**Topic: Contentment (Jealousy/Envy)**

**Bible Passage: Story of Naboth’s Vineyard - 1 Kings 21**

**Activity: The Bottomless Cup**

*Note: Before the activity, gather enough 16 oz. Styrofoam cups for each group to have 1. On each cup, create holes of varying sizes all around the sides and 1 large hold at the bottom.*

Break preteens into small groups (6-8 students). Give each group a plastic bin (shoe-box size or slightly larger) filled ¾ full with water, a small Dixie cup for each preteen, and a Styrofoam cup with the pre-punched holes. The game is that students must try to fill the cup with water from the plastic bin using only the Dixie cups. Give them a time limit for the activity and start the competition.

\**There will be no winner if the activity is prepared correctly. The holes should be large enough and numerous enough that the water continually flows out of the Styrofoam cup quicker than they can add water to it.*

**After the activity, say:** Did any of you get frustrated trying to fill these cups with water? *(Pause for responses)* What made it so difficult? *(Pause for responses)* I watched each group during the activity, and all of you kept adding water even though you knew there were holes. Why did you keep adding water? *(Pause for responses)*

In 1 Kings, we learn about King Ahab. Now, as King, Ahab probably had lots of stuff. He had the nicest clothes, the nicest house, the nicest servants, and probably the best of the best land. If there was anyone who should be happy with what they had, it would be Ahab! But for some reason, all that Ahab had was not enough. He wanted more, and he just wouldn’t be content until he had it.

Living near Ahab was a man named Naboth. Naboth was the proud owner of a nice vineyard, and this particular vineyard had caught the eye of King Ahab. Open your Bibles to 1 Kings 21 and read this with me.

**Read 1 Kings 21:1-16**

Can you believe that? The king was so jealous and upset that he went to his room and cried! He wouldn’t even come out for dinner! I bet none of you have ever EVER acted like that, right? We all have! We have all had a moment were we thought we just had to have the next best thing, and we acted like babies when we couldn’t have it! The truth is that we should learn to be CONTENT with what we have. Being content means that we find ways to be happy and take joy in the things that we have, and we don’t’ worry about the things that we *don’t* have.

What if your parents gave you a brand new cell phone? Would you be proud of it and want to show your friends? *(Pause for responses)* What if you went to show your best friend the new phone, and then you found out that her new phone was even *newer and even cooler?* Would you still be proud of your new phone?

Let’s say you got a brand new Xbox game, but your friend got a game with even better graphics or an even cooler storyline? Suddenly, you’re not so proud of that game, are you?

There is a great risk that comes with wanting what other people have. And there is an even greater risk in thinking that we can achieve happiness by getting more stuff. Ahab’s desire to have Naboth’s vineyard led to the murder of an innocent man. His actions had some really bad consequences. Listen to the rest of the story.

**Read 1 Kings 21:17-19**

**(*If you teach older students, you may read the remainder of 1 Kings 21)***

Lucky for him, Ahab repented and asked God for forgiveness, so God spared him this awful punishment. But even still, his desire to have more and more caused many people to sin and caused Naboth to be murdered. There are dangers and consequences that comes with being envious and wanting more stuff. But there is joy and peace that comes with being content. Listen to what Paul says in Philippians:

**Read Philippians 4:11b-12a**

God wants us to be content with all the amazing things He’s freely given us. Here are four points that can help you understand and remember *CONTENTMENT*:

* Contentment is all about looking at what you do have instead of what you don’t.
* God owns it all and everything we have comes from Him.
* When we see everything we have as a gift from God, we really start to appreciate it.
* And when we appreciate what we have, others will see the difference in us.

**Break into Small Groups and discuss the following questions:**

* Do you feel being content is a better way to live than feeling jealous or discontent? What are some reasons why you feel that way?
* What are some affects of feeling discontent or jealous? How can it effect your family, friends, others, relationship to God?
* Does being content mean never working hard to get something you really want or never working hard to get better? What’s the difference in these situations?
* What are some examples that you can think of when someone showed contentment?
* Read the following verses and discuss what they say about contentment:

**1 Timothy 6:6-7**

**Hebrews 13:5**

**Proverbs 23:17-18**

**Proverbs 14:30**

**Matthew 6:19-21**