

Respecting Those in Authority

Quarter 12 • Lesson 7

Focus on Character Development

1. *Connecting:* Act as respect detectives.
2. *Teaching:* Listen to Bible verses about authority and hear what Jesus taught about honoring authority (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13; Romans 13:1; Ephesians 6:1–3; 1 Peter 2:13–14; Luke 20:20–26).
3. *Responding:* Talk about ways to respect those in authority and pray for leaders.

SUPPLIES

- Bible

Optional Supplies:

- Memory Verse Poster
- Old newspapers or magazines
- *The Action Bible*, pages 615–617
- Paper
- Crayons
- Pencils
- Student Pages

Teacher Devotion

*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities,
for there is no authority except that which God has established.
The authorities that exist have been established by God.*

Romans 13:1

We observe leaders we agree with and those we disagree with. It is easy to respect the leaders we agree with but not so easy to respect those we disagree with. Then we read this verse. God has placed people in authority, and He wants us to respect them even when we do not agree with them.

Who has God placed in authority in your life? This week, ask God to show you specific ways you can show respect for these people. If you struggle to respect a leader because of his decisions or actions, you can choose to show respect for his position. Choose not to gossip and complain about your leaders. Pray for each person in authority over you.

Family Connection: Let families know that this week their children are learning to respect those in authority. Encourage families to talk about ways they show respect to each of these people.

LESSON TIME

1. Connecting: Act as respect detectives.

Give each child a high five as he or she enters class. Ask the children the following questions.

- **Was it easy or hard to remember to use respectful words? Why?**

Allow 3–4 children to share.

- **Turn to the person on your left and tell him 1 respectful word you said this past week. If you cannot remember anything, share 1 respectful word you want to say this week.**

Teacher Tip: You can teach the children respect by modelling how to treat others with respect in your class.

Let the children know that you will begin class by acting as respect detectives. Have the children get in groups of 3–4. Tell each group to talk about a recent situation where someone showed respect.

Optional Supplies: Give each group a newspaper or old magazine. Tell the groups to look for stories or photos of people showing respect in some way. Encourage each group to find at least 1 example.

After about 5 minutes, ask each group to share their example with the class.

- **Did any of the examples surprise you? Why or why not?**
- **How many of the examples you shared involved a leader?**
- **A leader is someone in authority. Who can tell us a type of leader? For example, a teacher is a leader.**

Children may suggest things like pastors, teachers, government rulers, community leaders, or parents. Mention these if the children do not.

You all thought of some good types of leaders! Sometimes we think because someone is bigger, or stronger, or richer, or smarter, that is what makes that leader worthy of respect. Let's find out what God says about why we should respect those in authority over us.

2. Teaching: Listen to Bible verses about authority and hear what Jesus taught about honouring authority (1 Thessalonians 5:12–13; Romans 13:1; Ephesians 6:1–3; 1 Peter 2:13–14; Luke 20:20–26).

Remember that we learned that God is the highest authority because He is the Creator of everything and everyone. God will always lead us in the right way because He is good, loving, and perfect.

- **How many earthly leaders are perfect?**
- **Does God want us to respect leaders even if they are not perfect?**

None. No matter how good they are, not one of them is perfect all the time.

Allow the children to respond before telling them the answer is yes!

Let's learn what God says about respecting our leaders, even when they are not doing right things.

Read the following verses from your Bible if possible.

*Brothers and sisters, we ask you to accept the godly leaders
who work hard among you. They care for you in the Lord.
They correct you. Have a lot of respect for them.
Love them because of what they do.
Live in peace with one another.
1 Thessalonians 5:12–13, Nlrv*

- **Who do these verses tell us to respect?**

Godly leaders in the church.

- **How would you say this verse in your own words?**

Allow 2 children to say the verse in their own words.

Read this next verse from your Bible, if possible. If you are using the Memory Verse Poster, show it to the students.

*All of you must obey those who rule over you.
There are no authorities except the ones God has chosen.
Those who now rule have been chosen by God.
Romans 13:1, Nlrv*

- **How would you say this verse in your own words?**

Allow 2 different children to say the verse in their own words.

Read the next verses from your Bible, if possible.

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.
“Honor your father and mother”—
which is the first commandment with a promise—
“so that it may go well with you
and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”
Ephesians 6:1–3*

- **How would you say these verses in your own words?**

Allow 2 different children to say the verse in their own words.

- **What are some ways you can honour your parents?**

Children may answer things such as obeying and not complaining.

Read the next verses from your Bible, if possible.

*Follow the lead of every human authority. Do this for the Lord's sake.
Obey the emperor. He is the highest authority. Obey the governors.
The emperor sends them to punish those who do wrong.
He also sends them to praise those who do right.*

1 Peter 2:13–14, NIV

- **How would you say these verses in your own words?**

Allow 2 different children to say the verse in their own words.

- **If you had to tell us what all these verses said about respecting authority in a single sentence, what would you say?**

Allow 2 different children to share their ideas.

Optional: If you are using *The Action Bible*, have the children read the story on pages 615–617.

Even Jesus—God's Son—honoured and respected authorities. He obeyed His Father in heaven. Listen to a story about when someone asked Jesus a question about authority.

Some men were sent to spy on Jesus and try to catch Him saying something that would get Him into trouble. They said to Him, "Teacher, we know you teach the truth. Tell us, is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?" Caesar was the Roman emperor at that time.

The spies knew that if Jesus said it was right to pay taxes, the people would turn against Him because they hated paying taxes to the Roman government. If Jesus said no, the Roman officials could arrest Him because the law required everyone to pay taxes.

But Jesus knew this was a trick question. He said, "Show me a coin. Whose picture and words are on it?"

The spies said, "Caesar's."

Jesus said, "Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and give to God the things that belong to God."

- **What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "Give to Caesar the things that belong to Caesar, and give to God the things that belong to God?"**

Help the children understand that Jesus was saying to honour the authority of our leaders and also to honour God's authority. It is possible to do both.

- **What are some things we give to God?**

The children may answer things such as our hearts, our lives, our prayers, our praise, and our giving.

- **What are some ways we can honour the authorities in our homes, schools, churches, communities, and nations?**

Allow 3–4 children to share their thoughts.

3. Responding: Talk about ways to respect those in authority and pray for leaders.

Share the following situations with your children and ask them how to show respect in each situation.

Situation 1: One of the boys at school is always saying nasty things about a teacher he does not like. One day you hear him say, "I do not like her. I do not have to obey her."

- What would you say to him? Use what we learned today from the Bible.

Situation 2: One of your friends tells you, "My father is not a good person. He drinks and then hurts my mother. I hate him. If I never saw him again, I would be happy."

- Tell your friend what the Bible says about honouring parents. How can this boy honour his father?

Teacher Tip: Some of your children may come from homes like the one in the second situation. Offer to talk with and pray for any child who is living in a difficult home situation. Seek help for her family if you can.

Situation 3: A pastor suggests that everyone in the church pray for a local leader. A woman in the church says to the pastor, "Why should I pray for him? He is not a Christian! I do not like some of the things he has done."

- The pastor asks you to tell her why she should pray for this leader. How can she respect and honour the leader?

Close class by standing in a circle and going around the circle praying sentence prayers for local, national, and international leaders. It is okay if the same leader is prayed for by several children. If a child cannot think of a leader, he can say, "Pass."

Optional Supplies:

Give each child a piece of paper. Make crayons or pencils available. Ask the children to draw posters about ways to respect those in authority. When the children have finished their posters, either hang them in your teaching space if possible or set them out on the floor. Give the children a few minutes to see all the posters. Then have the children stand around the posters to pray for the leaders.

If you are using the Student Pages, the children can make their posters on them.

End Option

Have your children remain in a circle as you close class by speaking this blessing from Romans 13:1 and Ephesians 6:1–3 over them.

Blessing: May you respect the people of authority in your life. God has chosen them to be in authority. May your words, actions, and attitudes show respect and honour to leaders, parents, and other authorities.

Lead the children in singing this quarter's song, if possible. "Mighty God" by Elevation Worship:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NAhKYOWYxAY>