

Nathan confronts King David

2 SAMUEL 11:1-12:15

prepare



PRAYER

Giving God, let your generous grace flow through me. Forgive me when I am coldhearted, mean-spirited, or cruel. May my faithfulness increase. Amen.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To proclaim God's call for justice

STORY SUMMARY

While the army was away at battle, King David committed adultery with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah. To cover it up, David arranged for Uriah to be killed in battle. God sent the prophet Nathan to confront David. Nathan told a story about a rich man who demanded a poor neighbor's beloved lamb. The rich man's unfair behavior aroused David's indignation. David then saw the great wrong of his own action and repented with bitter tears.

teaching tips for primary

Today's story is about David's cruelty and wrongdoing. Even great leaders in the Bible could not cover up such wrongs. Emphasize that God still loves us even when we do the wrong thing.

Choose which Explore options you will do. The bonus leaflet contains the same artwork as the "God speaks to us" poster. During Create children can make a mobile from the bonus leaflet pictures. They can take their mobiles home to remind them and their families of ways they can listen for God. Check Supplies and To do throughout this session to see what needs to be prepared.

Today is the last session of this quarter. Take some extra time at the end for children to share what they remember and enjoyed from the past weeks together. You may want to choose fewer activities to leave more time at the end.

A sobering turn

The previous three sessions have told the story of the rise of David, recipient of divine anointing and blessing. The beginning of 2 Samuel continues to report that “the Lord gave victory to David wherever he went” (8:6, 14). But in chapters 11 and 12, David’s story takes a decidedly sober turn. David abuses his royal power for personal gratification and gain, and so falls under God’s judgment. The prophet Nathan steps forward to speak the truth, confronting David with his sin.

From the beginning of this story, David is described as not living up to expectations. It is spring, when the end of winter rains create the dry conditions necessary to wage war. But strangely, in this season “when kings go out to battle” (11:1), King David remains behind in Jerusalem, sending his army to go fight without him.

David sins

Jerusalem at this time was a narrow finger of hilly land with steep valleys on both sides. Houses would have been built on an ascending slope from the valley floor up the hill, with the king’s house at the highest point of the city. It would be easy for someone living at this height to look down on the roofs of the dwellings below and see private activities occurring there. We might be tempted to judge Bathsheba a wanton woman for bathing in public. However, it was *her* roof! And she might have easily assumed the king—like all the men of the city—was out of town, since this was the season for combat.

In coveting another man’s wife and sleeping with her, David breaks two of the Ten Commandments. When he discovers that Bathsheba is pregnant, he seeks to rectify the situation by breaking three more. He plays loose with the truth by seeking to cajole Uriah into breaking a soldier’s vow of celibacy while home on furlough. And David plots to have Uriah placed in the hardest fighting, clearly intending that Uriah be murdered. In manipulating soldiers as if they were his property to command at will, David steals the life of Uriah and paves the way for marriage to his widow, a commendable act by all outward appearances.



Nathan speaks the truth to David

But the God who “looks on the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7) and commanded David’s anointing is displeased. God dispatches Nathan to pronounce judgment. David is not just any ancient king who can add a wife and a son to his harem in a moment of personal caprice. In Israel, even the king is subject to God’s rule. The narrative matter-of-factly reports that Nathan goes to challenge the king. David has amassed immense power and proven himself a valiant warrior, yet Nathan boldly challenges his personal behavior. Even more remarkable, David listens and acknowledges his sin. We would do well to ponder this ancient Israelite practice

of “checks and balances” on royal prerogative.

Nathan demonstrates that prophets can be creative communicators. He does not confront David directly but tells a parable that mirrors David’s personal scenario. As a king with the power to judge, David is drawn into the case of a poor man who loses his one little lamb to a rich man who has herds to squander. When David interrupts the story to pronounce judgment on the wealthy culprit, Nathan turns the mirror on David with resounding judgment: “You are the man!” (12:7).

Then Nathan announces the word of the Lord, recounting all God’s initiatives on David’s behalf and condemning his treatment of Uriah (12:7–9). David’s repentance after Nathan’s pronouncement saves his own life, but judgment falls on David’s family. Consequences are felt through the remainder of David’s reign. Not only will David and Bathsheba’s child die, but later David’s family will be torn by betrayal and violence. David’s son, Amnon, will rape his half-sister, Tamar, and be killed by his half-brother Absalom for this crime. Absalom will revolt against David’s rule and sleep with his father’s concubines “in the sight of all Israel” (2 Samuel 16:20–22), thus fulfilling Nathan’s prophecy (12:11–12).

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- Pencils and markers
- Candle and matches or battery-operated candle

poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Psalm 25)

media connections

- *The Quiltmaker's Gift* by Jeff Brumbeau
- VeggieTales movie *King George and the Ducky*
- *If the World Were a Village* by David J. Smith
- Bryan Moyer Suderman's song "To Be Content"

BUILD COMMUNITY

Welcome the children to the circle. Ask the children to share about a time that something unfair happened to them. Say that another word for "unfair" is *unjust*. Justice, then, is when things are right and fair.

On page 3 of the Primary leaflet, children can circle the pictures they think show fairness and put an X across the pictures that they think do not. If children mark them differently, use this as an opportunity for conversation.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Light your worship candle as you say:

We remember that God was with people long ago, and God is with us today.

Pray:

God, thank you for teaching us your ways. Help us walk your path together. Amen.

Sing or listen to "I Lift My Eyes Up" (track 10; page 17 in the *Year Two Songbook*). Stand and add movements to the song.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Praying about what happened each day helps us become aware of God's presence. Often, this is done at the end of the day as we think about what made us feel happy or sad and any actions or words for which we need to say we are sorry.

Page 2 of the Primary leaflet leads the children through a "Glad, sad, sorry prayer." Tell the children they can use this prayer at bedtime but that today you will practice it with the group and pray about events from the past week.

Bible memory

This is the final week of the quarter and the final time for reviewing this memory passage. Use the Bible memory poster only if needed.

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

Show the picture from last week's story, found on page 94 in *Shine On*. Recall how David was very kind to Mephibosheth. Today they will hear another story about King David and a prophet named Nathan. Ask a child to read about Nathan on the "God's people" poster.

Open the Bible to 2 Samuel 11. Spread a cloth in front of you. Place ten sheep on the left side of the cloth. Place one sheep on the right side. The Sheep template is on page 93 of this guide. Tell the story from page 96 of *Shine On*. When the rich man takes the poor man's sheep, remove the sheep from the right side of the cloth. Wait to show the picture from today's story until after Nathan's story. This will let the children see David's response to the story.



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supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Picture cards (from Additional resources)
- A small bowl

storytelling props

- Cloth
- Eleven sheep made from the Sheep template (from Additional resources)

poster pack

- "God's people" poster

to do

- Prepare the sheep following the instructions on page 93 of this guide.
- Become familiar with today's story in *Shine On: A Story Bible*. Practice telling the story with the props.
- Copy and cut out the Picture cards on page 95 of this guide.

WONDER AND REFLECT

Give each child a sheep to hold as you ponder the story together. As you ask the wondering questions below, be attentive to how children are responding to the story.

- Imagine a king's riches. What might they include?
- Have you ever wanted something that belonged to someone else?
- I wonder what it was like for Bathsheba to lose her husband and marry the king.
- I wonder how Nathan felt going to see David.
- I wonder what the people thought when they heard what King David did.

PEACE NOTES

Sharing God's peace means making sure everyone has enough, rather than taking what you want. Practice sharing with a miming game. Copy and cut out the Picture cards on page 95 of this guide, and place them in a small bowl. Gather the children in a circle. Have one child draw a card from the bowl. Without showing anyone the card, they can mime the object shown on it. Then they can pretend to pass the object to the next person. The "receiver" will say "thank you" and the "giver" will say "you're welcome." The receiver will repeat the action and "pass" the object. When the action returns to the first person, have children guess the picture. Give each child the chance to draw a card and begin the action.

explore

CREATE

Invite children to look at the “God speaks to us” poster. How did God speak in today’s story? Then children can make mobiles showing different ways we might hear God. The bonus leaflet contains the same images as the poster. Have children cut out the pictures and decorate them. They can draw another way that God speaks to them in the extra circle. Punch a hole in each circle and string a piece of yarn through it. Make pieces of yarn different lengths for variety. Thread pony beads onto the yarn for extra decoration. Children can finish the mobile by tying their pictures to a coat hanger.

supplies

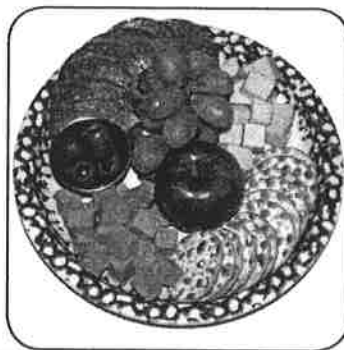
- “God speaks to us” poster (from poster pack)
- Bonus leaflets (from Primary leaflets)
- Scissors
- Markers
- Hole punch
- Yarn
- Coat hanger for each child
- Pony beads, glitter, stickers

MOVE

Share a snack together. Give each child a different kind of snack food. No child should have enough to share with everyone. The children will need to decide how to distribute the foods in a way that is fair for everyone. If a child doesn’t get any apple slices, do they get more grapes? Will children decide to break something in half? Be aware of any allergies in your group.

supplies

- Snack items (there should not be enough of any one item for everyone): crackers, apple slices, grapes, cheese slices, olives



RETELL

Retell the story using colors. Place different colored squares of paper in the middle of the table. As you read the story from page 1 of the Primary leaflet, children can take the colors they think represent different parts of the story and line them up in front of themselves.

supplies

- Primary leaflet
- Squares of colored paper for each child: red, green, black, white, blue, or others

LEAFLET

Nathan spoke out on God’s behalf. We can also speak out for God’s justice. Read the stories about justice on page 4 of the Primary leaflet. In the box provided, children can draw or write about how they might speak out for making things right.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- Pencils or markers

other ideas

- Use ideas from the “God’s speaks to us” poster to create a space in your room where children can listen to God.
- Go to www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras to download a poem entitled “Nathan’s Story.”

bless

PRAY

Point to the “God’s people” poster. Ask what the children remember about the people on the poster. Notice the variety of languages from around the world on this poster. Point to the blank nametag and say:

Remember that you are part of God’s people. The same is true for people around the world.

Point to the “God speaks to us” poster. Ask the children if there is a particular way that God speaks to them. Say:

God spoke to people a long time ago and God speaks to you today.

Say a prayer thanking God for each child and for making us God’s people.

Sing a favorite song from the *Shine Songbook and CD* that you have enjoyed this quarter.

SEND

If this is the last time you will lead the group, express how you have enjoyed your time together.

Give these words of blessing based on Numbers 6:24–26:

_____ (child’s name), God
**bless you and keep you. May
God’s face shine upon you and
give you peace.**

Make sure to send home leaflets, mobiles, and other crafts from the quarter.

supplies

- Primary leaflets
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- CD player
- Children’s crafts and projects from the quarter

poster pack

- “God’s people” poster
- “God speaks to us” poster

The stories are very important in themselves, the biblical stories are there for a reason. When you learn a story as a child, the meaning goes on throughout life. The story has application in ways you may not expect.

—Dr. Patricia White
Toronto, Ontario



leader’s closing prayer

Take a few moments to reflect on the quarter. How have your relationships deepened with the children? How has your own faith and walk with God grown?

Light of the world, thank you for shining upon these children and upon me. May your spark continue to grow in each of us. Amen.