

A Special Five in a Row Style Unit Study for

The story *Ego*, by Avery Batson

Winner of the Rainbow Resource Writing Contest 2015

Unit Study by Jane Claire Lambert (Author of Five in a Row Curriculum)

Written for ages 7-14, with ideas included for younger students as well.

The text of this story is very simple, but the book itself is rich enough in subject matter for older students, as are the attending lessons. The *Five in a Row* style of learning has always paired the selected story *along with* the lessons for scholastic richness and depth, and for enjoyment in the learning process.

Book: *Ego*

Author: Avery Batson

Illustrator: Avery Batson

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Summary: Learning the great rewards of not boasting, as seen through a grand adventure!

TEACHER NOTES **To use this *Five in a Row* style unit remember that you don't have to do all the lessons in each subject category. Just choose the lesson you wish to present each day with the story. Begin by reading the book selection, in this case the story *Ego*, by Avery Batson. Read the story once each day* and then choose a lesson to discuss or present. Below there are lessons inspired by this story for Social Studies, Language Arts, Art, Math, and Science. There are also Bible lessons if you wish to include them and a cooking recipe for fun and inspiration. There will be many lessons you choose not to do. Perhaps later you can come back, enjoy the story again and learn more!

*You read the story once each day for five days. Yes, your student will know after the first reading what happens, but a book is more than it's plot. Each day the reading will be richer because of the discussion and lessons that you have had the day(s) before and your student will see how all the elements of good story writing and illustration go together to make a great tale.

Language Arts: Author

At the time of the publication of the story *Ego*, Avery Batson was thirteen years old. Many students and young people have stories in their imaginations, just waiting to be written! Those who have used the *Five in a Row* unit studies know that great attention is paid to how the authors write their stories, what makes them interesting and enjoyable, as well as how the illustrations are created and how the art enhances the story.

Avery Batson, writes a story with many elements that blend together to make an exciting, interesting, and well written tale. The author uses both humor and suspense in her writing and it is those elements as well as others that carry us through the great plot to a successful ending, at which we say, "*That was a good story!*"

Don't miss the drawing of the author with her cat on the Author-Bio page!

Social Studies: Character - Friendship

Friends - This story provides such a good chance to discuss friendship! Ask your student what he thinks makes a good friend. Did he include someone who takes the time to get to know him? Or perhaps someone who can overlook an occasional mistake and forgive him, or make up from a quarrel quickly? Is a friend someone who is loyal and kind? Did your student mention someone who rejoices when he is happy, or is sad when he is sad. Maybe it is someone who seems to always want the best for him or one who helps through a really difficult time.

In the story *Ego*, it is easy to see qualities of good friend. Sandy and Iris are sad that Ego isn't including them in the recognition of the rewards earned by their team. But even though they are sad, they show an amazing amount of care for Ego. They are worried for him and his view of the rewards because they know that boasting is dangerous, that it doesn't bring good to the one boasting. They are so full of concern about Ego that they follow him into the dark and are on hand to help him as he falls into the icy river, and when he's almost crushed on the jagged rocks. Even though these friends receive no gratitude from Ego, they follow him into the dangerous cave, and even risk the grasp of the Golem for him. They forgive him and build him up by saying that he deserves the Victor's stone for saving them.

Friendships can last a very long time and some are new ones made recently. A good friendship is a two way street. There is give and take for both sides. A real friendship isn't all give, give, give on one side, and all take, take, take on the other. Also a true friend doesn't constantly make fun of or belittle the other, but builds up his friend. A good friendship is a treasure —something to take time to care for, in return. Depending on the age of your student any of these ideas could begin a great discussion.

Don't forget to point out the framed picture of the friends at the end of the story. What symbolisms do you see? What does the framed picture tell about the hearts of the characters? Perhaps you will talk about the fact that the friends are all together...standing evenly in a row, not opposite one another like in the first page picture, or with one character taller than another. They are a team and they are happy! Great friends, all victors!

Social Studies: Character - Contests and Awards

Contests - There are many kinds of contests that we will experience in our lives. Ask your student if he remembers a contest he participated in. Did he win? Did it take team effort?

Can you make a list of different kinds of competitions and contests? How about sports, cooking contests like BBQ championships, fine arts contests (musical instrument, art, dancing, writing, singing, etc.), contests on television like Jeopardy (trivia type contest) and Chopped (cooking contest), rodeos, board games like Scrabble, Chess and others, and many more. Almost anything a group of people enjoy doing they can make into a competition. In the competition

they have fun trying their own skills or their combined team skills against a competitor to see how they rank against others that love the same topic.

Awards - Apparently Ego had participated in several contests and there were many awards given out for the winners. Awards, in the book *Ego* and in the study you are doing, are given for excellence in contests. Ask your students if they can name a few different kinds of awards? Of course ribbons are popular and trophies of various kinds. Also, money is sometimes the award. And then there is the fame and notoriety that accompanies contest winning. For some contest participants "fame" is the most important thing. Spend a bit of time asking questions and discussing how caring too much about fame and other awards might backfire. It almost did for Ego. Talk about his choices. Through your discussions perhaps your student will discover for himself how Ego's choices originated, were worked through, and how the outcome of his choices affected him and his friends.

It's always good to chat about the idea that awards (or even being really good at something) are not the sum of all that a person is. Winning contests and awards do show some of a person's talents but they certainly do not define *all* that a person is.

One last idea for discussion is learning how to *share* the fame. Even in singles competition sports the champion doesn't get there on his own. There are coaches, parents who sacrifice time and money, and more. Always the champion can be aware of how his special place has been the result of a team working together and not just his own efforts no matter how dedicated and talented he may be.

Social Studies: Character - Pride

This might be a time to talk about pride. There is a satisfying good feeling that comes from working very hard at something and then seeing that you are successful in your endeavors. You might say: "I am proud of what I accomplished." That is fine. The problem with pride comes when a contestant who wins says, "I am better than anyone...and I want everyone to look at me and know it, and feel a bit smaller next to me!" That kind of pride is only going to get a person in trouble. Does your student remember anyone who has acted that way? Has he? Can you share a time when you did this and the results, or perhaps when someone acted this way to you and how you felt? The story *Ego* is a great reminder to enjoy what you do, but to know that caring for others is still the most important thing.

In talking about pride, people often use the saying: "There is always a bigger dog." Just as a dog can have a bone but a bigger dog can come and take it away, in life there is always someone who can do something better than we can do it. It should be enough for us to just enjoy being able to do something really well and not demand, for our happiness, that we *have* to be the best always.

Social Studies: The Golem

While It is also of note that the author J.R.R. Tolkien used the word golem as a name for one of his famous characters, Gollum, in the *Lord of the Rings* series, the word "golem" is found far back in Norse mythology and ancient Jewish history and legend. In addition the word has been

used for the character names of many stories and games. For those interested, use the Internet to search for more information and reasons for why Tolkien, as well as Avery Batson, may have used this word and its legendary implications for their stories.

The author of *Ego* used the concept of a golem to be a character in her story. She didn't name the character that, as J.R.R. Tolkien did in his story, but rather used the legendary "concept" of the word calling the character "the" Golem.

Social Studies: Cave Markings

Since man has been on the earth, he has been artistic. Much art throughout history has not been lasting. It has crumbled, been eroded and destroyed by many factors. Yet, one of the lasting evidences of man's art has been preserved on cave walls. Perhaps the temperature, humidity, protection from erosion, and other factors have kept these designs and art stories preserved for us to see.

There are markings in the cave illustrations of *Ego*. Perhaps these marking signs have meaning, or they may just be an artistic attempt by the author/illustrator to *remind* us of what can be found in certain caves. If either you or your student is interested, this would be a good time to do some Internet research on "Cave Markings." Read several references to gain more information and a better idea of the subject. Perhaps something you read will narrow your search to find a book at the library for even more history. Don't forget to search Internet YouTube for videos on Cave Paintings...there are some that are art classes showing students ways to create their own facsimile. Just make sure you view any video *before* you present it, and that you also watch it with your student.

Language Arts: Inspiration for Writers

Avery Batson says that she was inspired to write the story *Ego* from her association with Beep Patrol. In searching the internet, there is a Beep Patrol Robotics team in Arizona. Perhaps this is what Batson is citing as her inspiration for the story.

If you would like to know more about Robotics try the Internet or your library search systems. Perhaps you have a student who would be excited to find out about Robotics and about the competitions they have.

Language Arts: Sentence Variety

A lesson on the appreciation of sentence variety can be offered to younger students by just having them listen to a few sentences chosen for their variety of beginnings. Have them just listen and hear how the sentences sound. Having them listen to good sentences would be a simple, preliminary, auditory-only lesson for the youngest students in this Language Arts subject.

The lesson below is for older elementary and middle school students:

One of the things that good authors do to make a story readable and interesting is to use a variety of sentence structure, especially sentence beginnings. Avery Batson, the author of this story, has used wonderful variety in her sentences. It would be sad if every sentence had begun with a noun subject and had been followed by an attending verb predicate. First read the story with your student pointing out different ways Batson has started her sentences! (Note: A few sentences are technically not grammatically complete sentences, but that is a writer's license to be used now and then, especially in an action story and where there is dialogue. If an author *knows* the rules of grammar, he is allowed to improvise every so often.)

Next continue the lesson with the contrasting ways of writing the same little story. The first is a story in which the sentences *all* begin the same way. This story has *nothing* to do with Avery Batson's story *Ego*, but is just a sentence structure lesson. Read the story below or have your student read it:

The dog was named Sam. He found a bone. The bone was large. The bone was juicy. The bone slipped from his mouth. The bone fell down into a hole in the ground. Sam tried to reach the bone but it was too far down. Sam began to paw at the edges of the hole. He wanted to make the hole bigger so that he could get his head down far enough to retrieve his bone. He dug for a long time. He grew tired. He didn't want to dig anymore. He stopped and fell asleep under a tree. He dreamed he was chewing on a juicy bone.

After reading the above lesson ask your student if he could tell what the story was about? (Yes, any reader can understand the plot even when the sentences all begin with the same structure.) Then ask him if he thought it was well written and interesting? Some students might think it was a bit boring, while others don't have an opinion. Now, read or have your student read the same story below but with a varied sentence structure:

Once upon a time a dog named Sam found a bone. Because the large bone was surprisingly juicy, it slipped from the dog's mouth and fell down into a hole in the ground. Trying to pull the bone back out of the hole was impossible. The hole was too deep and narrow for Sam to get his head into. In a frenzy, he began to paw the ground. After a long while of digging, Sam grew tired and didn't want to dig anymore. Eventually he fell asleep under a tree. As he slept Sam dreamed he was chewing on a big juicy bone!

Can your student look at the sentences of the two stories and see the difference. Can he hear the difference? The stories that he loves probably have fine sentences that make the books exciting and enjoyable to read. As your student continues to write stories of his own, he can remember that there are reasons why every sentence shouldn't begin the same way. Variety definitely spices up writing as well as life!

Language Arts: Vocabulary

conceited- excessively proud of one's self; vain

ego- how one feels about one's self; some people have an inflated ego while others have a deflated ego, and still others seem to have a sensible balanced idea of who they are and how they feel about themselves in relation to others

a **golem-** a formed mass, brought to life; a defender of something of value; a robot

plummeted- falling straight downward very quickly

skulked- moving in a sneaky way, staying out of sight

voila— English is a language that has invited many foreign words to broaden the range of vocabulary. Some of the words you will find as you read, are words that come to us from the French language. As you become more familiar with these words you will learn pronunciation patterns that help you when you read aloud or say these words.

Voila is a French word that we often use as an exclamation —an excited “there it is” or “there you are”! Voila is pronounced “vwa la” with both “a’s” making the “ahhh” sound of satisfaction. In French the sound for the letters oi is “wah” —so you say the v sound followed quickly by “wah” = vwah then “la”....and voila! There you are!

Other French pronunciations that might be familiar are ballet- -a form of dance. In pronouncing ballet, the last consonant sound “t” is not vocalized.

Des Moines (Iowa) A city whose name probably came from a French named river is pronounced: “de moin” (moin rhyming with coin) as neither of the “s’s” of this name are sounded. The purpose of these examples is to acquaint young readers with words that come from other languages. Often this means that pronunciations are unusual given the letters of the alphabet that appear in those words.

Language Arts: Synonyms for Pride

A synonym is a word that has much the same meaning as another word. So when we consider the word pride (and here it is the kind of pride that is puffed up with an inflated sense of identity) some synonyms would be conceited, vain, swaggering, arrogant. For your older student you might mention and talk about the words egocentric and narcissistic. Remind your student that using synonyms gives his writing interest and depths of meaning that using exactly the same word over and over will not. Make up some games where you think of as many synonyms as possible for a word. You can do this anytime, even driving in the car. In addition, you can play the box game *Taboo* which is essentially a game of synonyms, as is the old television show (made into a game) *Pyramid*. (Watch for children friendly versions.)

Language Arts: Composing Characters

Some stories have many characters and some have few. Avery Batson chose to write a story using four characters. For fun, take a piece of paper and write the names of the characters across the top:

Ego

Iris

Sandy

the Golem Defender

Then under each character, go through the story and search for details about each character. See how many you can find. Write down the type of character, color, details like Iris' hair, and then qualities for each character as well. Follow the growth of the character traits for each. For instance Ego, might have listed under his name: conceited, perplexed (during decision), repentant, happy. This is a great exercise to begin to learn character composition both for greater enjoyment in reading, as well as for your student to learn to write his own character-rich stories. It is also a helpful exercise habit to form, to be able to identify multiple characters, remember them, and track their growth. Your student will grow to recognize great value in this enjoyable discipline as he reads more complex novels in high school and college!

Why does your student think that Batson, the author, chooses those particular names for the bird and the dog? (Can the flower, Iris, be blue? Sandy?)

Language Arts: Action in Words

The author of *Ego* uses many interesting words through out the story. These words add colorful dimensions of action and description: plummeted, conceited, skulked, bragging, collapse, annoy, strutted, skidded, yelped, skidded, sneaked, snatched, flailing, and more. Remind your student that the English language has many words for *each* action. "Plummeted" has a greater depth of meaning than just using the word "falling."

For your young student try acting out with him the above list of action words. This will help him learn the meanings and be great fun as well. Good to remember teaching tip: Acting out words, concepts, segments of history, stories, etc., is a great teaching tool.

Language Arts: Suspense (Warning Sign in Cave) and Surprise Ending

In the story *Ego*, there is a sign in the cave —a warning sign. What does it say? See if your student can remember and retell what it says. (It says: "*The cave entrance will collapse upon removing the Victor's stone or annoying the Defender.*")

The author's use of this warning begins to build the reader's feelings of suspense, as well as sets up Ego's heart decision between "friends and fame". The suspense builds as Ego makes his decision, jumps on the Golem, the cave begins to close up ...and he and his friends escape!

The surprise ending comes when Ego finds out Sandy has nabbed the Victor's stone and gives it to *him!*

Suspense and surprise are used masterfully by Batson in *Ego*. Remind your students to look for suspense and surprise endings in other well written stories.

Language Arts: Personification

Personification is giving speech, actions, dress or other human characteristics to things not human. The animal characters in the story have been given human characteristics. Search the illustration of the trees in the dark forest. Do their branches look to you like grasping arms?

Art: Expressions and Emotions

When an author illustrates his own work, often there is additional depth to the synthesis (interaction) between the words and pictures. Every illustration shows how Batson, the author/illustrator, is able to enhance the words of her story by creating images that are full of emotion, color and secrets.

Emotion After reading the story through, go back and specifically look for signs of emotion on the faces and body language of the characters. How many can you find? Did you see haughty-pride, fear, kindness, courage, or loving-caring, happiness? More? Make sure you examine the faces of Iris, the bird, and Sandy, the dog, throughout the story, as well as notice the cringing, ears-down face of Ego when he's scared of the dark.

Expression in art Look at the picture on page 10 where Ego's decision is mirrored in his eyes. Can you see that in one eye is the Golem grasping his friends while mirrored in the other is the stone? Decision time! Expressed beautifully in the illustration!

Color The scene where Ego is walking through the dark woods alone is one where the illustrator definitely uses color to make an emotional statement. Ask your student if that particular illustration looks kind of scary to them. If they think so, ask why? What about the illustrator's work make you feel that way? That deep solid black background (no stars or moon) lends an ominous air.

Secrets After reading the story through, what was the "secret" part of the story? What about the fact that Sandy grabbed the Victor's stone and escaped with it on his tail. Did you catch that in the first reading of the book? Perhaps you didn't notice because it was never explained in the **words** of the text. At the moment Sandy took the stone. Sandy's grab for the stone may have gone unnoticed as Ego screams into the Golem's ear because the reader and listener's eyes were more likely to be glued to the action part of the picture and miss the loyal friend's escape. Whether or not you noticed before reading the end of the story, or missed it and had to go back to search the pictures, this illustrator's device of including "secrets" and surprise is magnificent!

Art: Medium - Digital Illustration

It is never stated on the copyright page or author page exactly how the art illustrations were accomplished, but it looks as if the artist uses digital illustration. This is a technique that uses computer program to provide brushes, pens, etc., with which to draw, as well as the ability to fill in areas with color all by a computer, digital process.

Batson uses primary colors (reds, yellows, blues), rich and vibrant, in many of the illustrations and she also creates incredibly animate characters with the digital art utensils. Her drawn characters tell Ego's story, displaying deeply emotional expressions and high spirited body language. There is Ego's proud picture on the cover of the book, and the "nose in air" strut as he steps off the cliff, etc. Each of the emotions "drawn on the faces" of her characters and in the

her positioning of paws, tails, wings, etc., create characters full of personality that the readers come to love.

Art: Use of Color and Illustration for Mood

This lesson may have been previously touched upon as you discussed the dark scary background for Ego's night woods walk. The background for that page of illustration certainly sets the mood for anxiety and fear.

In contrast is the scene where Ego is walking with his friends at the river and the sun is shining, flowers blooming, etc. The artist's illustrations set the mood of joyousness and safety. Batson's use of color and figure illustration for setting the mood is magnified because the pictures appear *in contrast*. The dark night looked even darker when compared with the bright sunny daytime page and *visa versa*!

For younger students you will just point out that the dark picture seems scary and the sunny one does not seem that bad. (If you haven't already talked over this point, you can also say that the darkness is when Ego turns his back on — or was without his friends, while the sunny, happier picture is when Ego's heart is reunited with his friends and he sees their worth.

Math: Imagination and Math

Ask your student to imagine how long this story's adventures might have taken? There isn't a right or wrong answer. This is a "time" exercise just for fun. Choose a time frame and tell why you think it might have been that way.

Science: Classification of Animals (cat, dog, bird)

Your student already knows that there are a great many kinds of animals in our world. One of the ways that scientists use to make sense of such a vast number of animals in their studies is to group them. The scientists take a huge group, and make some smaller groups according to those with similar characteristics. These groups are further broken down several times until they are placed into groups called "species" in which the members of that group are all one kind of animal capable of reproducing. (simplified explanation)

You can do research on the Internet and find charts that show the Classification System for the Animal Kingdom and teach age appropriate material to the depth of the subject you wish.

For now it is good to know that Animals are grouped into a two large groups of those having spinal cord systems and those which do not. The group *without* spinal cord systems are called Non Chordates(Non Vertebrates) , while those *with* a spinal cord system are called Chordates (Vertebrates).

Among the Chordate (Vertebrate) animals that are most familiar to us there is division of five:
Mammals Birds (Aves) Fish Reptiles Amphibians

Each of these five groupings have distinct characteristics. So, even while each of the five groupings do all have spinal chord systems, they are set apart into various smaller groups by their other characteristics.

As you study the story *Ego*, you can use this opportunity to learn about three familiar Chordate (Vertebrate) animals. There are among this story's characters two mammals, Sandy and Ego, a dog and a cat, and Iris, the bird.

On the Internet there are games for students that teach the different characteristics in the five groups, and much information and pictures to help you explain this amazing science topic!

Science: Rock Formations (Cliff, Cave)

In the story *Ego*, when the cat is full of pride, he walks right off a cliff with his nose in the air. Where does he fall? He falls into a river of water, probably fast moving water. When you begin to study a **cliff**, you find that it is a sheer rock face that is often high, and often made by the erosion of water, either pounding coastal waters or the fast flowing waters of a river. Look at some images on the internet —Google search “cliff.” Let your student see the pictures of various cliffs. Do you have any cliffs that you could see or visit near you? Further research with a book from the library may expand your knowledge about how cliffs are formed and increase your enjoyment of this subject.

Also, in the story *Ego*, there is another rock formation — the **cave**. How do caves form? Caves are a underground chamber formed over a long period of time when forces act on rock to dissolve it. This is a very simple definition and there is so much to learn about caves and how they develop. Here is a website to begin your search. Have fun learning about caves and maybe even finding a cave near you to visit!

<http://www.caveslime.org/kids/cavejourney/caveJourneyGeologyForm.html>

As you learn about how caves form, you can also enjoy studying creatures common to cave environments such as bats, or bears that use caves for wintering, salamanders, fish, insects and more. Try in Internet site Adventure-Caves.com You can also learn about other rock forms such as stalactites and stalagmites, inner-cave pools, etc.

Science: A River— Formation, Temperature and Currents

As you read and study through the story *Ego*, you have a chance to find out about **rivers**. There is a great deal of information about this subject. If your student is very young, you may want to give a simple definition including the fact that the river's waters run from the highest point of land downward to a lower point. River water, unless stopped by higher ground and so forming a lake, or dammed for man's use, eventually flows to the ocean.

Make a small clay or dirt model with a channel (elevated at one end) and show your student how the water flows downhill. If you have an older student, he can have fun making a model as intricate as he'd like, and learning many terms associated with rivers such as mouth, source, channel, current, bank, ox-bow bend, etc. Colorful, interesting, simple books on rivers from your library yield information that is easy to digest and easy to for your student to copy or draw out

and label for his notebook. Encourage those that become interested to find more books on the topic!

<http://www.onegeology.org/extra/kids/earthprocesses/rivers.html>

The river that Ego falls into is icy. That would make it even more dangerous for Ego, because a body can only tolerate so much cold in a time period. Quick rescue is important. Some rivers are the result of ice melt and their streams are very cold. Other rivers are warm water rivers. The types of plants and animals that can live in each water is often vastly different. It is fascinating to study a particular river and learn about its formation, temperature, currents, and flora and fauna, and then choose another river in another biome, study it and compare! You can tailor the study as to be as simple as necessary for your young student or as deep and interesting as you wish for your older student. (Don't forget to have an interested older student make up some River Trivia. The game might include such topics as longest river in the world, famous rivers of Egypt, Germany, United States, U.S. rivers with a state capitol on their banks, longest U.S. river, U. S. river that flows all four directions before emptying into the Mississippi, etc.

Bible: Choices

Ego was on edge as he was making his choices in the cave. He'd been boasting so long he actually had to think about what was more important. Was the fame more important or his friends?

This story shows us that it is good to flee as quickly as possible from our sins, because they grow deeper as we let them continue. The results could be that we might make exceedingly bad choices, like the one that Ego might have made if he'd chosen fame to be the most important thing.

Our life choices are based on who we know God to be, and who we think we are. Sin can come in and get a strong grip on us when we have a low view of God and a high view of ourselves. Isn't it wonderful when Ego finally says that his friends are better than the stone, or better than being the best? That is Ego growing in wisdom!

Bible: Boasting (Bragging)

Boasting —telling the big things that “you” have done *in order to make yourself look great in the eyes of others*, comes directly from the root sin of Pride. There are many Bible verses about pride and its dangerous results. A simple verse from Proverbs about boasting is Proverbs 27:2 “Let another man praise thee; and not thine own mouth; a stranger and not thine own lips.”

If you find boasting a problem, get with the Lord and allow Him to help you relinquish your pride — that is your need to be superior to others— so that your boasting changes to become

boasting in how great the Lord is and how much He helps you. For since God gives us breath to breathe each day without which we would not exist then literally *nothing* we do, we do on our own —nothing can we do by ourselves. And God teaches us in the Bible to put our boasts in Him, for He loves our humility and He deserves our praise.

As in the Social Studies lesson on Contests and Rewards you might want to pursue this idea for discussion: Learning how to *share* the fame. Even in single competition sports the champion does not get to be number one on his own. There is first of all the Lord who is responsible for personalities and talents and who gives the champion breath to breathe each day, as well as coaches, and parents who sacrifice time and money, etc. Always the champion can be grateful for and aware of how his special place has been the result of teamwork and not just his own efforts, no matter how dedicated his work may be.

Bible: Pride and Humility

Here are some ideas to talk over as you consider the subject of Pride. The ungodly kind of pride is always puffing up one's own deeds and (perhaps without realizing) trying to make those listening feel small. **On the other hand there is also a pride of doing a job well, being satisfied with a good job, that is not ungodly.** In this type of pride there is no desire to flaunt what you've done before others but just an inner satisfaction of knowing that you've really done your best.

Which of these types of pride did Ego display?

The Godly characteristic of **humility** is the opposite of the self-obsessed sin of **pride**. Jesus, who sets aside His pride and in *complete* humility comes to do His Father's will, shows us His Father's better way of dealing with one's deeds. He not only shows us but He longs to help us *grow* in humility. He wants us to experience, along with Himself, His own peace and joy which come with being humble. The kind of peace and joy when one does not have to worry about being best and or having to work hard to make sure everyone else knows it, or being upset if they don't notice.

If you are not familiar with the Internet site called "Bible Gateway", this is a good time to look it up. There are many study helps you can use at this site, but one is to choose a word like "boast" or "pride" and view all the places in the Scriptures that the word is used. As this type of word study scans across the books of the Bible, it can yield amazing deeper understandings of Bible concepts and truths.

Bible: A True Victor's Stone

Think about the concept of a victor's stone, something of value, that will be powerful and helpful. That is reminiscent of two Bible themes. One is the pearl of great price, that one would sell everything they had to obtain, because it would be better than life itself. That was the Bible parable for the very Kingdom of God. Precious, valuable, of great help and worth.

The other is the name for Jesus as the Chief Cornerstone. He is the victor, best friend, Lord God, and a countless list of other magnificent names. He is our Rock and Chief Cornerstone. Blessed be His name!

Bible: Thankfulness

Three times Ego refuses to thank his good friends for their help. (Once was page 1 of the story). Over and over and over, all throughout the Bible, God's people forget or *refuse* to thank God for His help. Sounds like this is a serious problem. For Ego, his pride gets in the way and he doesn't want to admit that he even *needs* any help and so he refuses to thank his friends.

Spend some time talking over this damaging problem that comes to all of us now and then. Discuss the fact that we so often want to think that we do things all by ourselves. This thinking makes us feel that we are great or special because we think we can do so much. Then remember that it is the Lord, God who gives us the breath to breathe each day. If He did not, we would not even be alive! Truly there is nothing that we do all by ourselves. In addition, the more we seek God's help, His wisdom and understanding, His power, etc., and remember to thank Him, the more our eyes are able to see His working in our world! Giving more and more thanks to God is one way we show Him how much we *know* we need Him and how *grateful* we are for His daily help. Giving thanks to God spills over into the genuine knowledge that we need *others*, too, and that we are careful to thank *them* for their help, as well.

Bible: Repentance, Forgiveness and Mercy

This is your chance to use a great story like *Ego* to bring up one of these ideas: repentance, forgiveness or mercy.

Wow! Ego, thoroughly repents as he finally figures out that he's done wrong. Then you see he is genuinely sorry, and does not *automatically* expect that his friendship with Iris and Sandy will stand. (This reminds us of the story of the Prodigal Son, when the son told his father that he didn't deserve to be taken back, but could he just be a servant.) When his friends forgive Ego, we cheer! Sandy and Iris are indeed special friends! And then....then there is the gift of the Victor's stone because, they say he *deserves* it. It seems like one of the most magnificent forgiving, merciful, good thing that could possibly happen to Ego!

Bible: Light

Yes, there is light around the river when Ego chooses to be with his friends as opposed to the darkness of the night and the river when Ego is alone. Talk over the concept of Jesus as the Light of the World, and how we want to stay in His light as we make our journey through life. Again, the word light and lamp are good words for a Bible Gateway word study. Ps 36:9 is a quick verse to keep in your heart to remind you of times like this: "In Your light, we see light..."

Bible: Now That You Are A Winner

Winning competitions does indeed put the limelight of fame on the winner. Now everyone is noticing. One of the things that professional competitors face is the character they choose to

display in their lives as the light of fame is on them. People often look to these champions as heroes. It is good when they show themselves as heroes both at their own competitions and also in their private lives. But isn't it hard to change back and forth, to live one way and show one's self to others in another way? A true Godly character is the same in private and in public. Someone once said: Your character is who you are when no one is looking.

What character qualities does the Lord say in His word are the ones that are important? Read 1 Corinthians 13: 4-7. Indeed, the entire Bible tells and models for us the things important to the God's heart. Those things are important to Him because they show everyone watching, through how we live our lives, who *He* is and because He knows that following His ways will be the very best for *us*!

Cookbook: Ideas for Cooking Adventures to go with the story *Ego*:

Popovers (Puffed up!) - This is an easy recipe with ingredients that are normally on hand. You and your student can make them together and then talk about how the batter puffs up during cooking. It's a good reminder not to let ourselves get puffed up in our own estimation, but to be willing to always share the fame of accomplishments. Perhaps when you eat these popovers your student will observe the analogy that if one gets all puffed up in his own estimation (inflated ego) the inside will be rather empty!

Recipe for Popovers

Oven 400° F. Makes 12

These muffins will pop up and over the top of the muffin cups! That is what you want so you can tie the theme of your treat to the story! *Because the cooking time is fairly long...you need to schedule these so they come out warm when you want them!

3 eggs
1 1/2c. milk
1 Tablespoon melted butter
1 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 c. flour

Butter well a muffin pan (for 12)

Beat all the ingredients together until smooth.

Fill muffin pans about 2/3 full.

Bake at 400° for 45 minutes.

Take pan out and slit the tops of the popovers and return to oven for 5-10 min.

Serve warm, pulled open, with butter and honey, or jams. Light and yummy!

Good with hot tea on a cold winter mid morning or as a late afternoon tea.

More ideas for Cooking Adventures

To go along with the story of *Ego*:

Use your own creativity or search the Internet for a cake that looks like a cave.

Make some bat cookies to remind you of a learning trail you took when studying caves.

Make free-form spiky stalactite-stalagmite cookies and sprinkle with raw chunky sugar for sparkle.

Make a cake in the shape of an award. And drape the cake plate with colorful ribbons.