This includes:
  1. Leader Preparation
  2. Lesson Guide

1. LEADER PREPARATION

LESSON OVERVIEW
Josiah was just a young boy when he became king. But when he realized how he and his people were not following God’s laws, he responded with humility and action. He worked hard to put an end to idol worship and bring about change, and he obeyed God no matter what other people thought.

LESSON OBJECTIVES
1. WHAT: The Bible reveals how Josiah followed God with all his heart, soul, and strength.
2. WHY: Josiah was a teenager when he took a stand for his beliefs, even when others didn’t—setting a model for our own students.
3. HOW: Students will see how Josiah can be an example to them for making a difference in their worlds.

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE
2 Kings 22:1-20; 23:1-3, 21-25

SECONDARY SCRIPTURES
James 2:14-26

TEACHING PREP
The short overview below is designed to help you prepare for your lesson. While you may not want to convey this information word-for-word with your teenagers, you’ll definitely want to refer to it as you lead.


Josiah was a very young boy when he became king; it was unusual. Both Josiah’s father and grandfather were corrupt kings; they didn’t fear God, and that led the people to idol worship.
But even at a young age, the Bible says, King Josiah did what was pleasing to God. He wanted to honor God.

As part of his clean-up effort in Jerusalem, Josiah led the charge to repair the Temple. In the process, the Book of the Law was found. When Josiah read it, he realized how far his people had fallen away from God. Josiah was broken and humbled. He immediately set about to lead the people to full obedience of all the Lord’s commands and laws. He destroyed anything that had to do with idol worship—he demolished altars, removed priests, and destroyed shrines.

The Bible says the people “pledged themselves to the covenant” of honoring God. Unfortunately, we later find out that the people were only following Josiah’s commands because he was king, but their hearts ultimately didn’t change. But God saw Josiah’s heart and willingness to take a stand for God and follow with his whole heart and honored him: “Never before had there been a king like Josiah, who turned to the Lord with all his heart and soul and strength, obeying all the laws of Moses. And there has never been a king like him since” (2 Kings 23:25).

Josiah is an easily overlooked example of a young person in the Bible who boldly and courageously stood up for God. Use this week’s lesson to spark thoughtful conversation among your students about how their age doesn’t limit them from following God’s truths and declaring their commitment to make a difference for God.

THE BEFORE & AFTER [OPTIONAL]

Text Message Questions

We’ve provided a couple of different text message questions to send out to your students prior to your meeting. Feel free to use one or both of the questions below. As with the rest of the curriculum, edit these questions to fit the needs of your ministry.

• What kind of kid were you at 8 years old? Share your answer tonight with the group.

• What’s it like to take a stand for your faith? Get ready for some great conversation tonight.
Dear parents,

We just finished week three of our “Unlikely Heroes” Bible study with a look at Josiah. He was a young guy when he became king. And even though earlier generations of his family did not honor God, Josiah chose to obey God with all of his heart, soul, and strength. When Josiah realized how he and the Israelites were sinning, he acted on this truth. He was willing to lead his people back to God, even though it was hard.

Here are some questions that you can use with your child this week to keep the conversation going at home:

- As a young person, what’s the hardest part of taking a stand for a cause? How might it actually be easier because you are younger?
- When have you stood up for a person or cause? What did you learn from that experience?
- What is one thing you can do this week to put your faith into action?

Have a faith-filled week!
GETTING THINGS STARTED [OPTIONAL]
Preview the following video for your group: youtube.com/watch?v=Xdek-PmAgnY. You will need an Internet connection and a computer or tablet to display the video for your participants.

Welcome your students and invite them into your meeting area. Open in prayer, and then show the video clip. Then ASK:

- What’s your reaction to this quote mentioned in the video: “We are too young to realize that certain things are impossible, so we will do them anyway”? Explain your answer.
- When he was 12 years old, Zach Hunter—the guy in this video—learned about modern-day slavery and decided to raise money to make a difference. What other young people have you heard about who have taken a stand for a cause? Share as many details as you can remember.
- As a young person, what’s the hardest part of taking a stand for a cause? How might it actually be easier because you are younger?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: Zach Hunter is a regular young guy who was willing to roll up his sleeves and take a stand for something he believed in. Age is not a big deal for God—he can work through students, young adults, old people, and anyone in between. God just wants our hearts to be right—that we want to obey him and stand up for him. As we’ll learn in our lesson today, Josiah was 8 years old when he became king and wanted to take a stand for God. You are not too young to make a difference.

TEACHING POINTS
The goal of the Teaching Points is to help students capture the essence of each lesson with more discussion and less lecture-style teaching. The main points we have chosen are (1) You are never too young to take your faith seriously, (2) You can choose your own spiritual future, no matter your family’s past, (3) You can follow God not just with your heart, but also with your actions, and (4) You can stand up for what you believe, even if it’s not easy.
Remember: All throughout these lessons, it’s up to you to choose (1) how many questions you use, and (2) the wording of the main points—keep ours, or change the wording to make it clearer for your audience.

Read 2 Kings 22:1-20 and 23:1-3, 21-25 together as a group. Consider dividing verses among your students so everyone has a chance to read.

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** The story of Josiah as king begins when he is just 8 years old. Yet he is willing to wholeheartedly follow God and to lead his people back to God, too.

1. **You are never too young to take your faith seriously**

**ASK:**
- What do you think is the earliest age someone can be serious about his or her faith? Why?
- Do you think you are too young to take your faith seriously yet? Why or why not?
- How much do you think God considers someone’s age when he calls that person to do his work?

**SAY SOMETHING LIKE:** Not only was Josiah very young when he became king, he also inherited a kingdom that was dishonest. The Bible tells us that Josiah’s family had turned away from God. But that didn’t stop Josiah from wanting to follow God. He made a decision to humble himself before God and obey God’s laws.

2. **You can choose your own spiritual future, no matter your family’s past**

**ASK:**
- Think about your parents or grandparents. If you’re willing, share what they believe about God or their involvement with church.
- When it comes to your beliefs, how important are your family’s beliefs?
- Why might it be tough to follow God if your family doesn’t?
- What are some specific examples in these verses of decisions Josiah made about his own spiritual future? Which example is most inspiring, and why?
SAY SOMETHING LIKE: God had changed Josiah’s heart. Josiah made a decision to do things differently than his father had. But it’s one thing to have good intentions and care about God and his ways. It’s another thing for Josiah to act on his faith. Josiah destroyed anything that had to do with idol worship, and he once again honored God through the Passover celebration, a festival reminding people of how God freed the Israelites from slavery. Good intentions weren’t enough—Josiah honored God in all he did. And God blessed Josiah.

3. You can follow God not just with your heart, but also with your actions

ASK:
- Think of the last time you messed up and sinned. Did it break you and motivate you to change? Why do you think you responded the way you did?
- Look at 2 Kings 22:11-13. What is your reaction to what Josiah did when he realized his people’s disobedience against God?
- Look at 2 Kings 22:19. Why do we need to follow God with both our heart and our actions?

SAY SOMETHING LIKE: When we read about people in the Bible, it can be easy to just hear the words and not really think about how the people really felt. If Josiah’s father and grandfather didn’t follow God, but Josiah did, it’s likely that many people in his family were upset or angry or maybe even against him. Yet Josiah was more concerned with honoring God than making anyone else happy.

4. You can stand up for what you believe, even if it’s not easy

ASK:
- When have you stood up for a person or cause? In that situation, were most people for you or your cause, or against you?
- What did you learn from that experience?
- What can make it hard for you to stand up for what you believe?
- When you think of all that Josiah did, what three words would you use to describe what it must have felt like for him?
God never told Josiah that obeying him would make life easy. Josiah likely faced some opposition—or at least angered some people—in his efforts to end idol worship and to put God first. But Josiah was willing to act on his faith, and to care most about what God thought.

**ADDITIONAL DISCUSSION** (optional)

**ASK:**
- Read James 2:14-26. How would you summarize this passage?
- How do you know what good deeds God wants you to do?
- Which is more important to God, faith or good deeds—or are they equally important? Explain.

**APPLICATION**

Ask students to form groups of two or three for these questions.

**ASK:**
- Would you say you are more concerned with following the crowd or obeying God? As you’ve gotten older, how has that changed?
- If you live out your faith at school and at home, how might your days look differently than they do now?
- What is one thing you can do this week to put your faith into action?

Bring everyone back together, and ask for volunteers to share answers to the previous questions, as time permits.
SUMMARY

End your lesson here. Provide your teenagers with a quick summary or take-home challenge based on (1) the content of this lesson, (2) the dialogue that took place during the lesson, (3) your understanding of the issues and struggles your teenagers are facing, and (4) the big picture of your youth ministry and what your leadership team wants accomplished with the teaching and discussion time.

FOR KEEPS [MEMORY VERSE]

Encourage and/or challenge your teenagers to memorize the verse below.

So you see, faith by itself isn’t enough. Unless it produces good deeds, it is dead and useless (James 2:17).