

DAVID SHOWED MERCY

1 SAMUEL 24



KEY PASSAGE: Jeremiah 10:6-7a

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Is anything or anyone greater than God? No, God is greater than everything and everyone.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Saul was trying to kill David, but David chose to show Saul mercy. When the people were killing Jesus, He showed them mercy and said, “Father, forgive them.” We all sin, but God shows us mercy through Jesus, who died for our sin and rose again.

STORY POINT: David showed mercy even though Saul was trying to hurt him.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

In 1 Samuel 24, we see the tension between Saul and David come to a head, as David turned down an opportunity to rid himself of King Saul once and for all. We see David's heart for the Lord as he chose to pursue obedience over safety. David's mercy in this story shows us a glimmer of Christ's incredible mercy toward sinners who place their faith in His name.

Why did David spare Saul's life? How do we see an even greater pardon for sin in the lives of Christ followers?

Back in chapter 18, Saul had begun growing jealous of David's popularity after his many victories in battle. By chapter 24, Saul had attempted to kill David multiple times and refused to give up the fight. In fact, he brought 3,000 men on a mission to search for David in the wilderness of En-gedi. David soon found himself in a cave with his own men, who tempted him to kill the vengeful King Saul.

Yet, David knew what the Lord called him to do (1 Samuel 24:6). He extended honor to Saul, though he did not deserve such mercy. David even swore to never harm his king, an oath that would continue to be tested as Saul would go back on his word to preserve the life of his young successor.

David trusted God to deliver him from Saul and refused to take matters into his own hands, believing God's word would come to pass and that David would become king in God's perfect timing. David's willingness to grant mercy came from his trust in God's perfect justice and righteousness (v. 15). Rather than seek vengeance, David extended mercy, recognizing God alone would enact judgment on Saul's sin.

In an even greater act of mercy, Christ died for sinners. He prayed for forgiveness for those who nailed Him to the cross and took the judgment for our sin. The mercy of God is available to all who place their faith in Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:4-5). Lead boys and girls to see the immeasurable gift of Christ's mercy, that they, too, would experience forgiveness of sins and new life in Christ Jesus.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Cave Maze" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ blindfold

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ pony beads
- ☐ letter beads to spell MERCY
- ☐ nylon or elastic cording
- ☐ key chain rings (optional)



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ ball
- ☐ sticky notes, 1 per kid
- ☐ music

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ pitcher filled with water
- ☐ pipette
- ☐ bowl

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "David Showed Mercy" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 11, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Portrait of a Neighborhood" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "You Are Great, You Are Great (Jeremiah 10:6-7a)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “Do you like to play hide and seek? Why? Would you rather hide or be the seeker? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Cave Maze” activity page.

| **SAY** “Today, we will see how David hid in a cave because Saul was trying to hurt him.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: SNEAK UP



Choose one kid to be It and lead him to face a wall with his back toward the other kids. Place a blindfold on It. Guide the kids to line up on the opposite side of the room. Tell kids that they can only try to sneak up on It one at a time. If It hears a kid, he can turn around and point to where he thinks she is. Remind It to not remove his blindfold. If It is right, the kid who was caught becomes the new It. If It is wrong, the other kids take turns trying to sneak up on It. Play as time allows.

| **SAY** “Was it hard to know where someone was when you had the blindfold on? Today, we will see how David was hiding in a dark cave because Saul was trying to hurt him. Saul didn’t know David was hiding in the cave. We’ll learn how David snuck up on Saul and cut off a piece of his robe.”

☐ OPTION 2: MERCY BRACELET

Provide kids with pony beads, nylon or elastic cords, scissors, and letter beads that spell out MERCY. Invite kids to line up their beads in the pattern or design they like. Then guide kids to string the beads onto the cord. Assist kids in cutting the cord to the right length to make their bracelets. Tie the cords to secure the beads.

If kids prefer, you may also consider inviting them to create a key chain rather than a bracelet. Provide kids with a key chain ring and direct kids to tie the cords to the key chain ring.

| **SAY** “Your bracelets or key chains can be used as to remember our Bible story and also the mercy God has shown us through Jesus. Mercy means to not give someone a consequence they deserve, such as punishment for sin. Today, we will learn how **DAVID SHOWED MERCY EVEN THOUGH SAUL WAS TRYING TO HURT HIM.** We’ll also see how we can show mercy to others because of the mercy God has shown us.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m glad you are here as we learn how God helped David. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we will be in the Old Testament book of 1 Samuel as we see how David needed God to protect him from King Saul.

We will see how **DAVID SHOWED MERCY EVEN THOUGH SAUL WAS TRYING TO HURT HIM.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and ask God to prepare our hearts to hear from His Word: ‘Lord, thank You for Your mercy through Jesus Christ. Help us understand how Your mercy leads us to show mercy to others. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “What is the big picture question we learned last week? [Allow responses.] **Is anything or anyone greater than God?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] **No, God is greater than everything and everyone.** Let’s say the answer again: **No, God is greater than everything and everyone.**

God is great! He is great in power. He is great in goodness. He is great in grace. He is great in mercy. In fact, no one is greater at showing mercy than God. God showed people mercy by forgiving them, even when they deserved punishment for their sin. We can experience the mercy of God when we trust in Jesus. Instead of God punishing us for our sin, Jesus took the punishment we deserve. Christians show mercy to others because of the great mercy they received from God. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “David was a young shepherd boy when he was chosen to be the next king of Israel. Last week, we learned how David defeated Goliath with God’s power. God was with David and gave him victory in other battles he fought. Today, we will discover how David continued to trust in God while he was chased by King Saul. Instead of harming King Saul, David chose to do what was right in God’s eyes, and showed mercy to Saul. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 24. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “David Showed Mercy.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

DAVID SHOWED MERCY

“David became a great military leader for the Israelites and was more successful in battle than all of Saul’s army. Saul was very jealous of David. Saul was hunting down David to kill him, because he did not want David to become king instead of him.

While Saul and his army chased after David to kill him, Saul went into a cave to go to the bathroom. It just so happened that he went into the very cave where David and his men were hiding. Saul did not see David and the men in the cave.

The men whispered to David: “Look, the LORD has handed Saul over to you, just as He said He would.” David snuck up behind Saul while he was going to the bathroom and cut off a corner of his robe.

Afterward, David felt terrible for cutting off a corner of Saul’s robe. David said to his men: “I should have never done such a thing to a man anointed by the LORD!” The men wanted to go fight Saul, but David did not let them.

Then Saul left the cave and went on his way. David followed him out of the cave and called to him, saying, “My lord the king!” When Saul turned around, David knelt low before him and said, “Why do you listen to the people who say I want to hurt you? I could have killed you in the cave, but I showed mercy because you are the LORD’s anointed. See, I have the corner of your robe in my hand! I cut it off, but I didn’t kill you. I haven’t sinned against you even though you are hunting me down to take my life.”

David told Saul that God is their judge. Only God could decide what is right and rescue David from Saul. Then David said he would never harm Saul.

Saul wept and said to David, “You are more righteous than I am. You have done good to me even though I have done evil to you. May the LORD repay you with good for what you’ve done for me today. Now I know for certain you will be king over the kingdom of Israel.”

Christ Connection: Saul was trying to kill David, but David chose to show Saul mercy. When the people were killing Jesus, He showed them mercy and said, “Father, forgive them.” We all sin, but God shows us mercy through Jesus, who died for our sin and rose again.”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Make a cave: Use chairs and blankets to make a “cave.” Consider telling the story inside the “cave” to help bring the story to life.

Read it: Read Luke 23:34, reminding kids of the mercy Jesus showed His enemies.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ David became a great military leader and was very well liked by the people of Israel. Saul was jealous of David and allowed his jealousy to overpower him. Saul wanted to hurt David, so David had to run away and hide. As David and his men were hiding, they watched Saul enter the cave. What did David do to Saul? [Allow responses.] David snuck up on Saul and cut off a small corner of his robe. David didn’t hurt Saul, but David did make it known that he could have.

David immediately felt bad for cutting Saul’s robe. When Saul left the cave, David called out to Saul and said he would never hurt Saul. **DAVID SHOWED MERCY EVEN THOUGH SAUL WAS TRYING TO HURT HIM.** Why did David say he would never hurt Saul? [Allow responses.] David knew that it was not his place to seek revenge on Saul. David understood that God is our judge. God has the power to ultimately declare someone innocent or guilty. David trusted God to help him and judge Saul for trying to hurt him.

When David showed Saul mercy, what did Saul say to David? [Allow responses.] Saul said, ‘You are more righteous than I, for you have done what is good to me though I have done what is evil to you.’ Because David trusted in God, David did what was right. It is always right to show mercy. We all sin, but God shows us mercy through Jesus, who died for our sin and rose again. Anyone who trusts in Jesus is saved from sin and death. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Saul was trying to kill David, but David chose to show Saul mercy. When the people were killing Jesus, He showed them mercy and said, ‘Father, forgive them.’ Jesus never sinned but took the punishment we deserve for our sin. When we accept Jesus as our Savior, we receive the mercy of God. Have you accepted this gift? ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 11, Session 2” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What if someone was bullying me; should I bully back?
2. How does the good news of Jesus change how we treat others?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ A small town called Clarkston, Georgia, is known as the most diverse square mile in America because people from many different countries live in the area. Between 60–70 percent of the people living in Clarkston were born in another country. More than 50 countries and 100 ethnic groups are represented in a 1.4 square-mile area. There are 60 languages spoken in this small area outside of Atlanta. Many of the people living in Clarkston are refugees. A refugee is a person who has been forced to leave their country in order to escape war, persecution, or natural disaster. ”



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Play the missions video. Tell kids that an organization called the Atlanta Ministry Center works with local churches and volunteers to serve the refugees living in Clarkston. Explain that when refugees come to a new country, they may not have a place to live, food, or other basic necessities. The Atlanta Ministry Center helps provide refugees with food, shelter, and safety. They also provide classes to teach the people English, give them job skills training, do after-school tutoring, and provide other assistance to help people adjust to living in a new country and culture. The people working at the Atlanta Ministry Center share the good news of Jesus as they serve the refugees. Pray that many people will hear the gospel and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Jeremiah 10:6-7a together.

SAY “God was greater than Saul, just like our key passage reminds us. God delivered David from his enemies, and He has delivered us from the power of sin. No one is greater than God!”

Recite the key passage aloud. Then divide the key passage into phrases and repeat each phrase with a funny voice. Encourage the kids to repeat each phrase after you, using the same funny voice. Once they have repeated the entire key passage, encourage them to say it from start to finish using their funny voice.

Lead kids to sing “You Are Great, You Are Great (Jeremiah 10:6-7a).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “God, thank You for the reminder of Your mercy through the story of David and Saul. We know that You have power over our enemies. Lead us as we seek to show mercy to others, just as You have shown mercy to us. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles, and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 24. Tell kids that the word mercy or the idea of showing mercy is mentioned hundreds of times in the Bible. Tell kids that we first read of God showing mercy when He made the skins for Adam and Eve to cover their shame and nakedness.

Consider pointing out the Wilderness of En-gedi (J5), near the southwest side of the Dead Sea, on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 24:10 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “David could have hurt Saul, but he chose to show mercy because he trusted that God is the best Judge. We might feel like ‘getting back’ at someone when they wrong or hurt us. But God wants us to be merciful just as He is merciful.

When Jesus was on earth, many people were mean to Him. Eventually, they nailed Him to a cross even though He never did anything wrong. Rather than getting back at people, Jesus prayed that God would forgive them. We can pray for others too and ask God to help them find forgiveness in Jesus. Showing mercy to others helps them see what Jesus is like.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “How can we show mercy to those who mistreat us?”

Answers will vary. Explain that Jesus himself commanded us to love our enemies and pray for those who mistreat us (Matthew 5:44). Invite kids to consider how they can love others through prayer, forgiveness, serving them, and sharing the gospel.

SAY “Why can we trust God when others mistreat us?”

Discuss how **God is greater than everything and everyone**. He is a good Judge who always does what is right. God will make sure justice is served. Tell kids that God is just by either punishing people for their sin or by forgiving their sin because they trusted in Jesus, who paid the price for sin. Encourage kids to remember that God will be with believers when others hurt them.

SAY “Why do we show mercy?”

Read Luke 6:35-36. Explain how we show mercy because God has been merciful to us. Invite kids to think about ways God shows love to people, even when they sin. For example, God gives them life. He provides them with things they need (water, food, jobs). God gives them good gifts, even though they don’t deserve them. Most of all, God showed mercy when He sent Jesus to take the punishment we deserve for our sin.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: MOVED BY MERCY



Write the word MERCY on a sticky note and place the sticky note on a ball. Guide kids to sit in a circle and hand one kid the ball. Play music and direct kids to pass the ball around the circle. When the music stops, the kid holding the ball will choose who to give the MERCY sticker to. Play again, placing a new MERCY sticker on the ball. Repeat as time allows, ensuring every kid has a turn and receives a MERCY sticker.

SAY “ Today, we learned how **DAVID SHOWED MERCY EVEN THOUGH SAUL WAS TRYING TO HURT HIM**. We have opportunities every day to show mercy to others as well. When someone wrongs us, we can choose to forgive them. When someone says something mean to us, we can pray for them. We show mercy to others because God has shown mercy to us. ”

☐ OPTION 2: RICH IN MERCY

Fill a large pitcher with water. Then use a pipette to remove some of the water from the pitcher. Slowly drip each drop of water from the pipette into a bowl, inviting kids to count each drop. Then tell kids to look at the water pitcher. Ask kids if the water level looks like it lowered. Then challenge kids to guess how many drops are in the entire pitcher. Discuss how it would take a very long time and thousands of drops for you to remove all the water from the pitcher. Share how God’s mercy is even greater than all the drops of water in the pitcher, and it’s even greater than all the drops of water in the ocean. God is so rich in mercy, He will never run out of it.

SAY “ The Bible tells us that God is rich in mercy and through His mercy He saves people by His grace (Ephesians 2:4-5). When we sin, we can go to God and ask Him for mercy. Through faith in Jesus, God is generous to show us mercy. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.