

You Choose

By RLD Editorial Team

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 1**Focus:**

Put God first.

Lesson 1**Bible Basis:**Exodus 20:3; Matthew
19:16–30**Lesson 1****Memory Verse:**“Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind
and with all your strength.” —Mark 12:30

Students will watch a video about celebrating too early and discuss the sacrifice required in putting God first in their lives.

Materials:
 Internet access

➤ **Have you ever been in a situation where you wanted something so bad you could almost taste it? Tell us about it.** (Answers will vary. Be prepared to share your own experience.)

In professional sports, teams and athletes are often driven by a desire to be the best. When they think they’re about to win a competition, their success feels so close they can almost taste it. However, in sporting competitions, a lot can change in a short amount of time. Let’s take a look.

Share this video with your students [1:08]:

Race walker loses by celebrating too early

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3dcuM8rsUQ>

➤ **In this clip, we saw an athlete who began celebrating before the outcome was settled. Why?** (She thought it was a sure thing; she didn’t anticipate the outcome could change with the time left; etc.)

➤ **How would you feel if you were this athlete after not getting the outcome you expected?** (Answers will vary but may include embarrassment, anger, disappointment, etc.)

Today we’re going to learn about a man who was so close to gaining something, he felt sure it was a done deal. But somewhat like the athlete in the video clip, he found out something important: close isn’t enough. Today we’re going to talk about putting God first, and how “almost first” just doesn’t work.

(Continue on to Steps 2 and 3 in your teacher’s guide; your Step 4 appears below.)

upper elementary



Lesson 1 / June 7, 2026

You Choose

for use as
STEP 4 

**Lesson 1
Focus:**
Put God first.

**Lesson 1
Bible Basis:**
Exodus 20:3;
Matthew 19:16–30

**Lesson 1
Memory Verse:**
“Love the Lord your God with all your heart
and with all your soul and with all your mind
and with all your strength.” Mark 12:30

Materials:

- Paper
- Pencils/pens
- Optional: Internet access

If your class is meeting online, invite students to bring supplies with them to class.

Today we learned that God wants to be first in every area of our lives. In our story, we saw that the rich young ruler allowed God into every area of his life except money. God calls true believers to surrender it all in order to follow Him completely with heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Distribute supplies (or invite students to have them ready at home). Have students spread out and find a quiet place in the classroom (or at home). Ask them to think of a situation where they may not have put God first because they thought it was too hard, there was too much on the line, they felt embarrassed, or they just didn't want to. Give students a few minutes to think quietly.

Maybe today it's time for you to set things right with God and ask Him for a do-over. He will never force you to give that thing up if something is taking His place—the choice is yours.

Encourage your preteens to write a letter to God telling Him their feelings about putting Him first in their lives. Remind them that God knows their hearts, so they should be honest. If they want to make their letter one of confession and surrender, share with them what that might look like. If they are not ready to do that, encourage them to share with God about what is holding them back.

As your students are thinking and writing, you might want to play the following music video.

Optional music video [4:45]:

Chris Tomlin – Lay Me Down (Lyrics)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pkWrvCZDHA>

All of us struggle with putting God first all the time! Things sneak in and take over that first-place spot, like sports or playing on the computer or (share one of your own first-place priority robbers as appropriate so that your students know you identify with their situation.) **Some of us just wrote God a letter of surrender about those things, but they might try to sneak up on us again.**

➤ **What are some ways we can keep other things from taking over first place in our lives?** (Answers will vary but may include staying in the Word, spending time with God in prayer, asking God to show us ways He has been edged out by someone or something, etc.)

Encourage your students to put the letter they wrote in their Bible and read through it again several times during the week. If it was a letter of surrender, it should encourage them to stay strong in their desire to keep God in first place. If the letter was about struggles they have with making that commitment, urge them to seek God about whatever it is that is holding them back.

Close in prayer.

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