

## LESSON SNAPSHOT

**BOTTOM LINE:**

Choose God's way, not your own.

**OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn that we are wise to do things God's way.

**KEY PASSAGE:**

Numbers 22:21-38, Balaam's Donkey Speaks

**MEMORY VERSE:**

*"Lord, show me your ways. Teach me how to follow you." Psalm 25:4 (NirV)*

**SUMMARY:**

Balaam had done things his way instead of God's way. In order to get his attention, God sent an angel to block his way, and gave his donkey the ability to talk. In the end, Balaam realized that God's way was the only way.

**SIMPLE PRAYER:**

*Dear God,*

*Open our eyes so we will follow your way.*

*In Jesus' name,*

*Amen*

## LARGE GROUP LESSON

### **BOTTOM LINE:**

Choose God's way, not your own.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

Kids will learn that we are wise to do things God's way.

### **KEY PASSAGE:**

Numbers 22:21-38, Balaam's Donkey Speaks

### **INTRO:**

Who has a pet at home? Who has a dog or a cat or any other type of animal? Now, who here talks to their pet on a regular basis? Who has conversations with their pet? Maybe the dog doesn't talk back. I HOPE your dog doesn't talk back. But you still talk to your pet as if he or she were human.

You're not alone if you talk to your pets. All pet lovers do it. As a matter of fact, all caretakers do it. Go to the zoo some time and watch a trainer working with a tiger or an elephant. Not only will you hear the trainers speaking to the animals by name, you'll see the animals respond to their names when called!

Animals can't speak words back, but they understand a great deal of what we have to say. Dogs know what the word "No!" means, and most of them, if they are obedient, will listen that word. Dogs can even communicate with us. Some dog owners know when their dog is hungry, or needs to go outside, or wants a treat, just by the way they bark.

Some very special dogs have other ways to communicate with their trainers. Seeing-eye dogs are taught behaviors that can communicate dangers to their owners. If it's not safe for a person to walk in a given direction, the dog will either block its owner's path with its body or find another way around. These animals cannot speak audibly, but they are able to communicate danger to their owners and keep them from going down an unsafe path.

Today we're going to meet a donkey who could speak out loud. This donkey tried using non-verbal cues to keep his master from getting hurt, but when the master became angry with the donkey, the animal finally spoke up. His master was not physically blind, but he was blind to the danger that his donkey warned him about. It's a warning we all need to hear if we want to live a godly life!

# LARGE GROUP LESSON

## READ NUMBERS 22:21-38

### MAIN POINT:

Balaam was on his way to make some money. He had been hired to curse the children of Israel on behalf of an evil king. We don't know how much Balaam knew about the one true God before he left home, but Balaam got a powerful lesson in choosing to obey God. The Israelites were God's children, and God was not about to let someone call curses down on His people.

It took a talking donkey to set Balaam straight and spare his life. When Balaam saw that angel, he felt terrible not only for hurting his donkey, but for choosing greed over obedience. Balaam went to meet the king who hired him, but instead of cursing Israel, he blessed them repeatedly. He chose obedience to God, and God used him to bless Israel!

### DRIVE IT HOME:

The Bible spells out for us very clearly how God wants us to live. God gave us the Ten Commandments to teach us how to avoid sin and how to please God. He gave us an example in His Son Jesus of how we can live a life that blesses others. Yet even church-going, Bible-reading believers choose to follow their own path rather than stay obedient to God.

Some choose because they think they know better than God. They believe they are strong enough to handle temptations God says we must avoid. Some choose because they are greedy. They want money or power or possessions. They choose to please themselves rather than please God.

Balaam certainly fell into that latter category. He chose money over obeying God, and it nearly cost him his life. God went out of his way to stop Balaam and make an example of Him. God is hoping we will learn a lesson from Balaam's story. Rather than grabbing the gold and doing the wrong thing, God wants us to choose His way instead.

It's not easy to stay true to God's Word. We don't have talking donkeys or sharp-eyed companion animals to block our paths when we take a wrong turn. But the more we spend time reading the Bible and praying through the Holy Spirit, the easier it will be to choose the right path. Walking with God on a daily basis is the best way to insure we don't choose the wrong road. We will know the right choices to make because the Holy Spirit will be our guide.

It shouldn't take a talking donkey to set us straight. A daily walk with the Holy Spirit is all we need. Let's choose God's way instead of our own. Let's choose to honor God instead of satisfying ourselves. Let's be a blessing to others and follow after Christ.

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (K-2ND)

### ICEBREAKER:

Have you ever ridden on a horse or donkey?

### MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

**Psalm 25:4**

See who can recite the memory verse in a donkey voice.

### SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Who can do the best impression of a donkey sound?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

**Read Exodus 16:1-17**

Where was Balaam going?

What did the donkey see that caused him to turn away?

What did the donkey tell Balaam?

What did Balaam do after he saw the angel?

Why is it important to choose God's way?

### SIMPLE PRAYER:

*Dear God,*

*Forgive us when we go our way. Help us get back on the right track.*

*In Jesus' name,  
Amen*

## SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION (3-5TH)

### ICEBREAKER:

Have you ever ridden on a horse or donkey?

### MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY:

**Psalm 25:4**

See who can recite the memory verse in a donkey voice.

### SMALL GROUP GAME/ACTIVITY:

Who can do the best impression of a donkey sound?

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

**Read Exodus 16:1-17**

Why did the donkey keep turning off the road?

Why did God send the angel to stop Balaam?

What did Balaam do after he saw the angel?

Why is it important to choose God's way?

How can we do better at choosing God's way so we will do the right thing?

### SIMPLE PRAYER:

*Dear God,*

*Forgive us when we go our way. Help us get back on the right track.*

*In Jesus' name,  
Amen*