

DAVID: GOD'S CHOSEN KING

KING'S THEATRE

Puppets Workshop

Bible Story: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Memory Verse: 1 Samuel 16:7b “The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”

Theme

David, a man after God’s own heart, was chosen by God to be the King of Israel.

God directs the prophet Samuel to anoint David in secret as Israel’s future king. Twenty-four years later all of Israel covenants with David and anoints him king, “according to the word of the Lord to Samuel” (1 Chronicles 11:1-9).

Objectives

The students of this rotation will:

appreciate that God is in charge, working steadfastly according to God’s own plan and timetable.

learn that the shepherd boy David will become Israel’s greatest king, and, more importantly, an ancestor of the Messiah. David’s idealized kingdom points ultimately to the coming Kingdom of God.

learn that God sees things that people do not. Even God’s most trusted and most faithful followers sometimes fail to follow God’s instructions, taking charge themselves and relying wrongly on themselves. We recognize ourselves in their struggles to understand and to do God’s will.

see that when God calls people to do something, God prepares them and provides all they need to do God’s work. We also can rely on the Holy Spirit’s presence and support in our own lives.

Objectives for Puppetry Workshop

Puppets express unseen motivations that help children understand characteristics God might want inside a chosen leader.

Students will:

be able to give examples of internal qualities and their impact.

know that David was a person who really wanted to follow after God.

practice and better understand memory verse.

Overview of Puppetry Workshop

David, a man after God's own heart, had internal characteristics which God wanted in the king who would lead his people. The activities in this lesson will allow children to explore how internal characteristics can affect leadership. The arrival activity, "Simon Says," provides an opportunity to explain the power a king had. A puppetry warm up of practicing entrances while repeating the memory verse introduces the importance of internal characteristics. The main activity is a guessing game. The "king" exaggerates actions motivated by an internal characteristic while "subjects" experience the results and an audience tries to figure out what's inside the king. Finally, a puppet dog intent on retrieving a ball, illustrates David, the man after God's own heart, as first paying attention to what God wanted so he could follow.

PREPARATION

Read Bible Background and this lesson plan including the Additional Suggestions at the end of the plan.

Materials List

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- Ball, small enough for the dog to catch
- Copy machine or printer
- Crown – to pin on puppet king
- Index cards
- List of characteristics
- Memory verse to duplicate
- Paper
- Pens
- Pins or tape
- Puppet Stage
- Puppets, at least one dog puppet with a working mouth and a king puppet

Advance Preparation Requirements

Building/Stumbling Blocks

Prepare an index card or a piece of paper for each internal characteristic and building/stumbling block idea.

Search Institute (search-insitute.org) has been studying factors that help children and youth grow into the sort of people who make wise choices for the past 50 years. Their work, including a handout called “Developmental Assets and Scripture,” served as a shortcut for choosing the building/stumbling blocks for this activity. Other scripture about David also provides some background examples for teachers. Another source of ideas for this activity could be to consider strengths and weaknesses of individual students.

The scripture references in parenthesis are intended for teacher background; the 1 Samuel references are in other stories about David.

Learning is valuable (Commitment to Learning)

Stumbling Block: King keeps making the same mistake over and over, and doesn't care.

Building block: King learns from mistakes and wants to do better.

Positive Values Assets-- Young people thrive when they develop strong values that guide their choices. There are six positive values assets:

Caring (Good Samaritan Story Luke 10:25-37)

Stumbling block: King looks out only for self.

Building block: King wants to help those who hurt.

Equality and social justice (1 Samuel 30:23-25)

Stumbling block: King sees a wrong being committed and ignores, allows, or encourages.

Building block: King protects those who can't protect themselves.

Integrity (Micah 6:8)

Stumbling block: King believes one way, but does another.

Building block: King stands up for truth even when it is hard.

Honesty (Proverbs 24:26)

Stumbling Block: King lies about everything

Building Block: King tells the truth

Responsibility (1 Samuel 22:22)

Stumbling block: King blames someone else

Building block: King accepts/admits responsibility

David takes responsibility after Saul kills priests: 1 Samuel 22: 22-23

Healthy Lifestyle (Philippians 4:8)

Stumbling block: King complains, eats bad food, doesn't sleep, bathe, exercise, and so forth.

Building block: King is grateful; recognizes his life as a gift from God deserving care.

Social Competencies Assets -- Young people benefit from having skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to deal with difficult situations. Five assets make up the category of social competencies.

Planning and decision making

Stumbling block: King doesn't plan anything and makes snap decisions without consulting others, (including God).

Building block: King invites input, prays, and thinks about decisions.

Interpersonal competence

Stumbling block: King is rude, and takes out anger on others.

Building block: King is polite, tries not to hurt others' feelings and calms self when angry.

Cultural competence

Stumbling block: King doesn't associate with people who are different.

Building block: King learns about and enjoys people from different backgrounds.

Resistance skills

Stumbling block: King has bad advisors, but can't tell them no.

Building block: King makes sure advisors are good and says no to bad advice.

Peaceful conflict resolution (1 Samuel 24:1-22)

Stumbling block: King tries to solve problems with violence.

Building block: King works out non-violent solutions for problems.

Positive Identity Assets -- Young people need to develop a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise. There are four positive identity assets, all of which can be taught as rooted in the Lord:

Personal power

Stumbling block: King feels no ability to change.

Building block: King recognizes an ability to influence own life.

Self-esteem

Stumbling block: King puts self down

Building block: King recognizes God's gifts to himself/herself and is grateful.

Sense of purpose

Stumbling block: King thinks life is meaningless and nothing matters

Building block: King knows God has a purpose for his/her life

Positive view of personal future

Stumbling block: King thinks the future is very bleak

Building block: King trusts the future to God and knows God is good.

If desired, prepare a list of each developmental asset and post it for the audience to consider when deciding which internal characteristic the king exhibits in each scenario.

Memory Verse

Duplicate copies of the memory verse. Tape or pin them to the stage for puppeteers to read.

1 Samuel 16:7b -- "For the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

PRESENTATION

Open - Introduction Open with prayer.

Then play a game of "Simon Says." End the game with "Simon Says get your Bible!"

Dig – Main Content

Read the Bible story from 1 Samuel 16:1-13 but focus discussion on the memory verse.

Review the memory verse, 1 Samuel 16:7, and ask: What are some things we can see on the outside of a person? (Eyes, skin, ears, nose, hands, hair ...)

When they get to hair, ask: Is every bit of hair on the outside of a person? If yes, then what holds it to skin? Draw the children into a discussion about the

importance of hair roots which are not normally seen but effect the hair that is seen. Tell the students that the way we are inside can be like hair roots because they can affect actions. When God looked inside at David's heart he saw someone who would make a good king.

Memory verse practice activity

Distribute a puppet to each participant. Invite each child, in turn, to bring the puppet on stage as though they are walking up a ramp. Instruct each student to say 1 Samuel 16:7b (NRSV) "For the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart." After reciting the memory verse, have the student turn and exit as though walking down a ramp.

Guess What's Inside the King

Divide the class into puppet teams. One team at a time will perform a puppet skit showing how a king with a particular inner characteristic might act. Students not in the skit will try to guess what the internal trait is.

Show the class the index cards or papers on which the traits, plus the stumbling blocks and the building blocks, have been written. Review the traits, along with examples of how the characteristic plays out in a stumbling block or a building block.

Distribute one card to each team. Instruct the teams to decide on a setting from the list provided or anything else they select. The internal characteristic of the king will be displayed in this setting. Ideas for scenarios include:

King for the day in the Classroom -- Class and Teacher obey king

King visits a candy store. (Remember, there could be consequences.)

King of the playground -- Everyone obeys the King -- what to play, who to play with .

King of the Bus -- You can even tell the bus driver what to do.

King of the Team -- Opposing team does not have to do what King says

King of the Dinner Table -- Exactly as the King orders -- offenders may be removed

King of the TV or Computer -- no sharing required

Have each group choose which puppet and puppeteer will play the king, and other characters that might be in a given setting. Explain that a king is like Simon in “Simon Says”, because a king’s subjects have to do whatever the king says. The king is to display one stumbling block/building block so the audience can guess it.

Allow the teams a few minutes to plan their skits in private. Then take turns guessing and acting. **It might work best to start with stumbling blocks since puppets are often very good at misbehaving!** But do allow the “king” to have a change of heart and reenact the scenario with a building block. Finally, excuse the king (allow the puppeteer to join the audience) and interview the other puppets about the king’s behavior.

Teachable moments happen:

If the audience does NOT guess the internal characteristic:

It is hard for people to see what’s inside another person.

Sometimes we don’t know why people act the way they do.

If the audience DOES guess the internal characteristic:

What is inside really makes a difference on the outside!

Next, leader and shepherd become the puppeteers with “A Man After God’s Own Heart” Illustration:

God wanted his people to have a king who was “after” God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14 and Acts 13:22). In this activity a dog puppet chasing after a toy illustrates the idea that being after God’s own heart could mean a strong desire to follow God’s direction.

Tell the students this dog loves to play fetch. In fact it is his very favorite game in the whole world. Allow one student to throw the ball to the “dog” and another to be the puppeteer. Encourage the dog. Use comments that include the word after. Example: That dog’s really going after the ball! Look at him chase after that thing. Wow he really watches the ball every second ... See how he instantly follows after it?

Actions to Show Puppet Dog’s Interest In the Ball

Panting: Open the puppet’s mouth and quiver your hand back and forth.

Eye contact: Puppets eyes stay on the ball.

Head tilt: Close mouth and tilt head.

Voice: Bark or whine with excitement.

Have the children fetch all of the puppets and put them away.

Follow up questions:

What does it mean to “be after” something?

David was called a man “after God's own heart”. Is that a good thing? Why?

Reflect - Closure

Ask: Why are the puppets suddenly so quiet and lifeless? (People bring them to life.)

David understood that following after God’s heart brought life. God saw that David had the insides of a good King. Because: “People judge others by what they look like, but God judges people by what is in their hearts” (1 Samuel 16: 7b.).

Closing Prayer from one of David’s many Psalms

“Teach me to follow, Lord, and lead me on the right path” Psalm 27:11a CEV.

ADDITIONAL SUGGESTIONS

Adaptations -- Younger Children

Adapt “Simon Says” to the “King Says” to help the children understand a king’s power and responsibility to care for subjects. The Man after God’s Own Heart dog puppet activity could be extended. Reinforce the point that David wanted to follow God. Settle students by practicing the memory verse between chases for the ball.

Adaptations -- Older Children

Extend discussions. Encourage the children to consider ways that following God encourages building blocks (faith, forgiveness, role models) and discourages stumbling blocks (standards, support, The Holy Spirit) in their own life.

SOURCE

Search Institute. Toolkit for Integrating Developmental Assets Into Your Congregation

Handouts 1-12: Training. "Developmental Assets and Scripture." "40 Developmental Assets for Middle Childhood." 15 May 2009.

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