



Session 13

Fall 2015

Early Childhood

A shepherd's music

1 SAMUEL 16:14-23

prepare

PRAYER

God, help me respond to the needs of people around me and be willing to accept help when I need it. Amen.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

To appreciate a story of helping others

STORY SUMMARY

King Saul became tormented in spirit. His servants suggested that the music of the lyre might soothe him. They suggested that they look for a musician to calm him and help him feel better. They told him of a skilled musician named David, who was the son of Jesse. Saul sent for him. David entered the service of the king. His music calmed the king, and King Saul loved David.



teaching tips for early childhood

Young children enjoy singing, dancing, and playing instruments. Many enjoy listening to music in the car or while playing at home. Some want to hear a song before bed. This speaks to the power of music to soothe, encourage, and bring joy to children. They are likely to identify with the story of David and Saul, appreciating how music helped Saul feel better.

This session is not just about music; it encourages children to explore a variety of ways they can help others. Children must first notice the feelings and experiences of others to recognize the need for help. This is challenging for young children. Offer guidance. Say something like "I see that Rachel has a sad face. I wonder why. Let's ask her."

Decide which Explore activities you will do, and check Supplies and To do throughout the session to see what needs to be prepared. Go to www.ShineCurriculum.com/Extras to find tips for working with younger children.

David meets Saul

First Samuel 16:14–23 is the middle account of three stories that introduce David, who will become a model king in Jerusalem. The first story (1 Samuel 16:1–13) takes place in an intimate setting in Bethlehem where Samuel anoints David, the youngest son of Jesse, who had been out tending sheep, as God’s choice for the next king. The third story (1 Samuel 17) introduces David on the battlefield, in a military contest with the Philistine giant, emphasizing David’s faith in God to deliver.

Today’s story, which appears between these other two, occurs in a royal setting, describing the initial meeting of Saul and David. Saul is a troubled king whose servants suggest that music may ease his sad spirit, and so David joins the service of the king, both as his musician and his armor-bearer.

Music therapy

Saul’s kingship had begun with much promise. When he was anointed, the spirit of God came upon him in a mighty way, and he was promised God’s presence (1 Samuel 10:1–10). But the chapters that follow chronicle a mixed report of military victory and disobedience to God that ends with agonized judgment in 1 Samuel 15: God regrets that he ever made Saul king, and Saul laments that he has sinned and that God has rejected him.

This background is the prelude for how our story begins. In verse 13, we are told that the spirit of the Lord comes upon David in a mighty way when he is anointed. So it should not be a surprise to read that the anointing spirit that Saul had known as king now departs from him and “an evil spirit” from God torments him (verse 14). The idea of God sending an “evil spirit” may be unsettling for us, but from the narrator’s perspective, all things come from God, so it seems natural to attribute the cause of Saul’s struggle to God as well. Saul’s troubled disposition must be a consequence of his alienation from God. Saul’s servants suggest that some music therapy may be



just the thing to soothe the king, and Saul accepts this counsel.

One of Saul’s servants recommends David in glowing terms that go far beyond the actual requirements for the task. David not only knows how to play the harp well but is “a brave man and a warrior. He speaks well and is a fine-looking man” (verse 18). At the very end, the servant adds, “And the Lord is with him.” For Saul, perhaps this last detail holds the promise that he may recover a sense of God’s presence if he engages a harp player whose singing is divinely inspired.

Sweet psalmist of Israel

So David joins the king’s entourage and David’s music has the desired effect. When Saul is overcome with his black moods, David’s harp-playing soothes his spirit. Saul comes to love David dearly, not suspecting that the young man will soon become his rival.

As readers, we know that in the chapters of 1 Samuel that follow, Saul finds it increasingly difficult to deal with David’s success and popularity with the people (18:5, 8). The music that once had refreshed his spirit (16:23) no longer seems to work. Twice in these later chapters we read about the evil spirit that comes upon Saul and causes him to attack David with a spear while David is playing his lyre (18:10–11; 19:9–10). Saul comes to feel that God has abandoned him and is blessing David’s efforts.

But 1 Samuel 16:14–23 does not hint at this conflicted future. Rather, it invites us to consider Saul’s initial love for David and to hear the melodies of “the sweet psalmist of Israel” (2 Samuel 23:1) as he plays for the king. Perhaps we might even imagine that David is singing for Saul one of the eighty psalms attributed to David in the Psalter: “Awake, harp and lyre, I will awaken the dawn . . . for great is Your love, higher than the heavens; Your faithfulness reaches to the skies” (Psalm 108:2, 4).

gather

supplies

- *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*
- CD player
- Simple puzzle
- Soothing instrumental music

resource pack

- Bible memory poster (Psalm 25)

BUILD COMMUNITY

Welcome the children by name. Doing so each week helps children know that they belong and that they are loved.

Give each person one or two pieces of a children's puzzle. If you have access to a large floor puzzle, use that. Encourage children to work together to assemble the puzzle. Provide support as needed. For instance, "I see that Tania doesn't have a puzzle piece. Let's give her one." Thank children for helping their friends.

WORSHIP TOGETHER

Gather in a circle. Sing one or more soothing songs from the *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*, such as "God Is with Us" (track 12), "The Lord Is My Shepherd" (track 20), or "Prayer of Peace" (track 22). Lyrics for songs are at the back of this guide.

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

Tell the children that we can pray in many ways. Sometimes we say words out loud, other times we might whisper the words, or even just pray on the inside. God can hear all these prayers, even when we don't say the words out loud.

Turn on some quiet, soothing instrumental music. If possible, search YouTube for harp music and use that. Ask children how they would like to pray today—with spoken words, whispered words, or silently. If there are multiple responses, try out more than one way to pray.

teaching tip

Be responsive to the attention span of the children. The Spiritual practice can be very short, even just a few moments of silence or a one-line prayer. You may find, though, that children are enjoying the soft music and want to say multiple prayers. Continue as long as they remain interested. These prayer ideas can also be used at other points in the session if that works better for the group.

media connections

- *Kindness to Share from A to Z* by Todd and Peggy Snow
- *Heartprints* by P. K. Hallinan
- "Little David (Play on Your Harp)" children's song
- "Helping Hands" by NuBeat Music
- YouTube search for harp music

Bible memory

Look at the Bible memory poster and ask children to identify people who are helping others. Say the memory verse together.

**Make me to know your ways,
O Lord; teach me your paths.**
—Psalm 25:4

experience

SHARE THE STORY

Use the Saul faces and harp from page 94 in this guide as you tell the story. The story is found on the back of the story picture (from the resource pack). Follow the instructions there for movement of the props.

WONDER AND REFLECT

Read some or all of the wondering questions. Children may choose to share their thoughts aloud.

- I wonder what King Saul felt sad about.
- I wonder how David felt about leaving his home to help King Saul.
- I wonder what songs David played on the harp.
- I wonder how you help others.

Give each child an Early Childhood leaflet, open to page 2. Provide crayons so children can draw a sad face and a happy face on King Saul. At the bottom of the page, children can trace the line to help the sad girl “find” her lost teddy bear.

PEACE NOTES

By responding to people’s sadness, we can help them experience God’s peace and love.

Invite children to talk about times they or family members have felt sad. What helped them feel better? Draw children’s attention to the picture of the child playing an instrument on the “Family helpers” poster from the resource pack. Playing music can help people feel calm and happy.

Sing the following words to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”:

**I can be a kind helper every day,
hugging, sharing, singing, caring,
helping every day.**



A shepherd’s music

1 Samuel 16:14–23

supplies

- Early Childhood leaflets
- Crayons

storytelling props

- Saul faces and harp (from Additional resources)
- Craft sticks

resource pack

- Story picture
- “Family helpers” poster

to do

- Copy and cut out the Saul faces and harp from page 94 in this guide. Mount the pictures on craft sticks for ease of use. The faces should be mounted back-to-back on the same stick.
- Practice telling the story with the props.

explore

CREATE

Ahead of time, cut ribbons to fit across the harp on page 3 of the Early Childhood leaflet. Each child will need three ribbons. During the session, children can color the harp and glue the ribbons on the page to make harp strings.

supplies

- Early Childhood leaflets
- Crayons
- Narrow ribbons in a variety of colors
- Glue sticks
- Scissors

MOVE

Play a musical partner game. One person in each pair will be David and play an instrument such as a triangle, bells, or xylophones. The other person will be Saul. When “David” is playing music, “Saul” shows joy using movement, facial expressions, or clapping. When “David” stops playing, “Saul” shows sadness. Switch roles and continue as long as children remain interested. This can be done as a whole group activity, with one person playing “David” and the rest of the group playing “Saul.”

supplies

- Instruments such as triangles, bells, or xylophones

RETELL

Provide props so children can explore the story independently or in pairs. Include wooden story figures, cotton balls (sheep), blocks (homes), fabric or paper strips (roads), and small bells to ring (harp). Children could set the props on the Bible backdrop from the resource pack.

supplies

- Story figures
- Cotton balls
- Blocks
- Fabric or paper strips
- Small bells
- Bible backdrop from resource pack (optional)

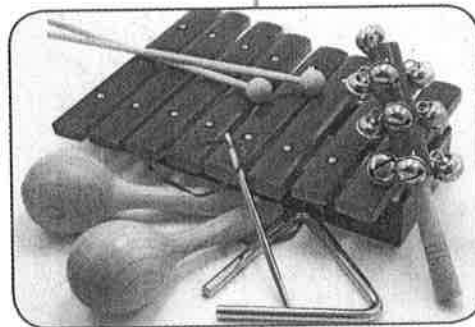
DISCOVER

Provide sheets of paper and art supplies so children can draw or paint as you play different types of music: soft, loud, fast, slow, excited, dreamy, sad, happy, and so on. (See Music suggestions on page 92 in this guide.) How do they feel when they hear the music? Choose art supplies that work best for your group, such as crayons, markers, watercolor paints, or washable tempera paint. Encourage children to draw or paint in any way they wish.

Option: Invite a musician to come and play different types of music.

supplies

- Different types of recorded music (see Music suggestions in Additional resources)
- Music player
- Art supplies
- Musician (optional)



other ideas

- Retell the story using the sad face, happy face, and harp pictures from page 94 mounted on craft sticks.
- Make harps from craft sticks and rubber bands. Search for instructions online.
- Sing “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” doing actions for the different emotions.

bless

PRAY

Gather the children in a circle. Sing one verse of “Prayer of Peace” from the *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*, track 22. Lyrics are at the back of this guide.

SEND

Send the children with a blessing based on Genesis 26:24. Say:

God said, “I am with you and will bless you.”

Make sure to send leaflets home with the children. Let parents know that there is a free download of the song “God Is with Us.” Instructions for downloading the song are on page 4 of the Early Childhood leaflet.

supplies

- Early Childhood leaflets
- *Shine Early Childhood Music CD*
- CD player



We welcome children by paying attention to their learning styles. Sometimes they need to draw, sometimes they need to move, sometimes they need silence. Don't assume everyone learns the way you learn.

—Theresa McDonald-Lee
Goderich, Ontario

leader's closing prayer

What type of music encourages you? If you feel sad or discouraged this week, pause to listen to a favorite song. Let the music soothe and uplift your soul. Be reminded of the way music changed Saul's outlook.

Thank you, God, for the gift of music. Let me experience the healing, restorative power of instruments and voices raised in song. Amen.