

DAVID SHOWED MERCY

1 SAMUEL 24



CHRIST CONNECTION: Saul wanted to be mean to David, but David was kind and showed mercy to Saul. Our sin makes us God's enemies, but He showed us mercy by sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and death.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Is anything greater than God? No, God is greater than everything.

KEY PASSAGE: LORD, there is no one like you. You are great. Jeremiah 10:6

STORY POINT: David showed kindness to Saul.



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 gives us a glimpse 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 grown 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 Sam. 24:6). He extended honor to Saul, though Saul 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 seeking vengeance, David extended mercy, recognizing that 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 He took the judgment for our sin. The mercy of God is available to all who place their faith in Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:4-5). Lead boys and girls to see the immeasurable gift of Christ's mercy so that they, too, might 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 preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30–40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60–65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Find and sort cloth

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ shallow bin
- ☐ shredded paper
- ☐ 3-inch cloth squares, 5 various



LEARN

Tell the Bible story

- ☐ "David Showed Mercy" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Crawl through a cave

- ☐ dark-colored sheet
- ☐ lantern flashlight

Paint cave pictures

- ☐ art smocks
- ☐ tan paper, 1 per child
- ☐ brown washable paint
- ☐ blue washable paint
- ☐ black washable paint
- ☐ paintbrushes, 1 per child



LIVE

Decorate a key passage phrase scroll

- ☐ "Scroll" printable, 1 copy per 2 children
- ☐ craft sticks
- ☐ ribbon

Missions activity

- ☐ "Portrait of a Neighborhood" missions video

Snack and transition

- ☐ hand sanitizer (optional)
- ☐ "Match Saul's Robe" activity page, 1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker

Cut play dough

- ☐ plastic knife, 1 per child

Complete a puzzle relay

- ☐ framed puzzles, 3



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the room. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

FIND AND SORT CLOTH

Fill a shallow bin with shredded paper. Cut a 3-inch cloth square from 5 different patterns of cloth. Hide the pieces of cloth in the tub. Post the Big Picture Question Poster near the entrance to the room. Encourage children to take turns finding a piece of cloth in the tub and pulling it out. Guide the children to sort the cloth into stacks of matching cloth. Read the Big Picture Question Poster to the children.

SAY “ In our Bible story today, David was hiding in a cave when King Saul walked in. King Saul didn’t like David! Some of David’s men wanted David to fight Saul. **DAVID SHOWED KINDNESS TO SAUL.** David knew that God had chosen Saul to be the king, so David didn’t attack King Saul. Instead, David sneaked up and cut a piece of cloth off of the king’s robe. David knew it was not time for him to be king yet. David wanted to honor and obey God and knew that nothing is greater than God. Our big picture question and answer says, **Is anything greater than God? No, God is greater than everything.** ”





LEARN the Bible Story

1 PLAY “SAUL’S COMING”

Encourage the preschoolers to walk around the room freely. Shout “Saul’s coming!” Instruct the kids to find hiding spots around the room to hide from Saul, like David did. Say “Saul’s gone” and lead children to begin walking around the room again. Repeat the game for as long as time and interest allow.

SAY “You found great hiding spots around the room when you heard Saul was coming. Today, we will learn why David was hiding from King Saul, and what David did when Saul did not know David was hiding in a cave.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 24. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

DAVID SHOWED MERCY

SAY “David became a brave leader who led the Israelite army. But King Saul did not like David. Saul wanted to hurt David because he was afraid David might become king instead of him.

One day, while Saul was looking for David, Saul went into a cave to go to the bathroom. But David and his friends were hiding in the same cave! Saul didn’t see them.

David’s friends whispered, “Look, God will let you fight Saul!” David quietly cut off a piece of Saul’s clothes while Saul wasn’t looking.

Afterward, David felt bad. He said, “I shouldn’t have cut Saul’s robe. God chose him to be king first.” The men with David wanted him to fight Saul, but David said no.

When Saul left the cave, David came out too. He said, “My king!” and he bowed down to Saul. David said, “I don’t want to hurt you. Look, I could have fought you in the cave, but I just cut a bit of your clothes instead.”

Saul cried. “You are better than me. Even though I wanted to hurt you, you didn’t hurt me. Now I know you will be the next king of Israel.”

Then Saul and David went to their homes.”

Christ Connection: Saul wanted to be mean to David, but David was kind and showed mercy to Saul. Our sin makes us God’s enemies, but He showed us mercy by sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and death.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Talk about the story briefly. Look at the Bible Story Picture Poster together. Toss a beanbag to children and encourage them to name ways they show mercy or are kind to their family and friends. Prompt as needed.

SAY “ The Bible tells us that **DAVID SHOWED KINDNESS TO SAUL**. David chose to not hurt King Saul even though he knew that King Saul wanted to hurt him. Look at the Bible Story Picture Poster with me. Which man is David? [Allow responses.] Which man is Saul? [Allow responses.] Can you name ways that you show mercy and are kind to your family and friends? [Allow responses.] God showed mercy to us by sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and death. We all sin and do things that are wrong, but Jesus loved us so much He died so we could be forgiven. ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Mulberry Bush”:

LORD, there is no one like you.
You are great.
You are great.
LORD, there is no one like you.
Jeremiah 10:6

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Jeremiah 10:6. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Guide preschoolers to place a hand near their forehead like they are looking around a dark cave. Practice the key passage phrase together as you walk through the cave.

SAY “ David knew that there is no one like God. David trusted God to help him even though Saul was looking for him and very angry at him. Instead of fighting Saul, David only cut a cloth from Saul’s robe. **DAVID SHOWED KINDNESS TO SAUL**. ”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for showing us kindness and sending Jesus so we can be forgiven for our sins. Ask God to help us show mercy to others.

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





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 PRACTICE CUTTING



Distribute play dough and a pair of safety scissors to each child. Encourage the preschoolers to roll the play dough into a log shape and cut it into pieces. Extend the activity by challenging children to make little play dough caves or form the letters D and S for David and Saul.

SAY 🗨️ Your hands are getting stronger, and you are beginning to cut well. Today in our Bible story, David cut a piece of Saul's robe. David did it to show Saul that he could have fought him, but instead **DAVID SHOWED KINDNESS TO SAUL**. When Saul discovered what David had done, he knew that David should be the king of Israel because he did the right thing. 🗨️

2 CRAWL THROUGH A CAVE

Make a cave by covering a table with a dark-colored sheet. Place a lantern-like flashlight under the table. Assist the children to safely crawl through the cave.

SAY 🗨️ David knew that Saul was looking for him and wanted to hurt him. David hid in a cave with his friends. They were surprised when Saul came into the cave. Saul didn't even see David hiding there. David's friends wanted David to fight Saul. **DAVID SHOWED KINDNESS TO SAUL**. David cut a piece from Paul's robe instead of fighting him. 🗨️

3 PAINT CAVE PICTURES

Assist children in putting on art smocks. Give each child a tan sheet of paper and provide several shades of brown, black, and blue paint and paintbrushes. Encourage the children to paint the inside of a cave. Comment that caves are usually dark and that sometimes they have water running on the floors. Comment that the walls, floors, and ceilings of caves are rock. Show the Bible Story Picture Poster and look at the cave together.

SAY 🗨️ David was hiding from Saul in a cave with his soldiers. Saul walked into the cave but didn't see David. **DAVID SHOWED KINDNESS TO SAUL**. God shows kindness and mercy to us by making the way for our sins to be forgiven. 🗨️

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 DECORATE A KEY PASSAGE PHRASE SCROLL

Print the “Scroll” printable, 1 copy for 2 children. Encourage the children to decorate the scroll. Glue craft sticks on each side of the scroll. Assist children to roll together both sides and tie closed with a ribbon. Encourage them to take it home and read the key passage phrase with their families.

SAY “Long ago, people didn’t have books and Bibles like we have now. They wrote important things on scrolls. We made a scroll that you can take home and read with your family. Your scroll has the key passage phrase on it. It says, ‘LORD, there is no one like you. You are great.’ We know there is no one as great as God!”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Remind preschoolers that the good news about Jesus is too good to keep to ourselves! God wants us to tell others about Jesus. A follower of Jesus who is sent to tell others about Jesus is called a missionary. Explain to preschoolers how the Atlanta Ministry Center provides services to help meet the basic needs of the people. They offer classes to teach the people English, give them job training, do after-school tutoring, and help them with medical care. Show the “Portrait of a Neighborhood” missions video. Pray for the Atlanta Ministry Center as they give the people in Clarkston the resources they need to live.

SAY “The small city of Clarkston, Georgia, is known as ‘the most diverse square mile’ in America. More than half of the people living in Clarkston were born in another country. Over 50 countries and 100 people groups are represented in the area. There are 60 different languages spoken in this city.”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION

Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “Saul wanted to be mean to David, but David was kind and showed mercy to Saul. Our sin makes us God’s enemies, but He showed us mercy by sending Jesus to rescue us from sin and death.”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 CAVE CONVERSATIONS

Greet the children in group time. Ask if anyone has ever been in a cave. Ask them to describe what it was like in the cave. Mention any caves that are in your area. Comment that caves are usually dark, damp, and cool. Ask the children to gather close together and pretend they are in a cave. Comment that David and the men that followed him were all hiding in a cave together when today's Bible story happened.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 24. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

DAVID SHOWED MERCY

- King Saul did not like David. He wanted to hurt him.
- One day, Saul went into a cave. He did not see David and his friends hiding in the cave.
- David's friends wanted him to hurt Saul, but David cut off a piece of Saul's clothing instead.
- When Saul left the cave, David talked to him. David said, "I could have hurt you, but I didn't."
- Saul said, "You are better than me. I know you will be the next king of Israel." Then Saul and David went to their homes.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "Mulberry Bush":

LORD, there is no one like you.
You are great.
You are great.
LORD, there is no one like you.
Jeremiah 10:6

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Jeremiah 10:6. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Ask the children to tiptoe around the room as they repeatedly say the key passage phrase. Comment that the men in the cave with David must have been very quiet when King Saul came into the cave because he did not know they were there.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God that there is no one like Him and that He is great. Pray that we can learn to follow God as David did.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 SHOUT “NO” TO WRONG THINGS



Call out things that children might do. Encourage the children to shout, “No” when you name something they should not do. Encourage children to whisper, “Yes” to things they should do.

SAY “We make choices every day. I am going to name some things children might do. If it is a bad thing, something that is wrong or could cause them to be hurt or to hurt someone else, shout “No.” Are you ready? Children should ride their bikes on a busy street. (No!) Children should eat all the cookies they want. (No!) Children should go to bed on time. (Yes.) Children should hit their little sisters. (No!) Children should take their brother’s toys. (No!) Children should help set the table. (Yes.) Children should cross the road when no adults are nearby. (No!) Children should put away their toys. (Yes.) Great job, everyone! David did the right thing when he chose to not fight Saul in the cave.”

7 CUT PLAY DOUGH

Give each child a ball of play dough, a plastic knife, and blunt-tipped scissors. Guide them to flatten the dough and cut off a piece. Talk about David cutting off a piece of Saul’s robe.

SAY “Flatten your dough and cut it. When Saul came into the cave where David was hiding, he didn’t see David. David sneaked up and cut off a piece of Saul’s robe. Why did he do that? David was close enough to Saul to hurt him. David knew Saul wanted to hurt him. David cut the cloth to prove he had been close to Saul but did not hurt him. Later, David was sorry he cut Saul’s robe because he knew God had chosen Saul to be the king first. When he showed the cloth to Saul, he bowed down and said, ‘My king.’ Saul knew that David had shown kindness and mercy to him. We should show kindness and mercy to our friends, even when they do something to hurt us.”

8 COMPLETE A PUZZLE RELAY

Choose three puzzles with the same number of pieces. Put the puzzle pieces on chairs at one end of the area. Place the matching frames on a table or chairs at the other end of the game area. Line a team up behind each chair with pieces. Let the first child in each line take a piece, run to the puzzle frame, place their piece, and run back to tag the next child.

SAY “You did a puzzle relay! Each piece of the puzzle only fits the right way. God wants us to live in obedience to Him. He gave us the way to be forgiven when we make wrong choices. God shows us mercy and kindness even when we don’t choose the right ways to live. Making the right choice may be difficult, but **God is greater than everything.**”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.