

# The Friendship Of David And Jonathan

1 Samuel 20

## **MEMORY VERSE**

1 SAMUEL 20:42

“May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.”

## **WHAT YOU WILL NEED:**

Several sheets of construction paper, yarn or ribbon and tape.

For each child you will need three strips of cloth or thick yarn approximately 1” thick and 2 yards long.

## **ATTENTION GRABBER!**

### **Buddy System**

The goal for this activity is for the children to get to know someone new in the class.

Have the children team up with someone at the beginning of class using the “buddy system.” Have the children do everything throughout class with their “buddy.” This should be someone that they are not already close friends with. They can sit together, sing at praise and worship time together, work together on their crafts and worksheets and work together in serving and cleaning up.

At the end of the class (especially with the older children) have them all sit in a circle and share what they learned about or from their buddy. Examples; hobbies, sports, music, favorite color, pets, collections, etc.

Ask why it is important to be a faithful friend.

## LESSON TIME!

Have you ever felt that your faith in the promises God has given you has been tested to the limit, to the breaking point? Perhaps some of you, though young, can relate to David as he faces heavy trials in our lesson today. Samuel had anointed David. David had God's Word: he would one day be the king of the children of Israel. Yet, the difficult times ahead would challenge his faith to the very limit.

After David's battle with Goliath, many saw him as a hero; but there was one who began to see him as an enemy. King Saul became jealous of David because the people seemed to love David more than they loved him. Saul began to see David as his enemy, and he set out to destroy him. Saul tried to kill David himself; when that attempt failed, he hired men to murder David in his own bed.

Through all these circumstances, God protected David from death. God had a plan and a purpose for David—he was to be Israel's next king; therefore, no harm could come to him. Yet, on David's part, much faith in God would be required, for it seemed that every circumstance of his life was saying that he would not even live long enough to become the next king of Israel.

In the scene before our lesson begins, David fled from Saul, taking refuge with Samuel in Ramah. Even there, Saul continued to pursue him.

### 1 SAMUEL 20:1-11

Then David fled from Natioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!"

Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death."

So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you."

And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening.

"If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked permission of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.'

"If he says thus: 'It is well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, then be sure that evil is determined by him.

"Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?"

But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?"

Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me, or what if your father answers you roughly?"

And Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." So both of them went out into the field.

David, continuing to run from Saul, left Ramah and found Jonathan, the son of Saul. He asked Jonathan what he had done to cause Saul to want to kill him. Jonathan could not imagine his father would do such a thing to David. David explains that Saul would not confide with Jonathan his intentions to harm him, since Saul knew Jonathan and David were close friends.

The Bible says that Jonathan loved David "as he loved his own soul" (1 Samuel 20:17). God sometimes works in mysterious ways. God blessed David and Jonathan's friendship. During a very difficult time in David's life, Jonathan proved to be a very faithful friend. **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

David asked Jonathan's help as he sought to determine why Saul was so angry with him and if there was any chance of reconciliation between them. David made plans to be absent during the feast of the new moon. If King Saul was upset over David's absence, then David would know that there would be no reconciliation between them. But, if King Saul was pleasant and accepting of David's absence, then perhaps reconciliation was possible. David was confident Jonathan would help him, for they were faithful friends and had entered into a "covenant of the Lord" one with another.

David told Jonathan, “if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?” Jonathan reassured David that he would help him and that his father would not come between them in their friendship by saying, “Far be it from you; for if I knew certain that evil were determined by my father to come upon you, then would not I tell it to you?” In time of crises, who can measure the worth of a true and faithful friend? **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

Proverbs 17:17 says, “A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.” Also, Proverbs 18:24 says, “A man who has friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother.” We have a friend, who is always with us no matter what we go through—a friend who always loves us. His name is Jesus.

### 1 SAMUEL 20:12-23

Then Jonathan said to David: "The LORD God of Israel is witness! When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, or the third day, and indeed there is good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you,

"may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.

"And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die;

"but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth."

So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "Let the LORD require it at the hand of David's enemies."

Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow is the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty.

"And when you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel.

"Then I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target;

"and there I will send a lad, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to him, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you; get them and come'; then, as the LORD lives, there is safety for you and no harm.

"But if I say thus to the young man, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you'; go your way, for the LORD has sent you away.

"And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD be between you and me forever."

Jonathan and David reaffirmed their friendship. Jonathan faithfully promised David that he would let him know how his father reacts towards David. If it is good, he would let him know; if it is evil, he would send David away safely.

Jonathan asked David if he would remember him and his family, and show kindness to his house always, even “when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth.” Jonathan had faith that God was going to perform everything that He said He would do in David’s life. Note the quality of Jonathan’s love for David; though Jonathan knew he was next in line to be the king after Saul, he knew that David was God’s choice to be king over Israel. True love as in 1 Corinthians 13 is not jealous, and Jonathan had no jealous feelings toward David.

In verse 17, we are told that “Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.” Jonathan and David had a true friendship. It’s a love that puts aside one’s own interests for the interests of the other, a selfless love. **God wants us to be faithful friends**

In paraphrase of verse 19, Jonathan tells David, “Now go and after three days come back again. Come into this field and wait alongside the stone. I will come out from my father’s house to shoot three arrows, and I will bring a boy with me (so no one suspects me). Though we may not be able to talk to each other, I will shoot the arrows. If they land right by you, it will be safe for you to come back home with me; Saul is going to be kind. If however, the arrows fly over your head and go beyond you, go your way, for the Lord has sent you away.”

What a difficult circumstance for David; for he would either go back to Saul’s house and Jonathan’s friendship, or he would have to go into exile, alone and away from his beloved friend. Under all the pressure of the situation, David was in a place of waiting.

## **Friends Are a Gift from God**

For this craft you will need construction paper, yarn or ribbon, and tape.



Form pairs and have each child make a gift from construction paper. For younger children, you can cut out the shape for them (square). Next, make a bow out of either the yarn or ribbon and use the tape to hold in place. Write their name on one side and the theme on the other side. For the older children, use scraps of construction paper and make a multi-colored gift. Have the children cut out a shape of a gift (square). Then, they can glue small pieces of different colors of construction paper. Next, they can glue the gift onto a 1/2 sheet of paper, tape a bow and then write the theme (**God wants us to be faithful friends.**) and their names. Have them exchange them with someone else in class or take them home to give to a friend.

Explain to the children that friends are a gift from the Lord. In order for us to have good friends, we ourselves need to be a good friend to others.

#### 1 SAMUEL 20:24-34

Then David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast.

Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty.

Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; he is unclean, surely he is unclean."

And it happened the next day, the second day of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?"

So Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked permission of me to go to Bethlehem."

"And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table."

Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?"

"For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die."

And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?"

Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David.

So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully.

Remember, David was hidden in the field, waiting. How agonizing the three days must have been for him, not knowing what the outcome would be. On the day of the feast Saul sat at the table, in the place of honor. On the first day, Saul said nothing about David's absence. But on the second day, Saul asked Jonathan where David was. Jonathan answered as he and David had agreed upon. Saul became very angry upon hearing the news and vented his anger on Jonathan. He calls Jonathan a "son of a perverse woman" or son of a perverse and rebellious woman, meaning Jonathan was a perverse and rebellious man.

Saul knew Jonathan loved David and also knew that as long as David lived, Jonathan would never become king. Saul wanted David brought to him to be killed. Jonathan replied, "My father, why shall he die? What has he done?" Saul became so angry that he hurled his javelin at Jonathan. In his anger, he nearly took the life of his own son. Jonathan saw that his father had firmly resolved to put David to death. He rose up from the table, angry himself; and, grieving deeply over David, he ate nothing that day.

### 1 SAMUEL 20:35-42

And so it was, in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad was with him.

Then he said to his lad, "Now run, find the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

When the lad had come to the place where the arrow was which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?"

And Jonathan cried out after the lad, "Make haste, hurry, do not delay!" So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came back to his master.

But the lad did not know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew of the matter.

Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go, carry them to the city."

As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from a place toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another; and they wept together, but David more so.

Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.' " So he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.

What a difficult task Jonathan faced. It was with a very sad heart that Jonathan went out with the arrows and a boy to the waiting David. Jonathan knew that his father was determined to kill David. Jonathan may have wondered if this would be the last time he would ever see David.

As David anxiously watched Jonathan come and shoot the arrows, he heard the message and knew that God was sending him away. Alan Redpath comments, "If David dared to linger now, after this word from heaven, he would lose his life, the crown, and everything that God had for him. This man's life was being emptied from vessel to vessel, like wine, in order to preserve its freshness and keep it from going musty. Every prop upon which

he had leaned was taken away from him; now he must stand alone.” Though David was leaving behind all earthly comforts, he had the most important thing anyone could ever have, a relationship with God. God would become his all in all.

David and Jonathan had to say goodbye, never knowing if they would ever see each other again. Jonathan said to David, “Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, the Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever.” So, David departed; and Jonathan went into the city.

It takes a great love and trust in the Lord to walk away from all you know and love, including your best friend. But, God was faithful to David, as He is to us, in everything. In David’s dark hour, God was with him; He would “never leave him or forsake him.” (Hebrews 13:5b). David went through many painful trials; yet through these hardships, God was preparing him for the task God had for him—to be the new king of Israel.

We all go through difficult times. At times, we may feel we are all alone--that even God has forgotten about us. At those times, we must remember God’s great love for us and His promise to “never leave or forsake” us. Sometimes “arrows” shot into our lives will bring pain and heartache; but, we can be confident we will look back and see that His hand was upon our lives, guiding and directing us in the preparation for the work He has called us to do. Though circumstances may change, God’s love for you remains deep and constant.

## **Braided Belts**

For this craft, you will need three strips of cloth or thick yarn, approximately 1” thick and 2 yards long. You will need three strips for each child.

This craft will teach the children the value of working together with a friend. Form pairs. Give children each three strips of fabric. Have one child hold the ends of three of the strips. Show the other child how to braid the strips and then tie each end. Then have partners switch roles. When both partners have completed their braids, show the children how to tie the belts around their waists.

Read Proverbs 17:17 as a class. Explain that friends are people who become part of our lives, just like these separate pieces of cloth became part of our belts. God can “knit” our hearts together with other Christians. Tell your partner one thing you’ll do to be a good friend this week. **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

## **PRAYER**

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be a faithful friend. Have the children ask the Lord to help them to choose their friends wisely and be a good friend to those whom the Lord brings into their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.