

Living the Word:

Teaching Youth God's Story

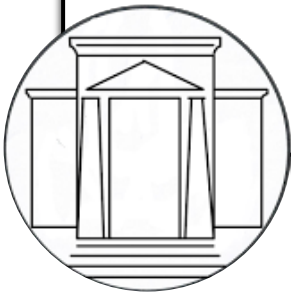
Narrative Lectionary, Year 3

God's Promise to David

2 Samuel 7:1-17

Lesson #3-7

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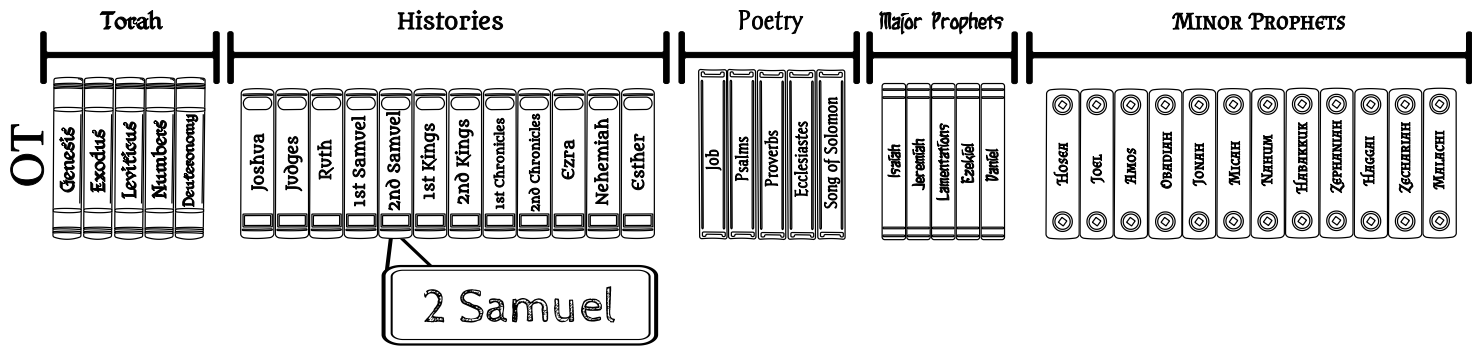
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God's Promise to David

2 Samuel 7:1-17

God says "Thanks, but no thanks," to David's offer of a house, and promises David something greater instead.

Story Connections

Samuel grew up to be the prophet who anointed the first kings of Israel, Saul and David. This week, a new prophet, Nathan, is given a message from the Lord to bring to David, which is the establishment of a new covenant (or promise) with the king and his descendants.

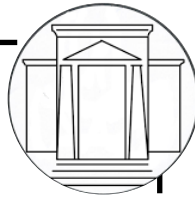
Story Summary

God's Promise to David

David wants to build a temple to house for the Ark of the Covenant. But God has other plans. What God wants to build David a

Lesson @ A Glance

#3-7: God's Promise to David
2 Samuel 7:1-17



The Point: Even when we have the best intentions in mind, God always does greater things for us than we can do for God.

Making Connections: Promises Made, Promises Broken

Spiritual Practice Emphasis: Worship

Bible Nuts and Bolts: Bible Citations

"house"—a royal dynasty. God promises that a descendant of David will build God's temple, and another descendant, Jesus, will reign on the throne forever. This further fulfills that first promise to Abraham, when God called God's people to be a blessing for the entire world.

The Point

Even when we have the best intentions in mind, God always does greater things for us than we can do for God. Even when we think we have the best plan, if it is not God's plan, it is not the best. God knows us better than we know ourselves, and God

loves us more than we can imagine. When we try our best and when we fail the most, God's love for us is unyielding.

Bible Nuts & Bolts: Bible Citations

When we want to locate a particular part of the Bible we look it up by its citation, its chapter and verse. Although these marked divisions can help us to find our way around the text, they were not part of the texts as they were originally written. Editors who wanted to help people navigate the stories better added them later.

Your house and
your kingdom shall
be made sure
forever before me;
your throne shall be
established forever.
2 Samuel 7:16

Spiritual Practice: Worship

We often associate certain places with God's presence—a sanctuary or chapel, a place in nature or at camp—places where we are particularly open to God's presence. David wanted to build a place where people could go to be in God's presence. Sometimes it can help us to feel closer to God when we have a special place where we can go to pray, to read Scripture, and to invite God's presence into our lives.

For Your Reflection:

1. Have you ever wanted to surprise some one, only to have them surprise you with something even greater?

2. How can this news that God will stick by us no matter what be especially powerful for your youth?

Overview, Objectives, and Materials You'll Need

Core Elements

+Into the Story

5 min.

› None

Different Houses

Look at pictures of different houses and talk about what makes a house special.

+Learning the Story

15 min.

› Bibles
› Activity Sheet #3-7.A
› Pens or pencils

House for David, House for God

Identify uses of the word "house" in the story and think about its different meanings.

Living the Story

15 min.

› Red cedar incense cones or sticks
› Lighter or matches
› Optional: reflective music and music player

The Scent of Worship

Engage in a sensory experience of worship.

+Sending the Story

5 min.

› None

Short on time?
Items marked +
can be adjusted to be done with
what you probably already
have in your pocket or
classroom.

Extending the Learning:

Hands On <i>Bread and Oil</i> <i>Eat a Mediterranean snack reminiscent of King David's time and place.</i>	15 min.	› Unsliced loaf of bread › Olive oil › Small bowls
+Mixed Media <i>Join the Bible Project—2 Samuel</i> <i>Watch a video and learn how God's promises link together across the various stories.</i>	15 min.	› Video player
+The Competitive Edge <i>House of Cards</i> <i>Compete to see who can build the sturdiest house with playing cards.</i>	15 min.	› Playing cards
+Simply Serving <i>Keeping God's House in Good Order</i> <i>Plan and carry out a church building/grounds cleanup day.</i>	20 min.	› None
+Worship Connection <i>Creating a Space for Worship</i> <i>Create a temporary prayer space for members of the congregation.</i>	10 min.	› Flat sheets › PVC pipes › Twine › Hooks › Mural paper › Markers

Into the Story: *Different Houses (5 minutes)*

Look at pictures of different houses and talk about what makes a house special.

BEFORE CLASS:

1. Do an Internet search for images of different kinds of houses: large houses, small houses, huts, tents, houses of worship, animal burrows... Try to find examples of houses from different areas of the world, and of different creatures (human, animal, plant, etc.). If possible, print out a different kind of house for each youth.

Supplies:

› Nothing

DURING CLASS:

1. Pass out the pictures of houses to the youth, or allow them to choose pictures on their own.
Today's Bible story will get us talking about houses. You each have in front of you a picture of a house. Maybe it looks like a house to you, and maybe it does not. Your job is to think about this house and how it acts as a home to those who live there: what is its function? How does it keep its inhabitants safe? What characteristics make it a house? Could other people, or other creatures, call it home, or is it specific to its residents? What makes it special?
2. Give youth some time to think about their houses and prepare what they will share. Invite volunteers to share spontaneously, or go around in a circle.
3. An example might be: A picture of a rabbit's burrow: *This house is underground and keeps its inhabitants safe, dry, and warm. It is perfect for small rabbits, but bigger animals or people would not be able to live there.*

Learning the Story:

House for David, House for God (20 minutes)

Identify uses of the word “house” in the story and think about its different meanings.

BEFORE CLASS:

1. Make copies of the Activity Sheet #3-7.A.
2. Note that this activity assumes use of the *New Revised Standard Version*, but depending on the version(s) of the Bible your youth are using, the terms may be different.

Supplies:

- › Bibles
- › Activity Sheet #3-7.A
- › Pens

DURING CLASS:

1. **Open your Bibles to 2 Samuel 7:1-17. We are going to break this passage into three sections. Can I have three volunteers to read? Assign readers for verses 1-3, 4-7, and 8-17. When you are not reading aloud, pay special attention to the text and the different terms for “house” that are used. When you find one, circle it in your Bible.**
2. Invite your volunteers to read the story aloud. If it is helpful, read it a second time through. Sometimes using a second translation can help provide a deeper understanding of the text. Activity Sheet #3-7.A provides this passage from *The Living Bible* translation. Have youth read this version as well and circle the different terms for “house.”
3. “House” terms to highlight (using the *New Revised Standard Version*):
 - 2 Samuel 7:2 – house of cedar, tent
 - 2 Samuel 7:6 – house, tent, tabernacle
 - 2 Samuel 7:7 – house of cedar
 - 2 Samuel 7:11 – house
 - 2 Samuel 7:13 – house
 - 2 Samuel 7:16 – house
4. **What uses of “house” did you circle? How do those dwellings function as a house in that specific setting or context?** [*House of cedar: David’s palace was made of cedar and he lived there; Tent: the Ark of the Covenant was housed in a tent that could keep it safe but could also be easily taken down and moved; etc.*] **What does David mean when he says he wants to build God a house?** [*David wants to build a permanent place where the Ark of the Covenant can be kept and where sacrificial offerings and incense can be burned. Since the nation of Israel has found its permanent home, they do not have to keep worshipping God in a tent/tabernacle that can be easily taken down and moved.*]
5. **What do you think of when you hear the term “God’s house?”** [*Church? A sanctuary? Nature? Everywhere?*] **Some people feel God is more present in certain places than in others. What do you think? Are some places “holier” than other places? What makes a place**

“holy?” What makes a place a “house” for God? Tap into experiences youth may have had with God on mission trips, retreats, or at camp. These can be “mountaintop” experiences, like when Moses met with God on the mountaintop to receive the Ten Commandments—experiences when we feel God’s presence in vivid, maybe even overwhelming, unquestionable ways.

6. **God knew that David wanted to build God a house, but God surprised David by saying that God wanted to build a house for David instead. David already had a physical house, so what did God mean?** *[Instead of focusing on building a temple, God wanted David to focus on being faithful to the covenant made with God. God would make David a great leader, and out of David’s line would come a heir to the throne who would be like God’s own son (Solomon), who would actually build a physical temple.]* **How do you think David felt when God responded to his eager desire to build a temple by saying, in essence, “No, thank you. Let me build a house out of you instead”?**
7. **Look at verse 16 in your Bibles, our key verse for today. Read the verse out loud together. What is one way God kept this promise to David?** *[God brought the Messiah, Jesus, out from the line of David to be “king,” to reign forever.]*

Living the Story:

The Scent of Worship (15 minutes)

Engage in a sensory experience of worship.

BEFORE CLASS:

Supplies:

- › Red cedar incense cones or sticks
- › Lighter or matches
- › Optional: reflective music & music player

1. Check to be sure that none of your youth have asthma or problems with incense.
2. Practice burning the incense cones or sticks. Red cedar is recommended to best represent the scent King David was so familiar with, but any wood resin or nature-based incense will do.
3. Select the song(s) you would like to play. If you can find a soft rendition of Marty Haugen's "Let My Prayer Rise Up" (the psalmody from Holden Evening Prayer), the lyrics to the song are fitting and are based on Psalm 141. Another suggestion is this YouTube video of Psalm 141 through chant:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhTKPYOoer0> ("Psalm 141: O Lord, Let My Prayer Rise," posted by Paul Inwood). Gentle acoustic worship music would be appropriate here as well and would help guide youth into a meditative prayer time.

DURING CLASS:

1. **Part of the reason David wanted to build a temple for God was that he recognized that he was living in a palace with cedar paneling, yet the Ark of the Covenant was still housed in a simple tent. The cedar in David's palace smelled good and was part of what made his house special. We may not often think about it, but scents play an important part in making a place or memory feel special. Does anyone associate a certain place or good memory with a particular scent?** [*A summer cabin smells like cedar, a certain perfume reminds someone of spending time with a grandmother, etc.*]
2. **What scents do you associate with worship?** Youth may or may not recall any particular scent of worship. In congregations that use incense, youth might mention incense right away. **We know that incense was burned in both the tabernacle and later in the temple that David's son, Solomon, built. This sweet smelling incense symbolized the prayers of God's people ascending to God.**
3. Light the incense and invite youth to center their focus on the smoke as it rises. Ask them to think about what prayers they have for God that can be offered this morning by the rising of the incense. Play the music you have chosen. After five minutes of meditative prayer, invite youth to lift their hands into the air and offer a collective "Amen."

Hands On: Bread and Oil (15 minutes)

Eat a Mediterranean snack reminiscent of King David's time and place.

BEFORE CLASS:

1. Set bread, oil, and bowls on a tray or table. Provide enough bread so that each youth can enjoy a decent share. Make sure to wash your hands before handling the bread and oil, and instruct youth to do the same.
2. Before serving any food, always check with participants or caregivers for youth who have food allergies. Provide an alternative if necessary.

Supplies:

- › Unsliced loaf of bread
- › Olive oil
- › Small bowls

DURING CLASS:

1. While holding a loaf of bread, share with the class: **David's reign was a time of relative peace and prosperity for the united kingdom of Israel. David conquered the city of Jerusalem and established it as the new religious capital. In addition to being associated with the establishment of Jerusalem as the holy city, David was also associated with Bethlehem, where he was born and where one day his descendant, Jesus, the Messiah, would also be born. Bethlehem means "house of bread."**
2. Bring out the olive oil you will use for dipping. **In addition to being used to anoint kings in David's time, oil was also used for cooking and eating. In fact, bread and oil were two staple foods in biblical times, and having enough of both was a sign of plenty. Let's break bread together and dip our bread pieces in the oil, enjoying this biblical snack that has stood the test of time!**
3. Make sure youth have washed their hands before handling the food. Encourage youth to use their hands to break off their pieces of bread! If youth are uncomfortable with this, or if it is cold & flu season, feel free to portion the bread yourself and distribute to youth.

Mixed Media: Join the Bible Project (15 minutes)

Watch a video about the book of 2 Samuel and learn how God's promises link together across the various stories.

BEFORE CLASS:

Supplies

› Video player

1. Cue up the video “Read Scripture: 2 Samuel” from the Bible Project found here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvoWDXNDJgs>.
2. If you used the Mixed Media section from last week, this will be a good follow-up to that activity, continuing the narrative and giving youth an overview of the entire story of 1 and 2 Samuel. If you did not use Mixed Media from #3-6, you can still use this activity this week. The video will offer a brief recap of what happened in 1 Samuel to catch viewers up.

DURING CLASS:

1. **This week's story is actual a critical point in the history of Israel. The Bible Project's video 2 Samuel will help us gain a deeper understanding of just how important today's story is, especially in light of our theme this unit, “Promises Made, and Promises Broken.” As you watch, listen for the promises mentioned in the video.**
2. Play the video.
3. **What are some of the promises of God that you heard mentioned in the video?** *[God makes a promise to David that a future king will come from his line that will build God's temple here on earth and will set up an eternal kingdom; the promise of a Messiah; Gods promise to Abraham, that through this messianic kingdom God will bless the nations; God was faithful to God's promise to David and his family when God saved David from danger]*
4. **Where did you see promises being broken? Or, if it is easier to spot, where did you see people not living as God intended?** *[David's affair with Bathsheba and assassination of her husband, Uriah; the violence and rebellion of David's sons, Amnon and Absalom; both David and Saul hurt people because of bad decisions.]*
5. **How does this video help you understand God's faithfulness to God's promises even when we break them?**

The Competitive Edge:

House of Cards (15 minutes)

Compete to see who can build the sturdiest house with playing cards.

DURING CLASS:

Supplies:

› Deck of playing cards

1. **Even though David did not get to build his house for God—his son, Solomon, ended up building the Temple—we are going to have a competition to see who can build the best house out of playing cards.**
2. Have youth break into pairs. Give each pair $\frac{1}{4}$ of a deck of playing cards.
3. **The object is to build the tallest house in the shortest amount of time. I will give you one minute, and at the end of that minute the partner with the tallest house advances to the next round.** Play until you have one final winner.

Simply Serving:

Keeping God's House in Good Order (20 minutes)

Plan and carry out a church building/grounds cleanup day.

BEFORE CLASS:

1. Speak with church staff about hosting a “Church Clean-Up” event. Speak with a property/building manager if you have one, and bring to class a list of projects that need to be completed. It might be a good idea to bring a copy of the church’s calendar with you so you can be aware of possible conflicts when scheduling this event with your youth.

Supplies
› Nothing

DURING CLASS:

1. **We often refer to “church” as God’s house, even though we know God is actually everywhere. Still, it is important to us to take good care of the gifts God has given us, including our church building and property. Let’s plan an event where we can come together to complete some maintenance projects inside and out** (depending on your needs and abilities). Look at the list of tasks you have brought and decide as a group which to focus on during your project day.
2. Get to planning! Some things to consider:
 - When will this event be? What day and time?
 - Aside from your youth, who else should be present to help complete tasks? (Property team members, adult volunteers, men/women handy with tools?)
 - What supplies/tools do you need, and where will you get them?

Worship Connection:

Creating Space for Worship (30 minutes)

Create a temporary prayer space for members of the congregation.

BEFORE CLASS:

1. This activity involves constructing a "prayer tent" which will hang from the ceiling. Determine where in your church building you will set it up. Confirm that hanging PVC pipes from the ceiling is permissible.
2. Assemble the supplies. Judge the length of PVC pipes you will need to form your three poles based on your space (we recommend poles of around six feet). For instructions and a visual guide, visit <http://bibleclasscreations.blogspot.com/2013/03/fabric-tent.html>.

Supplies

- › Flat sheets
- › PVC pipes
- › Twine
- › Hooks
- › Large paper
- › Markers

DURING CLASS:

1. **We know that God is not limited by space. The whole earth belongs to God and God can be worshipped anywhere! The Israelites learned this in the wilderness when they worshipped God in a tent that they could put up and take down as they traveled from place to place. To remind our congregation of Israel's transient houses of worship by building a prayer tent here in our building. Worshippers can visit the prayer tent to pray and reflect.**
2. Explain how the structure of the tent works. Pass out printed instructions from the recommended website (link above). Take your group to the area where the tent will be built, give them the supplies, and let them construct the tent.
3. When the tent is constructed, ask youth to think of what they should put in the tent to help people feel prayerful and to be reminded of God's presence [examples: candles (LED for safety); incense; chairs/pillows; soft instrumental music...]
4. Use large paper and markers to make signs to advertise the prayer tent and its purpose.

Sending the Story (5 minutes)

We have been tracing the promises of God during the past several weeks. We have seen that God makes and keeps God's promises with great faithfulness, even when human beings are not faithful to their promises to God. Let's do a quick review of the promises we have heard about the past few weeks, the promises made and the promises broken. What are some of the promises you can remember? *[God's first promise in the Garden of Eden/Adam and Eve disobey God's instructions; God's promise to Abraham/Abraham and Sarah doubted; Joseph; the promise of Passover; Israel forgets God's promise in the wilderness; Samuel is promised to God; God promises to make a house for David.]*

In these first stories we have of God's interactions with humanity we see time and time again evidence of God's faithfulness despite our repeated mistakes. Even when our sin and brokenness seem to hinder God's plan, or when we are tempted to wander or go our own way, God is able to bring to completion the good work God already began. This is really good news!

Our focus point for today's lesson has been that even when we have the best intentions in mind, God always does greater things for us than we can do for God. In light of these ancient promises, we can trust in this: God's ancient promises remain true for us today. No matter where we go in life or what we do, God's love for us is never-ending, unwavering, unconditional, constant, and all encompassing.

For our closing prayer today we are going to sit silently and still with that promise echoing in our minds. Right where you are, just close your eyes and let these words roll around in your mind: No matter where we go in life or what we do, God's love for us is never-ending, unwavering, without condition, constant, and all-encompassing. You will always be enough for God. Repeat these words at least once to let them sink in. Let youth sit quietly for two minutes. Then, continue with the following: As you think on these words, think about the freedom that comes with this promise from God, the promise that you are loved no matter what. What is one thing that could change in your life if you trust in this promise with your whole heart? Let youth sit silently for two more minutes. At the end of the quiet time, close with the following prayer:

Promise-keeping Lord, we are in awe of the promises you have made and kept to your people throughout the generations. We know that Adam and Eve, Abraham and Sarah, Joseph and his family, Moses and Aaron, the people of Israel in the wilderness, Hannah and Samuel, and David all knew you as the faithful, promise-keeping God you are and have always been. Sometimes they held tight to your promises and had faith in you, and sometimes they forgot, sometimes they did not trust you and turned their own way; but you remained faithful to them every time. Help us to truly understand how faithful you are. Thank you for all you have done to rescue, redeem, and restore your creation. In your holy name we pray, amen.

Remember to send "The Story @ Home" take home sheet with students before dismissing them.

House for David, House for God

Identify uses of the word "house" in the story and think about its different meanings.

2 Samuel 7:1-17

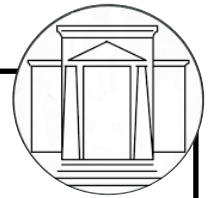
¹When the Lord finally sent peace upon the land, and Israel was no longer at war with the surrounding nations, ²David said to Nathan the prophet, "Look! Here I am living in this beautiful cedar palace while the Ark of God is out in a tent!"

³"Go ahead with what you have in mind," Nathan replied, "for the Lord is with you."

⁴But that night the Lord said to Nathan, ⁵"Tell my servant David not to do it! ⁶For I have never lived in a temple. My home has been a tent ever since the time I brought Israel out of Egypt. ⁷And I have never once complained to Israel's leaders, the shepherds of my people. Have I ever asked them, 'Why haven't you built me a beautiful cedar temple?'

⁸"Now go and give this message to David from the Lord of heaven: 'I chose you to be the leader of my people Israel when you were a mere shepherd, tending your sheep in the pastureland. ⁹I have been with you wherever you have gone and have destroyed your enemies. And I will make your name greater yet, so that you will be one of the most famous men in the world! ¹⁰⁻¹¹I have selected a homeland for my people from which they will never have to move. It will be their own land where the heathen nations won't bother them as they did when the judges ruled my people. There will be no more wars against you; and your descendants shall rule this land for generations to come! ¹²For when you die, I will put one of your sons upon your throne, and I will make his kingdom strong. ¹³He is the one who shall build me a temple. And I will continue his kingdom into eternity. ¹⁴I will be his father and he shall be my son. If he sins, I will use other nations to punish him, ¹⁵but my love and kindness shall not leave him as I took it from Saul, your predecessor. ¹⁶Your family shall rule my kingdom forever.'"

¹⁷So Nathan went back to David and told him everything the Lord had said.



The Point

Even when we have the best intentions in mind, God always does greater things for us than we can do for God. Today's story is important because we can always use the reminder that God's plans are always greater than our own. Even when we think we have the best plan, if it is not God's plan, it is not the best. God knows us better than we know ourselves, and God loves us more than we can imagine. How can you trust in this unending promise of unconditional love this week?

Story Connections

Last week God remembered Hannah and answered her prayers for a son. This week, a new prophet, Nathan, is given a word from the Lord to bring to David, the establishment of a new covenant with the king and his descendants.

Spiritual Practice: Worship

We often associate certain places with God's presence—a sanctuary or chapel, a place in nature or at camp—places where we are particularly open to God's presence. David wanted to build a place where people could be in God's presence. Is there a place where special moments—holy moments, where you feel close to each other and to God, happen in your house? Around the dinner table? By the fire? During conversations before bed? Designate a place to be the "holy place" in your house this week, where you can go to pray, perhaps lighting a candle and burning incense.

Story Summary

God's Promise to David

David wants to build a temple to house for the Ark of the Covenant. But God has other plans. What God wants is to build David a "house"—a royal dynasty. God promises that a descendant of David will build God's temple, and another descendant will reign on the throne forever. This further fulfills that first promise to Abraham, when God called God's people to be a blessing for the entire world.

Last Week/Next Week

Last week, we read about a woman named Hannah, who cried out to God for a child and whose prayers were answered. Hannah rejoiced and promised her yet-to-be-born son to God's service. Next week we hear about the prophet Elijah and how, after David's kingdom was split in two, the northern King Ahab disobeyed God and suffered the consequences.

Bible Nuts and Bolts: Bible Citations

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God's Promise to David

The Story @ Home + Youth #3-7

2 Samuel 7:1-17

Going Deeper

As you hear and study these stories each week, consider what God has to say to you and your family. What is God's message to us? Consider the following basic pattern as a way of forming family devotions:

- ✦ Light a candle to help you focus this time as "God time." Pray a simple prayer together.
- ✦ Take a moment to check in with each other; what are each person's "highs" and "lows" today?
- ✦ Read aloud from the Daily Bible Readings from below. Discuss the questions following each.
- ✦ End with a blessing, by simply tracing a cross on each other's forehead. The Lord's Prayer is a good way to end your devotion time. If you used a candle, extinguish it as a sign of the end of the devotions.

Note: This is only a suggested pattern. It will vary with your household's context and patterns. What works best for you? First thing in the morning? Over breakfast? Bed time? Be creative and flexible with how you practice and keep your devotions!

Daily Bible Readings

Sunday - 2 Samuel 7:1-17

David plans to build a temple for God, but God has other plans.

- Have you ever wanted to do something special for someone, but instead they surprised?
- How do you think David felt to hear God say that God would never turn away from him?

Monday - Read 2 Samuel 12:1-13

Nathan confronts David with the reality of his actions.

- When have you been helped to understand something you had done or said was hurtful?
- Is it difficult to be confronted about our behavior? Why or why not?

Tuesday - Read 1 Kings 1:32-40

King David passes the throne of Israel to his son, Solomon.

- Does David seem proud to see his son become king or reluctant to leave the throne? Why?
- How was Solomon received by the people when he became king?

Wednesday - Read 1 Kings 3:3-14

Solomon asks God to give him wisdom as a leader.

- Between wealth, fame, a long life, or wisdom, which would you choose? Why?
- Why do you think God was so impressed by Solomon's request?

Thursday - Read 1 Kings 6:1; 8:14-21

Solomon builds a permanent temple to house the Ark of the Covenant.

- What is the longest time you have waited for something to happen?
- Why do you think God wanted Solomon to build the temple, and not David?

Friday - Read 1 Kings 12:1-15

Rehoboam ignores the advice of his elders.

- Based on this story, what kind of king do you think Rehoboam will be?
- When is a time when you ignored the advice of someone older or wiser? What happened?

Saturday - Read 1 Kings 12:16-24

The people of Israel rebel against Rehoboam and the kingdom is split in two.

- Have you ever had a big fight with a family member? What happened?
- If Rehoboam had made better choices, how might the outcome have changed?