



Session 12
Fall 2015
Middler

David begins his rule

2 SAMUEL 7, 9

prepare

PRAYER

God, your goodness and love are abundant. Let your Spirit fill me and overflow to everyone I meet. 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 middler

This session's Bible story introduces a lesser-known character, Mephibosheth. Let the children practice saying his name (Meh-FIH-bo-sheth). Today's story shows the priorities David makes in establishing a kingdom—honoring God and showing compassion. While it may be hard for children to identify with a powerful king, they can think about how they can display these priorities in their own lives.

Decide which Explore activities you will do. For Create, choose which mosaic supplies you will offer. (Mosaics are traditionally made with one medium rather than a mishmash of different ones.) For Move, you will need two placesettings and a snack. Check Supplies and To do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared.

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

- *Glow* magazines
- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- Scrap paper
- Blank paper
- Colored pencils/crayons/markers

poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Psalm 25)

BUILD COMMUNITY

Welcome the children warmly and ask them to tell about a promise they made or a promise someone made to them. Tell your group that in today's story they will hear about a time God made a promise to David and David made a promise to someone else.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Sing "Come into God's Presence," track 4 on the Shine CD and page 9 of the *Year Two Songbook*. Lyrics are also at the back of *Glow*. Divide the children into two groups to try the round.

Keep the children in two groups and read together the "Praise from the psalms" litany from page 38 of *Glow*.

Close your worship time by praying together, thanking God for creating the earth and each one of us.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Pass out blank paper and make sure everyone has easy access to colored pencils, markers, or other drawing materials. Quietly play a song from the Shine CD, such as "Praying" (track 17). Invite the children to write the name or initials of someone they want to pray for and fill the area around the name with colors or doodles while they pray for that person. Continue this activity for at least five minutes; children can doodle and pray for multiple people, including themselves. Assure the group that they will not be expected to show their doodles to anyone else.

media connections

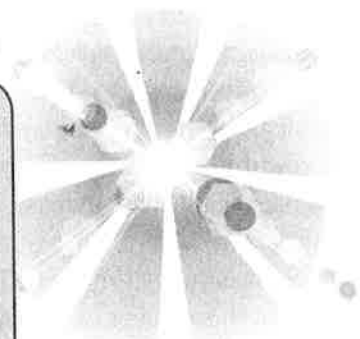
- YouTube search for "King David's palace 3-D fly-around"
- Wikipedia's article on Mephibosheth
- L'Arche International website (organization where people with and without disabilities live together)
- Internet search for "random acts of kindness stories"

Bible memory

Divide the Bible memory passage into sections and have each child write the words from one section on a piece of scrap paper. Crumple the pieces up and toss them into a pile on the floor. When all the sections are in the pile, have the children unfold the papers and put them in order, referring to the Bible memory poster only if needed. Say the passage together.

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

Tell the children that this story takes place when David is beginning his reign as king of Israel. Point out this spot on the timeline on pages 22–23 of *Glow*.

Have the children participate in the story by doing motions to accompany certain words. Practice the motions below.

- *king*—Pretend to set a crown on your head.
- *house*—Make a triangle with your arms over your head.
- *God*—Point your whole hand upward and look upward as well.
- *called*—Cup your hands around your mouth.
- *bowed down*—Bend your forehead toward the floor

Open *Shine On* to page 94. Hold the book on your lap as you read the story, guiding children in doing the motions when appropriate.

WONDER AND REFLECT

Show children the picture in *Shine On* and also open your Bible to 2 Samuel 7 to show where the full story is located. Reflect on these questions together.

- I wonder if David often spoke to God.
- I wonder what life was like for Mephibosheth before David called him to the palace.
- Imagine what it was like for Mephibosheth to meet King David.
- When have you shown kindness to someone? When has someone shown great kindness to you?
- I wonder what it was like to eat at King David's table.

PEACE NOTES

David showed compassion. Explain that the word *compassion* literally means to “suffer with” someone. Use the scenarios on page 95 of this guide to explore compassionate choices in potentially difficult situations. Your group could either act out or talk about the scenarios. Encourage the children to come up with their own scenarios as well, either real or fictional.

teaching tip

If your group does well with discussion, share that in David's time a new king would usually get rid of all the previous king's family. That way he could be sure that none of them would challenge him. Ask the children what they think David's actions in today's story say about him. What do they think is the best way of making a peaceful kingdom—getting rid of any challengers or treating them with kindness?



David begins his rule

2 Samuel 7, 9

supplies

- Bible
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- *Glow* magazines
- Compassionate choices scenarios (from Additional resources)

explore

CREATE

Make mosaics of items or symbols in today's story: crown, house, heart, feet, field, table, and so forth. Children should choose an item and draw it in pencil on heavy paper or cardboard before they begin gluing. Explain that mosaics are made from small pieces of one kind of material with a bit of space between pieces.

supplies

- Heavy paper or cardboard
- Mosaic materials (buttons, torn bits of magazines or tissue paper, or squares of colored paper)
- White glue

other ideas

- Retell the story from Ziba's or Mephibosheth's perspective.
- Play the memory game.
- Make bird feeders or pet treat packs to show compassion for animals.

MOVE

Divide your group into two teams for a relay where they pretend to be Ziba setting a place at the table for Mephibosheth. Set up a table and have each team line up on the other side of the room with a box of items for a placesetting. Demonstrate how to arrange the placesetting and designate a spot on a table for each team's setting. The first player on each team should take one item from his or her box, run and place it on the table, and return. Players continue to set the place one item at a time. The first team with a neatly set place wins. After the game, enjoy a snack together at the table.

For smaller groups: Even one child could race back and forth to set a place; time the runner to see how fast the task is accomplished.

supplies

- Two boxes
- Two placesettings (knife, fork, spoon, plate, cup, paper towel, placemat)
- Snack

RETELL

"Drawing is like taking a line for a walk." —Paul Klee

Have the children draw a line that expresses emotions or events in the Bible story as you read it again. The line will need to change direction to stay on the paper. After the story, children can add detail and color to their drawings.

supplies

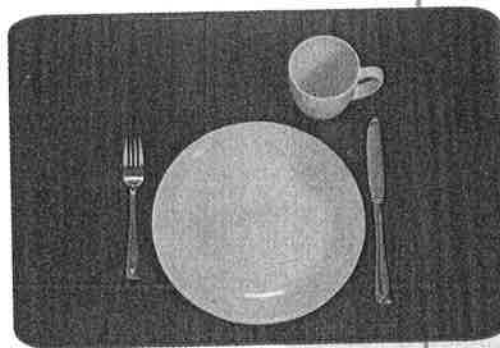
- *Shine On: A Story Bible*
- Blank paper
- Pencils
- Colored pencils/crayons

GLOW

On pages 36–37 of *Glow*, children complete the "Watery word search," illustrate crops in Mephibosheth's field, and read about a basketball player who uses his wealth and power to help others.

supplies

- *Glow* magazines
- Pencils/colored pencils/crayons



bles

PRAY

Gather the children together for a time of prayer and blessing.

Sing "Som'landela" (We Will Follow) from the Shine CD (track 19; *Year Two Songbook*, page 28. Song lyrics are also at the back of *Glow*).

Pray together, thanking God for being with your group and asking God to help the children follow God's way in every part of their lives.

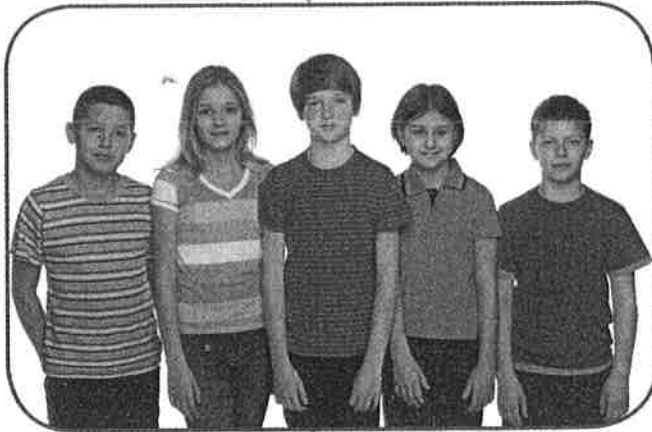
SEND

Send the children with the following words, based on 2 Corinthians 1:4:

As you shine your light this week, remember that God comforts us when we are in trouble so that we can offer that same comfort to others.

supplies

- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player



Share unique moments with other leaders. Your experiences can encourage and teach others at just the right time.

—Stephen Murphy
Holland, Michigan

leader's closing prayer

Psalm 23 talks about the good shepherd preparing a table for us. Imagine yourself in the scene of that psalm.

God, thank you for inviting me to eat at your table. Help me to show compassion to others as you have extended your great love to me. Amen.