



Session 12
Fall 2015
Junior Youth

David begins his rule

2 SAMUEL 7, 9

prepare

PRAYER

God, you want us to love one another as you have loved us. Let compassion root itself deep in me as I experience this story of remarkable kindness. 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 junior youth

In today's text David is at last in place as king. His first act is to want to do what we expect powerful rulers to do—build a grand building, a temple for God. His next move, however, is unexpected—to honor a promise to a friend and care for the grandson of his former enemy. The story tells of David listening to prophets, praying earnestly, and showing compassion to someone who would normally be excluded. This session challenges youth to think about and care for others as David did.

Decide which Explore activities you will do, and 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

- *Shine Songbook and CD*
- *Year Two Songbooks* (optional)
- CD player
- Current newspapers
- Thumbtacks
- Scissors

poster pack

- Bible memory poster (Psalm 25)

to do

- Gather current newspapers or news magazines.
- Clear the bulletin board or wall of the “pray the news” postings from previous sessions to make room for new ones.

media connections

- Image search for “David and Mephibosheth” (Compare the various illustrations.)
- Search for “Forever I Will Sing, Psalm 89” (songs drawn from a psalm with many of this story’s promises and prayers)
- Clip from the movie *Radio* (starting at 1:37:24, ending when the auditorium scene fades out of view, where another leader, like David, decides that caring for a person is more important than securing a fancy legacy)
- Internet search for “random acts of kindness stories”

BUILD COMMUNITY

Invite the group to think about their closest friends. What does it mean to be loyal to their friends? What would they be willing to do for a best friend in need? What about their friends’ families? Would they step in to help the brother or sister of a close friend?

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Invite each youth to share briefly a high moment from the past week—a moment when they felt thankfulness or joy. Then listen to or sing along with “Come into God’s Presence,” track 4 (page 9 in *Year Two Songbook*). Lyrics are also found in the back of *L.E.D.*

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Invite your group to pray the news together, looking for people in the world who need our compassion. Hand each person a section or two of a recent newspaper. Have youth cut out only images of people—faces are best. As they cut out the image, they should skim the caption or article with it to learn why this person is in the news.

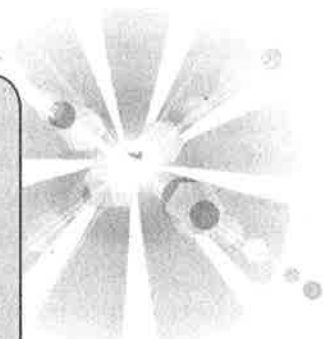
Invite youth to imagine being that person, or being in the situation pictured. As they reflect, quietly play “Óyenos, mi Dios” from the Shine CD (track 15).

One by one, youth can post their pictures on a bulletin board while offering aloud a simple sentence prayer: “God, I pray for _____,” naming the person, situation, or need in their picture.

Bible memory

Have youth sit back-to-back with a partner. One partner faces the Bible memory poster; the other faces away from it. The person who can’t see the poster tries to say the verses from memory, with only hints from the partner. Then the partners trade places. Finally, have the whole group say the verses together without the Bible memory poster.

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

Introduce the story by explaining that David had at last become king. Saul died in a battle, and David was chosen to follow him on the throne. David set up a new capital for Israel in Jerusalem and brought the ark of the covenant into the city. (Review the information about the ark from the “Set the scene” poster.) He was ready to lead the people.

To learn about David’s plans and God’s response, assign four people to read these passages: 2 Samuel 7:1–3; 2 Samuel 7:4–7; 2 Samuel 7:8–11; and 2 Samuel 7:12–13.

The next part of the story is a prayer David offered in response to the prophet Nathan’s words. Have the youth assume a prayer posture—kneeling, heads bowed, or arms uplifted, as you or a strong youth reader prays 2 Samuel 7:18–29.

After the prayer, have youth turn to 2 Samuel 9. Share that David did not build a house for God, but he did end up welcoming someone unexpected into his house. Remind the group that David did not have a good relationship with the previous king, Saul. Saul had tried to kill David on many occasions. David was very close to Saul’s son, Jonathan, though.

Ask three youth to read the dialogue parts of Ziba, Mephibosheth, and David as you read the narrator’s part from 2 Samuel 9. Go over names that may be hard to pronounce (ZEE-bah, Meh-FIH-bo-sheth, Ma-KEER, AH-me-ell, LO-de-bar) and unfamiliar words (*obeisance* = to show respect by bowing down).

WONDER AND REFLECT

Prompt reflection and discussion with some of the following questions:

- What stood out to you or surprised you in the story?
- How would you describe David’s prayer? What is David’s relationship with God like?
- I wonder what life was like for Mephibosheth. I wonder what challenges he faced.
- Imagine sitting at the table as David and Mephibosheth eat together for the first time. What might they have talked about? What whispers might you overhear from those serving the meal?

PEACE NOTES

Point out that David didn’t just do the bare minimum to honor his promise to Jonathan; he went out of his way to care extravagantly for Mephibosheth. Inviting Mephibosheth to live with him and eat at his table made a much different statement than if he had just given him money and sent him away.

Divide the group into pairs and give each one a Compassion scenario from page 92. Have youth either draw or act out doing the bare minimum in that situation, and then responding extravagantly like David. Talk about how bringing healing and peace sometimes requires us to go “above and beyond.”

For smaller groups: Do several scenarios all together rather than forming pairs.

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supplies

- Bibles
- Compassion scenarios (from Additional resources)

poster pack

- “Set the scene” poster

to do

- Make a copy of the Compassion scenario on page 92 for each pair of youth.

explore

MOVE

Review God's unlikely heroes from this quarter by playing "Ups and downs charades" in two teams. Use all of the Charades cards except the "down" card for David. Actors should choose a card and then act out one of the statements on the card. The others guess the character and the event they're portraying.

For smaller groups: Have the whole group work together to guess the character.

supplies

- Charades cards (from poster pack)

RETELL

Youth have probably seen modern political ads, thirty-second TV commercials that try to convince viewers a candidate is worthy of being elected. Have youth work in trios to create thirty-second ads lauding David's actions and choices from today's story. They should highlight how he is worthy to lead, and present their ads to the rest of the group. *Option:* Make a video of the ads.

supplies

- Bibles
- Stopwatch
- Video camera or smart phone (optional)

L.E.D.

Have youth look at page 27 of *L.E.D.* and decide which things were true in Mephibosheth's day, which are true now, and which are true for both times. Then read the story about the Hardy House in Kenya. Youth may also read "A little illumination" and see how many words they can make from the name Mephibosheth.

Solution for page 27: 1. circle; 2. underline; 3. underline; 4. circle; 5. square; 6. underline; 7. square; 8. underline.

supplies

- *L.E.D.* magazines
- Pencils



CONNECT

Many experiences shaped David into the king he became. Some of them helped him to be compassionate. Invite youth to complete the comic strip on page 28 in *L.E.D.*, using their Bibles to look up stories about David and fill in the speech bubbles and frames.

Option: Invite youth to respond by creating a comic strip showing events in their own lives that have challenged them to be more compassionate and kind.

supplies

- Bibles
- *L.E.D.* magazines
- Colored pencils
- Paper (optional)

other ideas

- Tape a paper in each corner of the room with titles like *kindness, love, and loyalty*. Write or draw symbols or words for those traits.
- Play "Prophet, may I?" Players ask a "prophet" for permission to do various things a ruler might do. They walk forward the number of steps the prophet allows, while pantomiming that action.

bleSS

PRAY

Gather the group to stand in a circle. Invite youth to take note of the person on their left and offer a silent sentence prayer for them. While they do this, play "Unity" quietly from the Shine CD (track 20).




SEND

As the song ends, offer this blessing:

Go, to see through the eyes of others and offer God's love to all you meet.

supplies

- Shine Songbook and CD
- CD player



I am not eager to talk in front of a group of adults, but youth in grades 7 and 8 are so down-to-earth and real that engaging in conversation with them is easy. They have so much energy.

—Patty Woodyard
Ottawa, Ontario



leader's closing prayer

We are not born with compassion; we develop it as we learn to take on the perspective of others. Where might you be called to compassion this week?

God, do not let me forget that all people are my brothers and sisters. As you reminded David of his promise to care for Jonathan's family, remind me of my call to care for all of your children. Amen.