Samuel Anoints David



Scripture Reference: 1 Samuel 16:1-13

Suggested Theme: God cares more about our hearts than how we look. Don't judge someone by their looks.

Memory Verse: "God does not see the same way people see. People look at the outside of a person, but the Lord looks at the heart." 1 Samuel 16:7b

Story Overview:

God told Samuel that he had chosen a new king for Israel, and the new king was to be one of Jesse's seven sons. When Samuel saw the sons, he assumed the Lord would choose Jesse's oldest son. Instead, to everyone's surprise, the Lord chose the youngest son, David. Samuel anointed David as the new king, but it would be many years before the time was right for David to take Saul's place. The Lord chose David even though he did not look as big and handsome as his older brothers. The Lord does not judge by outward appearance but by the heart.

Background Study:

Samuel mourned for King Saul because Saul had sinned. Saul was no longer the humble man who hid behind the baggage rather than stand before a crowd (10:20-27). All of Saul's accomplishments seem to have gone to his head. Samuel loved Saul but knew that God had rejected him as king. Saul was allowed to rule for as long as he lived, but God planned to have another man ready to become king after Saul died. God told Samuel to go to Bethlehem and anoint one of Jesse's sons as the next king.

The official way that a person was shown to be chosen by God was to be anointed. Samuel used the hollow horn of a cow to store the oil for his journey.

Since Saul's attitude had changed, Samuel didn't know how he might react to Samuel anointing someone else to be king. God advised Samuel to make a sacrifice in Bethlehem, which would be the obvious reason for his journey.

When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, the town elders met him in fear. Perhaps they feared that someone in their town had been accused of wrongdoing. But Samuel assured them that he had come in peace to offer a sacrifice to God. Then he invited these men, especially Jesse and his sons, to "consecrate" or "sanctify" themselves and come to the sacrifice. To sanctify themselves probably meant stopping work, washing their clothes, and bathing in preparation for a time of worship.

Jesse was old and had eight sons (1 Chronicles 2:13-15): Eliab, Abinadab, Shammah, Nathaniel, Raddai, Ozem, and David. One is unnamed, possibly because he did not live to maturity.

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

Eliab probably was Jesse's oldest son. He was such a fine-looking young man that Samuel thought he must be the one God had chosen. But, from God's perspective, outward appearance has never been the measure of a person.

> "But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Don't look at how handsome Eliab is. Don't look at how tall he is. I have not chosen him. God does not see the same way people see. People look at the outside of a person, but the Lord looks at the heart.'"
> 1 Samuel 16:7, ICB

What God saw in David's heart pleased Him, and He chose this young man to be the next king of Israel. Verse 12 indicates that David had a pleasing outward appearance as well.

Samuel anointed David in the presence of his family, but it is unclear whether Samuel explained to them what he had done. Perhaps the family understood his actions or thought he was anointing David to be a prophet. Samuel left immediately and went back home. David returned to tending his sheep, willing to wait for the Lord God to work out things in His own time. The difference in David was that the Spirit of the Lord was on him, starting then and lasting for the rest of his life.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Prepare two types of icing for biscuits. One type should be yummy, and the other should be made with lots of salt. Decorate some plain wine biscuits with both types of icing. Decorate the salty ones to look inviting, but just put plain icing on the others. Give each child one of each type of biscuit. Let them taste them. Now, discuss that something can look good on the outside but be bad on the inside. Some things don't look special on the outside, but they are the best on the inside. People are like that, too. God does not decide what we are like because of how we look. He judges us by what is inside us – what is in our hearts.

The Story:

Samuel was very sad. Saul was the king of Israel, and he was not obeying God. Samuel knew that Saul was not a good king, and it made Samuel sad to see him disobey God.

God said to Samuel, "Saul does not want to obey me. I have chosen a new king and I want you to anoint him. He lives in the town of Bethlehem and he is the son of a man named Jesse. Get an empty horn that has been cut from a cow. Fill the horn with oil and go to Bethlehem."

Samuel was afraid. King Saul would be very angry if he heard about Samuel anointing a new king. What if he got mad at him and tried to kill him?

The Lord told Samuel not to be afraid. He told Samuel to make a special sacrifice to Bethlehem, and everyone would think he was making a normal trip. This sounded like a good idea to Samuel, so he made the sacrifice and travelled to Bethlehem. No one knew that Samuel was going to anoint a new king.

When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, he told everyone he would make a special sacrifice to the Lord. He invited Jesse and his sons to come. Before they came, Jesse and his sons washed and got dressed up. All of the sons wanted to look their best.

When Samuel saw Jesse's sons, he was very happy. They were fine-looking men. Jesse's oldest son, Eliab, was very tall and handsome. Samuel thought that Eliab would be a good king.

But the Lord told Samuel, "This is not the one I want to be king. He is handsome and tall but the Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

So if Eliab was not to be the king, then which of Jesse's sons would be the next king of Israel? Jesse told his next son to come forward and stand before Samuel. His name was Abinadab. Maybe Abinadab would be the next king.

"No," said Samuel, "the Lord has not chosen Abinadab."

One by one, all of Jesse's sons stood before Samuel. The Lord had not chosen any of them to be the new king of Israel. Samuel did not understand. The Lord had told him that one of Jesse's sons would be the new king.

"Jesse, are these all of your sons?" asked Samuel.

Jesse answered, "These are my seven oldest sons. I do have one more son. He is my youngest son and he is out in the pastures taking care of my sheep. His name is David."

Samuel was surprised. Could God want a young shepherd to be the next king of Israel? Samuel told Jesse to send someone to get David.

When David arrived, Samuel saw that he was healthy and handsome. But that was not all. The Lord told Samuel that this was the new king. And the Lord does not look just at the outside of a person. He looks at a person's heart. The Lord knew that David had a good heart.

"Arise and anoint him," the Lord said to Samuel. "He is the one."

Samuel anointed David. He took the horn full of oil and poured some on David's head. From this day on, the Spirit of God came upon David. David loved God for the rest of his life.

Even though David was chosen as the new king, it was not time yet for him to take King Saul's place. David went back to tending his father's sheep. When the right time came for David to reign as the new king, the Lord would tell him.

top

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various 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 or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell 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.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

View this slideshow and download it from the original source:
http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/samuel-david-anointed/

top

Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

Review:

- Why was Samuel sad about King Saul? (Saul did not obey God)
- Whose son would be the next king of Israel? (Jesse's)
- Why did Samuel think Jesse's oldest son would be the new king? (He looked handsome and tall)
- People look at how people appear on the outside. What does the Lord see? (The heart)
- How many older brothers did David have? (7; David was the youngest of Jesse's sons)
- David was not with his brothers. Where was he? (In the pasture, taking care of his father's sheep)
- Who did God choose to be the next king of Israel? (David)
- Why did God choose David to be Israel's next king? (God was pleased with David's heart, etc.)
- What did you learn about God from this story?

Reflection:

- What is something you wonder about in this story?
- Imagine there are eight brothers, and God wants one of them to be King. What would make you think a certain brother would be king? (Would you look at their appearance, how strong they are, how smart they are, their heart, etc.)
- David was the youngest brother and a shepherd. How do you think he felt when Samuel told him he was God's chosen king for Israel?
- If you were David, would you want to be king or remain a shepherd?
- Do you think Samuel was surprised that God wanted David to be king? Why or why not?
- How are King Saul and David different? How do you think they will be different as kings?
- What kind of heart pleases God? What is a person like whose heart pleases God?
- What do you think pleases God about your heart or life?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- Love is Something If You Give It Away Song
- I've Got Peace Like a River Song
- Books of the Old Testament Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

top

Activities and Crafts:

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- It would be great if you had a real cow's horn. If not, bring a small container of water, let the children play like it is oil, and act out Samuel anointing David.
- Bring several books to your gathering. They should all have similar covers or have nothing on the cover. Discuss the saying, "You can't judge a book by its cover."
- Draw a large crown and write "DAVID" on it. In the next few weeks, write words on the crown that describe David (shepherd, youngest son, son of Jesse, etc.). Add to this each week.
- Play a simple word game. Bible Wordz Game is an adaptable game in which children form words from letter tiles. The words relate to those in the Bible lesson.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable "God's Story" printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Make any heart craft and discuss how God looks at our hearts, not our appearance. You could also discuss sins committed in the heart even though they don't "show" on the outside (hate, jealousy, coveting, etc.)
- Make any craft involving sheep and talk about David being a shepherd.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

top

Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page and puzzle worksheets-David anointed as king (Calvary Curriculum)
- Craft: Printable pattern for toilet paper roll shepherd (DLTK)

top

Date
2026/11/13

©2011-2026 Mission Bible Class, used by permission. Not to be sold. Find more free lessons at https://missionbibleclass.org/