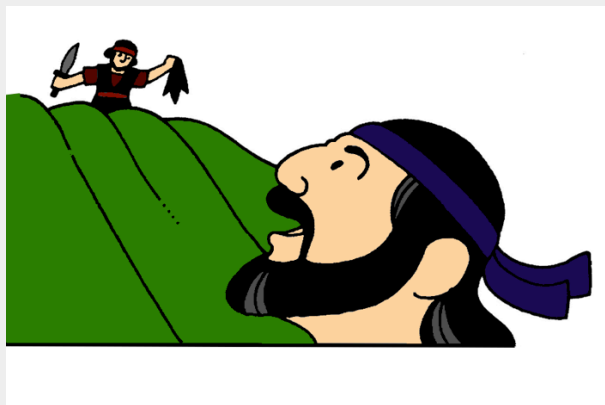


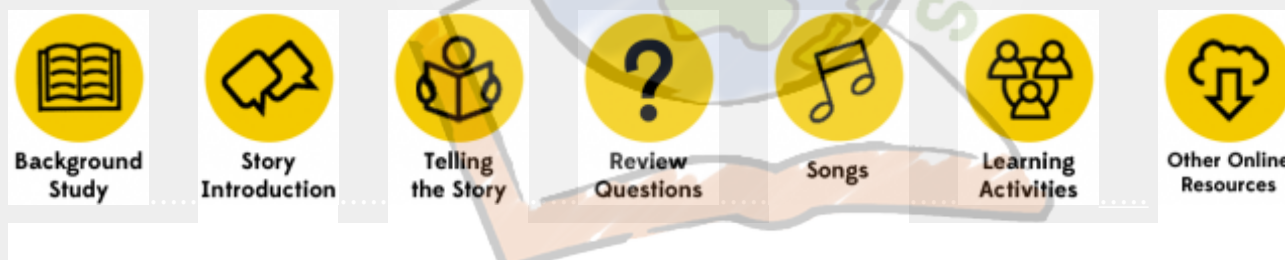
David Shows Mercy to King Saul



Scripture Reference: [1 Samuel 26](#)

Suggested Emphasis: Show mercy to others.

Memory Verse: “Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.” Matthew 5:7



Story Overview:

Saul continued to be jealous of David. He hunted him and tried to kill him. David had raised his own armies and could have fought Saul but he did not. He respected Saul as king. David trusted the Lord to know when it was time for him to become king. Once, David came upon Saul’s camp and found Saul sleeping. He quietly took Saul’s spear and water jug to prove to Saul how close he had been. After walking a long distance away, David called to Saul and told him that he could have killed him but chose to show mercy. Mercy is showing kindness even though we have the power or opportunity to hurt

someone.

Background Study:

Saul continued to chase David around the region. His hatred of David made him want to kill him. For some time now David had been dodging Saul's soldiers. During this time Saul had often repented of his efforts to kill David. But shortly after each brief period of repentance, Saul would renew his efforts to find David and kill him.

David and the men who had sided with him were hiding near Ziph, a city in the hill country of southern Judah. The land between the city and the Dead Sea was desolate. It was an excellent area for the "cat and mouse" game being played out between David and his men and King Saul and his soldiers. However, the inhabitants of this region betrayed David and revealed his location to Saul.

Saul's army camped near David's hiding place. There were 3000 men in Saul's army. David knew where they were because he had sent out scouts to check on Saul (26:4). During the night David and one of his men, Abishai, snuck into Saul's camp. At that point David's actions were truly admirable. David could easily have killed his tormentor. He did not and he even prevented Abishai from doing so. David's respect for God extended to Saul. David knew that as long as Saul was alive, Saul was God's anointed and appointed king. It was up to God to remove Saul from the throne of Israel. David would trust God to keep His promise and would not attempt to claim the throne on his own.

David's companions could not understand David's willingness to respect a man whose actions earned him no respect. David's loyalty to Saul may have confused David's companions, but it probably gave them a greater respect for David's integrity. David had the power to hurt Saul but he chose to show mercy.

David told Abishai and the others to take the spear and water jug that were near King Saul's head. Saul and his men continued to sleep because the Lord was causing them to

have a deep sleep (26:12). After the group left the camp they walked to the top of a nearby hill and called out to Saul and the leader of his army, Abner. David asked them where the spear and jug were and they knew that David had been in the camp and had not killed them.

Saul told David he was sorry (again) but David refused his invitation to come and join them in camp. David went on his way, instead.



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Way to Introduce the Story:

“Have any of you ever woken up in the night because you heard a sound? What noises wake you in the night?” (Share your own story if you have one) “In today’s story we are going to learn about someone that was sleeping so deeply that they did not hear someone walk right beside where they were sleeping. They didn’t even wake up when someone took something away from a spot right beside their head!”

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The Story:

David travelled all around the country trying to stay away from King Saul. Even though David had run away from King Saul, the king continued to try to find David to hurt him. At first David was alone but soon people began to come and follow David.

One time King Saul gathered 3000 soldiers and went looking for David. Some men came

to Saul and told him that they knew where David was hiding. Saul decided to take his army and make a camp near that place.

David had heard about Saul and his army. He had sent scouts out to see where Saul was camped. David wanted to go and see Saul's camp so he asked his friend, Abishai, to go with him.

David and Abishai waited until night and then they snuck up very closely to King Saul's camp. They saw all of the camp and decided to go down and get a closer look.

All of the King's soldiers were sleeping so soundly that not one of them woke up. David and Abishai walked right up to the place where King Saul was sleeping. Abishai wanted to kill Saul. That would mean that Saul could never hurt his friend David again.

David and Abishai could have killed the King and no one would ever have known. Everyone was asleep so no one could have stopped them. Even though David could have hurt the king, he decided to show the king mercy. Mercy means choosing to show someone kindness even though you are stronger than them and could hurt them if you wanted to. David decided to show kindness (mercy) to King Saul.

David reminded Abishai that Saul was still the King that God had chosen. Some day Saul would die and David would be king but David wanted to wait until God thought it was the right time.

David noticed that Saul's spear and water jug were right beside him. He told Abishai to take those with them. David and Abishai then walked away from the camp. Still no one woke up. God had caused a deep sleep to come upon the whole camp.

David and Abishai kept walking until they reached the top of a hill. They were far enough away that Saul's army could not reach them quickly. David called out to Saul's camp. He especially called out to a man named Abner. Abner was the commander of Saul's army.

Abner was supposed to protect the king but he had never woken up even when David and Abishai walked right beside him.

“Wake up, Abner!” David yelled out. “Why didn’t you protect your king?”

At first Abner did not understand. Then David yelled, “Have you noticed that King Saul’s spear and water jug are no longer right beside his head?”

When Abner looked down he saw that the spear and jug were missing. Then he knew what David was talking about. David must have been right inside the camp. How else would he have known about the spear and water jug? Abner knew that David could have hurt Saul but had chosen to show mercy instead. David had not hurt the king.

When King Saul heard David’s voice he told him he was sorry. He invited David down to the camp but David knew he could not trust King Saul. David left Saul’s spear and jug on a rock where Saul would find it. Then David went on his way again.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow.](#) Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. Why did David have to keep travelling all around the country and finding places to hide? Saul was trying to kill him.
2. Who went into King Saul's camp at night? David and his friend, Abishai
3. David did not kill Saul even though he had the power to do so. What is that called? Mercy
4. Why did Abishai take Saul's spear and water jug? To prove that he and David had been right beside him while he was sleeping

Song Suggestions:

- [I've Got Peace Like a River Song](#)
- [Read Your Bible, Pray Every Day Song](#)
- [Books of the Old Testament Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Act out the story.
- Have children look up "mercy" in the dictionary and write the definition on the board.
- Role play situations where the children can show mercy (playing a game with a younger child, stopping and helping an elderly person walk to their car, etc.)
- Before asking review questions instruct the class to stand on tip-toe if they know the answer. Just a fun way to ask questions.
- Write the memory verse and reference on the chalk/white board. Let the children

say it with you a few times. Erase one word and let them say it again. Erase another word and say it again. Do this over and over until the entire verse is erased. The children will then know the verse!

- Place an item on the floor along with a cushion. A child should be blindfolded and lie on the cushion and pretend to be asleep like Saul. Choose one child to come and take the item away. The child who has picked up the item should lay it down in an agreed upon place and then join the rest of the group. When he or she says “mercy” the “sleeping” child removes their blindfold and guesses who took the item. Children will quickly learn to disguise their voice.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for “David Shows Mercy to Saul” printables to print on A4 size paper](#)

[Click here for “David Shows Mercy to Saul” printables \(Letter size-USA\)](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/united-kingdom-davidsolomon/>

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