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## Forward

This book contains lessons from the period of Kings. This series of lessons introduces your students to the period of time when the children of Israel were ruled by kings. It begins with the story of Samuel and ends with the fall of Solomon. Your students will learn the value of remaining loyal to our one and only true God. They will be inspired to make wise choices in life. And, they will be encouraged to honor God in all that they think, do or say.

I have designed these lessons to enable you to teach the Bible expositively. The idea is to have the kids read the passages in their own Bibles and the teacher explain the scriptures and give good practical applications that are age-appropriate. My goal is to ensure that children learn that God's Word is exciting and meaningful and that teachers teach sound doctrine!

Even though I've scripted the lessons, I don't expect teachers to read my lesson materials verbatim to the children as they teach. My lessons are meant to provide the details you need to get background information and some suggestions for child-oriented personal application. Once you know and understand the Bible lessons for yourself, you'll be ready to teach your class.

The two-column layout of this book is designed so that you can copy and cut the pages in half to fit into your Bible. When the children observe that you are teaching right out of the Bible, rather than from a curriculum book, it validates God's Word and gives your teaching more authority.

You will discover that there is not always a Craft or Game idea suggested in each lesson. When I've had a good idea that really seems to support the lesson objectives, I've included it. But I have another handbook called *Tips and Tricks — Making Children's Bible Lessons Come to Life* that gives lots of suggestions for activities that will help reinforce your lesson and teach the memory verse. (This is available from my website:

<https://www.freechildrensministrylessons.com/>)

Use the Teaching Schedule to help you organize your teaching rotation.

I pray that you will use these lessons for God's glory by teaching the Bible as an entire plan by a systematic and connected study of the Word.

*Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. (Mark 10:14)*

*Sheila Scroggins*

Sheila has had over 35 years' experience in teaching children and has several other lesson series available. You may contact her by eMail at: [ccuv-ChildrensMinistry@usa.net](mailto:ccuv-ChildrensMinistry@usa.net) for more information.

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## Teaching Schedule

Date	Teacher	Lesson	Memory Verse
		Hannah Prays (1 Samuel 1:1-20)	<i>You, O Lord, have helped me and comforted me. (Psalm 86:17b NKJ)</i>
		Samuel Listens (1 Samuel 1:21-28; 2:18-21; 3)	<i>Get all the advice and instruction you can, so you will be wise the rest of your life. (Proverbs 19:20 NLT)</i>
		Choosing a King (1 Samuel 8 – 10:24)	<i>Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15 NKJ)</i>
		Saul Disobeys God (1 Samuel 15:1-31)	<i>I will hurry, without delay, to obey your commands. (Psalm 119:60 NLT)</i>
		A Shepherd King (1 Samuel 16:1-13)	<i>You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:5 ESV)</i>
		David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1-52)	<i>The LORD is my strength and shield my heart trusts in him. (Psalm 28:7 NLT)</i>
		David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1-9; 19:1-10; 20)	<i>A friend loves at all times. (Proverbs 17:17 NKJ)</i>
		David Hides from Saul (1 Samuel 24; 26)	<i>Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right. (Romans 12:17 NKJ)</i>
		David Worships God (1 Chronicles 13)	<i>I will celebrate before the Lord. (2 Samuel 6:21 NKJ)</i>
		The King's Kindness (2 Samuel 4:4; 9)	<i>Always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else. (1 Thessalonians 5:15b NIV)</i>
		Solomon's Wisdom (1 Kings 3:4-28)	<i>If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God. (James 1:5a NKJ)</i>
		Building the Temple (1 Kings 5; 6; 7:13-51; 8)	<i>God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7 NKJ)</i>
		Solomon Disobeys God (1 Kings 11:1-13, 28-40)	<i>You shall have no other gods before me. (Exodus 20:3 NKJ)</i>



# Hannah Prays

(1 Samuel 1:1-20)

## Introduction

Does God answer prayer? How? Does He always give us what we ask of Him? [Teacher, allow children to discuss briefly.] God has three answers to every prayer we pray: “Yes,” “No,” or “Wait!” God doesn’t always give us what we ask for, but He always gives us what we need. God loves us and wants the very best for us. Sometimes that means He doesn’t give us what we ask for.

Today we will see how God answered the prayer of Hannah.

## Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for always hearing our prayers and answering them according to Your will. Thank You that you have a plan and a purpose for my life and that You always want the very best for me. I love You and want to follow You all the days of my life. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*You, O Lord, have helped me and comforted me. (Psalm 86:17b NKJ)*

## Lesson

Israel had been ruled by judges for over 200 years. Today we begin a study in the book of 1 Samuel. It begins in the days when the judges still ruled Israel, possibly during the closing years of Samson’s life.

The period of judges was a sad time in the history of the Israelites. It was a time when the people did not have a strong leader, so they didn’t have strong faith in God. Then, Samuel came along. He was the last of the judges and he was Israel’s greatest judge.

1 Samuel begins with the story of Samuel’s mom and dad before Samuel was born.

1 Samuel 1:1-2 [Teacher, read...]

*There was a man named Elkanah who... had two wives, Hannah and Peninnah. Peninnah had children, but Hannah did not.*

(We’re going to call Elkanah, “Elk,” and Peninnah, “Penny” today just to make it easier to read, OK?)

How sad for Hannah. She was not able to have children. In those days, a woman who could not have children was considered a failure in life. Some people thought that a woman who did not have children was being punished by God. Children are a gift from God and to be childless was a shameful thing to Hannah. She wanted a baby very much.

It was a custom in those days, that if your wife couldn’t give you children, you could either divorce your wife or take a second wife. This was not God’s plan; this was a rule that the people made up for themselves. Elkanah could have divorced Hannah because she was not able to give him children. But he didn’t because he loved Hannah. But, he did take a second wife and that was not a good thing for Hannah, as we will see.

1 Samuel 1:3 [Teacher, read...]

*Each year Elkanah would travel to Shiloh to worship and sacrifice to the LORD of Heaven’s Armies at the Tabernacle. The priests of the LORD at that time were the two sons of Eli—Hophni and Phinehas.*

Every year Elkanah and his family traveled from their home at Ramah up into the mountains at Shiloh, where they worshiped God. This was one of the three major holidays that the Israelites celebrated every year, just like we celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas.

1 Samuel 1: 4-5

*On the days Elkanah presented his sacrifice, he would give portions of the meat to Peninnah and each of her children. And though he loved Hannah, he would give her only one choice portion because the LORD had given her no children.*

[Teacher, the NKJ, NASB, and ESV versions all say that he gave Hannah a double portion, but NLT says he only gave her one portion.]

Elkanah loved Hannah very much and this made Peninnah very jealous.

1 Samuel 1:6

*So Peninnah would taunt Hannah and make fun of her because the LORD had kept her from having children.*

Peninnah *provoked* Hannah. Instead of trying to make Hannah feel better, Peninnah made fun of Hannah! I can just hear Peninnah jeering Hannah, “*Look at you, Hannah!*” she might have said. “*God has not given you even one little child. I have many children! God must love me more than you!*”

Has anyone made fun of you? How do you think Hannah felt when Peninnah made fun of her?

1 Samuel 1:7

*Year after year it was the same—Peninnah would taunt Hannah as they went to the Tabernacle. Each time, Hannah would be reduced to tears and would not even eat.*

Poor Hannah! Peninnah’s taunting and teasing made her so sad that she could not stop crying. She felt so terrible she couldn’t even eat.

1 Samuel 1:8

*“Why are you crying, Hannah?” Elkanah would ask. “Why aren’t you eating? Why be downhearted just because you have no children? You have me—isn’t that better than having ten sons?”*

Hannah knew her husband loved her, but even his encouragement could not comfort her. Her bitterness blinded her to the fact that God had given her a wonderful loving husband. She could not keep from listening to Peninnah’s jeers and letting Peninnah’s words break her heart.

You and I need to be careful not to let our hurt feelings make us bitter and angry and resentful. When we hang on to hurts it makes our attitudes sour. Bitterness blinds us and we lose sight of our

blessings; we forget about all the good things God has done for us; we forget to be thankful for the many ways God has blessed us. God wants us to have a joyful heart. We need to be quick to forgive people when they hurt our feelings. But Hannah couldn’t let go of her hurt.

1 Samuel 1:9-10

*Once after a sacrificial meal at Shiloh, Hannah got up and went to pray. Eli the priest was sitting at his customary place beside the entrance of the Tabernacle. Hannah was in deep anguish, crying bitterly as she prayed to the LORD.*

One day while they were in Shiloh, Hannah felt so sad that she quietly left the table where everyone was eating and she went up to the place of worship and began to pray. Eli, the priest, saw Hannah weeping and praying to the Lord.

1 Samuel 1:11

*And she made this vow: “O LORD of Heaven’s Armies, if you will look upon my sorrow and answer my prayer and give me a son, then I will give him back to you. He will be yours for his entire lifetime, and as a sign that he has been dedicated to the LORD, his hair will never be cut.”*

Hannah brought her problem honestly before God. She did just what God wants you to do. She prayed to Him. Isn’t it wonderful to know that you and I can talk to God about anything and everything? He is always listening. And, He cares about everything that concerns you. God wants His children to come to Him in prayer when they are sad. He wants you to talk to Him about the things that make you unhappy.

When you feel angry because your friends treat you unkindly, talk to the Lord about it. If your friend is not a Christian, tell God. If someone you know is sick, pray for that person. God wants you to tell Him your problems. Hannah did that. And, as Hannah discovered, prayer opens the way for God to work.

## 1 Samuel 1:12-14

*As she was praying to the LORD, Eli watched her. Seeing her lips moving but hearing no sound, he thought she had been drinking. "Must you come here drunk?" he demanded. "Throw away your wine!"*

Hannah was so intent on her prayer, that only her lips were moving and Eli thought she was drunk! What do you think Hannah said?

## 1 Samuel 1:15-16

*"Oh no, sir!" she replied. "I haven't been drinking wine or anything stronger. But I am very discouraged, and I was pouring out my heart to the LORD. Don't think I am a wicked woman! For I have been praying out of great anguish and sorrow."*

Hannah just poured out her heart to Eli. And that pleased God very much.

## 1 Samuel 1:17

*"In that case," Eli said, "go in peace! May the God of Israel grant the request you have asked of him."*

Eli knew that God would surely do what was best for Hannah so he told her to go in peace. Eli was reminding Hannah that as she brought her requests to God in faith, she could have peace knowing that God would answer in the way that was best for her. As you trust God, He will give you peace (Philippians 4:6-7). Eli knew that God would answer Hannah's prayer in His own perfect way, so he told her to go in peace.

## 1 Samuel 1:18

*"Oh, thank you, sir!" she exclaimed. Then she went back and began to eat again, and she was no longer sad.*

Eli's kind words comforted Hannah. It changed her attitude, hadn't it! Now she was cheerful and was able to go back and join in the celebration. She didn't know if she would ever have a baby; but she had hope. She had told God her problem and how sad she felt. She

knew the Lord had heard her prayer and was going to answer her request! You can talk to God about any problem you have, too. He hears your prayers and you can rely upon Him to answer them.

The next day they all went back home to Ramah and not long after that, Hannah found that she was going to have a baby!

## 1 Samuel 1:20

*and in due time she gave birth to a son. She named him Samuel, for she said, "I asked the LORD for him."*

God answered Hannah's prayer! Now it didn't matter what anyone said.

About three years later, when Samuel was a little boy, Hannah kept her promise to the Lord. Do you remember what that was? Look back at verse 11. She had told God if He would give her a son that she would give him to the Lord for his entire lifetime.

You have to be careful what you promise the Lord; He will expect you to keep your promises to Him. Hannah was faithful to do what she promised. Hannah took Samuel to Shiloh and gave him to Eli the priest. Hannah gave up what she had wanted most – her son – and presented him to Eli to serve in the house of the Lord. Samuel became Eli's assistant there serving the Lord.

Hannah never forgot her much-wanted son. She visited him every year when she and Elkanah went up to the feast. Every year she would bring him new clothes that she had made for him.

Hannah praised God for his answer to her prayer for a son. We should be thankful for the ways God blesses us and answers our prayers.

Are you willing to trust God to answer your prayers in the way that is best for you? He won't always give you what you ask for because He knows that some things are not good for you. Sometimes He will make you wait for a while before He grants your request. But, if you believe God wants you to have something, keep on praying faithfully

for it (Luke 18:1). Because God loves you, He will hear your prayers and give you what's really best for you.

When trouble comes or when we feel sad, we can pray to God like Hannah did. God will comfort and help us!

## Closing Prayer

Father, Hannah was sad because Peninnah made fun of her for not having any children. But You heard her prayers and sent Eli to talk with her. Thank You for helping us and comforting us when we are sad. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

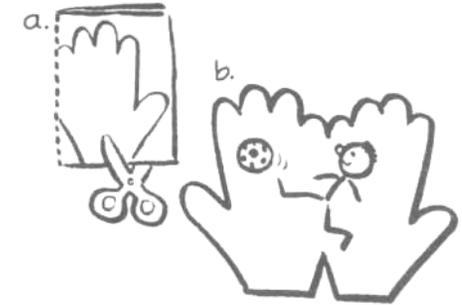
#### *Praying Hands Prayer Journals*

Materials:

- Bibles
- Construction paper
- Pencils and Markers
- Scissors

Preparation:

1. Fold construction paper in half widthwise.
2. Place hand on page with pinky finger next to folded edge.
3. Trace around hand, keeping fingers together.
4. Cut out hands without cutting through folded edge.
5. Open paper hands to make a prayer journal.
6. List prayer requests in the prayer journal or draw pictures of situations in which you might ask for God's help. Or, optionally, write the Memory Verse in the prayer journal.
7. Present the prayer journal to the Lord and see how He answers prayer.



As children work, ask the following questions:

- When is a time you were sad and someone helped and comforted you? What did he or she do?
- What did God do to comfort and help Hannah? (God sent Eli to listen to her problem. God also heard and answered Hannah's prayer.)
- [Teacher, review the memory verse.] Who does Psalm 87:17 say will comfort us? (God) God isn't a person we can see. But He helps us remember His love by giving us people who can help us and comfort us when we're sad.

**Game Center**

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. Who was the last and greatest judge in Israel? (Samuel)
2. Hannah was barren. What does that mean? (She couldn't have any children.)
3. Why was Hannah ashamed because she wasn't able to have children? (In those days, a barren woman was considered a failure in life; someone who was being punished by God.)
4. What did Peninnah do to Hannah? (She teased her; hurt her feelings.)
5. One time when the family was up at Shiloh for a celebration, what did Hannah do because she felt so terrible about being barren? (She went to the temple to pray.)
6. What are some things that you can talk to God about in prayer? (When you feel angry because your friends treat you unkindly, if your friend is not a Christian, if someone is sick...)
7. What did Eli think when he saw Hannah praying so intensely? (Hannah was drunk.)
8. What three ways does God answer prayer? (No, Yes, Wait)
9. Why doesn't God always give you what you ask for? (It may not be good for you.)
10. What changed Hannah's attitude? Why did she finally have peace? (She knew that God had heard her prayers.)
11. What did Hannah promise God if He would give her a baby? (She had told God if He would give her a son that she would give him to the Lord for his entire lifetime.)

12. When did Hannah keep her promise to God? (When Samuel was about three years old Hannah gave him to Eli, the priest, to be his helper in the temple.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com> ]



# Samuel Listens

(1 Samuel 2:18-21; 3:1-10)

## Introduction

[Teacher, softly whisper, “If you can hear me, wiggle your fingers.” Repeat the request in louder and louder whispers until all children have responded.] What did you have to do so that you could hear me? (Listen.)

Do you listen when someone speaks to you? How do you show that you have heard what that person has said? [Teacher, discuss how you show that you are paying attention; that you have listened and heard what was said.]

[Teacher, another opening activity option is the following: Have children sit in a circle and play a game like *Telephone*. Whisper the first phrase of Proverbs 19:20 to a child. Children pass the phrase around the circle by whispering it to each other. Last child says the phrase aloud. Repeat activity using other phrases from the verse. Repeat the verse aloud with the children.] What did we need to do with our ears to play this game? (Listen.) What words in this verse tell us how we can be wise?



In our Bible lesson today, we'll find out how Samuel did some very important listening.

## Opening Prayer

Father, we want to learn how to listen to Your voice. Open the ears of our hearts this morning, Lord, so that we might learn more about the sound of Your voice. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*Get all the advice and instruction you can, so you will be wise the rest of your life. (Proverbs 19:20 NLT)*

## Lesson

We learned last week that Hannah had not been able to have babies. So she prayed and asked God to give her a son. She told God that if He gave her a son, she would dedicate him to serve the Lord in the Tabernacle.

God heard Hannah's prayers and gave her Samuel. Then when Samuel was three years old, Hannah kept her promise to God and gave him to Eli, the priest, to serve God in the house of the Lord.

But she didn't forget Samuel. Hannah loved him and visited him as often as she could. Each year when Elkanah and Hannah went up to Shiloh to celebrate one of the Jewish holidays, Hannah would visit Samuel and bring him a new little robe to wear.

1 Samuel 2:18-20

*But Samuel, though he was only a boy, served the LORD. He wore a linen garment like that of a priest. (19) Each year his mother made a small coat for him and brought it to him when she came with her husband for the sacrifice. (20) Before they returned home, Eli would bless Elkanah and his wife and say, "May the LORD give you other children to take the place of this one she gave to the LORD."*

Each time Hannah visited Samuel, Eli, the priest, would pray that God would bless her with more children because she had given her first born to the Lord.

1 Samuel 2:21

*And the LORD blessed Hannah, and she conceived and gave birth to three sons and two daughters. Meanwhile, Samuel grew up in the presence of the LORD.*

Because Hannah kept her promise to God, he blessed her and gave her three more sons and two daughters. God is very pleased with us when we keep our promises to Him.

Samuel was a boy now. And he spent his days helping Eli take care of the Tabernacle, making sure there was oil for the lamps and wood for the fire. He probably swept and dusted and polished everything.

#### 1 Samuel 3:1

*Meanwhile, the boy Samuel served the LORD by assisting Eli. Now in those days messages from the LORD were very rare, and visions were quite uncommon.*

In Samuel's day, God did not speak to his people very often. Remember, this was during the period of time when the judges ruled the children of Israel. In those days, the people did not have a strong leader, so they did not have strong faith in God. And because the people did not believe and obey God, God stopped speaking to them. We have to make sure our hearts do not get so hard that we won't listen to God's word. God only speaks to those who are listening.

It is important to take time to listen to God. We hear His voice through reading the Bible. Start by reading a few verses. Then stay quiet for a few minutes and think about what you have read. If you want to "hear" what God is saying to you, you must get alone and think quietly and deeply about what you are reading.

Most of us never take the time to really listen to God speak to us. We may read a verse or two, but then we close our Bibles and run off to play or go to school. We don't really let God's word help us that day. In order to get to know God, we need to know what He is really saying to us. If you take time to think about what God is saying in His word, you can tell what He wants you to know. Next time you read the Bible, ask God to help you keep His word in your mind throughout the day.

God wanted His people to know His will in Samuel's day, too. And one night the Lord called to Samuel.

#### 1 Samuel 3:2-4

*One night Eli, who was almost blind by now, had gone to bed. The lamp of God had not yet gone out, and Samuel was sleeping in the Tabernacle*

*near the Ark of God. Suddenly the LORD called out, "Samuel!" "Yes?" Samuel replied. "What is it?"*

One night, Samuel had finished all his chores and went to bed. He was almost asleep when he heard someone calling, "Samuel! Samuel!"

#### 1 Samuel 3:5

*He got up and ran to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you," Eli replied. "Go back to bed." So he did.*

Eli might have thought that Samuel was just hearing things, so he told Samuel to go back to bed.

#### 1 Samuel 3:6

*Then the LORD called out again, "Samuel!" Again Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" "I didn't call you, my son," Eli said. "Go back to bed."*

It must have seemed strange to Samuel that Eli hadn't called him; he knew he had heard someone call. There was no one else in the Tabernacle. But, Samuel went back to his bed.

#### 1 Samuel 3:7

*Samuel did not yet know the LORD because he had never had a message from the LORD before.*

Samuel didn't know the Lord and had never heard His voice before. So, he didn't know it was God speaking to him. So, once again, Samuel went back to his bed and he was about to drift off to sleep. Suddenly the same voice called again.

#### 1 Samuel 3:8

*So the LORD called a third time, and once more Samuel got up and went to Eli. "Here I am. Did you call me?" Then Eli realized it was the LORD who was calling the boy.*

Finally, Eli realizes that Samuel is not making this up, so it must be God who is trying to speak to Samuel.

1 Samuel 3:9-10

*So he said to Samuel, "Go and lie down again, and if someone calls again, say, 'Speak, LORD, your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went back to bed. And the LORD came and called as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel replied, "Speak, your servant is listening."*

God was speaking to Samuel! Imagine how excited Samuel must have been. It is an exciting thing to hear God's voice.

You can hear God speaking to you when you read His word. But, you have to take the time to listen. It is important for you to get into a quiet place, alone with God each time you read your Bible. Then while you are reading, ask yourself these three questions:

1. What does this passage of Scripture say?
2. What does it mean?
3. What is God saying to me?

[Teacher, discuss these questions with the children using the following passages:]

Matthew 6:19-21

*"Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there the desires of your heart will also be."*

John 3:16

*"For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."*

Ephesians 4:32

*Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.*

Psalm 95:1-3

*Come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come to him with thanksgiving. Let us sing psalms of praise to him. For the LORD is a great God, a great King above all gods.*

You may not understand everything you read, but the more you read and think about what you are reading, the more God will open His word to you. When you take time to listen to God, He will help you understand what He wants you to know.

God's word is like a love letter written to us personally by the Lord Himself. If you got a letter from someone, you would read it as soon as you got it, right? God loves you and wants you to hear His voice. He wants to speak to you. He wants to encourage you and help you live your life in a way that is pleasing to Him. So, it is very important for you to pay attention to what He is saying to you and then to do whatever it is that He is telling you to do. To hear God's messages we must be ready to listen and to do what He tells us to do.

Samuel listened to God and obeyed him. God wants you to do the same thing each and every day.

## Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that you haven't left us to wonder what to do to live a life that is pleasing to You. Thank You that You have given us Your word and that You speak to us every time we read it. Lord, we want to be ready to hear to Your voice. We want to be just like Samuel who said, "Here I am" when You called his name. We want to have our ears tuned to hear Your voice. Then we want to be willing to do whatever You ask of us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

#### *Ear headbands*

(See pattern on last page of this lesson)

Have children cut out a left and right ear and attach them to a headband. On the headband write "I will listen to the Lord!"

### Game Center

#### *Play this Listening Game:*

[Teacher, stand near one wall of the room and have the children line up at the opposite wall.] As I read the following story, listen for the word "lead." It's the word that's in the saying, "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make him drink." When I say "lead," take two giant steps toward me. The person that touches the wall behind me first will get a prize. But remember, you can only move when you hear the word "lead." If you move at the wrong time, take two steps backward. Listen carefully!

[Teacher, read the following story slowly, drawing out the underlined words to make children anxious to move.]

Once there was a boy name Lee who loved to rake leaves. Lee would rake the leaves into a huge pile, lean his rake against the tree and leap into the pile. Sometimes Lee would even lead his dog, Levi, on his leash, walking around the neighborhood and picking up leaves. Then he'd lead Levi to the baseball park, where he would show off his treasures. Well, Lee's love of leaves soon caught on. Before long, all the kids in Little League were collecting, raking, and at least, jumping into piles of leaves. Lee would lead his friends on great expeditions into the forest, where they would see who could find the biggest leaf. Lee was always in the lead!

[Teacher, reward the child who touched the wall first, or came the closest, with a treat. Then toss handfuls of wrapped candies in the air saying you think they all deserve a treat. Then gather the children in a circle and ask:]

- What were you thinking of as you listened to the story?
- Why were you so excited to move ahead?
- How were you like Samuel in this game?
- How can you show God that you're ready to listen to Him and obey?

Samuel was the same age as many of you when God spoke to him, and he went on to be a great prophet and leader of God's people. You don't need to wait until you're older to serve God – you just need to be willing to listen. I believe that God can do great things through you just as he did through Samuel.

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

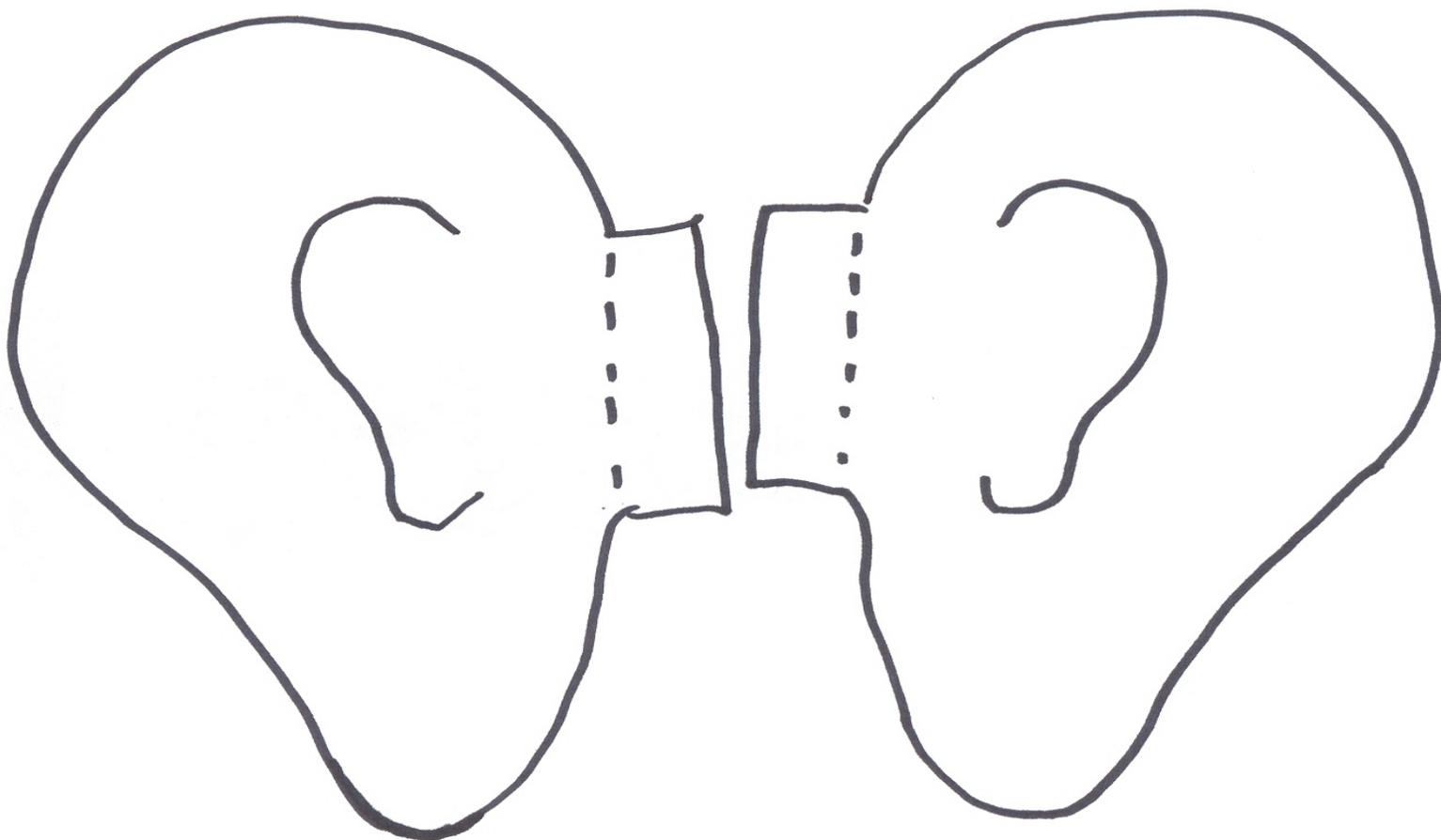
1. What was Hannah unable to have? (A baby.)
2. In what way did Hannah show Samuel that she remembered him and loved him? (She took him a little robe every year.)
3. How did God bless Hannah for dedicating Samuel to Him? (He gave her three more sons and two daughters.)
4. Why was the word of the Lord rare in those days? (This was the period of the judges when they didn't have a strong leader. So, they didn't have strong faith in God. They didn't believe and obey God so He stopped speaking to them.)
5. What's the best way to hear God's voice speaking to you? (By reading the Word of God, the Bible.)
6. What do you need to do to really listen to God's voice as you read the Bible? (You need to get alone and stay quiet and think about what you are reading.)

7. Why is it important to really listen to God speak to us? (So we can get to know God and know what He wants us to do.)
8. Why didn't Samuel know it was God speaking to him? (He didn't know God and had never heard His voice before.)
9. What three questions should you ask yourself every time you read the Bible? (What does it say? What does it mean? What does it mean to me?)
10. Who did Eli say Samuel should listen to? (God)
11. Why do you think Eli told Samuel to listen to God? (Eli knew God's instructions are important. Eli wanted Samuel to listen to God and obey Him.)
12. What did Samuel do to learn God's instructions? (Listen.)
19. In order to become wise, who or what can we listen to for advice and instructions? (Parents, teachers, the Bible, a pastor, grown-ups who love God, or friends who make good choices.)
20. What can we do to learn about God's instructions? (Read verses in the Bible, ask parents or teachers for help understanding what the Bible says, listen to Bible stories, and ask God to help us learn.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com> ]

**Questions regarding the memory verse:**

13. Read Proverbs 19:20 aloud with the children and ask:
14. What does this verse tell us to do? (Listen to advice and accept instruction.)
15. What are some ways we can learn about God's instructions? (Listen to Bible stories, read Bible verses, talk to parents or teachers about God, listen to Christian music, or pray.)
16. Which word in Proverbs 19:20 tells what you will be if you listen to advice and instruction? ("Wise.")
17. What are some instructions God wants us to obey? (Be kind, tell the truth, help others, or be thankful for what you have.)
18. How can we be wise? (Listen to advice and accept instruction.)



# Choosing a King

(1 Samuel 8 – 10:24)

## Introduction

[Teacher, lead the children in a discussion about making choices, by asking some variation of the following questions:]

1. What are some easy choices you make every day? (What to wear to school, what to eat for breakfast, etc.)
2. What are some choices that might be harder to make? (Whether or not to be kind to a kid that others are mean to, whether to forgive someone who doesn't deserve it. etc.)
3. What can you do to show me that you have made a decision to serve and obey God? (To not lie or cheat, to read my Bible, etc.)

Every day we have to make choices. Today we will talk about the importance of making good choices.

## Opening Prayer

Father, we love You and we want to please You. Every day we have many choices to make: what to wear, what to eat, where to go, who to play with, whether we'll be obedient to our parents... We want to learn how to make godly choices so that everything we think, or say, or do brings Your name honor. We don't want to do anything that displeases You. Help us to pay attention this morning so that we will learn the importance of making good choices. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord. (Joshua 24:15 NKJ)*

## Lesson

What would you say if someone very important said you were going to be a king or queen? In our Bible story today, we'll hear about someone who was told he would be king.

Samuel had been serving the Lord since he was three years old. At the time we pick up the story in 1 Samuel 8, Samuel is an old man. He had been Israel's judge for many years. He spent his life traveling around the towns and cities, visiting the people and teaching them God's way.

1 Samuel 8:1

*As Samuel grew old, he appointed his sons to be judges over Israel.*

Samuel was the last judge over Israel. And, since he was getting on in years, he decided to have his sons take over for him.

1 Samuel 8:3

*But they were not like their father, for they were greedy for money. They accepted bribes and perverted justice.*

Samuel had grown up serving and obeying God with his whole life, but he was unable to lead his sons into a close relationship with God. They were greedy and dishonest. We don't know why Samuel's sons turned out to be so bad. But the lesson for us is this: someday you will stand before God and give an account of your life, both the good and the bad. You won't be able to rely on your parent's good name. You must choose to follow God for yourself.

Even though Samuel was a good and godly man, his sons were evil.

1 Samuel 8:4-5

*Finally, all the elders of Israel met at Ramah to discuss the matter with Samuel. "Look," they told him, "you are now old, and your sons are not like you. Give us a king to judge us like all the other nations have."*

The children of Israel wanted to be just like all the other nations around them who had kings. The problem was they were God's chosen people. He didn't want them to be like other nations; He wanted them to set the example for them.

God wants you to be set apart from others, too. Is it easy for other kids to talk you into doing things that displease God? Or, do you stand firm on your faith in God? God wanted the children of Israel to show people that they trusted and obeyed God.

1 Samuel 8:6

*Samuel was displeased with their request and went to the LORD for guidance.*

Samuel was very upset. He knew that the Lord was disappointed when the children of Israel asked for a King. Hadn't God proved Himself over and over to be a good and loving? Hadn't He led them out of Egypt and performed all kinds of miraculous deeds on their behalf? Wasn't He the King of kings and the Lord of Lords?

Samuel was displeased with the people so he prayed to the Lord. And that's what you and I need to do, too. Whenever you get upset about something, go to the Lord, and pour out your feelings to Him. The Lord will answer you, just as He did Samuel.

1 Samuel 8:7

*"Do everything they say to you," the LORD replied, "for they are rejecting me, not you. They don't want me to be their king any longer.*

God told Samuel to let them have a king. But before he did that, Samuel wanted to tell the people some of the things that would happen to them when they had a human king ruling over them.

1 Samuel 8:11

*"This is how a king will reign over you," Samuel said. "The king will draft your sons and assign them to his chariots and his charioteers, making them run before his chariots.*

Samuel told them that if they appointed a man to be king over them, he will tax them, use the money to keep a trained army and make their sons serve as soldiers. Then he will build himself a fancy house and take their sons and daughters for his slaves.

Samuel carefully explained that it was going to be very hard on them to have a man rule over them as a king. But the people refused to listen.

1 Samuel 8:19-20

*But the people refused to listen to Samuel's warning. "Even so, we still want a king," they said. "We want to be like the nations around us. Our king will judge us and lead us into battle."*

Have you ever made a wrong choice because you wanted to be like everyone else? Never let others pull you away from what God says is right. Because the children of Israel wanted to be like the unbelieving nations around them, they were heading for spiritual disaster.

One day a man named Saul, was out looking for his father's donkeys. He and his servant walked many miles searching for them. Finally Saul suggested that they just return home without the donkeys. But Saul's servant suddenly remembered something.

1 Samuel 9:6

*But the servant said, "I've just thought of something! There is a man of God who lives here in this town. He is held in high honor by all the people because everything he says comes true. Let's go find him. Perhaps he can tell us which way to go."*

The servant remembered that Samuel was a prophet and lived nearby. He thought that perhaps Samuel could tell them where the donkeys went.

1 Samuel 9:10

*"All right," Saul agreed, "let's try it!" So they started into the town where the man of God lived.*

They went to the town where Samuel lived and just as they entered the gate, they saw him.

Meanwhile, God had already spoken to Samuel and told him that Saul would be coming and that he was to anoint him as the king over the people.

You see, God is sovereign. That means He knows all things and He has our lives all mapped out before we are even born. And He has all power! He makes all things happen according to His will and for His purposes. God is in control of every circumstance in our life and we can trust Him to lead us and to take care of all our needs. We serve a great and awesome God, don't we? God told Samuel ahead of time that Saul was the one to appoint king over Israel.

1 Samuel 9:17

*When Samuel saw Saul, the LORD said, "That's the man I told you about! He will rule my people."*

Samuel took Saul and his servant into a great dining hall, where there were thirty other guests. Much to Saul's surprise, he was given the place of honor at the table and a special portion of food.

The next day when Saul and his servant were leaving to go back home, Samuel wanted to talk to Saul privately.

1 Samuel 9:27

*When they reached the edge of town, Samuel told Saul to send his servant on ahead. After the servant was gone, Samuel said, "Stay here, for I have received a special message for you from God."*

Then Samuel told Saul that God had chosen him to be the king over all Israel. Many days later, Samuel called all the people together to make the announcement.

1 Samuel 10:17-19

*Later Samuel called all the people of Israel to meet before the LORD at Mizpah. And he said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, has*

*declared: I brought you from Egypt and rescued you from the Egyptians and from all of the nations that were oppressing you. But though I have rescued you from your misery and distress, you have rejected your God today and have said, 'No, we want a king instead!' Now, therefore, present yourselves before the LORD by tribes and clans."*

Samuel reminded the people all that God had done for Israel since He brought them out of Egypt. He said that God was not pleased that they did not trust Him to look after them. God didn't want to give them a king because *He* was their king. Yet, they were not satisfied with God! He was not enough. They wanted to be like the rest of the world. Since they wanted a king, God would show them who that was to be. Samuel announced that Saul was to be their king.

1 Samuel 10:24

*Then Samuel said to all the people, "This is the man the LORD has chosen as your king. No one in all Israel is like him!" And all the people shouted, "Long live the king!"*

It wasn't God's perfect will for the people to have a human king to rule over them. He wanted the people to look to Him for all their needs. What a sad thing for God's people to be dissatisfied with God! They thought God wasn't enough; they wanted to be like the people in the nations around them! You and I need to be careful to not want the things of this world.

Do you ever see things on TV that you want? Sometimes we want things just because we see it on TV or because our friends have it. When we desire to have things just because our friends or neighbors have them, watch out! Not everything is good for us. Be careful not to want the things of this world more than you do the things of God. We need to make wise choices, don't we? We need to choose things that will please God.

The Israelites were happy to have Saul as their king. But as we will learn in the weeks to come, their decision to have a king brought the people a lot of trouble. The trouble all started because they wanted to be like all the other countries around them.

It is very important for you to make good choices in life. The very most important choice you can make is to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and to want to please Him with everything you do in life.

## Closing Prayer

Father, forgive us for looking at the things of the world and wanting those things more than we want You. Teach us how to make good choices in life so that we always follow You. Help us to make a choice today to serve You all the days of our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

Draw pictures of ways you can serve and obey the God. [Teacher, lead the children in a discussion of what they can draw. Here are some suggestions: Praying hands to show that you can pray; bible to show that you can read Bible God's Word; friends to show that you can be kind to your friends.]

### Game Center

#### *Memory Verse Activity*

##### **Preparation:**

Write each word of today's Memory Verse on separate sheets of construction paper. Tape sheets in verse order in a path on the floor.

##### **Procedure:**

Lead children to find Joshua 24:15 in their Bibles and repeat the verse aloud. Have each child take a turn following the path in a different way (step, hop, jump, etc.) as other children say the words aloud together. Invite children to mix up the words on the path and then attempt to

step on words in verse order. [Teacher, you can number the papers in verse order to assist nonreaders.]

##### **Discussion:**

Today we talked about choosing to serve and follow God. Each of us gets to make this important choice. [Teacher, lead the children in a discussion about the importance of making godly choices.]

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What were Samuel's sons like? (They were greedy and dishonest.)
2. Why did the people of Israel want a king? (They wanted to be just like all the other nations around them who had kings.)
3. Why was God displeased with the people's desire to have a king? (He wanted them to look to Him as their King. And, by doing so, set the example to all the nations around them. He wanted the children of Israel to show people that they trusted and obeyed God.)
4. What did Samuel do when he was displeased with the people? (He prayed to the Lord.)
5. What did Samuel explain that it was going to be like for the people to have a king? (It would be hard on the people: he would charge taxes, want an army, a big house, and servants...)
6. Have you ever made a wrong choice because you wanted to be like someone else?
7. Why did Saul and his servant go to Samuel? (Saul was out looking for his father's donkeys and thought that Samuel might know where they were.)

8. When Saul found Samuel, he and his servant were invited to a great dinner where there were thirty other guests. What surprising thing happened at that dinner party? (Saul was treated as the guest of honor and given a special portion of food.)
9. What are some easy choices children your age make every day? (What to wear to school, what to eat for breakfast, etc.)
10. What are some choices that might be harder to make? (Whether or not to be kind to a kid that others are mean to, whether or not to lie about homework not being finished, etc.)
11. What is a choice you can make this week to show that you want to serve and obey God? (Answers will vary.)
12. By demanding a king, what did the people show God? (They were dissatisfied with God.)

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# Saul Disobeys God

(1 Samuel 15:1-31)

## Introduction

What have you heard people say when they are caught doing something wrong? Sometimes people make excuses for not doing what they know they should do. [Teacher, lead the children into a discussion of some of the excuses they have heard such as the following:

- “I was late to class because...”
- “I didn’t do my homework because...”
- “I forgot to brush my teeth because...”
- “I didn’t clean my room because...”

If you don’t do what you’re asked to do or if you only partly obey, you are really being disobedient. In our Bible story today, we’ll hear about someone who made excuses for doing wrong instead of obeying God.

## Opening Prayer

Father, In Your word You tell us to obey our parents in all things, to love our enemies, and to be kind and tenderhearted to each other. Sometimes we fail to do those things. We don’t always obey our parents and sometimes we aren’t very loving to others. Yet, Lord, You want us to do the right thing. Teach us this morning how very important it is to You for us to be obedient. In Jesus’ name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*I will hurry, without delay, to obey your commands. (Psalm 119:60 NLT)*

## Lesson

Israel had been ruled by judges for over 200 years. Samuel was the last of the judges and he was Israel’s greatest judge.

When Samuel was getting on toward the end of his life, he appointed his worthless sons to take his place as judges over Israel. But the people didn’t want Samuel’s sons to rule over them. They insisted that God give them a king because they wanted to be like all the nations around them.

God told the people that it was going to be hard on them to have an earthly king. But, they refused to listen. So, even though it disappointed God, He told Samuel to appoint Saul king over Israel.

When we pick up the story this morning, Saul had been the king of God’s people for many years.

Saul had started as a good king. But after awhile he became full of pride. He got to the point that he wasn’t as interested in obeying God as he used to be. He seemed to want to do everything his own way instead of God’s way. So God gave Samuel a message for King Saul.

1 Samuel 15:1-3

*One day Samuel said to Saul, “It was the LORD who told me to anoint you as king of his people, Israel. Now listen to this message from the LORD! This is what the LORD of Heaven’s Armies has declared: I have decided to settle accounts with the nation of Amalek for opposing Israel when they came from Egypt. Now go and completely destroy the entire Amalekite nation—men, women, children, babies, cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys.”*

Why did God command such utter destruction? The Amalekites were a band of guerrilla terrorists. They lived by attacking other nations and carrying off their wealth and the families. They were the first to attack the Israelites in the wilderness on their way to the Promised Land.

Remember, Moses had told Joshua to pull together an army to fight them (Exodus 17:9). But Joshua didn’t wipe them out. So, they continued to raid Israelite camps at every opportunity ever since – for hundreds of years.

God knew that the Israelites could never live peacefully in the Promised Land as long as the Amalekites existed. He also knew that their corrupt, idolatrous religious practices threatened Israel's relationship with Him. The only way to protect the Israelites was to utterly destroy the people of this warlike nation and all their possessions, including their idols.

The Amalekites had heard about Israel's true and living God. They probably watched God part the Red Sea. Surely they knew about the miracles God performed in Egypt before the Pharaoh finally let them go. The Amalekites had every opportunity to come to Him and make Him their God. But they refused to believe in Him. Their sinful unbelief caused them to do wicked things. Because God is holy, He must punish sin (Romans 6:23).

You and I also deserve to be punished for our sins, just like the Amalekites. But in His love, God sent His perfect Son, the Lord Jesus, to take the punishment for our sins. Jesus was beaten and put on the cross. He gave His blood for you as He died (1 John 1:7b). When you believe in the Lord Jesus, He will save you from the punishment of your sins. The Amalekites refused to believe in God, and now God was going to judge them for their wickedness.

God told Saul to attack the Amalekites and to get rid of everything that belonged to them. And God expected Saul to obey!

1 Samuel 15:9

*Saul and his men spared Agag's life and kept the best of the sheep and goats, the cattle, the fat calves, and the lambs—everything, in fact, that appealed to them. They destroyed only what was worthless or of poor quality.*

King Saul gathered a great army and set out after the Amalekites. But then, after the mighty battle had been fought and won, Saul and his army only destroyed the people and the goods that they considered worthless; they kept Agag, the king of the Amalekites, and they kept the best of the animals for themselves.

Why did Saul return with the king and some of the animals? Hadn't he been told to completely destroy the Amalekites, all the people and their animals, and everything? Saul didn't believe God; he didn't take God at His word; and, he decided to do things his own way. Saul deliberately disobeyed what God had told him to do.

God wants you to be obedient to Him; even if what He asks you to do seems hard. There are times when you and I are tempted to do only part of what God says. For example,

Ephesians 4:25

*So stop telling lies. Let us tell our neighbors the truth...*

Do you ever purposely tell only half the truth? [Teacher, discuss.]

Colossians 3:20

*Children, always obey your parents, for this pleases the Lord.*

When Mom or Dad tells you to do something, do you ever obey only part way?

Matthew 5:44

*Love your enemies...*

Do you show love only to people who do nice things for you?

When God gives a command, He expects His children to obey Him. We please God by showing our love for Him through our obedience. Saul deliberately disobeyed God when he kept the king and some of the animals alive. And this made God very sad.

1 Samuel 15:10-11

*Then the LORD said to Samuel, "I am sorry that I ever made Saul king, for he has not been loyal to me and has refused to obey my command." Samuel was so deeply moved when he heard this that he cried out to the LORD all night.*

Samuel was so sad about this situation he prayed all night to God.

The next morning, Samuel went out to meet Saul on his way home. And Saul told Samuel that he had done all that the Lord had told him to do.

1 Samuel 15:13

*When Samuel finally found him, Saul greeted him cheerfully. "May the LORD bless you," he said. "I have carried out the LORD's command!"*

This was a big lie! So, Samuel confronts Saul with his lie.

1 Samuel 15:14

*"Then what is all the bleating of sheep and goats and the lowing of cattle I hear?" Samuel demanded.*

Samuel could hear the sheep and the cows. He knew that Saul hadn't completely destroyed all of the animals.

What excuse do you think Saul made for bringing home some of the animals?

1 Samuel 15:15

*"It's true that the army spared the best of the sheep, goats, and cattle," Saul admitted. "But they are going to sacrifice them to the LORD your God. We have destroyed everything else"*

First Saul tried to blame it on his soldiers. Then, he said they kept some of them alive to give them to the Lord! They knew that because God is holy, their sin had to be punished. So in those days, they sacrificed animals to God as a way to make up for their sins. Maybe Saul thought that a good excuse would make things right!

This made Samuel very angry at Saul! Here's what he told Saul.

1 Samuel 15:18-19

*And the LORD sent you on a mission and told you, 'Go and completely destroy the sinners, the Amalekites, until they are all dead.' Why haven't you obeyed the LORD? Why did you rush for the plunder and do what was evil in the LORD's sight?"*

Saul kept insisting that they brought the animals home to give to the Lord.

Do you think gifts are more important to God than obeying Him?

1 Samuel 15:22

*But Samuel replied, "What is more pleasing to the LORD: your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.*

God wants us to be obedient to Him more than anything else. And, He wants us to be completely obedient. When we only do part of what we're asked to do, like Saul did, you are still being disobedient.

God expects you and me to obey Him completely and humbly. Sometimes you may not want to do all that God says. But, you must ask God to give you the strength and the "want to" to obey Him. You must count on God's strength to enable you to obey Him. Saul had refused to do what God had told him, and Samuel had to face Saul with his sin.

1 Samuel 15:26 [Teacher, read...]

*...Since you have rejected the LORD's command, he has rejected you as king of Israel."*

Because Saul disobeyed God, He didn't want Saul to be king anymore. It was a sad day for Samuel and for all Israel. Their king had deliberately disobeyed God.

God doesn't lie or change His mind. When He tells you to do something, He means it! The Bible calls disobeying God *sin*. Next time you do something wrong, instead of giving excuses, confess your sin – admit that you were wrong – and ask God to forgive you and to help you obey Him in the future.

## Closing Prayer

Father, help us to take Your commandments very seriously. You have told us not to lie or cheat or steal, yet so often we only obey You part way. We are sinners, deserving of punishment. Thank You for sending Jesus to die in our place on the cross. His death took the punishment that we deserve. And, because we are thankful to You, we want to obey You in all things every day. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

### Game Center

Use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. True or False: God had given Samuel a message for King Saul. (True.)
2. True or False: God's instructions were to get rid of a few things that belonged to the enemy. (False.)
3. True or False: Saul did what God told him to do. (False.)
4. True or False: Saul gave excuses for not obeying God. (True.)
5. True or False: God still loved Saul, but his kingdom would be taken away. (True.)
6. When might a child make an excuse for not obeying God? (You were asked to do one of these chores, but you didn't: clean your room; to do the dishes; feed the dog; take out the trash; pick up your toys; put your bike away; brush your teeth...)
7. When do you need to ask God's help in obeying Him?
8. According to our Memory Verse, what is a good way to obey God? (Hurry to obey. Don't put off doing what is right.)
9. In our story today, God told Samuel what King Saul was supposed to do, but King Saul made excuses. What is something God wants people to do? (Tell the truth. Be patient. Help others.)
10. What are some excuses people give for not obeying God? What excuses might a kid make for not doing what is right? (Obeying God is too hard. Nobody else has to obey. I'll obey next time.)
11. When we do not obey God, instead of making excuses we can ask God to forgive us. What can you do this week to obey God?
12. What excuses did Saul give for not obeying God's commands? (The soldiers did it. We kept the animals for God!)
13. What are some commands God wants us to obey? (Worship God. Honor parents. Tell the truth. Be satisfied with what you have. Be kind. Show God's love. Tell about Jesus.)
14. When are some times that it is hard to obey God's commands? When is it hard to do what we are told to do? (When you're mad at your mom or dad it's hard to honor and respect them. When your friend has a nifty new toy, it's hard not to desire the same thing for yourself—that's coveting.)

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# A Shepherd King

(1 Samuel 16:1-13)

## Introduction

[Teacher, fill a candy box with something inedible, but something that would make the box feel as if it contained the expected goodies. It would be wise to have some treat ready at the end of class so this object lesson doesn't disappoint.] I brought a treat with me today! What do you think it is? Oh! It isn't what you thought. By looking on the outside you thought you knew what was on the inside. Do you think it is possible for a boy or girl to look different on the outside from what he or she really is? Some boys and girls I know look so nice on the outside, but they are really "meanies." The real you, or your heart-attitude, is what really matters to God. God uses those whose hearts are right with Him.

In our Bible story today, we'll find out who God chose to be the new king of Israel and why God chose him.

## Opening Prayer

Father, teach us this morning never to judge a person by what we see on the outside. Help us to learn to see people the way You see them, from the inside out. We want to learn to love people the way You do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deuteronomy 6:5 ESV)*

## Lesson

After 200 years of being ruled by judges, the children of Israel asked God to give them a king. God told the people that it wouldn't be good for them to have an earthly king. But they refused to listen. They demanded that God give them a king. So God had Samuel, the last judge, appoint Saul to be the king of Israel.

Saul started out as a good king. But after a while he became full of pride. He got to the point that he wasn't as interested in obeying God as he used to be. He seemed to want to do everything his own way instead of God's way.

Because Saul disobeyed God, He didn't want Saul to be king anymore. It was a sad day for Samuel and for all Israel when God rejected their king for being deliberately disobedient to Him. Samuel's heart broke over the whole situation.

God told Samuel he wanted him to go anoint another man to be king of Israel.

1 Samuel 16:1

*Now the LORD said to Samuel, "You have mourned long enough for Saul. I have rejected him as king of Israel, so fill your flask with olive oil and go to Bethlehem. Find a man named Jesse who lives there, for I have selected one of his sons to be my king."*

God told Samuel to stop feeling so sad about the way things worked out for Saul; He had someone else in mind. And that made Samuel worried about how Saul would react to this.

1 Samuel 16:2-3

*But Samuel asked, "How can I do that? If Saul hears about it, he will kill me." "Take a heifer with you," the LORD replied, "and say that you have come to make a sacrifice to the LORD. Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you which of his sons to anoint for me."*

God told Samuel to invite Jesse and his sons to a time of worship. Then He would show Samuel what to do from there. So Samuel packed up and went to Bethlehem. He found Jesse and invited him and his seven sons to worship God with him. When they came together, Samuel saw Jesse's oldest son, Eliab.

1 Samuel 16:6

*When they arrived, Samuel took one look at Eliab and thought, "Surely this is the LORD's anointed!"*

Eliab, Jesse's oldest son, must have been tall and good-looking. Because Samuel took one look at him and thought, "Surely this is the man the Lord has chosen to be king!"

## 1 Samuel 16:7

*But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."*

God was teaching Samuel that how a person looks on the outside isn't important. God said to Samuel, "Don't pay attention to how he looks or how tall he is. What really matters is his heart-attitude toward God." God is the only One who knows our hearts – the real you and me, our inner feelings and deepest thoughts.

Maybe you know lots of Bible verses about loving other people, but deep down inside you often have mean thoughts about others. Perhaps you sing songs about loving Jesus in church, but during the week you seldom think about Him. Sooner or later what you think and feel on the inside will come out in what you say and do. You may be able to fool your parents or teachers for a while, but when God looks at your heart, what does He see? Does He see a heart full of sin, one that is disobedient and rebellious against Him? Or does He see a heart that wants to please and serve Him more than anything else?

When God is choosing someone for a special task, He looks at the heart-attitude to see if it is one of love and obedience to Him. The Bible says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." Do you love God that way? God uses those whose hearts are right with Him. Samuel was learning that God looks at what's on the inside of a person and not at the outward appearance.

People can only see how someone looks on the outside, but God is looking to see what is in a person's heart. How a person thinks and feels is more important than how a person looks.

## 1 Samuel 16:8

*Then Jesse told his son Abinadab to step forward and walk in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "This is not the one the LORD has chosen."*

Jesse brought his second son before Samuel. But God said he wasn't the right one either. Maybe it would be the third son.

## 1 Samuel 16:9

*Next Jesse summoned Shimea, but Samuel said, "Neither is this the one the LORD has chosen."*

One by one Jesse brought his sons before Samuel. And not one of them was the one God wanted! God had told Samuel to visit Jesse. Where was the son God had chosen to be the next king?

## 1 Samuel 16:10-11

*In the same way all seven of Jesse's sons were presented to Samuel. But Samuel said to Jesse, "The LORD has not chosen any of these." Then Samuel asked, "Are these all the sons you have?" "There is still the youngest," Jesse replied. "But he's out in the fields watching the sheep and goats." "Send for him at once," Samuel said. "We will not sit down to eat until he arrives."*

No one was getting any dinner until God showed Samuel who the next king was going to be.

## 1 Samuel 16:12

*So Jesse sent for him. He was dark and handsome, with beautiful eyes. And the LORD said, "This is the one; anoint him."*

David was the one that God had chosen to be the next king over Israel. Why do you think God chose David? What was it He saw in David's heart? God must have seen in David a heart that



was right towards Him. David loved God with all of his heart. David trusted God with his whole life. David desired to please God with everything that he thought, said, and did. David had a heart completely committed to God.

1 Samuel 16:13

*So as David stood there among his brothers, Samuel took the flask of olive oil he had brought and anointed David with the oil. And the Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon David from that day on. Then Samuel returned to Ramah.*

We can show that we love God, too. The Bible says, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.” When we do what this verse says, we show that we love God and want to obey Him in everything we do.

Your heart-attitude is very important. Because what is on the inside will eventually show up in your actions. A right attitude produces right actions, but a wrong heart-attitude causes wrong actions. If you are happy and loving and full of joy, you will treat others with love. But if you are angry or jealous inside, you will be mean to others.

This week will you ask God to examine your heart and to show you if there is anything that displeases Him? Are you angry with someone? Or jealous? Are you depending on God, or are you worrying all the time? God will show you if there is anything wrong. Confess that sin to Him so that your heart-attitude will be right.

## Closing Prayer

Father, help us to have the right heart attitude this week. Keep our hearts pure before You. We don't want to harbor any anger or jealousy or worry. We want to love You with all our hearts so that we can love others in the same way You love us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

On a large heart shaped piece of construction paper, have the children draw a picture of a way to show love for God. On the other side, have them draw a picture of a way they can show love to a person they love (mom, friend, grandparent.)

To help the children think of what to draw ask some of these questions:

- Who is someone you love?
- How do you show that person you love him or her?
- What are some ways we can show that we love God?

### Object Lesson

Materials:

- A pitcher of Kool-Aid (or brightly colored water)
- 3 clear glasses
- 3 index cards

Procedure:

1. Write one word on each of the index cards: Heart, Soul, Mind.
2. Tape each card on the outside of a glass.
3. Invite the children to look at the glasses.
4. Ask: “*Who in this room loves God? Show me how much you love God? This much?*” (Demonstrate an inch, then about a foot in size...)
5. Share the Memory Verse and talk about it.
6. Pour some of the Kool-Aid into a couple of the glasses and ask: “*Is this enough for God?*”

7. Fill the glasses to about half full and say: *"I could give God half of my heart. That would be OK, right?"*
8. Keep up the conversation until all three glasses are absolutely full.
9. Say, *"This is what God wants! He wants us to love him with our whole heart, soul and might. He wants our love for Him to overflow all over everyone around us!"*

## Game Center

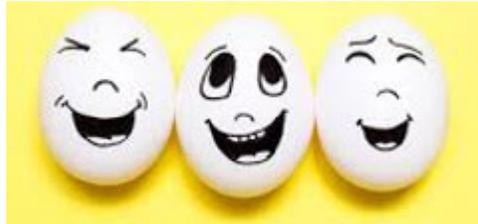
### *Don't be hard-hearted*

Materials:

- Carton of eggs

Procedure:

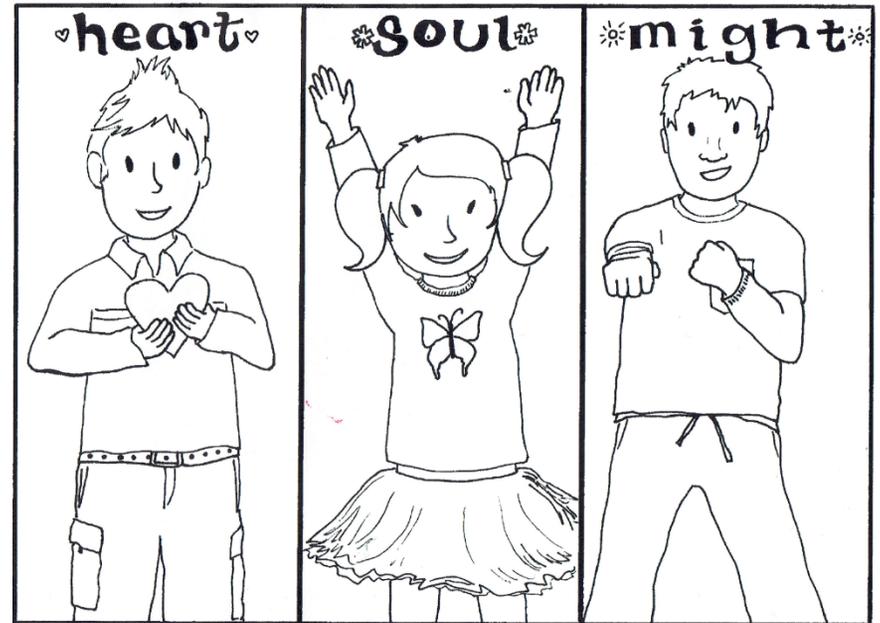
1. Hard boil 3 of the eggs.
2. Using a Sharpie permanent marker, draw happy faces on all of the eggs.
3. For a correct answer to a review question, a child gets to choose an egg to crack. If the egg is raw, that child's team gets 1,000 points; if the egg is hard boiled, he gets a ZONK, or no points.



Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. Why did Samuel go to Bethlehem? (God told him to visit Jesse)
2. What did God tell Samuel to take with him? (A flask of anointing oil and a heifer for sacrifice.)
3. What did God tell Samuel NOT to look for when choosing the new king? (What the person looks like or how tall a person is.)
4. Why did God choose David to be king? (David had a heart completely committed to God.)

5. Read our Memory Verse. What does "love God with all your heart, soul and strength" mean? (Show that you love God and that you want to obey Him in everything that you do.)
6. What are some ways people show that they love God? (Pray. Learn Bible verses. Sing, Show God's love to other people.)
7. What can we do to obey our Memory verse? (Obey God and show that we love Him in everything we do.)
8. When have you seen someone show love for God? How did you know that person loved God?
9. How can we show that we love God more than anything else?
10. Who is somebody you love very much? How can you show your love for them?



# David and Goliath

(1 Samuel 17:1-52)

## Introduction

Have you ever faced a big, huge problem? What are some problems children your age face? (Getting teased; having lots of homework at school; facing a test at school; nobody likes me; being bullied at school; parents fighting; mean friend; new in school or neighborhood, scared of big dog in neighborhood, etc.) Our problems can seem like giants in our lives, can't they?

Today in our Bible story, we'll learn about a big, mean, ugly giant named Goliath and how a little boy trusted God for the power to overcome him.

## Opening Prayer

Father, so often the problems we face in life are like great big, mean, ugly giants. Teach us this morning that we can face the giants in our lives because You give us Your power and strength. Teach us to trust that You will always be with us as we face our fears. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him.  
(Psalm 28:7 NASB)*

## Lesson

Last week we learned that because King Saul was disobedient, God decided to remove him and appoint another king for the people of Israel. God told Samuel to appoint David, a young shepherd boy, as the king. But because David was still only a boy, it would be years before he actually takes the throne from Saul.

Meanwhile, the Philistines caused many problems for Israel.

We pick up the story today at a time when the Philistines and the Israelites were getting ready to fight each other. King Saul and the army of Israel were camped on a mountain on one side of a valley and the Philistines were camped on the other side of the valley. Nobody had started fighting yet. Instead of coming out with their spears and swords, the Philistine army sent their secret weapon. What do you think it was?

It was a man named Goliath. He was more than nine feet tall! He had a bronze helmet and armor that weighted two hundred pounds. He carried a thick sword and a twenty-five pound iron spearhead. And to protect him even more, a man walked ahead of him with a huge shield.

Goliath was big, mean, and ugly. Every day for 40 days the giant strutted before the people and shouted in a mighty voice, challenging the Israelites to send a man out to fight him one-on-one.

1 Samuel 17:10

*I defy the armies of Israel today! Send me a man who will fight me!"*

No one could stop Goliath! King Saul and his soldiers didn't seem to have a chance against Goliath and his mighty army. Has anyone every threatened you? Is there a bully at your school? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

King Saul and the Israelite army did not have courage. They were terrified by the threats of the giant Goliath. No one wanted to fight with him. They were all too scared.

1 Samuel 17:24

*As soon as the Israelite army saw him, they began to run away in fright.*

Then one day David's father sent him out to bring some food and supplies to the Israeli army. David listened as Goliath dared the Israelites to fight him and this made David furious.

## 1 Samuel 17:32

*“Don’t worry about this Philistine,” David told Saul. “I’ll go fight him!”*

David said that he’d go out and fight Goliath! But he was only a young shepherd boy; not a soldier.

## 1 Samuel 17:33

*“Don’t be ridiculous!” Saul replied. “There’s no way you can fight this Philistine and possibly win! You’re only a boy, and he’s been a man of war since his youth.”*

King Saul thought it was ridiculous that a boy would want to fight a giant like Goliath. But David wasn’t afraid!

## 1 Samuel 17:34-36

*But David persisted. “I have been taking care of my father’s sheep and goats,” he said. “When a lion or a bear comes to steal a lamb from the flock, I go after it with a club and rescue the lamb from its mouth. If the animal turns on me, I catch it by the jaw and club it to death. I have done this to both lions and bears, and I’ll do it to this pagan Philistine, too, for he has defied the armies of the living God!”*

What do you think gave David confidence to fight Goliath?

## 1 Samuel 17:37

*The LORD who rescued me from the claws of the lion and the bear will rescue me from this Philistine!” Saul finally consented. “All right, go ahead,” he said. “And may the LORD be with you!”*

Saul gave David his own sword and armor to wear, but they were too big for David and besides, he was not used to wearing armor, so he left them behind. Instead he went to a nearby stream and chose five smooth stones and put them in his pouch. Then with his sling in his hand, he walked toward Goliath.

## 1 Samuel 17:41-42

*Goliath walked out toward David with his shield bearer ahead of him, sneering in contempt at this ruddy-faced boy.*

Goliath looked down on David and snorted at him. What a bully!

## 1 Samuel 17:44

*“Come over here, and I’ll give your flesh to the birds and wild animals!” Goliath yelled.*

Goliath thought he could get away with his proud attitude against the armies of the living God, but God gave David supernatural boldness.

## 1 Samuel 17:45-47

*David replied to the Philistine, “You come to me with sword, spear, and javelin, but I come to you in the name of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies—the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. Today the LORD will conquer you, and I will kill you and cut off your head. And then I will give the dead bodies of your men to the birds and wild animals, and the whole world will know that there is a God in Israel! And everyone assembled here will know that the LORD rescues his people, but not with sword and spear. This is the LORD’s battle, and he will give you to us!”*

David ran to meet Goliath. Taking a stone from his pouch, he fit it into his sling, whipped it around his head and let go. Whap! The stone hit Goliath squarely between his eyes and he fell to the ground!

When the Philistines saw that their champion was dead, they dropped everything and ran away as fast as they could go.

The Israelites shouted for joy! God had delivered them from the fierce Philistine.

Why was David so bold? Not because he had the strength in himself to have victory over Goliath, but because he knew and trusted his God. God had delivered him many times out of very difficult situations. David knew that he could trust God completely in this situation. God gave David courage.

What about you? Do you have any giants in your life? (Refer to Pre-Lesson Warmup.) When we have a problem, we can remember the words of Psalm 28:7 to help us remember we can face the giants in our lives because we can trust God to give us His power and strength.

God is all-powerful and he loves you very much. You can count on Him completely. God is our strength and shield. That means that He protects us and helps us in times of trouble. We love the Lord and are glad for all the good things He does for us.

## Closing Prayer

Father, thank You that You are our strength and shield. Thank You that You are always with us, protecting and caring for us. We love you Lord. Help us to remember that because of who You are, we can trust You totally. Thank You for giving us the courage we need to face the giants in our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

On butcher paper sketch a nine-foot Goliath. Let the children color it; then tape it to the wall so they can get an idea of just how big he was. As they work talk about how sometimes our problems seem as big as Goliath, but God gives us courage to face them.

Allow the children to write or draw pictures of the "giants" in their lives on sticky notes – things that scare them, make them sad, or problems that seem overwhelming.

Then let the children throw bean bags at the giant and as they do they can yell, "The battle is the Lord's!" If they hit Goliath in the head, they can remove one of the sticky note problems.

## Game Center

### *Pantomiming the Story*

Invite volunteers to take turns pantomiming the actions of people in the Bible Story (Goliath shouting, the Israelites shaking in fear, David putting on Saul's armor, David choosing stones from the stream, David using his slingshot, and Goliath falling). Other children guess the actions.

Note: you can combine the games by having a child pantomime a story action and whoever guesses the story action correctly gets to throw a bean bag at Goliath and remove a problem sticky note.

### *Pantomiming the Memory Verse*

Invite volunteers to pantomime words from Psalm 28:7 (for "strength," flex arm muscles; for "shield," pretend to hide behind a shield; for "heart," make heart shape with hands; for "helped," hold out hands.) Other Children guess the actions.

### *Review Question Game*

Divide kids into 2 teams.

For a correctly answered question the child gets a chance to toss a bean bag to a Target. If they get a bull's eye their team gets 1000 points. Next ring out is 500 points and 100 points for outside ring.

If they get a bull's eye, they also get to pull a "Problem" sticky note off of Goliath.

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

1. How did the Israelite army feel when they saw Goliath? What did they do? (They were scared and ran away.)

2. What did David do when he heard about Goliath? (David said that he'd go out and fight Goliath.)
3. Why wasn't David afraid to face Goliath? (David had confidence in God. He knew that God was with him.)
4. What are some problems children your age face? (Friends who tease them; lots of homework; failed a test; nobody likes me; bully at school; parents fighting; angry with a friend; new in school or neighborhood.)
5. What makes you feel afraid? Or Sad? (Parents fighting; big mean dogs.)
6. When someone faces a problem, what are some things he or she can do? (Ask a parent or teacher for help in knowing what to do. Pray to God. Talk to a friend. Apologize to that person you are having the fight with.)
7. What can we remember when we have a problem? (Ask God for help. Trust in God for help.)
8. Why do you think it is good to talk to God about problems you face?
9. What are some ways God helps us when we have problems. (Gives us parents or teachers to help us know what the best thing to do is. Cares for us.)
10. What is today's Memory Verse? Psalm 28:7, "The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him.")
11. What does this verse say about God? (He is our strength & shield.)
12. What does a shield do? (Protects a person) What are some ways God helps and protects us?



# David and Jonathan

(1 Samuel 18:1-9; 19:1-10; 20)

## Introduction

Who is one of your best friends? Why is he or she a good friend? What makes a person a good friend? If you were looking for a friend, what kind of a person would you be looking for? [Teacher, let the children respond.] What kind of a friend should you be?

Our Memory Verse today is Proverbs 17:17. Let's take a minute to look at 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 together to find out what love really is. [Teacher, read the verse and jot on the board some of the characteristics of a good friend: patient, kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, etc.] These are the qualities that make a person a good friend.

In our Bible story today, we'll find out about David and Jonathan, who made a promise with each other to be loyal friends.

## Opening Prayer

Father, teach us this morning what it means to be a good friend. Give us a desire to always be faithful and true to our friends, to never lie to them or be mean to them. Teach us how to love other people in the same way You love us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*A friend loves at all times. (Proverbs 17:17 NKJ)*

## Lesson

Last week we learned that God used David, a shepherd boy, to kill the Philistine's secret weapon. Do you remember what that weapon was? Yes, David killed the big, mean giant, Goliath, with a single stone and his sling shot! How was that possible? It wasn't that David was so strong or smart; God gave him the courage to face the giant and it was God who directed that stone to hit Goliath right between the eyes!

We learned that we can rely upon God as we face our problems in life. The battle is the Lord's; He will give us the strength; power and wisdom we need in life.

Well, after David's victory over Goliath, King Saul asked David to come and live in the palace with him and his family.

1 Samuel 18:2

*From that day on Saul kept David with him and wouldn't let him return home.*

And there, in the king's household, David became best friends with Jonathan, King Saul's son. What does the Bible say about Jonathan and David's friendship?

1 Samuel 18:3

*And Jonathan made a solemn pact with David, because he loved him as he loved himself.*

A covenant is a promise to be true. David and Jonathan were best buddies and they promised to always be faithful friends.

Evidently David made a good impression on King Saul, too, because Saul gave David a very high position as a military commander.

1 Samuel 18:5

*Whatever Saul asked David to do, David did it successfully. So Saul made him a commander over the men of war, an appointment that was welcomed by the people and Saul's officers alike.*

Everyone loved David. One time when Saul and David returned from a battle, Saul heard a group of women celebrating David's victories in song.

1 Samuel 18:6

*When the victorious Israelite army was returning home after David had killed the Philistine, women from all the towns of Israel came out to meet King Saul. They sang and danced for joy with tambourines and cymbals.*

All the women made up songs about what a great hero David was.

## 1 Samuel 18:7

*So the women sang as they danced, and said: "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands."*

This made King Saul jealous of David.

## 1 Samuel 18:8

*This was their song: "Saul has killed his thousands, and David his ten thousands!"*

Saul thought the women were giving David credit for killing tens of thousands of soldiers while only giving him credit for killing one thousand. Saul thought they were saying that David was greater than he was, and this made him jealous of David!!

Have you ever been jealous of someone? Do you know what jealousy is? It is feeling unhappy – even angry – because you don't have something that someone else has. How do you react when someone says good things about your friend, but they don't compliment you? Do you know anyone that always seems to get new clothes or new toys, while you never seem to get anything new? Do you have a friend or a brother or sister that always gets better grades than you? Is there a new baby in your home who seems to get more attention than you? These are all situation that can make you jealous. Have you ever felt jealous? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

Saul was so jealous of David, that he wanted to kill him. Soon he became so jealous and hateful towards David that he tried to get his own son to murder him or even his servants.

## 1 Samuel 19:1-2

*Saul now urged his servants and his son Jonathan to assassinate David. But Jonathan, because of his strong affection for David, told him what his father was planning. "Tomorrow morning," he warned him, "you must find a hiding place out in the fields."*

Even though King Saul was jealous and hateful towards David, his son Jonathan wasn't like that at all. He was David's best friend. Jonathan begged his father not to do it.

## 1 Samuel 19:4-5

*The next morning Jonathan spoke with his father about David, saying many good things about him. "The king must not sin against his servant David," Jonathan said. "He's never done anything to harm you. He has always helped you in any way he could. Have you forgotten about the time he risked his life to kill the Philistine giant and how the LORD brought a great victory to all Israel as a result? You were certainly happy about it then. Why should you murder an innocent man like David? There is no reason for it at all!"*

Jonathan tried to show his father how wrong he was to try to kill David. David was probably one of King Saul's most loyal and helpful men. He had killed Goliath and defeated Saul's enemies. At first Saul listened to Jonathan and promised not to kill David. But his jealous anger was so great that it wasn't long before Saul allowed his jealousy to control him again, and again he tried to take David's life.

## 1 Samuel 20:1

*David now fled from Naioth in Ramah and found Jonathan. "What have I done?" he exclaimed. "What is my crime? How have I offended your father that he is so determined to kill me?"*

Jealousy is a terrible thing. It puts murder in your heart. There are times when all of us have feelings of jealousy. But we need to make sure it doesn't grow in our hearts. You can stop the sin of jealousy with God's help. When you realize that you are even a little jealous of your friend, what do you think you should do? Confess it to God; admit that you have those wicked feelings of jealousy. Ask God to help you to stop being jealous. Do you know the very best way to stop being jealous of someone else? Stop comparing yourself to that other person. Stop wanting "things" others have. Stop feeling sorry for yourself. And begin to pray for the wellbeing of that other person. Look for good in that person and compliment him or her for those

good traits you see in them. God will give you power to stop being jealous.

Saul's jealousy of David had become so bad that he tried over and over again to kill him. Jonathan tried to talk to his father...

1 Samuel 20:32-33

*"But why should he be put to death?" Jonathan asked his father. "What has he done?" Then Saul hurled his spear at Jonathan, intending to kill him. So at last Jonathan realized that his father was really determined to kill David.*

Saul's jealous anger turned against his own son and he tried to kill him, too. There was no doubt in Jonathan's mind; he knew for sure that his father had made up his mind to kill David.

Now think about this: It never crossed Jonathan's mind to be jealous of David even though, if he helped David live, it might spoil his own chances at becoming king. Instead of being jealous like his father, Jonathan tried to be a peace maker between David and his father, Saul. Then, when he realized Saul was determined to kill David, he helped David escape from Saul.

You have a choice to either be jealous or to show God's love for others. With God's help, you can be a good friend, just like Jonathan. Ask Him to help you choose to show His love to your friends.

## Closing Prayer

Friends are a gift from You, Father. Thank You for giving us friends. Help us never to take advantage of them or take them for granted.

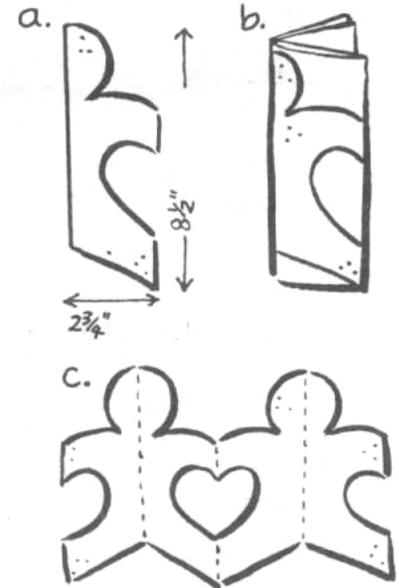
We want to always be true and faithful to our friends and love them with the kind of love Jesus has for us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

#### Best Friends

1. Make several cardboard patterns as shown in sketch a.
2. Give each child a sheet of white construction paper, a pencil and a pair of scissors.
3. Children fold the paper in half and in half again as in. (See sketch b.)
4. Children place pattern on the folded paper so the straight edge of pattern is on folded side and other edge of pattern touches other side of paper.
5. Children trace, cut, and open their paper to discover the surprise design (see sketch c).
6. As the children work talk to them about friendship. Ask, questions such as the following:
  - How do you know when others are your friends? (They smile at you. They play with you. They help you. They share with you.)
  - What do you do to let someone know you want to be his or her friend? (Talk to the person. Invite him or her to play. Share your lunch with the person.)
  - How did Jonathan show David that he was a good friend?



- What does the surprise design make you think of?

## Game Center

### *Buddy Relay*

1. Write each word of the Memory verse (Proverbs 17:17) on separate index cards, making two sets of verse cards using two different colors of cards.
2. Use masking tape to make start and finish lines on the floor on opposite sides of the room.
3. Mix up cards, keeping sets separate.
4. Divide class into two teams.
5. Teams line up behind the start line.
6. Place a mixed set of cards at the front of each line.
7. Call out the name of a body part (elbow, shoulder, head, and hand).
8. First two children in each line carry one of the word cards between them, using the named body part, to the finish line.
9. Children leave card at the finish line and walk quickly back to start of line.



10. Play continues in this manner until all cards are brought to the finish line. Children put cards in the correct verse order and then say verse out loud.

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

1. What are some things friends like to do together? (Go to the park.)
2. Why was David known as a big hero? (He defeated Goliath. He won victories for Israel's army.)
3. How did Jonathan show he was David's friend? What did Jonathan do to show God's love to his good friend, David?
4. Why do you think that Jonathan wasn't jealous that David would become the next king?
5. What can you do to show God's love?
6. What are some ways you can be a good friend to someone? (Invite a new kid to play. Share lunch or toys with another kid. Only say kind things about others.)
7. How has a friend helped you?
8. When are times kids might need a good friend? (When they are in a new class. When they need help with homework. When they are sad. When other people make fun of them.)
9. When are times it is difficult to be a good friend? (When I want first choice. When my friends don't play fair. When I have a bad day.)
10. How do you know when others are your friends? (They smile at you. They play with you. They help you. They share with you.)
11. What do you do to let someone know you want to be his or her friend? (Talk to the person. Invite him or her to play. Share lunch with the person.)

# David Hides from Saul

(1 Samuel 24; 26)

## Introduction

Tell me about a time someone was mean to you? What did you do? When someone does something mean to you, what do you normally want to do in return? Yeah, you want to do something mean back – and even a little more than they did to you.

Our scripture today says we are not to repay evil for evil. That's hard, isn't it! Instead, God tells us to love our enemies and do good to them.

David had a problem like that. In our Bible story today, we'll find out what David did.

## Opening Prayer

Father, help us to have good listening ears this morning and give us teachable hearts for I know that You want to teach us how to respond to people when they are mean to us. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right.  
(Romans 12:17 NKJ)*

## Lesson

Last week we learned that even though David had been one of Saul's most loyal and helpful men, Saul became insanely jealous of David's popularity with the people. He became so jealous, in fact, that he wanted to murder David. So, David had to leave the palace.

From then on, David lived a very hard life. He slept in the forest or caves in the mountains. Wherever he went, Saul chased after him and whoever helped David was in terrible trouble.

One time when he was searching for David, Saul went into a cave. Little did he know that it was the very cave where David and his men were hiding. Let's read what happened...

1 Samuel 24:3-4

*At the place where the road passes some sheepfolds, Saul went into a cave to relieve himself. But as it happened, David and his men were hiding farther back in that very cave! "Now's your opportunity!" David's men whispered to him. "Today the LORD is telling you, 'I will certainly put your enemy into your power, to do with as you wish.'" So David crept forward and cut off a piece of the hem of Saul's robe.*

Saul walked right into the very cave that David and his men were in! This was David's chance to get Saul. David's men wanted to attack him right there and then. But even though Saul wanted to kill David; David did NOT want to hurt Saul. Quiet as a shadow, David slipped up to Saul, took out his knife, but instead of killing him, David just cut a piece off of Saul's robe.

Wow! Could you do that? Have you ever wanted to get even with someone who was mean to you?

If you had just spent the last few years of your life running and hiding from someone that was out to kill you, what would you do if that very person walked right into your cave? When someone is being mean to you, it's easy to want to get even and be mean right back, isn't it? But David knew that wouldn't please God. David showed respect for Saul. After all, Saul was the King of Israel.

He let Saul leave the cave unharmed.

1 Samuel 24:9

*Then he shouted to Saul, "Why do you listen to the people who say I am trying to harm you?"*

David pleaded with Saul, "You must believe that I do not want to harm you, I could have killed you just now if I had wished. Look!" And, he held up the piece of Saul's robe to show him how close he was. This made Saul feel ashamed.

1 Samuel 24:17-19

*And he said to David, "You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me good for evil. Yes, you have been amazingly kind to me today, for when the LORD put me in a place where you could have killed me, you didn't do it. Who else would let his enemy get away when he had him in his power? May the LORD reward you well for the kindness you have shown me today."*

Even though King Saul was glad David did not kill him, it wasn't long before Saul was chasing David again! David knew that Saul's feelings towards him had not really changed.

Saul took 3,000 soldiers and went looking for David. Saul and his big army camped for the night near a hill; Saul slept in the middle of the soldiers with his sword and a water jug next to his head.

1 Samuel 26:7

*So David and Abishai went right into Saul's camp and found him asleep, with his spear stuck in the ground beside his head. Abner and the soldiers were lying asleep around him.*

Here again, David had the perfect opportunity to get Saul. What would you do if you were David?

1 Samuel 26:8

*"God has surely handed your enemy over to you this time!" Abishai whispered to David. "Let me pin him to the ground with one thrust of the spear; I won't need to strike twice!"*

Abishai begged David to let him kill Saul. He said he could do him in with one blow! But David would not allow any harm come to Saul.

So, David and Abishai quietly made their way down to Saul's camp, tiptoeing between the sleeping soldiers to get to Saul.

Let's read what they did next...

1 Samuel 26:12

*So David took the spear and jug of water that were near Saul's head. Then he and Abishai got away without anyone seeing them or even waking up, because the LORD had put Saul's men into a deep sleep.*

Wow! David sneaked into the middle of the camp where Saul was sleeping and took his spear and his water jug!

David could have taken Saul's life, but he didn't.

When David was safely away, he woke up Saul and all his men by shouting, "Who's guarding the king of Israel? Where are the water jug and the spear that were beside his head?"

Once again, Saul realized that David spared his life and didn't try to get even with him.

Even though Saul was mean to David, David showed God's love to Saul.

What do you do when someone is mean to you? When someone is mean to us, we usually feel like being mean back, don't we? But God wants to help us show His love instead. God can help us choose to be kind and to do what is right. Being kind, especially when others are unkind, and doing what is right are ways we can show God's love.

## Closing Prayer

Father, when Jesus was on earth, people were mean to Him, but He always showed them love. I pray that You will help us to show love when others are unkind to us. Help us to resist the temptation to get even with people. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Object Lesson

#### ***Don't Explode with Anger***

Materials:

- Can of soda

Procedure:

The bible tells us in Romans 12:17 not to repay anyone evil for evil. When someone does something mean to us, our natural reaction is to do something mean back – and even a little more than they did to you!

When we get angry, we need to be very careful not to sin. Sinning is when we do something that goes against God's rules for our life like pushing, fighting, and saying unkind things.

Have you ever been really mad at someone?

*(Take out can of soda.)*

When we get angry it is like shaking this can of soda up. *(Shake the can hard then act like you are going to open it.)*

What would happen if I opened this can? It would explode everywhere!

*(Set the can down and make sure you give it at least a minute or two before picking it up again. It would be best if you test this before presenting it.)*

So, if you were angry like this can and you sin by getting in a fight or calling someone bad names it would be like opening this can and it spraying everywhere!

Sometimes what we need to do is walk away and pray and ask God to help us to calm down and not respond in sin.

*Ask:* What should you do when someone is mean to you? (Pray for the person. Tell the person that he or she is not being kind. Walk away instead of saying something mean. Ignore what that person says. Don't say mean things back. Seek the help of an adult.)

*Ask:* What are some kind things you can do or say to someone who is mean to you? (Bake them cookies, let them go "first", hold the door open for them, pay them a compliment.)

(Take the can and open it. It should open normally now. Make this dramatic so the kids think it will spray everywhere.)

See, all this can needed was a few moments of quiet and it calmed down and it could be opened without exploding. When we are angry, we often need a few moments so that we can react without sinning.

### Game Center

#### ***Memory Verse Game***

To reinforce the idea that David spent years running and hiding from Saul, print the words of the memory verse on separate index cards, two or three words per card. Hide cards around the room.

Children search for hidden cards and then arrange them in verse order, referring to their Bibles as needed.

#### ***I Spy***

Lead children in playing a game like *I Spy*. Think of a spot in the room (bookshelf, clock, table) where you pretend David is hiding. Say, "I'm looking for David, and he's somewhere on this side of the room." Children ask "yes" or "no" questions to determine the spot where David is hiding. Once a child guesses the correct location, challenge him or her to answer one of the review questions.

Or, use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

1. *True or False:* Saul and his 3,000 men tried to capture David. (True.)
2. Where was David hiding? (In a cave.)
3. Why was Saul trying to kill David? (Saul was jealous of David and thought he was a threat to the throne.)
4. *True or False:* When David found Saul alone in a cave, David wanted to attack Saul, but his men told him not to. (False.)
5. What did David's men want David to do to Saul while he was in the cave? (Kill him.)
6. Why didn't David kill Saul? (David respected Saul because God had chosen him to be the first king of Israel.)
7. How did David show Saul he had the opportunity to kill him? (He cut off a piece of Saul's robe.)
8. *True or False:* Saul stopped trying to kill David after the first time David showed kindness to him (False.)
9. When David spared Saul's life, what was Saul's response? (He felt ashamed, verse 17.)
10. *True or False:* David was kind to Saul, even though Saul was unkind to him. (True.)
11. Tell me about a time someone was mean to you? What did you do?
12. Have you ever wanted to get even with someone who was mean to you?
13. What should you do when someone is mean to you? (Pray for the person. Tell the person that he or she is not being kind. Walk away instead of saying something mean. Ignore what that person says. Don't say mean things back. Seek the help of an adult.)
14. What are some kind things you can do or say to someone who is mean to you? (Bake them cookies, let them go "first", hold the door open for them, pay them a compliment.)

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# David Worships God

(1 Chronicles 10:6 – 15:2-3)

## Introduction

[Teacher, an optional way to introduce this lesson is to decorate the room for a celebration – blow up balloons and hang streamers, etc.] How do you look when you are happy or excited? What are some reasons that you feel joyful or happy? (Birthday parties, Christmas celebrations, pet, friends, etc.) What do you know about God that makes you feel joyful or happy?

Today we are going to find out why King David was joyful and wanted to celebrate.

## Opening Prayer

Father, we love You. You are worthy of our praise. Teach us this morning what a thrill it is to worship You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*I will celebrate before the Lord. (2 Samuel 6:21 NKJ)*

## Lesson

Last week we learned that David spent years running from Saul. He lived in caves and out in the forest, as he tried to escape Saul's attempts to kill him. One day, during an attack from the Philistines, both Saul and his son, Jonathan, were killed.

1 Chronicles 10:6

*So Saul and his three sons died there together, bringing his dynasty to an end.*

It was at this time that David became the king of Israel.

1 Chronicles 11:1-3 [Teacher, read...]

*Then all Israel gathered before David at Hebron and told him, "We are your own flesh and blood. In the past, even when Saul was king, you were the one who really led the forces of Israel. And the LORD your God told you, 'You will be the shepherd of my people Israel. You will be the leader of my people Israel.'" So there at Hebron, David made a covenant before the LORD with all the elders of Israel. And they anointed him king of Israel, just as the LORD had promised through Samuel.*

Many years before David became king, the Philistines had captured the Ark of the Covenant in a battle.

What do you think of when I say the word "ark"? (Noah's ark.) The Ark of the Covenant is a different kind of ark. It was a beautiful wooden box covered with real gold and in it were some very special things: The Ten Commandments, Aaron's rod, and a jar of manna.



These were precious to the children of Israel and now that David was king, he wanted to bring the ark to Jerusalem.

## 1 Chronicles 13:1-3

*David consulted with all his officials, including the generals and captains of his army. Then he addressed the entire assembly of Israel as follows: "If you approve and if it is the will of the LORD our God, let us send messages to all the Israelites throughout the land, including the priests and Levites in their towns and pasturelands. Let us invite them to come and join us. It is time to bring back the Ark of our God, for we neglected it during the reign of Saul."*

What a special day this was for David! He was bringing the ark to Jerusalem so that all the people there could worship God.

## 1 Chronicles 13:8

*David and all Israel were celebrating before God with all their might, singing songs and playing all kinds of musical instruments—lyres, harps, tambourines, cymbals, and trumpets.*

King David led the big crowd of people. He sang and danced to show his joy that God was really with His people! All along the way, people stood by the road, singing and shouting and playing music to show their love for God. They joyfully played cymbals, harps and trumpets. They wanted God to know how happy they were to have the ark in Jerusalem.

God wants us to follow David's example and worship God with joy.

Worship is not just sitting and listening to a pastor or Sunday school teacher talk about God. It is thinking about God yourself. Worship is taking time to appreciate who God is, what He has done, and what He is doing. It is responding to Him with reverence, praise, and joy. Showing Him how much you love Him.

### **The first step to true worship: being grateful for what Jesus did for us**

The first way we really show God that we appreciate Him is to thank Him for paying for our sins by dying on the cross. When you truly

understand that when Jesus was nailed to the cross, He took the punishment that you and I deserve for all the naughty things we do, we can begin to understand how great and good God truly is. Until that happens, true worship cannot begin. True worship begins when we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior.

### **Worship God with others**

Just going to church or Sunday school does not mean you are worshiping. You worship by thinking about God as you sing, pray, and learn His Word. Focus on God and join others in honoring Him.

### **Worship God when you're alone**

You can worship God anytime, anywhere. Learn to go through each day thinking about God and thanking Him for who He is and what He does. As the sun shine (or rain) strikes your window in the morning, thank God for giving you a fresh new day. Hum a praise song as you get dressed. Kneel by your bed and worship God by giving yourself to Him to serve Him during the day. And remember, you are surrounded by His wonders. Enjoy the warm water as you wash your face. Notice colors and fabrics and scents. Think about the banana or egg you're having for breakfast. Isn't God's creation amazing? As you leave for school, look at God's beautiful sky and trees and flowers and animals. Feel your heart pumping; watch your fingers work. Just think! The marvelous God who made you and all things goes through your day with you. Tell Him how glad you are for His love and for the promise of His continual care. Enjoy His presence from the time you wake until you whisper your good-night prayer.

### **Use God's Word to help you worship**

Let God's Word help you to focus on Him and His works. The Psalms and many other Scriptures are praise words spoken to God (1 Chronicles 16:34; Psalm 95; 100) and you can take some passages, like Psalm 23, and pray them back to God in worship. "Thank You, God, for being my Shepherd, for promising to keep me from want..."

## Worship God in prayer

Another part of worship is talking to God and telling Him how wonderful He is.

### Singing is a way to worship.

Use songs to help you tell God that you love Him and honor Him.

### Make giving an act of worship.

We can worship by giving. We can give God our whole selves – our time, our money, our talents, our bodies, our minds, and our hearts. You and I give time to God by doing kind things for others. We give Him money by putting it in the offering at church to help people in need and support missionaries. How can you give God your talents? Your body? Your mind? Your heart? Malachi 3:10 tells of the special ways God rewards giving.

Worship is exciting! Those who make worship a natural part of their daily lives discover the secret of true and lasting joy. (Psalm 91:1, 2; Isaiah 26:3).

What are some reasons that we should worship God? What are some ways you can think of to show God how much you love Him? [Teacher, let the children respond.]

We can show that we are glad for God's love when we sing and pray and talk with other people about God. Another way to worship God is to thank Him for the many things He has done for us. Let's do that together right now...

## Closing Prayer

[Teacher, lead the children in prayer, inviting volunteers to express love or thanks to God.]

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

#### *Prayer Poems*

King David wrote many songs and poems as prayers to God. These songs and poems are called psalms. We can read them in our Bibles. (See Psalm 91:1, 2; Isaiah 26:3). Let's write a prayer poem of our own.

[Teacher, prepare a piece of construction paper for each child with the heading, "I thank God for..." written at the top. Have children write or dictate words to complete the sentence on their papers, telling what they thank God for. Then, allow the children to draw pictures to illustrate their papers.

If children have trouble getting started, ask them, "What are some things God has done for you that makes you happy?" Or, prompt them with some of the review questions from the Game Center.]

#### *Tambourines*

**Materials:** two paper plates for each child, two jingle bells, yarn, hole punch, scissors, markers.

**Preparation:** For each child, cut a length of yarn twice the circumference of a paper plate. Wrap one end of each length of yarn with tape to make lacing easier.

#### **Procedure:**

1. Give two plates and a piece of yarn to each child. To make tambourines, each child lays one plate right side up and then puts the other plate right side down on the first plate. (Note: you can put a few beans between the plates.) Help children punch holes 1 inch apart around the edge of their plates and lace the yarn

through the holes. (Note: if you pre-punch holes before class, make sure the holes line up on each plate.) As children work, ask the following questions:

- What instruments do you like to hear?
  - What kinds of instruments did the people play in our lesson today? (Harps, Cymbals, Trumpets.)
  - What instruments have you heard played when people are singing praise songs to God?
2. Tie ends of yarn together, leaving tails. Children thread a jingle bell onto each yarn tail and knot yarn to hold the bell.
  3. Allow children to decorate their tambourines with markers, glitter glue, etc.
  4. Lead children in playing tambourines as they worship God.

## Game Center

### ***Praise the Lord!***

What do kids your age do if they are really excited? [Teacher, help the children discover the following actions and as they do, write them on the board: clap, jump, click heels, do high fives, twirl, cheer, skip, leap, etc.] God loves it when we show Him we love Him with our actions.

**Game:** Have children stand in a circle. Have the first child do something to show excitement. Second child repeats that action and does another action. The third child must repeat the first two actions and does another one. And, so forth. For example, the first child claps, the second child claps and jumps, the third child claps, jumps, and twirls around and so forth around the circle.

## ***Worship Activity***

Select an upbeat worship song that celebrates God, such as “How Majestic Is Your Name” or “What a Mighty God we Serve.” Bring in a cassette or CD player and a copy of the song.

Form three groups: The Motion Makers, the Crazy Clappers, and the Cheerleaders. Explain that you’re going to play a song, and each group will come up with a way to celebrate along with the music. The Motion Makers will make up unique actions, the Crazy Clappers will create exciting clapping rhythms, and the Cheerleaders will come up with a list of things they can celebrate such as God’s goodness, power, creation, or love.

Once kids understand their roles, play the song. Then allow about five minutes for groups to come up with their celebration elements. Play the song again, and have the Motion Makers teach their motions, the Crazy Clappers lead their clapping rhythms, and the Cheerleaders shout out their reasons to celebrate.

Or, use the following review questions in a game of your choice:

1. What are some ways David and the Israelites showed joy as they worshiped God? (Sang songs, danced, played instruments, gave gifts to God, ate special food and prayed.)
2. Why do we celebrate and praise God? (Because He loves us. Because He hears our prayers. Because He helps us. Because He is good and powerful, full of kindness.)
3. What are some ways people can worship God? (Sing songs. Pray. Give money. Play musical instruments.)
4. What are some reasons we have for praising and thanking God? What can you thank God for today?
5. When is a time you might sing a song to praise God?

6. What is something you want to thank God for?
7. How did David and the people celebrate the ark's arrival?
8. What are some ways people celebrate and praise God today?
9. Why do we want to celebrate and praise God with joy? (Because He made the world. He made us. He gave us friends.)

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# The King's Kindness

(2 Samuel 4:4; 9)

## Introduction

What do you use your feet for? What things might be hard for you to do if you didn't have any? Do you know anyone who is disabled? What is their handicap? What do you think life is like for them? [Teacher, lead a discussion about how it may feel for someone to have a disability and what someone could do to be kind to that person. As an object lesson, bring in garden gloves and have the children take turns trying to pick up coins, paper clips and/or pencils.]

In today's Bible story, we are going to hear about what a king did when he met a person who had a disability and couldn't walk normally.

## Opening Prayer

Father, teach us this morning how important it is for us to show kindness to people who have disabilities. Show us how to love them. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*Always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.  
(1 Thessalonians 5:15b NIV)*

## Lesson

Today we are going to learn about a man named Mephibosheth. I want you to repeat that name out loud with me, "mih-FIHB-eh-shehth." That's a hard name to say, isn't it?

Mephibosheth was the grandson of King Saul and the son of Jonathan. Remember that after David killed Goliath, King Saul asked

David to come live in the palace. It was there, growing up in the king's household, that David became best friends with Jonathan, the king's son. David and Jonathan had made a promise to always be loyal and true friends with each other, no matter what. They also made a promise to always show love and kindness to each other's families, as well.

Well, Mephibosheth was Jonathan's son. And, he was crippled in both feet. He couldn't walk. Here's what happened. . .

2 Samuel 4:4

*(Saul's son Jonathan had a son named Mephibosheth, who was crippled as a child. He was five years old when the report came from Jezreel that Saul and Jonathan had been killed in battle. When the child's nurse heard the news, she picked him up and fled. But as she hurried away, she dropped him, and he became crippled.)*

On the day that Saul and Jonathan were killed in the battle with the Philistines, Mephibosheth's nurse (the woman who took care of him) heard the terrible news. So, she picked him up and ran away from the palace as fast as should could.

They must have been frightened when they heard that both Saul and Jonathan were killed. They probably thought the Philistines would come after them next. The nurse was in such a hurry that she dropped the little boy and his feet were hurt.

What do you think it was like for Mephibosheth as he was growing up? He couldn't run, jump, and play as a boy. He was not able to work in the field and grow food. He couldn't go to battle as his father and grandfather had done. Many people with disabilities in those days were treated unkindly. Some people even went so far as to blame a person for his disabilities, saying that it was because he was sinful. Life was hard for Mephibosheth.

Many years later, after David had been king for a long time, he asked if anyone from the family of Saul was still alive.

## 2 Samuel 9:1

*One day David asked, "Is anyone in Saul's family still alive—anyone to whom I can show kindness for Jonathan's sake?"*

Keep in mind that because he had spent years running and hiding from Saul, David probably never knew Jonathan had a son. Now that he was king, David wanted to know if there was anyone he could show kindness to because of his love for Jonathan and the promise they had made to each other.

God expects you to show kindness to others and to keep your promises.

A former servant of King Saul was found and he told David that Jonathan's son was still alive. So he was told to bring Mephibosheth to the palace to meet King David.

How would you have felt if you were Mephibosheth? It might have been scary to hear that the King wanted to see him. It's like being sent to the Principal's office, isn't it? But David only wanted to show God's love and kindness to whoever was left in Jonathan's family.

As Mephibosheth entered the presence of King David, he bowed down before him.

## 2 Samuel 9:6

*His name was Mephibosheth; he was Jonathan's son and Saul's grandson. When he came to David, he bowed low to the ground in deep respect. David said, "Greetings, Mephibosheth." Mephibosheth replied, "I am your servant."*

Mephibosheth was probably shaking in fear as he bowed down to the king. He might have thought that David wanted to kill him! David saw that Mephibosheth was really scared. So he tells him not to be afraid.

## 2 Samuel 9:7

*"Don't be afraid!" David said. "I intend to show kindness to you because of my promise to your father, Jonathan. I will give you all the property*

*that once belonged to your grandfather Saul, and you will eat here with me at the king's table!"*

David told Mephibosheth that he was invited to be a permanent guest at the palace! What a shock this must have been to Mephibosheth!

Here he thought he was about to lose his head, but instead he was brought into the royal family.

This is a picture of God's grace. Let me explain:

According to the customs of those days, when a new king from another family came to the throne, he searched out the sons of the former king and had them put to death so that they could never take power. Mephibosheth was a member of the enemy family and expected to be put to death. Until you and I ask Jesus to be our Lord and Savior, we are like Mephibosheth – we deserve eternal death. But instead of death, Mephibosheth was given a royal life!

Mephibosheth did not deserve the great love and kindness that King David offered him. Like Mephibosheth, we do not deserve God's great love and kindness, either. David received Mephibosheth because of his great love for Jonathan. The Bible says that even though we don't deserve God's kindness. He receives us into His family because of His love for His only begotten Son, Jesus.

King David showed kindness to Mephibosheth by receiving him as part of his royal family and gave him the privilege of eating at his table every day. In the same way, God, in His great loving kindness, offers you everlasting life in His family. If you ask Jesus to be your Lord and your Savior, God makes you His child. You become a member of God's family (John 1:12). Your Heavenly Father will care for you while you live here on Earth. And, someday He will take you into His heavenly home where you will live with Him forever.

Have you become a member of God's family by believing on the Lord Jesus? If you trust Jesus as your Savior, then you will know God's great kindness in your life.

## Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the love and kindness You have shown us by sending Jesus to take the punishment that we deserve for all the sinful naughty things that we do. Thank You that You receive us into Your family and that someday we'll be brought to live with You in Your heavenly home. We look forward to that glorious day! In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

#### Have a Heart

Cut large hearts out of construction paper, enough for each child. On each heart print, "\_\_\_\_\_ can be kind to . . ." with a marker.



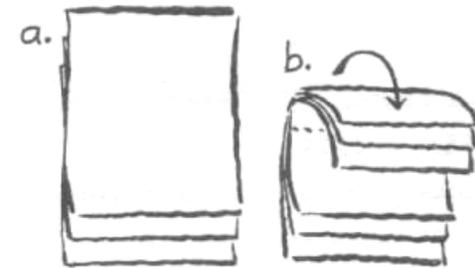
Sit with the children in a circle. Give a marker and a heart to each child. Each child writes his name on the blank line of his heart.

Say, "Let's discover the names of people we can be kind to in our class today. On the count of three, pass your heart to the person on your right. One, two, three!" Children pass their hearts and then write their names in an open space on the front of the hearts they receive. Children continue to pass hearts and write names until children end up with their own hearts.

On the back of hearts, children draw pictures of ways they can be kind to others in the class. Ask the questions below as children draw pictures.

- How many names are on your heart? How can you be kind to the people whose names are on your hearts?

- Read our Memory verse with the children. Who does the Bible say that we should be kind to? (Each other and everyone else.) Who can you be kind to this week?



### My Kindness Plan

1. Give each child three sheets of paper. Each child layers one sheet on top of the other so that papers look like stairs (see sketch a.) children then fold papers so that six layers show (see sketch b). Staple pages in place.
2. Children print "My Kindness Plan" on the top page, and print the days of the week (Monday-Friday) on the edge of the pages. Children lift pages and write or draw ways they can show kindness to others each day of the coming week.



(Note, if you have a class of younger children, fold and staple papers and write the title and days of the week on each book before class.)

### Game Center

#### Hot Spot

Designate two chairs; label one "David" and the other "Mephibosheth." Ask volunteers to take turns choosing a Hot Spot to answer questions about the Bible story. Volunteers choose to be either David or Mephibosheth and answer one of the questions below:

**Questions for David:**

1. Who was the big guy you killed? (Goliath)
2. Who's household did you grow up in? (Saul's)
3. Who was your best friend? (Jonathan)
4. What did you promise Mephibosheth's father? (To always show love and kindness to each other's families.)
5. What did you say when Mephibosheth came to see you? (Don't be afraid, I will be kind to you because your father, Jonathan, was my best friend.)
6. What kind thing did you do for Mephibosheth? (Gave him land that belonged to his grandfather Saul. Invited him to eat at the king's table every day.)
7. Why were you kind to Mephibosheth? (Because you promised his dad, Jonathan, to love and care for his family. And Mephibosheth needed help.)
8. Why was Mephibosheth surprised at your kindness? (He was expecting to be killed.)

**Questions for Mephibosheth:**

1. Who was your father? (Jonathan)
2. Who was your grandfather? (Saul)
3. Who was kind to you? (King David)
4. What happened to your feet? (My nurse dropped me.)
5. Describe your life after your nurse dropped you?

6. How did you feel when you were told to come to the palace to see King David? (Scared)
7. What did you do when you came into the presence of King David? (Bowed down.)
8. How did David surprise you? (He didn't kill me; he invited me to live at the palace.)
9. What did David give you? (A place to live. Good food to eat, your grandfather Saul's land.)

Or, use the following review questions in another game of your choice:

1. What are some ways we can be kind to others? (Share with them. Help them. Give them a hug or a smile.)
2. How can you be kind to someone on the playground? In your neighborhood? (Give them a turn before you get one.)
3. Who can you be kind to this week? (New kids at school. The disabled. The elderly.) Why might these people need some extra kindness? (They might be sad or lonely. They may need help.)
4. How do you feel when someone is mean to you? (Angry. Sad.) How do you feel when someone is kind to you?
5. What are some ways kids can be kind to others? (Sit with a new kid at lunch. Help carry books for someone on crutches or in a wheel chair. Bring the newspaper or mail to an elderly neighbor.)

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# Solomon's Wisdom

(1 Kings 3:4-28)

## Introduction

Imagine for a moment what would run through your mind if God told you that you could have whatever you asked for! If you could have anything you wanted, what would you ask for?

Today in our lesson we will learn that God loves to give good things to his children.

## Opening Prayer

Father, teach us this morning how important it is for us to make wise decisions in life. We want our lives to please You in every way. Don't let us forget that we can always ask You for wisdom—any time and any place we need it. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God. (James 1:5a NKJ)*

## Lesson

David, the king of Israel, had lived to be a very old man. He had been king for a long time. Before he died, he chose one of his sons, Solomon, to be the next king. Solomon loved God and wanted to please Him in every way.

One night while King Solomon was sleeping, something very wonderful happened. God spoke to him in a dream.

1 Kings 3:5

*That night the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream, and God said, "What do you want? Ask, and I will give it to you!"*

God said, "Ask Me for whatever you want Me to give you."

*Anything?!* That meant Solomon could ask for all the money in the world. He could ask to be the most powerful king ever! He could ask God to get rid of all his enemies! All kinds of thoughts must have gone through Solomon's mind. He could have said, "Give me lots of gold and riches, and large, beautiful houses, and much land, many servants, and lots of cattle." But he didn't. What do you think Solomon asked God to give him?

1 Kings 3:7

*"Now, O LORD my God, you have made me king instead of my father, David, but I am like a little child who doesn't know his way around.*

Solomon was probably about 20 years old. He knew he did not have the experience or the wisdom to govern a nation of people.

1 Kings 3:9

*Give me an understanding heart so that I can govern your people well and know the difference between right and wrong. For who by himself is able to govern this great people of yours?"*

Now, Solomon could have been filled with pride. He could have thought, "I'm King David's son" and had a cocky attitude about becoming the King of Israel. But he didn't. He was humble. He told God, "I'm just a kid. I don't know how to be King. Please give me wisdom so that I'll know what is right and what is wrong. I need Your help to rule your people wisely." Solomon humbly asked only for wisdom to do his job.

1 Kings 3:10

*The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom.*

God was very pleased with Solomon's humility.

1 Kings 3:11-12

*So God replied, "Because you have asked for wisdom in governing my people with justice and have not asked for a long life or wealth or the death of your enemies— I will give you what you asked for! I will give you a wise and understanding heart such as no one else has had or ever will have!"*

God was pleased with Solomon's request, and said, "Because you have asked for wisdom, I will give it to you. You shall be the wisest man who ever lived. And, I am going to give you the things you did not ask for..."

1 Kings 3:13

*And I will also give you what you did not ask for—riches and fame! No other king in all the world will be compared to you for the rest of your life!*

And then God says that He'll give Solomon a long life, too.

1 Kings 3:14

*And if you follow me and obey my decrees and my commands as your father, David, did, I will give you a long life."*

Solomon could have asked God for money, power or fame. But, because he asked for wisdom, God gave him even more than he had asked for! God is eager to do what is best for you, too.

Solomon's chance to find out if God really did give him wisdom came along soon. One day, two ladies who were having a terrible fight came to ask King Solomon to settle their disagreement.

1 Kings 3:17-18

*"Please, my lord," one of them began, "this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to a baby while she was with me in the house. Three days later this woman also had a baby. We were alone; there were only two of us in the house."*

Here's what happened: Two women, living together in the same house, both had babies within three days of each other. Then one night one woman's baby died and while the other woman was sleeping, she switched the babies. When the second woman woke up, she had the dead baby in her arms. Instantly, she realized it wasn't her child! But when she accused the other woman of switching babies, the first woman denied it. So, the two women came to King Solomon to settle their argument.

1 Kings 3:22

*Then the other woman interrupted, "It certainly was your son, and the living child is mine." "No," the first woman said, "the living child is mine, and the dead one is yours." And so they argued back and forth before the king.*

How would you settle this argument? [Teacher, let the children respond.] Let's read on to see how King Solomon solves this problem...

1 Kings 3:24-25

*All right, bring me a sword." So a sword was brought to the king. Then he said, "Cut the living child in two, and give half to one woman and half to the other!"*

Woe, that sounds pretty drastic, doesn't it?! Let's see if this was a wise thing for King Solomon to do...

1 Kings 3:26

*Then the woman who was the real mother of the living child, and who loved him very much, cried out, "Oh no, my lord! Give her the child— please do not kill him!" But the other woman said, "All right, he will be neither yours nor mine; divide him between us!"*

The idea of seeing her baby die was too much for the true mother. She cried, "Let the other woman have him! Don't kill the child."

But the woman who switched the babies said, "Yes, cut the child in half! Neither of us should have him."

So, now Solomon knew for sure which mother was the truly the mother of the living child. He knew that the real mother was the one who would rather let someone else have the baby than to let him be hurt.

1 Kings 3:27

*Then the king said, "Do not kill the child, but give him to the woman who wants him to live, for she is his mother!"*

Word of the king's decision spread quickly throughout the nation. All the people were amazed. They knew that God had given Solomon great wisdom.

God wants you to be wise in what you say and what you do. What kinds of problems do you face where you might need the Wisdom of Solomon? [Teacher, let the children discuss.] He will help you to know the right thing to do at the right time. All you need to do is ask Him for wisdom and he will give you all you need.

James 1:5 says, "If you want to know what God wants you to do, ask him, and he will gladly tell you, for he is always ready to give an abundant supply of wisdom to all who ask him; he will not scold you for asking."

## Closing Prayer

Father, You know how hard it is for us to live a life that is well pleasing to you. Help us to remember to call upon You when we get confused and don't know what to do in life. Thank You that You are always ready and willing to give us the wisdom we need to choose the right thing to do. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

### Game Center

### Key Word Match

#### Preparation:

1. Make two sets of key words from the lesson on large squares of colored construction paper. For example:
  - Solomon
  - Ask
  - Dream
  - Riches
  - Babies
  - Little Child
  - Wisdom
  - James 1:5
  - Humble
  - Mothers
  - Sword
  - Understanding Heart
2. Tape the squares face down on the white board.

#### Play:

Form the children into two teams. The first player from the first team turns over two cards. If the cards match, the child (with the help of his team) must tell why that key word is significant in the context of the lesson. If the answer is correct, they get to keep the matched set. If the answer is incorrect, the other team has an opportunity to explain why that word is important to the story. If they get a right answer, they get the matched set. Whichever team has the most matched sets at the end, is the winning team. Let the winning team squirt the other team with silly string or bombard them with marshmallows.

**Wisdom Game**

Before class write one letter of the word "wisdom" on the front of six cards. On the back, describe situations such as the following:

- You're not supposed to wear your brother's clothes without asking first, but you want to borrow his blue sweater for school today, and he's already gone. What do you do?
- You're visiting grandmother. When no one else is in the room, you break a lamp. But no one saw you do it. What do you do?
- Your mom told you never to run in the house. You ran through the family room, fell, and cut your lip. Your mom is comforting you and asks you what happened. What do you say?
- You come home from school, it's a beautiful day, but you have a lot of homework to do. Your friends want to play. What do you tell them?
- Your mom and dad have told you that it is wrong to smoke cigarettes, but your friends want you to try it. What do you do?
- A stranger comes up to you as you walk home from school and asks you what time it is. What do you say?

**PLAY:**

1. Have children sit in a circle.
2. Say: *God appeared to King Solomon in a dream and told him that he could ask for anything he wanted! Wow! That sounds exciting. He could have anything he wanted. Are you wondering what Solomon asked for? We're going to play a game to find out. Before we do that, try and guess.* [Teacher, let the children guess but don't tell them the answer yet.]
3. Shuffle the index cards, and then read the situations to children. Discuss several options after each one. Ask kids to answer each

question, turn the card over and place it on the floor in order, spelling "wisdom."

4. After discussing all six of the situations, point out the word "wisdom" and say: King Solomon could have asked God for anything in the world – money, power, a beautiful palace. But instead, he asked for wisdom. In our game you chose wise solutions to your problems. King Solomon was a good king because he was wise. Wisdom is a gift from God, and it's a good thing for all of us to ask for!

Or, use the following questions in a game of your choice:

1. What kind of problems did Solomon face when he became king? (He was young and needed to know how to be a good king. He had to decide who the real mother of a baby was.)
2. What did Solomon tell God that he wanted? (Wisdom.) What else could Solomon have asked for?
3. How did Solomon become wise? (Asked God for wisdom.)
4. How did Solomon show wisdom in today's lesson? (He asked God for wisdom. He made a wise decision about the two mothers.)
5. How did Solomon use God's wisdom? (Solomon used wisdom to help him know who the real mother of the baby was.)
6. How did people know God had made Solomon wise?
7. When do you need help deciding what's right to do on the playground? At school? In your neighborhood?
8. What does the Bible say we should do if we need help deciding the right thing to do? (James 1:5)
9. What does the Bible tell us to ask for in James 1:5? (Wisdom.)

10. When might a child your age need wisdom from God? What kinds of problems do children your age face? (Have a lot of homework to do, but friends want to play. Friends want them to do something Mom or Dad said not to do. Accidentally broke something and are afraid to tell what happened.)
11. What can you do when you need wisdom? (Pray. Read the Bible. Talk to an adult.)
12. Tell me the name of someone besides God who you think is very wise. What do you think makes a person wise?
13. When is a time you need to act wisely by telling the truth?
14. What wise instruction has your mom or dad or teacher told you? (Look both ways when crossing the street. Don't talk to strangers. Don't touch the stove.)
15. How does God help us to become wise? (Gives us instructions in the Bible. Gives us parents and teachers to help us learn His commands. Helps us know the right thing to do.)

[For more expositional lessons for children, visit <https://www.FreeChildrensMinistryLessons.com> ]



# Building the Temple

(1 Kings 5; 6; 7:13-51; 8;  
1 Chronicles 17:1-15; 22; 28:10 – 29:20;  
2 Chronicles 2:1 – 7:22)

## Introduction

Why do people give gifts to one another? (It's Christmas or someone's birthday; we want to show the other person we love them.)

What is the best gift you have ever received? How did you feel when you received that gift? Did you want to do something nice back to the person who gave you that gift?

Have you ever given someone a gift they weren't thankful for? How did that make you feel?

Today we'll talk about how important it is to be a cheerful giver.

## Opening Prayer

Father, You are the giver of life; You created the whole universe and everything in it, including me! You have done great things, Lord. Teach us this morning how important it is for us to want to show you just how much we love You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*God loves a cheerful giver. (2 Corinthians 9:7 NKJ)*

## Lesson

When King David died, his son Solomon became the king of Israel. When Solomon began his reign, God told him to ask for anything he wanted. King Solomon could have asked God for anything – money, power, a beautiful palace. But instead, he asked for wisdom.

Because Solomon had asked God for wisdom instead of money or power or fame, God honored him by not only giving him the wisdom he asked for, but also riches and power and fame!

As king, Solomon could have done anything he wanted to with all his money. What do you think Solomon decided to do?

Solomon loved God so much and he was so grateful for all the gifts God had given him that he decided to give a gift to God. What kind of a gift do you think Solomon could give God?

He decided to use his riches to build a beautiful house for God. They called it a Temple and it would be the place where people could come to worship God and where God could come and minister to the people. We call this kind of place a "church" these days.

Building a beautiful house for God was a huge job. God gives you important jobs to do, too. What kinds of jobs do you have to do? (Clean room, do yard work or school work, run a paper route.) Have you ever been given a job that seemed too big for you to handle? Have you ever felt like your job would take too long to do? You may not always feel like doing the tasks before you, but God wants you to do your best.

It was a huge job for Solomon to build this temple. But, because his heart was filled with gratitude, Solomon wanted to honor God by building a beautiful temple. What a privilege to give back to God, the Creator of the universe! Solomon felt that nothing he could give to God would ever be too much.

You and I should feel the same way. Why? Because God has given us the most valuable gift in the world – His Son, the Lord Jesus, to die on the cross for our sins! Because of the "want to" in our hearts to do wrong, we cannot go to God's heaven the way we are. But because God loved us so very much, He sent Jesus to earth to take the punishment for your sin and mine. What a wonderful God He is! Nothing we could do for Him would ever be too much!

Solomon's heart was filled with gratitude toward God for all He had done for him. Building the temple would be his gift to God.

The people gave generously toward the work of the house of God, too. They gave gold, silver, precious stones, everything they had that was of value.

Before construction could begin, Solomon had to gather a huge work force together.

2 Chronicles 2:2

*He enlisted a force of 70,000 laborers, 80,000 men to quarry stone in the hill country, and 3,600 foremen.*

It took a lot of people to help build the Temple. Some of the people cut great big stones from the ground to use in building the walls. Other people made gold lamp stands; still others carved flowers, palm trees and angels in the wooden doors and on the walls of the Temple. It took seven years to build the Temple, not because it was a very big building, but because it was so beautiful! The people gave generously of their time and their labor to build this house for God.

1 Kings 7:48-49 [Teacher, read...]

*Solomon had all the furnishings made for the house of the Lord: the altar of gold, and the table of gold...; the lamp stands of pure gold...*

It was built on a hill so that everyone could see it. It was made of white stone that sparkled in the sunlight. Inside the Temple, the walls and floors were covered with pure gold. Cherubim, great angel-like statues with huge gold wings, were in a special room in the Temple. This room was called the Most Holy Place. The cherubim reminded the people of God's power. On the walls hung tapestries woven with gold and embroidered with silk thread dyed in rich colors. Everything was perfectly made; only the best was good enough for God.

When the Temple was finally finished, Solomon led a joyful parade to bring the Ark of the Covenant into the Most Holy Place in the Temple. (The Ark was a special box covered with gold that reminded people

that God was with them.) A huge crowd of people joined in the parade. Everyone wanted to see the beautiful new Temple.

2 Chronicles 5:13-14

*The trumpeters and singers performed together in unison to praise and give thanks to the LORD. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals, and other instruments, they raised their voices and praised the LORD with these words: "He is good! His faithful love endures forever!" At that moment a thick cloud filled the Temple of the LORD. The priests could not continue their service because of the cloud, for the glorious presence of the LORD filled the Temple of God.*

After the Ark was placed in the Temple, suddenly the whole Temple was filled with God's glory – a golden cloud filled the Temple.

Solomon stood in front of the Temple and prayed to God. He and all the children of Israel praised and thanked God for His goodness and mercy and for enabling them to complete such an important job.

What a happy day this was for King Solomon and all the people! Because God had given Solomon so many wonderful gifts, Solomon wanted to give something to God to show his love and thanks. And he built a beautiful Temple so that God could come and meet with the people. Solomon wisely gave what he had to build the Temple and show his love for God. Cheerfully giving is a wise way to live!

God has given you and me so many good things. What is something you are glad God has given you? (home, family) Have you ever received His free gift of everlasting life? Does remembering what God has done for you give you a grateful heart?

It pleases God show Him our love and thanks! What are some things we can give God? You can give Him your time and your money. What are some ways you can give God your time? You can spend time with him reading the Bible or praying. You can spend time helping others, such as your mom or dad or a sick friend or neighbor. What are some things that God needs your money for? We need money to pay the rent here at church and for buying supplies for Sunday school. You

can also give of your money to help people in need. What can you give to others to show your love and thanks to God?

It's important to be a giving person, but more important than what you give, is your attitude when you give it. God wants you to be a cheerful giver. What do you think that means?

Have you ever given with a grumbling or complaining attitude? What about when your mom or dad asks you to clean your room or do the dishes? How many of you cheerfully help clean up the Sunday school area after church?

What can give you a cheerful heart about giving of your time or money? (Remembering all that God has done for us. Having a thankful and grateful heart will give us the "want to" to give of ourselves to others.)

Let's thank God for all the great things that He was given to us.

## Closing Prayer

Father, thank You for the wonderful way that You provide for us. We have food to eat and a warm bed to sleep in. We have families that love us. Lord, give us grateful hearts this morning, running over with the desire to show You how much we love You. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

#### Wrapping Paper Gifts

On back of wrapping paper squares, children draw pictures of how they could show love to God by giving of their time or money. (Ideas: reading the Bible, praying, putting money in the offering box, cleaning the church, helping a neighbor, taking a meal to a sick person, etc.)

Or, they may draw pictures of gifts they want to give to others. Make sure they draw themselves as cheerful givers! Children then fold their wrapping-paper squares to look like wrapped gifts.

Optional: Add stick-on bows and gift cards to folded papers.

### **Build a Replica of the Temple**

Give each child a large index card on which to make a model of the Temple with sugar cubes. Provide gold foil wrapping paper to make door and other details.

Children glue sugar cubes 3 sugar cubes wide by 10 sugar cubes long by 3 sugar cubes high.

If your class is small, have children work together on one large Temple model built on a 12 x 18 inch piece of cardboard 7 cubes wide, 21 cubes long and 3 cubes high. Leave out the center cube on one end for the entrance.

As the children work talk about the beauty of the Temple or read to them passages out of the Bible that describe its splendor.

2 Chronicles 3:3-16 (Good News Bible translation)

*The Temple which King Solomon built was 90 feet long and 30 feet wide. The entrance room was the full width of the Temple, 30 feet, and was 180 feet high. The inside of the room was overlaid with pure gold. The main room was paneled with cedar and overlaid with fine gold, in which were worked designs of palm trees and chain patterns. The king decorated the Temple with beautiful precious stones and with gold... He used the gold to overlay the Temple walls, the rafters, the entryways, and the doors. On the walls the workers carved designs of winged creatures. The inner room, called the Most Holy Place, was 30 feet long and 30 feet wide, which was the full width of the Temple. Twenty-five tons of gold were used to cover the walls of the Most Holy Place; twenty ounces of gold were used for making nails, and the walls of the upper rooms were also covered with gold. The king also had his workers make two winged creatures out of metal, cover them with gold, and place them in the Most Holy Place, where they stood side by side facing the*

*entrance. Each had two wings, each wing 7 1/2 feet long, which were spread out so that they touched each other in the center of the room and reached to the wall on either side of the room, stretching across the full width of 30 feet. A curtain for the Most Holy Place was made of linen and of other material, which was dyed blue, purple, and red, with designs of the winged creatures worked into it. The king had two columns made, each one 52 feet tall, and placed them in front of the Temple. Each one had a capital 7 1/2 feet tall. The tops of the columns were decorated with a design of interwoven chains and one hundred bronze pomegranates.*

Help the children to imagine how beautiful the Temple was by asking them some of the review questions while they work on their models.

### Game Center

Game idea: Put each of the following questions into a small gift box. Give each child a box to open and answer the enclosed question.

Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:

1. In our lesson today, how did Solomon show his love for God? (He gave of his great wealth to build the Temple.)
2. Why did Solomon build the Temple? (To show his love for God.)
3. How did God feel about the gift that Solomon had given Him? (He was pleased.)
4. What do you think it was like for the people who were there on the first day of worship in that Temple? How do you think they felt? What do you think it was like to know that God was actually there among them?
5. What are some things you can give to God? (Give money to church. Give time to help someone else.)
6. Why do you think giving to God is a wise thing to do? (It pleases Him.)
7. What is the best gift you have ever given? How did you feel when you gave that gift?
8. What kind of attitude should we have when we give gifts to God and others? (Cheerful.)
9. What is the best reason people give money or time to church? (To express their love for God for all He's done.)
10. Who was a cheerful giver in our lesson today? (Solomon and all the people.)
11. How do you know that a person is giving cheerfully? (They don't gripe or complain.)
12. What are some ways we can give to show our love for God? (Give money for offering. Be kind to others. Help Mom and Dad.)
13. What is something you are glad God has given you? (Parents, home, eternal life.)
14. What are some ways you can give God your time? (Reading the Bible, praying, putting money in the offering box, cleaning the church, helping a neighbor, taking a meal to a sick person.)
15. Why do we give God money? (To pay the rent, pay for salaries, pay for utilities, buy supplies for Sunday school and to help people in need or to send to missions.)
16. What can give you a cheerful heart when you give your time or money to God? (Remembering all that God has done for us. Having a thankful and grateful heart will give us the "want to" to give of ourselves to others.)

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# Solomon Disobeys God

(1 Kings 11:1-13, 28-40)

## Introduction

What's something special you like to play with or are glad you have? (Soccer balls, books, video games, etc.) What are some things kids may think are more important than God? (Money, clothes, cool toys.) [Teacher, list their answers on the board to use later in the lesson.]

We all love different things. But God deserves our love more than anything! Do you know anyone who shows that God is most important to him or her? What does that person do that shows you God is important to them?

In our lesson today we'll hear about a king who had to choose who he was going to love the most.

## Opening Prayer

Father, thank You for these things that we enjoy and find important to us. Help us to show that You are important to us when we play with our friends. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Memory Verse

*You shall have no other gods before me. (Exodus 20:3 NKJ)*

God gave 10 important rules to His people. This verse is the first Commandment.

## Lesson

We've been learning about the kings of Israel. The first king was Saul, the second king was David, and then David's son, Solomon, came to power.

Saul started out as a good king. But after a while he became full of pride. He got to a point where he wasn't interested in obeying God. He wanted to do everything his own way instead of God's way. Then he became so jealous of David's popularity with the people that he wanted to kill him. After years of running for his life, David finally came into power after the Philistines killed Saul.

David was a good king and he lived a long life. The Bible refers to David as "a man after God's own heart." Before he passed away, he appointed his son, Solomon, to become the third king.

When Solomon came into power, he asked God for wisdom to rule the people well. God was so pleased with Solomon's request for wisdom that He gave him riches, power, and a long life, too.

God honored King Solomon; he had everything a person could want. He was famous for his great wealth and he was the wisest man who ever lived. He had it all! But, sadly, King Solomon had one major weakness which led him away from God.

King Solomon had a weakness for women. He had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines. Many of these women were from nations where people worshiped idols—wooden or stone statues of false gods. The Lord had clearly instructed the children of Israel not to marry anyone from those nations because He knew that if a man married a foreign woman—one that worshiped false gods—he would be tempted to start worshiping her gods. Yet Solomon did it anyway. Why did Solomon marry so many foreign women? He did it to make friends with the other nations around him; they were political marriages to strengthen his foreign alliances.

1Kings 3:1 [Teacher, read...]

*Solomon made an alliance with Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and married one of his daughters. He brought her to live in the City of David until he could finish building his palace and the Temple of the LORD and the wall around the city.*

Solomon's first wife was an Egyptian princess. And, there was one big problem: Egyptian people didn't worship the true God; they worshiped idols and Solomon allowed her to keep her idols.

God had given Solomon wisdom, but once Solomon had made this foolish mistake, he acted foolishly again and again. Soon he married another princess. And then he married again and again and again!

1 Kings 11:1-2

*Now King Solomon loved many foreign women. Besides Pharaoh's daughter, he married women from Moab, Ammon, Edom, Sidon, and from among the Hittites. The LORD had clearly instructed the people of Israel, "You must not marry them, because they will turn your hearts to their gods." Yet Solomon insisted on loving them anyway.*

All these foreign wives brought their own idols of false gods with them from their countries! Soon there were lots and lots of false gods being worshiped in Solomon's kingdom! He even built some temples for his foreign wives to use for worshiping their false gods.

And, sure enough, these women encouraged Solomon to worship along with them and he turned his heart away from the true and living God. Solomon, the wisest man in the world, started to listen to his wives! He began to think that maybe, just maybe, these idols really had some power of their own! Pretty soon, Solomon himself was praying to the false gods that his wives worshiped.

Solomon did what was clearly wrong and refused to follow the Lord as his father David did. God was very angry with Solomon about this. Even though God appeared to him twice to warn him specifically against worshiping others gods, Solomon didn't listen and now he was no longer interested in the Lord God of Israel.

1 Kings 11:11

*So now the LORD said to him, "Since you have not kept my covenant and have disobeyed my decrees, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to one of your servants."*

How Sad! Since Solomon did not obey the Lord, God took the kingdom away from him and gave it to one of his servants.

Solomon wasn't happy about that! And which of his servants would become the king? Solomon didn't find out right away.

But one day, that servant found out! Solomon's servant, Jeroboam, was walking through the country. A prophet, a man who gave messages from God, met him. The prophet stopped. He took off his beautiful, brand-new robe and tore it into 12 pieces! [Teacher, tear a piece of fabric into pieces for a dramatic effect.] One piece for each of the 12 tribes of Israel.

1 Kings 11:31

*Then he said to Jeroboam, "Take ten of these pieces, for this is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I am about to tear the kingdom from the hand of Solomon, and I will give ten of the tribes to you!'"*

The prophet gave Jeroboam 10 of the pieces and told him that after Solomon dies, he will be king over 10 tribes of Israel. (The other 2 tribes would be ruled by Solomon's son for the sake of his father, David. Remember that God promised to bring Jesus through the family line of David. So, God couldn't completely wipe out Solomon's line.)

How could a king so blessed by God fail to obey the One who had lavished such love on him?

All this happened because Solomon allowed his wives to worship their own gods when they came to live in his palace. As time wore on, Solomon's heart was no longer fully devoted to God. The next thing that happened was that he began to worship the idols along with his wives.

What about you? Is your heart fully devoted to God? Do you ever choose to let someone or something become more important to you than your love for God? [Teacher, refer to the things listed on the board.]

How can you show others that God is more important to you than anything else? (Being thoughtful, helping others, obey God's rules.)

Even though Solomon was the wisest man who ever lived, he did not always choose to do what was wise. We each have a choice to do what is wise. We can make a wise choice to honor God.

We honor God by showing Him, and everyone around us, that He is most important to us by the things we think, say, and do. Do your friends know that you love God with all of your heart, mind and soul? What are some ways you can show that God is more important than anything else? (Show God's love to our friends. Help others.)

Our Memory Verse this week tells us that God should be most important in our lives. God longs for us to worship Him and Him, alone.

## Closing Prayer

Father, we want everyone around us to know that we put You first in our lives. I pray that You will be honored and glorified in everything that we think, or say, or do. Guard our hearts from seeking after idols in our lives. And help us to never misrepresent You to anyone You bring into our lives. In Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.

## Learning Activities

### Craft Corner

#### *There's Only One True God*

In this craft project, kids celebrate ways to describe our one true God.

#### MATERIALS:

Markers, index cards, Bible, and large sheets of newsprint or butcher paper.

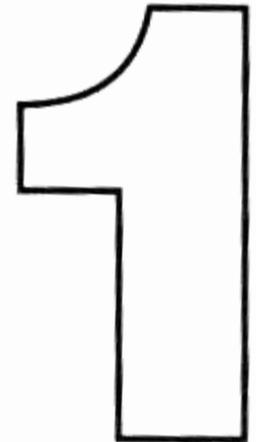
#### PREPARATION:

On separate index cards, write the following Scripture references:

Psalm 23:1	Psalm 43:2	1 Timothy 6:15
Psalm 28:1	Isaiah 1:24	James 1:17
Psalm 42:11	John 6:45	Revelation 1:8
Revelation 15:3		

Say: King Solomon of Israel was famous for his wisdom. But as he grew older and richer, Solomon did some things that weren't wise at all. In our Bible Lesson today, what did Solomon do wrong? The Bible teaches us that there is only one God and that we are to worship only Him. Let's make a special banner to remind us how wonderful our one true God is.

On the newsprint, instruct kids to title their banner, "The Only 1," making the "1" a large outline that fills most of the paper. Have children look up the scripture passages. Have kids work together to fill in the hollow "1" with words from the passages that describe God. Kids might write words such as "Shepherd," "Rock," "Savior." As kids work, you might want to play songs such as "Great Is the Lord" and "We Will Glorify." Then have kids display the banner in the room as a reminder that our God is the one true God.



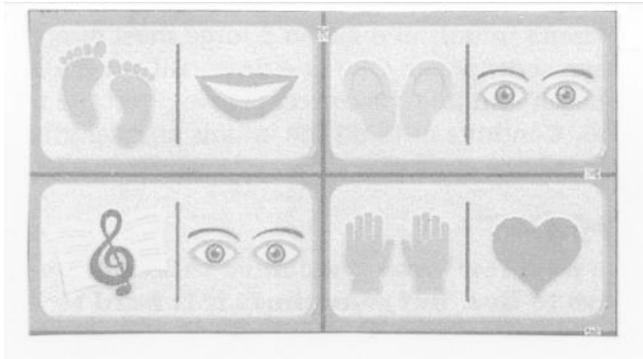
## Game Center

### **Mouth, Eyes, Ears, Hands and Feet**

Our memory verse tells us that God should be most important in our lives. Use this game to reinforce how we can show that God is most important in our lives.

#### PREPARATION:

Make cards with pictures of a mouth, eyes, ears, hands, and feet.



Hold the cards in your hand with the blank side facing the children. Have a volunteer pick a card and then ask that child a question that corresponds to the picture using the questions below as a guide:

- How can you use your **mouth** to show that God is most important in your life? (Sing songs or tell others about how great God is. Pray to God. Never tell lies or dirty jokes.)
  - How can you use your **eyes** to show that God is most important to you? (Read the Bible; be careful what you watch on TV or at the movies. Be careful about what you read.)
  - How can you use your **ears** to show that God is most important to you? (Listen to others tell about God. Be careful what music you listen to. Be careful about listening to your friend's jokes at school. Never let someone gossip to you about someone else.)
  - How can you use your **hands** and **feet** to show that God is most important to you? (Do kind things to help other people.)
- Or, use the following questions in another game of your choice:
- Solomon made lots of trouble for himself when he didn't make God most important in his life. What do you think made him decide to worship false gods? (His wives led him away from God.)
  - Which one of the Ten Commandments did Solomon disobey? (*You shall have no others gods before me.* Exodus 20:3)
  - How do you think Solomon felt after he heard that his kingdom was going to be divided? (He wasn't happy.)
  - What are some things kids may think are more important than God? (Having lots of money, clothes, and cool toys. Being popular.)
  - How can someone your age show that God is more important than anything else? (Pray to God. Read the Bible. Obey His rules in the Bible. Become a member of God's family. Be kind to others and show God's love to our friends. Help people. Memorize verses from the Bible.)
  - God is very wise! He wants to help us to make wise choices each day. What wise choice have we talked about today? (Making God first in our lives.)
  - How can you show that God is important to you when you are out on the playground? (Help other kids learn how to play a new game. Play fair.)

8. Why did Solomon have so many foreign wives? (He married for political reasons to strengthen his foreign alliances.)
9. Did God encourage the Children of Israel to marry foreign women? Why or why not? (He said, "*Surely they will turn away your hearts after their gods.*")
10. Solomon's first wife was an Egyptian princess. Why was that a problem? (She worshipped idols.)
11. Why did Solomon build temples for his foreign wives? (To use for worshipping their false gods.)
12. What did God do to punish Solomon? (He tore the kings away from Solomon.)

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