

Samuel anooints David

1 SAMUEL 16:1-13

prepare



PRAYER

When my self-confidence wanes, God, help me remember that you have called me to walk this journey with you. Amen.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To know that God sees what we can do

STORY SUMMARY

When Saul's kingship took a turn for the worse, God instructed Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint one of Jesse's sons as the new king. Jesse brought seven of his sons one at a time, but none of them was God's choice. Jesse said that his youngest son, David, was out with the sheep. David was the chosen one, so Samuel anointed him as the next king. God's spirit came upon David.

teaching tips for primary

This story offers children the chance to think about their God-given gifts. One way to help children understand "gifts" is to talk about what they are good at doing. The Spiritual practice provides the opportunity for them to affirm what they see in each other. It would fit well following Peace notes.

Choose which Explore activities to do. Generally, primary children do not take much interest in their appearance. However it is important for them to hear that what is inside of them helps them love God and others, not how they look. The Create and Move activities touch on this. Check Supplies and To do throughout this session to see what needs to be prepared.

Choosing another king

After God's rejection of Saul as king, God tells Samuel to anoint one of the sons of Jesse as Saul's replacement. Samuel has been grieving over Saul, but God will not allow him to remain in this state. God instructs Samuel to journey to the small village of Bethlehem, to the house of Jesse, so that God can reveal to Samuel which of the sons will become the new king.

When Samuel sees Jesse's firstborn, he feels certain that Eliab is God's choice. God, however, rebukes Samuel, warning him not to consider appearance or height. These are the attributes that made Saul seem like a good choice for king.¹ God tells Samuel that "the Lord does not see as mortals see; they look on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

Finally, after Samuel has seen and rejected seven of Jesse's sons, David is brought before him. There seems to be some confusion in the biblical tradition about whether David has seven brothers, as it says here, or whether he was the seventh son, as it says in 1 Chronicles 2:13–15. In any case, David is the youngest and the one ignored in the original call to come before the prophet.

Biblical texts tend to resist the tradition of primogeniture, in which the firstborn son receives the most, best, or all the family inheritance. The book of Genesis has several famous examples of this overturning of tradition: Ishmael and Isaac; Jacob and Esau; Reuben and Joseph; Ephraim and Manasseh. This pattern continues in the selection of David and later in that of Solomon, David's son.

Choosing a shepherd

Shepherding was commonly used as a metaphor for kingship throughout the ancient world. The shepherd/king must lead the sheep/people, care for them—especially for the weak and powerless—and put himself in danger to protect them. This understanding was common throughout Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, Greece, and other ancient civilizations as well.

So it is not surprising that a king should be compared to shepherd. What may be surprising is that a shepherd



would actually become a king. From this humble beginning will come one of the most influential figures in the entire Old Testament.

The text then sets up a contrast between David and Saul. At this point the spirit of the Lord comes on David while it departs from Saul. God's presence will now follow the young shepherd rather than the current monarch.

The condition of the heart

The condition of the heart is a recurring theme in the books of Samuel and the books of Kings, as in many other biblical texts. David becomes known as one after God's own heart.² He will be the standard by which the books of Kings evaluate all subsequent kings of Israel and Judah. Even though David, like Saul, will commit some grievous sins and make terrible mistakes, God does not abandon David. Why the two kings are treated so differently is never stated. In this passage, David is selected by God; we are not given any indication why. The reasons for God choosing certain individuals are often not revealed in the Bible: see, for example, the calls to Abraham, Joseph, Moses, Jeremiah, and the apostle Paul.

We often have mistakenly thought that inner spirituality is a concern of only the New Testament; that the Old Testament emphasizes only physical manifestations of spirituality and devotion. This view, as with many of our ideas about differences between the Old and New Testaments, does not reflect what the texts actually say. Many of the Hebrew scriptures, including most of the Prophets, Psalms, Chronicles, and Deuteronomy, celebrate the condition of the heart and the one who seeks God. Jesus clearly builds on this part of the tradition and makes it a priority in his understanding of what it means to follow after God.

1. 1 Samuel 9:2; 10:23.

2. 1 Samuel 13:14; 1 Kings 3:6; 9:4; 11:4; 14:8; 15:3.

gather

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- CD player
- *Year Two Songbook* (optional)
- Bowl of fruit: apple, banana, orange, kiwi (fruits easy to slice)
- Knife for cutting fruit
- Napkins
- Candle and matches or battery-operated candle
- Pencils and crayons

poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Psalm 25)

to do

- Review the sign language for the Bible memory activity (see page 92).

media connections

- Internet search for *Samuel Anointing David*, an ancient painting from the Dura-Europos synagogue in Syria
- "This Little Light of Mine" from the Veggie Tales album *25 Favorite Sunday School Songs*
- *You Are Special* by Max Lucado
- Aesop's "The Lion and the Mouse" (a fable in which size doesn't limit usefulness)

BUILD COMMUNITY

Welcome the children by name. Gather around a bowl of fruit containing an apple, a banana, a kiwi, and an orange. Ask the children to describe the outside of each fruit. Then cut open the fruit and see what is on the inside. Share a few fruit slices as you talk about how the outsides of the fruits are different than the insides. Be aware of food allergies when selecting fruit to share.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Sing "God's Light Shines" (track 8; *Year Two Songbook*, page 14). Then light your worship candle and say these words:

We remember that you spoke to your people long ago. We listen as you speak to us today.

Enter into a time of prayer. Invite the children to name something they are thankful for. Close the prayer by inviting God's Spirit to be with you.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

In today's story God saw leadership qualities in David that others did not see. Naming and affirming each other's gifts is a spiritual practice best done within community. Turn to page 4 in the Primary leaflet. Explain that in the Bible people were anointed with oil when God asked them to do a special job. Ask the children to think about each child in the group. On the drops of oil, they can write down or draw a picture of the different qualities or gifts they see in the children around them.

teaching tip

Today's Spiritual practice fits well after the Peace notes activity. Spiritual practices can be done anytime in the session plan that works best for your group.

Bible memory

Point out the Bible memory poster. Review the Sign language for Bible memory on page 92 (also used in session 9). Practice the signs as you say the Bible memory passage.

Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.
—Psalm 25:4–5

experience

SHARE THE STORY

Open a Bible to 1 Samuel 16 and tell the children that today's story comes from a book named after Samuel.

Today's story is told with easy-to-draw symbols. Lay out a large sheet of paper. Draw a crown toward the top left corner of the paper. Remind children that in the session 9 story, the people received a king—King Saul. Today Samuel anoints David. As you read the story from page 86 in *Shine On*, draw simple pictures that reflect the events in the story. Suggestions for story symbols are on page 94 of this guide. Or make a copy of the suggestions, cut out the individual images, and place them on the large paper as you tell the story.

WONDER AND REFLECT

Ask someone to read about David from the "God's people" poster. Show the picture from today's story while you think about the following questions. Perhaps children have other questions related to the story.

- I wonder why Jesse did not call David in with his other sons.
- I wonder how David felt about being chosen.
- I wonder what good things God sees in you.
- I wonder when you have felt small or unimportant.
- I wonder what David's brothers thought when they heard David would be king.

PEACE NOTES

Ask a child to find the arrow with David's brothers on it. They can tape it near the number 7 on the Numbers poster.

David's brothers were not anointed as king. Did that cause jealousy for David's brothers? Ask the children if they ever feel angry or jealous. Does a brother have a better electronic device? Is a friend the better soccer player? Explain to the children that while it is normal to feel jealous within our families and with our friends, it can hurt our relationships.

Ask for volunteers to stand and hold a piece of yarn between them. Each time children name an example of something that can make us jealous, cut the yarn. As you think about ways to heal jealousy tie the pieces of yarn back together. These might include reminding ourselves that God makes each of us good at different things and being thankful for the things we have.



Samuel anoints David

1 Samuel 16:1–13

supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Yarn
- Scissors

storytelling props

- Story symbols (from Additional resources)
- Easel paper
- Markers

poster pack

- "God's people" poster
- Numbers poster

to do

- Become familiar with today's story in *Shine On*. Practice drawing as you read the story.

explore

CREATE

God sees what is inside of us: our thoughts, attitudes, and feelings. Does God's light shine through us? Give children a white piece of paper. Invite them to draw a self-portrait with marker or crayon. Then place the picture on a cookie sheet and rub it with a cotton ball soaked in olive oil. The paper will become transparent. Gently rub a dry paper towel or cloth over the picture to absorb as much extra oil as possible. Hang the pictures in windows in your room. Or place them in a large envelope or file folder (to keep oil from getting on anything) and give them to the children to take home.

supplies

- White paper
- Markers or crayons
- Olive oil
- Cotton balls
- Cookie sheet
- Paper towel or dry cloths
- Large envelopes or file folders

MOVE

Turn to page 2 of the Primary leaflet. Read through the song and actions with the children. Then sing the song and do the actions together.

supplies

- Primary leaflets

RETELL

Children can choose five scenes from today's story and create a pose for each one. Take a photo of each pose with a camera. Provide minimal props, such as a jar of oil and a crown to represent the king. The story on page 1 of the Primary leaflet could help identify different photo possibilities. Wait until after all of the pictures are taken before letting the children see the photos.

For smaller groups: It is possible for one child to represent each scene. For example, Samuel can hold the oil and look fearful. The oldest brother can stand proudly. David can kneel to receive the oil.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Digital camera with a display screen
- Props: container for oil, crown

LEAFLET

Children can complete the crossword puzzle on page 3 of the Primary leaflet. When they are done, talk about why each of these words were important in the story. Solution is on page 94 of this guide.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Pencils



other ideas

- Each child can draw their own symbols or stick figures to retell the story.
- Trace each child on a large paper. Write or draw pictures inside of things each child can do.

bles

PRAY

Play a song from the Shine CD. Tell the children that when the song is over you will gather for the blessing time.

Gather in a circle. Pass a jar of oil around the circle. As each child holds the jar, name a gift you see in that child. After you name each gift, say:

_____(*child's name*), **God's Spirit is with you.**

Sing "Dios de la esperanza" (May the God of Hope) from the *Shine Songbook and CD*, track 5. The words and music are also on page 10 of the *Year Two Songbook*.

SEND

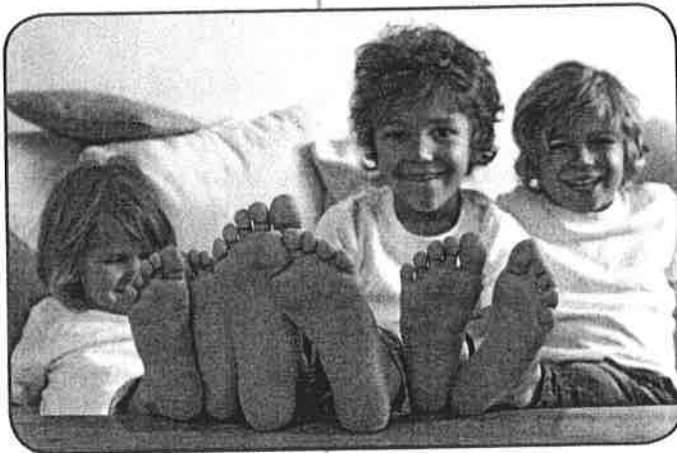
Send the children with these words from Isaiah 61:1–2a:

The spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me; he has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoner; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Make sure to send leaflets home with the children.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- Jar of oil



Listening is the most important skill that a Sunday school teacher can develop. Come prepared but also let go of your agenda. Hold your session plan loosely and listen to your children and to the Holy Spirit. What is God's lesson for us today?

—Jeanne Davies
Elgin, Illinois

leader's closing prayer

Take a few moments to think about your own emerging qualities and gifts. What is God growing in you?

God, let your anointing oil touch my head. May the gifts you have given me enrich my community. Amen.