



JONATHAN WARNS DAVID

1 SAMUEL 20

GOAL

▶ **The story of Jonathan's loyalty to David will help children identify qualities of a good and faithful friend.** David and Jonathan trusted God, and they knew they could trust each other. To Jonathan, David's interests and well-being were more important than his own, and he remained loyal to his friend—even to the end.

CHARACTERS

▶ **David:** He is the son of Jesse and the promised future king of Israel. After Saul is rejected by God as king, Saul becomes fiercely jealous of David, who is anointed by God to take his place. The king seeks to murder David, which forces him out of the kingdom and into hiding; but David finds true friendship in the king's son, Jonathan, who sides with God and supports his friend as the anointed King of Israel.

Jonathan: He is the son of King Saul. He becomes the closest friend of his father's sworn enemy, David. Even though he is the next in line to be king, he believes and supports God's choice for David to be the next king of Israel—even at the risk of his own life.

King Saul: He begins as an admired king, but his reign of courage and generosity are cut short and destroyed by pride, hatred, and jealousy. He knows God's favor is against him and for David as the future king of Israel. His new ambition is to destroy David in an attempt to secure his own throne, which causes instability and division in the kingdom of Israel.



**MEMORY
VERSE**

▶ **I Samuel 18:1:** As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

OVERVIEW

▶ **Read 1 Samuel 20:** David and Jonathan were best friends. Jonathan knew that God was with David and that God had chosen him to take the place of his father, Saul, as the future king of Israel. But Saul could not so easily let go of what God had taken away. Jealousy filled Saul's life with anger and murderous intent so that David feared for his life. Even when a supposed truce had been declared on behalf of peace between David and the king, David still feared that Saul had again turned against him and sought to kill him. When David brought the concern to his friend, Jonathan could not believe that his father still had ill will against David, but he wanted to make sure; so the two agreed to a plan that would reveal Saul's true intent.

SUGGESTIONS

▶ **This lesson is an opportunity to discuss the qualities of a good friend, which are found in Jonathan's friendship with David.**

- 1. Faith in God:** Even though Jonathan was presumably the heir to Saul's throne, he accepted God's word that David and his descendants would reign in place of his father and his father's descendants.
- 2. Trustworthy:** David trusted Jonathan with his deepest concerns and knew that he would never betray him. David could always trust Jonathan.
- 3. Selfless:** Jonathan loved David as his own soul and would not allow his jealous father, the king, to harm his friend. He put his own interest as heir to the throne aside for God's choice in king, his friend David.
- 4. Enduring Loyalty:** Jonathan never gave up on his friend. Even when things looked dire, Jonathan reminded David that in the end God would succeed, that David would be king, and his enemies would be destroyed.



**PRE-LESSON
ACTIVITY**

▷ **Whisper Game**

Divide the group into teams of 6-8 players. Have the children in each team form a circle. Choose one child to start and give him or her a nonsensical phrase to whisper to the child on the right, such as, "The cow is jumping in the rain." Have the children continue to whisper the message to the person on their right until it reaches the first child in the circle. Whichever team delivers the message closest to the original wins that round. Continue with as many rounds as you like.

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**MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING**

▷ Jonathan loved David as his own soul. Think of the best qualities of your closest friends. Do they own some of the same qualities as Jonathan did for David? Can you talk about God together? Can you trust your friend to keep your secrets and love you no matter what you are going through? How about your side of the friendship? Do you encourage your friend with God's promises? Do you love your friend as yourself? Do you show your friend you care about what is important to them? All these are the qualities of a good friend.

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**POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY**

▷ **The Arrows of a Friend | Supplies:** One toilet paper tube for every student, scrap paper, glue or tape, yarn, an arrow template copied multiple times per student, scissors, crayons or markers.

Give each student a toilet paper tube and scrap paper, and instruct them to trace around one end. Have them cut out the circle and glue it to one end of the tube. Give each student a length of yarn and have them tie it around each end of the tube; alternately, you can punch holes in the tubes and they can tie the yarn through the holes. They now have quivers. Give each student a page of arrow templates; tell them to think of qualities that make a good friend, such as love, helpfulness, caring, kindness, etc. Have them write one quality on each arrow, then color the arrows and cut each one out. They can now store their arrows of friendship in their quivers.



TAKE
HOME



How to find a good friend and how to be a good friend:

- 1.** A good friend believes and trusts God's word. Jonathan trusted God's decision for his life and for his friend's life. We should be friends who encourage hope and who remind our friends of God's promises.
- 2.** A good friend is trustworthy. A good friend does not reveal the secrets of another friend.
- 3.** A good friend is selfless. The Bible teaches us to love others as we love ourselves. That means putting our friend's interests ahead of our own.
- 4.** A good friend is always loyal. We should never give up on our friends, no matter what. A good friend does not abandon another during difficult times. We should be an encouragement to our friends, reminding them that they are loved, forgiven, and that God desires good things for them.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: What was the name of Jonathan's friend?

A1: David

Q1b: What is your favorite thing about your best friend?

TN: This question will get your students thinking about the qualities of friendship.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: What was Jonathan's reaction to David's question?

A2: Jonathan was surprised.

Q2b: What kind of plans do you like to make with your friends?

TN: This question is to get students thinking about making plans with friends and following through with them. While the students' plans may not be life or death situations, it is still an important aspect of friendship to be trustworthy.

SLIDE 3



Q3a: What was Jonathan supposed to tell the king if he asked where David was?

A3: Jonathan was supposed to tell the king that David was attending the feast with his own family.

Q3b: Have you ever helped a friend?

TN: This question will get students thinking about selflessness, one of the characteristics of a being a good friend. Being selfless means to put the interests of another before your own. By helping David, Jonathan was giving up his right to the throne.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 4



Q4a: How did the king respond to David not attending the feast with him?

A4: The king flew into a murderous rage.

Q4b: Has a friend ever helped you without expecting you to return the favor?

TN: This question directs students to think about their friends and whether they are selfless. It is important for the students to be good friends, but it is equally important that they recognize the characteristics of friendship in their own friends.

SLIDE 5



Q5a: What did Jonathan use to communicate his message to David?

A5: Arrows

Q5b: How would you have sent David this important message? If you were Jonathan, how would you communicate this message to David if you couldn't write it down or have someone tell him?

TN: This question drives at the notion of loyalty. Letting David know that Jonathan's father wanted to kill David was important. Even though Jonathan knew it would be dangerous for him to be seen talking to David, sent a warning to his friend, even though he knew he might get caught.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 6



Q6a: How did David react to what Jonathan had done for him?

A6: He fell to the ground, filled with love and gratitude.

Q6b: How do you thank your friends when they help you?

TN: When friends help you, it is important to acknowledge their action and thank them for it.

SLIDE 7



Q7a: What made David and Jonathan cry?

A7: That Jonathan's father wanted to kill David and that this would keep them apart.

Q7b: How do you tell your friends that you love them?

TN: It is important that we don't take advantage of our friends. Telling your friends in some way that you appreciate them will help to build a strong friendship.

SLIDE 8



Q8a: In Jonathan's last words, what did he say about David?

A8: He said that David was destined to be the king.

Q8b: Do you ever pray or talk about God with your friends?

TN: David and Jonathan had very conflicting lives. Jonathan was in line for the throne that David was anointed to take. The major thing they had in common was their faith in God. David was anointed by God to take the throne, and Jonathan believed in God and that His plans were for the best. Their friendship was based on a love for the Lord.



**MEMORY
VERSE**

- ▶ **1 Samuel 18:1:** As soon as he had finished speaking to Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

BIG IDEA

- ▶ Being a good friend is a way of showing our love for God.

**CLOSING
PRAYER**

- ▶ Dear Lord Jesus, help us to know what it means to be a true friend, and help us to find the kind of godly friends who are committed to the same qualities. Thank you for the example of David and Jonathan. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



Jonathan and David were best friends. It didn't matter to Jonathan that one day David would be king over Israel and take the place of his own father, King Saul. Jonathan would always do what was best for his friend, because he loved David, and he knew that God was with him. King Saul, on the other hand, was so jealous of David that he wanted to kill him. David feared for his life. He asked Jonathan, "Why is your father trying to kill me, and what have I done to make him so angry?"

SLIDE 2



Jonathan was surprised by David's question. "How do you know my father wants to kill you? He promised me he was not mad at you anymore. He promised me he would never hurt you." But David was convinced that Saul had turned against him, so the two of them came up with a plan that would prove whether or not David was in real trouble with King Saul. When they were done discussing the details, David remained in hiding and Jonathan returned to his father.

SLIDE 3



And so the plan moved forward. David purposely did not show up for an important dinner that he was expected to attend with the King and his family. If the king asked why David was not at the dinner Jonathan was to tell the king that he was attending the feast with his own family. The hope was that the King would respond kindly, or that he wouldn't care at all. As the dinner went on the king could not help but notice that David was not sitting in his place at the table. He asked Jonathan, "Where is David, and why is he not here?"



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 4



Jonathan wasn't even finished explaining when the king flew into a murderous rage! He was so blinded with anger that he picked up his spear and hurled it at his own son. Jonathan knew without a doubt that David was in real danger.

SLIDE 5



David, still hiding, waited for the signal that would tell him whether or not it was safe for him to come out. Jonathan would shoot three arrows that would land nearer the target if it was safe for David to return, but he would shoot them well past the target if it was not. Jonathan let the arrows soar far into the distance! There was no confusion. Saul wanted to murder David!

SLIDE 6



As soon as he was sure he would not be seen by anyone else, David came out from where he was hiding and he fell on his face to the ground before Jonathan, filled with love and gratitude for what his friend had done for him.

SLIDE 7



The two friends held each other and cried over the sorrow of what had been revealed—about how the king had not only rejected David, but wanted him killed, and about how the two friends and their two families would be separated forever. David's tears were the most grievous of the two.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 8



So Jonathan truly loved David as his own soul and proved it in his words and in his actions. He knew that God was with David and that he would be king over Israel. Not only had Jonathan protected David with his own life, but he continued to stand by David to the very end. The last recorded words of Jonathan to his beloved friend were, "Do not fear my father, for you are destined to be king, and I will be second to you. Even my father knows this."