to become a writer. She is becoming familiar with different writing styles, good grammar, and different ways to present ideas. Her vocabulary is growing through her reading. She will be ready at the first opportunity to learn how to write.)

Application:

Ask the students, what is one way you can show initiative at school? At home? At church? This week, look for one way to show initiative. Next week, I will ask you how you showed initiative in the past week.

Invitation (optional, according to situation):

Do you know that God saw that we were in a big problem because of our sin, and He took the initiative to save us? The Bible says we all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). There is nothing we can do to save ourselves. God took the initiative to save us. He sent His own Son from heaven into the world to become our Savior. His Son Jesus Christ died for our sins and rose again triumphantly from the dead. Many people saw Him for 40 days. Then He went back to His Father in heaven. He's alive today. He can save you today if you will call on Him and ask Him to be your Savior. If you've never done that before and today you are ready, just pray a prayer something like this, and mean it with all your heart:

Father in heaven, I believe You sent Your Son Jesus to be my Savior. Jesus, thank You for dying to take away my sins. Thank You for rising from the dead. I ask You now to be my Savior. I ask You to come into my heart and life. Take away my sins. Give me new life in You. Thank You for saving me just now. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Lesson 2 A Sick Woman Looks for a Way to Find Healing

Bible Story from Luke 8:43-48

Lesson Aim: At the conclusion of this lesson my students will know that the woman with the issue of blood was healed because she proactively sought Jesus rather than passively waiting for something good to come to her. In the same way, God is pleased when we do not passively wait for good to happen, but proactively look for opportunities to make it happen.

Introduction:

Emmanuel's family was very poor. It was hard for them to find enough to eat. All of Emmanuel's friends were from poor families, too. Every day he listened to them

Character Building from the Bible Lesson:
Initiative or Passivity?



complain. Nothing good ever happens to us! We don't have enough food to eat! Why doesn't God love us? Why doesn't He bless us like other people. Emmanuel wondered a lot about that, too.

Transition to the Bible Story: Emmanuel's story reminds me of a woman in the Bible. We read about her in Luke ch. 8. The Bible doesn't give her name, but we do know she had been sick for a very long time—for 12 long years.

Main Points in the Bible Story:

This story is short and can be effectively taught using the 4 Point Active Method: Read, Question, Act Out, and Sing. Do these four for each of the 7 points. (Readings given are from New King James Version).

1. The woman had an issue of blood that couldn't be stopped. Luke 8:43a
READ: Luke 8:43a "Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years"

QUESTION:

Who was sick? (A woman.)

What was the problem? (A flow of blood that couldn't be stopped)

How long had she been sick? (12 years)

ACT OUT:

The students should pretend they are weak and feel sick. They should complain loudly, "12 years I've been sick!"

SING:

"A woman had been sick for a long, long time. She felt so very bad."

2. She had used up all her money on doctors but no one could help her. 8:43b
READ: Luke 8:43b "who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any."

QUESTION:

What was all gone? (her livelihood or her money)

What had she spent it all on? (doctors)

How much help had she found? (No help. She could not be healed by any.)

ACT OUT

The students should pretend they are paying one doctor after another. Then they should open their hands to show that their money is all gone.

SING:

"She paid many doctors till her money was all gone. Oh, oh, oh!"

3. The woman came up quietly behind Jesus and touched the border of his garment. 8:44. She showed initiative to press through the crowd to get to Jesus.

READ: Luke 8:44 (She) “came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped.”

QUESTION:

Where was she in relation to Jesus? (behind him)

Where did she touch Him? (on the border or hem of His garment)

What happened when she touched Jesus? (the flow of blood stopped. She was healed.)

How fast did it happen? (Immediately when she touched Him.)

ACT OUT:

Let two students act out the woman touching Jesus and being healed.

SING:

“She touched Jesus’ garment, and whoom! she was healed!”

4. When she touched Jesus’ garment, immediately she was healed. 8:44
5. Jesus stopped and asked who touched him. 8:45-46

READ: Luke 8:45-46

45 And Jesus said, "Who touched Me?" When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, "Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?' " 46 But Jesus said, "Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me."

QUESTION:

Did Jesus know she had touched His garment? (Yes. He asked who touched Him.)

Why do you think everybody denied it? (There was a big crowd around Him and lots of people might have touched Him.)

Who spoke up and said what they all were thinking? (Peter)

How did Jesus know somebody touched Him? (He perceived power going out from Him).

ACT OUT:

Let a group of students act this out. One acts the part of Jesus. Many others are pressing around in and bumping into Him. In the midst of them, the woman reaches out and lightly touches the hem of His garment. Jesus turns around and says, “Who touched me?”

SING:

“Who touched Me? Somebody touched Me. Power is gone out of Me!”

6. The women fell down before Jesus and told how she pressed in to touch Him and how she was healed. 8:47

READ:

Luke 8:47 “Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately.”

QUESTION:

Why did the woman come forward and confess? (She saw that she was not hidden.)

Did she feel confident or scared? (Scared. She came trembling.)

What position did she take before Jesus? (She fell down before Him.)

What two things did she tell? (1. The reason she touched Him and 2. How she was healed immediately.)

Did she do this privately or publicly? (Publicly. In the presence of all the people.)

ACT OUT:

Have all the children act out bowing down before Jesus. Have them repeat, "I touched You, Jesus, and I was healed."

SING:

"I touched Jesus, and I was healed."

7. Jesus commended her faith and the initiative she showed. 8:48**READ:**

Luke 8:48 And He said to her, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

QUESTION:

How did Jesus address her? (He called her Daughter.)

What encouraging words did He give her? (Be of good cheer. Your faith has made you well. Go in peace.)

How did the woman show initiative? (By pressing into the crowd to touch Jesus)

Did Jesus approve or disapprove of the initiative she showed? (He approved. He said it showed her faith.)

How was she helped through the initiative she showed? (She was healed.)

ACT OUT:

Repeat, holding up one finger for each phrase Jesus said:

1. Daughter,
2. Be of good cheer.
3. Your faith has made you well.
4. Go in peace.

SING:

She took the initiative, and Jesus made her well!

Points to Re-emphasize as you close the story:

The woman took the initiative to press in to touch Jesus. Her initiative was rewarded. Jesus healed her and commended what she had done.

Application:

What is a need in your life? How will you take the initiative to do something about it? (Listen to their ideas.) If they are slow in giving ideas, give an idea of your own for an area in which YOU need to show more initiative.

Invitation: (optional, according to situation):

Aren't you glad that God took the initiative to save us? He knew there is nothing we can do to save ourselves. He took the initiative to save us. He sent His own Son from heaven into the world to become our Savior. His Son Jesus Christ died on the cross to

pay the punishment for all our sins. He didn't stay dead. He rose again triumphantly from the dead. Many people saw Him alive. Then His work on earth was done, so He went back to His Father in heaven. He's alive today. He can save you today if you will call on Him and ask Him to be your Savior. If you've never done that before and today you are ready, just pray a prayer something like this, and mean it with all your heart:

Father in heaven, I believe You sent Your Son Jesus to be my Savior. Jesus, thank You for dying to take away my sins. Thank You for rising from the dead. I ask You now to be my Savior. I ask You to come into my heart and life. Take away my sins. Give me new life in You. Thank You for saving me just now. In Jesus' name. Amen.