

# David begins his rule

**2 SAMUEL 7, 9**

## prepare

### PRAYER

*Loving God, you share your compassion with your people over and over again. May your kindness continue to spread like ripples in the water, soothing and refreshing the land. Amen.*

### PURPOSE STATEMENT

To hear the story of a compassionate king

### STORY SUMMARY

David became king and bought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. He wanted to build a fine house for God. God promised David that his son would build the temple and that his family would reign for generations. David prayed and thanked God. David wanted to show kindness to one of Saul's descendants. He sought out Saul's grandson Mephibosheth and invited him to eat at his table. David returned all of Saul's land to Mephibosheth.



### teaching tips for primary

Mephibosheth had a physical disability. Primary children can be very curious about disabilities. *Shine Together: The Essential Guide for Leaders and Teachers* (available at [www.ShineCurriculum.com](http://www.ShineCurriculum.com)) offers some guidance about children and disabilities. If a child in your group has a physical disability, you might also ask the child and his or her parents to share some experiences. Arrange for this ahead of time.

The Spiritual practice for this week is an offering. Offering is a response to God's generosity and a way we care for others. If your church collects an offering, this is a good opportunity to talk about why you do so or why you give money to others.

Decide which Explore options to prepare for your group, and check Supplies and To do throughout this session to see what needs to be prepared.

# dig deeper

by Patricia Shelly

Today's text contains two different covenant stories, the first more consequential than the second. In chapter 7, God makes a promise to David concerning future kings in Jerusalem. In chapter 9, David shows his character as a king by following through on a promise made to Jonathan, Saul's son and David's dear friend.

## The beginning of royal theology

In 2 Samuel 7, God makes a covenant with David that there will always be a Davidic heir on the throne in Jerusalem. This becomes the basis for royal theology from the time of David onward and gives rise to reflection about the ideal king (Psalm 72; Isaiah 9:6–7; 11:1–5) and messianic expectation after the exile.

This text relies on a delightful wordplay with the Hebrew word for “house,” which can also be translated as “temple” or “dynasty.” All three meanings appear in this brief text. David dwells in a “house” of cedar and wants to build God a “house” (verses 1–2). Through Nathan's dream, God rejects the idea that he needs a “house,” saying that he intends to build David a “house” (verse 11). God promises that each Davidic king will have a special father-son relationship with God. The king will be held accountable when he sins, but God will never reject the Davidic king as Saul was rejected (verse 14–15). Rather, God promises that David's dynasty and his kingdom will last forever (verse 16).

That promise must have seemed permanent and irrevocable to those living in Jerusalem for 385 years after David, as they trusted the security of God's blessing to the long line of Davidic kings in their midst. How devastating it must have been when the city of Jerusalem was destroyed in 587 BCE and the king carried off into exile in Babylon. The theological struggle for the next generations would be to understand whether and how God might restore Davidic kingship in Jerusalem or how a coming “Anointed One” (Messiah) might renew the kingdom. The early church declares that Jesus is indeed this Messiah who fulfills the promises of the Davidic covenant (Luke 1:31–33).



This long trajectory, which ends in the Gospels, begins with God's promises to David to build him a “house.” We know from the closing chapters of 2 Samuel that David's kingship will suffer the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba and his family will know judgment, violence, and betrayal (2 Samuel 12–18). Yet God's promise of a Davidic heir is sustained when Solomon becomes king (2 Kings 1) and later builds the temple (2 Samuel 7:13; 2 Kings 6–8).

## David's promise to Jonathan

The second covenant text in 2 Samuel 9 shows how David keeps his promise to show loyalty to Jonathan's house and not to cut off his name (1 Samuel 20:8, 12–17, 41–42). This is the background of David's inquiry in 2 Samuel 9:1 about a remaining member of the house of Saul to whom he might show kindness “for Jonathan's sake.”

David discovers that Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, is still living, but is disabled because of an accident he suffered as a child after the battle of Mount Gilboa (2 Samuel 4:4); 2 Samuel 9 mentions twice that Mephibosheth is “crippled in both feet” (verses 3, 13). David invites him and his young son, Mica, to come to Jerusalem and restores to him all the land of his grandfather, Saul. He also declares that Jonathan's son will always eat at David's table, like one of the king's sons (verses 7, 10–11, 13).

Some interpreters have wondered whether David is acting partially out of self-interest, keeping a watchful eye on a potential claimant from the house of Saul to the Jerusalem throne. But David's gesture toward Mephibosheth is also an act of compassion, hospitality, and loyalty to Jonathan (2 Samuel 21:7). It is a gesture worthy of a king who “defends the cause of the poor of the people and gives deliverance to the needy” (Psalm 72:4).

# gather

## supplies

- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- Picture of you with a friend
- Candle and matches or battery-operated candle
- Collection plate or basket (optional)
- Any offerings children bring (optional)

## poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Psalm 25)

## media connections

- "Mother Teresa," "Cesar Chavez," and "Martin Luther King Jr." in *Paths to Peace* by Jane Breskin Zalben
- YouTube search for "random acts of kindness by children"
- Guy Davis' song "We All Need More Kindness in This World"

## BUILD COMMUNITY

Welcome the children to your circle. Show them a picture of you and a friend. Tell how you show friendship and kindness to each other. Invite the children to share about something kind they did for a friend this week. How do we show kindness to our friends sitting around the circle? Do we pray for each other? Listen to each other?

## WORSHIP TOGETHER

Light your worship candle as you say:

**We remember that God spoke to people long ago and God speaks to us today.**

Sing "I Lift My Eyes Up" (track 10; *Year Two Songbook*, page 17).

Share a prayer of thanks for the ways God helps us and ask for guidance on how best to help others.

## SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

In today's story David returned land to Mephibosheth and shared food. We too can practice generosity. Talk with the children about offering times at your church. Does your church gather money to share with others? What organizations or people has your church given money to in the past? You can also talk about other things you can give or share—kind words, hugs, food, clothes, or toys. If your group collects an offering, do this now.

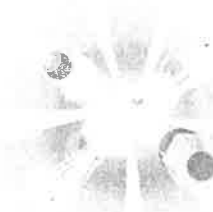
### Bible memory

Review the Bible memory passage from the Bible memory poster.

Then say the passage several more times, taking different kinds of steps around the room with each repetition. Children might take giant steps one time, dancing steps the next, and penguin steps a third.

**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 the Bible to 2 Samuel 7 and open *Shine On* to page 94. Tell the children that one of the people in the story has a long name. Practice saying Mephibosheth together (Meh-FIH-bo-sheth.).

Share the picture on page 94 in *Shine On* as you read the story.

## WONDER AND REFLECT

Reflect on these questions together.

- I wonder why David wanted to build a temple or “house for God.”
- We can worship God anywhere. Where do you like to be to sing and pray?
- I wonder what Mephibosheth thought as he met David.
- How have you have shown kindness to someone?
- What character would you like to be in this story?

## PEACE NOTES

Because of his friendship with Jonathan, David extended compassion to Mephibosheth. We too can spread God’s peace to others through kindness. Turn to the Kindness calendar on page 4 of the Primary leaflet. Talk with the children about what they can do. In each square, children can write or draw a picture of what they might do. Read the calendar instructions for the upcoming week.



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## supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Primary leaflets
- Pencils, crayons, and markers

# explore

## CREATE

David asked Ziba and his family to farm the fields for Mephibosheth so that Mephibosheth and his family could eat. Turn to page 3 of the Primary leaflet and follow the instructions to make a "Giving garden." Children can give their gardens to someone as a gift, or share the harvest when it comes.

### supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Large plastic pots
- Permanent markers
- Dirt
- Small shovel or scoop
- Several kinds of herb seeds or seedlings
- Water



## MOVE

Play a game to show how kindness spreads. Gather everyone in a tight circle. Have one person say, "It's a new day and I'm going to \_\_\_\_\_" (*name a kind action*). Go around the circle, with each person repeating what has been said before and adding an act of kindness to the list. Or you could repeat the accumulated list as a group and then let the next child add something new. As each person adds an idea the group takes one step backward until the circle becomes as large as possible.

**For smaller groups:** Instead of growing a circle, squat as low to the ground as possible and "grow" a little with each new action. Take turns naming actions until you are reaching high.

## RETELL

Act out today's story with a few simple props. Choose children to play David, Mephibosheth, Nathan, and Ziba. If you have a larger group, you might add people around the palace or Ziba's family members. How would a kind and compassionate king act? How would Mephibosheth move? What would Ziba do in the fields? Switch parts and act it out again. Children may refer to the rhymes on page 1 of the Primary leaflet.

**For smaller groups:** Retell the story from Mephibosheth's perspective.

### supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Props: a crown, chair for throne, stick or crutch, shovel or hoe

## LEAFLET

Mephibosheth ate at David's table for the rest of his life. Children can help Mephibosheth find his way to David's table through the "Come to the table" maze on page 2 of the leaflet. The solution is on page 88 of this guide.

### supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Pencils or markers

## other ideas

- Decorate your room with compassion flags. On each flag, children can draw pictures on pieces of colored paper of people showing kindness.

# bless

## PRAY

Signal to the children that it is time to clean up. As they do so, put a large bowl of water and a small stone on your worship table.

When they are finished, gather around the bowl of water. Hold up a stone. Say:

**Acts of kindness start small . . .**

Drop the stone into the bowl and watch the water ripple. Say:

**. . . but they spread to more and more people. This week, spread God's kindness and it will grow.**

Sing "Dios de la esperanza" (May the God of Hope). Find this song on track 5 and page 10 in the songbook.

## SEND

Send the children out with these words of encouragement from Colossians 3:12:

**As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.**

Make sure to send leaflets and "Giving gardens" (from Create) home with the children.

## supplies

- Primary leaflets
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- Large bowl of water
- Small stone
- "Giving gardens" from Explore



*After nearly a quarter of materials that emphasized loving others, as we began an activity, one second grader called out, "Me first! No! I mean, Me last!"*

—Susan Mark Landis  
Orrville, Ohio

## leader's closing prayer

What small acts of kindness and compassion did you see today? Did children share the seeds or seedlings? Did anyone wait patiently for help or say thank you? Did they say good-bye when they left? Celebrate the small acts of kindness and pray that they grow and grow.

*God, I want to partner with you bringing compassion into the world, in both seen and unseen ways. Amen.*