

The Power of Pressure

By Anne Love

for use as
STEP 1 

Lesson 1**Focus:**

The popular way may not be God's way.

Lesson 1**Bible Basis:**

1 Samuel 8—10

Lesson 1**Memory Verse:**

Show me your ways, LORD, teach me Your paths. —Psalm 25:4

Students will experience the reality of peer pressure and recognize that following God's plan often requires that we don't follow the crowd.

Materials:

None

You will read the following imaginary scenario aloud to students.

Imagine that you were running a few minutes late to class today. After all, sometimes it can be really hard to get up in the morning! Now imagine you came into class, sat down, and found a blank piece of paper on the table in front of you.

You look around and notice that your neighbors have all written the word "APPLE" at the tops of their papers in big, bold letters. The class is in the middle of a discussion, and you don't want to interrupt the teacher to ask what you should do with your piece of paper.

➤ **How would you feel walking into the classroom and seeing that you'd missed the instructions for what to do with your piece of paper?** (Answers will vary.)

➤ **How would you decide what to do with your piece of paper?** (Answers will vary.)

Discuss with your students how they might have responded in that situation.

➤ **Raise your hand if you think you would've written "apple" on your paper. Why?** (Answers will vary; students may share that they didn't want to be left out, or they may have assumed that writing on the paper was the right thing to do.)

➤ **Raise your hand if you think that you would have left your paper blank. Why?** (Answers will vary; students may have wanted instructions from the teacher, they didn't want to do the wrong thing.)

This is an example of peer pressure. If you came late to class, you would've had to decide what to do. You wouldn't be sure what everyone else had done with their papers or whether you should do the same.

Peer pressure is a feeling that someone (or a group) is pushing you to make a certain choice, good or bad. When you see people around you doing something, we often can find ourselves wanting to do the same thing—or feeling like we should be doing the same thing. We feel pressure to fit in with our peers. Sometimes peer pressure results in us doing the wrong thing, but peer pressure can be positive as well if what we are following is beneficial. Peer pressure can also result in us doing things that don't really make sense, but we do them anyway because we want to fit in.

Isn't it amazing how quickly we decide to join in with those around us? Sadly, there are plenty of situations in life when we see others doing things that aren't right, and still we want to join in and follow the crowd. In our Bible study today, the people of Israel are faced with the reality of peer pressure. They saw something that other nations around them had, and they wanted it too. Let's find out what the people of Israel decided to do, and how peer pressure affected them.

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

The Power of Pressure

for use as
STEP 4 

Lesson 1**Focus:**

The popular way may not be God's way.

Lesson 1**Bible Basis:**

I Samuel 8—10

Lesson 1**Memory Verse:**

Show me your ways, LORD, teach me Your paths. —Psalm 25:4

Materials:

- “The Power of Pressure” printout (1 copy per student; template found at the end of this step)
- Pens/pencils

Before class, print off enough “The Power of Pressure” worksheets so that each student has a copy—the template can be found at the end of this step. If you are meeting online, send the template to students ahead of time and ask them to print it off so they have it ready to use. Also invite them to find a pen or pencil before the virtual class begins.

Today, we saw how easy it can be to follow the crowd, to want what others have or what they do, and to make the choice to ignore God's plan and go with our own. Many of you have probably, at some point in your lives, said to your parents, “But everyone else has one!” or “But everyone else gets to go!” That's how the Israelites felt about wanting a king. They were so caught up in what they saw in the nations around them, they didn't want to think about God's plan for them.

Have your students think about their daily lives at home, at school, or with friends. Ask them to think about a time when they experienced peer pressure. Ask them to analyze if it was a positive situation—one when they were pushed to make a good choice. Or, was it a negative situation, when they found themselves making a wrong choice and doing something that most likely went against what God asks of us?

If your class is meeting online, invite students to have their worksheet and pen/pencil ready.

If your class is meeting in person, distribute the checklists and pens/pencils. **This worksheet will help you think through and reflect on how you feel and what you do when you are faced with peer pressure. Read through the options listed and mark any that describe how you feel when you experience peer pressure; if you respond in ways that aren't listed, there is space to write those down.**

There is also a checklist of things as a challenge for you to do this week to follow God, especially when you are feeling pressured to ignore God's plan for you. Check off the things you want to try to do this week to ensure that you are doing your best to live His way.

Allow students to find a quiet place in the room to reflect and fill out their checklists.

This week, as you interact with your parents and siblings at home, as you go to school and interact with your friends and classmates, and as you spend time after school at sports practices, doing homework, and even playing, think about the things you checked off regarding peer pressure and following God. You've recognized how you respond to peer pressure, especially when that peer pressure is negative. You've also thought about and chosen some ways that you can strive to follow God. Do your best to keep this list in mind this week; share it with your parents, so that they can encourage you to make good choices and follow Jesus.

Close in prayer.

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THE POWER OF PRESSURE

Check any of the following responses to the sentence starters.

When I experience peer pressure, I...

- Get nervous
- Feel angry
- Want to fit in
- Try my best to do the right thing
- Forget to think about doing the right thing

This week, I can follow God by...

- Reading my Bible
- Praying
- Singing a praise song
- Being obedient to my parents
- Focusing on things that are pleasing to God
