

Small Wonders

Follow the Leader

The Toys go on a hike. They find themselves lost.

Lesson Link: King David and the qualities of good leaders.

Unlike some people who may act for selfish reasons, good and wise leaders love God and want to follow His ways, even in unlikely places and situations.

It was one of those days when the sky couldn't decide if the sun should shine or hide behind the gray clouds, or if the rain should fall or stay at home.

Pencil-Neck the Brachiosaurus, Brambles the Porcupine, Tell-Tale the Mouse, and Trifles the Kitten were standing in the park, hoping that the sky would make up its mind.

"Let's go on a hike to find better weather," Pencil-Neck suggested.

"What's a hike?" asked Trifles the Kitten.

"It's a long walk," answered Tell-Tale.

"That would be fun!" Trifles said.

"We'll need a leader," Brambles stated, hoping she would be picked.

"Me! Me!" said Trifles.

"You're too little," said Brambles.

"Pencil-Neck should lead us because he is the biggest and tallest and can see over things," said Tell-Tale.

"Do I get to wear a hat?" Pencil-Neck asked. "A leader should have a hat."

"There's no time to find a hat that will fit you," Brambles said.

"Aw," moaned Pencil-Neck. But he agreed to lead them even without the hat.



They marched into the Brackenbury Forest, where Pencil-Neck said very confidently to "turn left here" and "veer to the right" and "now go that way."

No one was sure how long they hiked, but they couldn't find better weather. And there was another problem.

"We're lost," said Brambles.

"How did that happen?" asked Pencil-Neck, surprised.

"It's easy when you don't know where you're going or where you are," Brambles said in a prickly manner.

"It's getting dark," said Tell-Tale nervously.

"I don't want to be the leader anymore," Pencil-Neck announced.

"Well, *someone* has to lead us back," Brambles said.

"Me! Me!" said Trifles.

"You're too little," Brambles reminded him.

"Then *you* be the leader," Tell-Tale said to Brambles. "You are the prickliest and can defend us if anything scary comes out of the dark."

Brambles looked at them proudly. "I am happy to serve," she said. "I promise to lead you bravely and—"

Brambles didn't finish her sentence. At just that moment Pencil-Neck stepped on a fallen branch. It snapped loudly.

Brambles screeched with fear. "Follow me!"

Brambles scrambled into a nearby cave. Tell-Tale ran after Brambles. Trifles ran after Tell-Tale. Pencil-Neck ran after Trifles. Into the cave they all went.

There's something funny about a brachiosaurus. The front has a small head and a long thin neck. So the front of Pencil-Neck went into the cave without any trouble.

However. The back of a brachiosaurus is big and round. That part of Pencil-Neck *didn't* fit into the cave. Instead, it got solidly wedged in the cave's mouth.

"I'm stuck," said Pencil-Neck.

A leaf outside blew onto his leg. "Something's got me!" he shouted and pushed farther in and got further stuck.

In the darkness, Brambles said, "I don't want to lead anymore."

"Ouch," said Pencil-Neck as he bumped his head on the ceiling of the cave.

"Now what?" asked Tell-Tale. Her back was pressed against the wall of the cave. "We can't go anywhere."

Trifles sniffed the air. "I smell something tasty baking."

"It's a cave," said Brambles. "There won't be a bakery in here."

Trifles sniffed even more and his nose led him to a hole in the back wall of the cave. "Here's a hole. Maybe it leads somewhere."

"Maybe it leads to a den of snakes," Pencil-Neck whispered. He was horribly afraid of snakes. "I've heard that snakes use tasty smells to lure innocent victims into their snake pits."

"But it smells like Granna's cupcakes," Trifles said.

"The perfect trap," said Pencil-Neck, sure that it was.

Tell-Tale said hopefully, "Our *leader* will find a way out."

"Let me sit down and think about it," Brambles said, then sat down on something round.

"That's my nose," said Pencil-Neck.

Brambles grunted and gave a little cough. "I have thought about it," she said. "I resign as the leader."

"Then what are we going to do?" Tell-Tale asked.

No one spoke.

Trifles considered the dark hole, which somehow seemed darker than the dark cave they were in, and wondered if there might be snakes or other scary things creeping and crawling down there.

He sniffed and thought, *I know I smell Granna's cupcakes.*

"I will find help," he said in as brave a voice as he could muster.

Before Tell-Tale could say "don't," Trifles scampered into the hole, come what may.

Questions:

1. ***Were any of the Toys good leaders? (Trifles.)***
2. ***Was Trifles brave to go into the hole to look for help? (Yes, he was willing to sacrifice himself, in spite of being afraid, which made him a good leader.)***