

DAVID SHOWS MERCY

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

LOVE HURT MERCY APPEARANCE LOOK OFFEND

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

1 Samuel 24 and 26

MEMORY VERSE

“The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7b, NIV*).

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To teach children that God’s desire is that we show love and mercy to all people, even those who offend and hurt us.

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

When David and Saul were about to meet (1 Samuel 23:26), the king was aggressive and David was a vulnerable fugitive. Now, David is safe in his hiding place and Saul is in danger and does not know it.

David had the opportunity, motivation and time to hurt Saul, but he did not do it, even though he knew that the king would kill him if he found him. When he showed him the piece of his cape, the king recognized that he had escaped death by David’s mercy, who in his own words, was more just than himself.

In 1 Samuel 26, we see Saul again following David. This smart young man entered the king’s campsite, stole his spear and canteen and left unscathed. The spear symbolized Saul’s security and authority, and now this symbol of power was in the hands of his enemy.

God put Saul and all of his camp into a deep sleep. This supernatural action is a demonstration of God interceding for David and against Saul.

Chapters 24 and 26 reveal the purity of David’s heart and the mercy he showed toward his enemy. In both chapters, we see God protecting David’s life, and that vengeance belongs to the Lord. We should not hurt others, even when they are acting wrongly.

In our society, it is common for people to take justice into their own hands or seek revenge. Nevertheless, the children of God have a different perspective.

David had two opportunities to kill Saul. Who would blame him? It would have been in self-defense. But he showed mercy and chose not to hurt Saul because he was anointed by God.

ADAPTATION

Children have a strong sense of justice and are very sensitive to being treated unjustly. Many feel they should respond in the same way that they are hurt, and hold grudges or negative thoughts.

The mercy that David showed Saul shows another way of resolving conflict. Help them to understand that David's actions were a sign of strength and not weakness.

David showed mercy because he knew that God is the only judge. This trust can signify a new experience for them. Children wish to see immediate justice. Their concept of time is limited and they want answers in the short-term. Knowing that God will judge all according to their acts will give them a new perspective.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What happens next?

Give your children Student Activity Sheet #144-A along with colored pencils. Ask them to look at the pictures and read the dialogue. Ask them what they think is happening in the story. In the blank square, have them draw the ending that they would like to see happen.

Talk to them about what it means to seek vengeance on someone who has hurt them. Tell them that in today's story, they will learn what David did when given the opportunity to take vengeance on the king who wanted him dead.

TEACH THE LESSON

Carefully study 1 Samuel 24 and 26 prior to the session. Be prepared to tell the Bible story in your own words.

Begin this portion of the session by reviewing with your children what they have learned about David's life over the last several weeks.

Help them understand the context of the story. David was fleeing because King Saul wanted to kill him. He had spent a lot of time hiding in caves, far from his family. Nevertheless, he had no grudge in his heart against Saul.

Tell the Bible story and if possible, show pictures that will illustrate the story's events.

You can use Student Activity Sheet #144-B as a visual aid.

CONNECT THE LESSON 2

David shows mercy

You will need Student Activity Sheet #144-B for each child for this activity, plus scissors, and glue.

Instruct your children to cut out the strip of drawings from the bottom of the activity sheet. Then, have them cut along the black parallel lines in the middle of activity sheet. Help them weave the strip of drawings from behind in between the black lines. Encourage them to move the strip and see the two ways in which David showed love and mercy towards Saul.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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You will need construction paper, scissors, glue, or tape.

Prepare in advance a crown that will fit your children's heads, so they can wear it. Use the next activity to help them memorize 1 Samuel 16:7.

Have your children sit in a circle, then choose one to stand in the middle. Tell the one who is in the middle to close their eyes, wait a little and then say, "Stop!" The children in the circle will pass the crown. When the child in the middle says, "Stop!" the child with the crown in his hands should put it on and recite the verse. Then that child will be in the middle and will say "Stop!" If you wish, you can allow the children to ask someone to help them remember the verse.

WRAP-UP

Pray

To finish, lead your group in prayer and pray for specific prayer requests.

Encourage

Encourage your children to be merciful throughout the week with people who do not treat them fairly. Remind them that David's example teaches us to live according to God's will, being loving to those around us, including those who offend us.

Invite

As an introduction to the next session, announce to your children that you will bring a surprise next week. It does not have to be expensive, it can be a sweet treat, a bookmark, or a pencil. If possible, contact them throughout the week and talk to their parents about how their children are applying biblical truths to their daily lives.