

Lesson 4 / June 22, 2008

He Who Dies With the Most Toys . . . Wins, or Loses?

for use as

STEP 1**Lesson 4
Focus:**Learn to be happy with
what you have.**Lesson 4
Bible Basis:**Exodus 20:15, 17;
Luke 12:13-21, 33-34

This lesson will engage students in a debate about some commonly held perceptions in today's world, particularly in the U.S.: How do we learn to be content with what we have, when we are constantly bombarded with messages telling us we need more?

Supplies (optional)

Internet connection to watch a Youtube video found at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egi6HnAsxZo&feature=related>, or DVD player and DVD of the 2004 movie, *Super Size Me*.

No matter how you measure it, the United States is one of the wealthiest countries in the world. And everywhere we look, we're hit with the message that we need more—more toys, more food, more and nicer clothes, cars, you name it. Let's take a little quiz (no, it's not graded) to see what facts we know about advertising.

Discuss:

- **How many TV commercials do you think the average American child sees each year?** (40,000)
- **How many ads would you guess are in four hours of television, on average?** (100)
- **What was the cost for a 30-second commercial during the Super Bowl in 2008?** (\$2.7 million)
- **Multiple Choice:** How much money do American kids ages 4 to 12 spend in a year?
a) \$10 million; b) \$695,000; c) \$3 billion; or d) \$40 billion (d)
- **True or False:** Children who watch a lot of television eat more advertised food than kids who don't watch as much television. (True)
- **True or False:** Kid versions of adult magazines, such as *Sports Illustrated for Kids*, are forbidden from advertising adult products, such as minivans. (False)
- **To the average first grader, who is more recognizable, Ronald McDonald or Jesus?** (Ronald, according to the 2004 movie, *Super Size Me*.)

Lesson 4
Memory Verse

Keep your lives free
from the love of money
and be content with
what you have.
—Hebrews 13:5a

- **Why do you think that is?**
- **Do any of these answers surprise you? Why or why not?** (If you wish to show the clip from Super Size Me, do so now. The YouTube clip does not actually show Ronald McDonald, but students will be able to get the gist of the message.)

Today's Bible reading tells us we should not covet. Covet means to wish for something, to crave something, or to long for it.

Discuss:

- **What do you think is the message of advertisers for adults and kids today?**
- **Have you ever seen the bumper sticker that says, "He who dies with the most toys, wins"?**
- **What is your opinion of this saying?**

Let's continue to our Bible study part of the lesson and see if we can figure out what Jesus would think of this bumper sticker. Even if you haven't heard this part of the Bible before, you can probably imagine what Jesus will say. As we go through the story, think about how hard it is to keep from coveting in today's world, in the midst of all the advertising messages we see every day.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your *Upper Elementary Teacher's Guide*; your Step 4 appears below.)

For more information on the wealth of countries, see
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_\(PPP\)_per_capita](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_countries_by_GDP_(PPP)_per_capita);

for more on children and advertising, see
http://www.mediafamily.org/facts/facts_childadv.shtml

for information on the cost of a Super Bowl ad, see
seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/seahawks/2004148668_supernotes28.html.

For more on *Super Size Me*, see
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0390521>

Lesson 4 / June 22, 2008

He Who Dies With the Most Toys . . . Wins, or Loses?

for use as

STEP 4**Lesson 4
Focus:**Learn to be happy with
what you have.**Lesson 4
Bible Basis:**Exodus 20:15, 17;
Luke 12:13-21, 33-34**Supplies needed:**

- A number of ordinary school supplies, such as a pencil, scissors, a piece of chalk, and a paper clip

Divide students into small groups of 2-4. Each group will be given one of the school items.

You have just been given an amazing product—that is, a pencil, or a paper clip, or other school supply. Now, we're going to spend a few minutes creating our own commercials. I want you to imagine that this product is new, and it's your job to make everyone covet it. How will you do it? Come up with your pitch—your way of convincing your classmates that they must have this product. You may choose one person to be your spokesperson, or you may choose to put on a skit using your entire group. It's up to you. We'll view your commercials in a few minutes. Then we'll vote on which product we just must have.

After students have had some time to brainstorm and plan, bring them back together to present their commercials. After each commercial, ask the following questions:

- **What particular words did this group use to try to convince you that you had to have their item?**
- **Besides specific words, what other methods did the group use to persuade you?** (For example, is it something “cool” kids must have? Or perhaps only geeks use the “old” version of the paper clip.)
- **Which words and methods were most effective?**

After all commercials have been presented, ask:

- **Which commercial was the most convincing? Support your answer.**
- **What real life commercials and products can you think of that use the same methods your classmates just used?**
- **How does knowing about marketing tricks help you resist these commercials' messages?**

Lesson 4
Memory
Verse

Keep your lives free
from the love of money
and be content with
what you have.

—Hebrews 13:5a

Commercials are trying to convince you that their product is cool, or special, or fun. One way to fight this is to remember what things you already have in your life that are cool, special, and fun. Whether that's friends, or toys, or fun things you do with your family, chances are you already have the good things that commercials try to promise you. But it can be hard to remember the things you already have.

If we don't have God's help, do you think it's possible to not covet? Why or why not?

The truth is, without God's help, we can't keep from coveting. Everywhere we turn, we're bombarded with the message, buy, buy, buy! Even in the bathrooms of restaurants, for example, you'll often see ads. But Jesus tells us that we'll never find our treasure if it's buried in all this stuff of the world. So this week, let's try hard to remember the treasure that our Heavenly Father has for us—the gift of eternal life. Let's pray now, for help.

Heavenly Father, You have given us all the treasure we need, or should ever want. Help us each day to understand that true happiness comes only from Your gift, not from things that money can buy. Help us to be strong and smart when messages try to tell us we need to have things. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

For some ideas on how to help make kids savvy about advertisers' messages, see <http://www.caru.org/guidelines/parent.asp#5>.

(We are not affiliated with and do not endorse any website listed on these pages.)