

# David and Jonathan Are Friends



## Overview

### Materials You'll Need

- no extra materials are needed for this lesson



### Scriptures

1 Sam 16:14-23; 18:1-11; 19:1-7

### Bible Truth Objective(s)

God wants us to show love to the people around us

### Behavioral Objective(s)

To teach the children that we should show love to our friends; to identify ways to show love

### Memory Verse

"A friend loves at all times." (Prov 17:17)



## Bible Knowledge

### Jonathan

Jonathan was the eldest son of King Saul by his only wife (1 Sam 14:49-50). That made him the heir to his father's throne. He possessed some qualities that would have made him a good leader. First, he was courageous. Jonathan led one thousand soldiers to defeat the Philistines at Gibeah (1 Sam 13:2-3). He was also loyal to his friends, as witnessed in his relationship with David. Since David already knew he would become king based on God's promise, it was likely that his best friend Jonathan would have known as well. Yet, Jonathan never hesitated when he helped David escape from the plots of his father to have David killed. He only offered what he could. His love was pure and free of personal interest, born out of trust in God (see 1 Sam 20:13-15).

### Saul's Mental State

In 1 Samuel 16:14 the Bible says, "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a distressing

spirit from the Lord troubled him." A question that often arises is whether the evil spirit is from the devil or from God. Since no evil could come from God, the spirit must be from the devil. But, as in the story of Job, God could have allowed the evil spirit to disturb Saul, which accounts for the Bible's wording. To make this story age-appropriate, this lesson simply refers to the spirit as an evil spirit.

Other questions of consistency arise when Saul asks David to play the harp for him (1 Sam 16:14-23) and when David defeats Goliath (1 Sam 17:55-58). When Saul talks to David after his victory over the giant, Saul appears to be introduced to David for the first time. However, the Bible seems to say that David first played the harp for Saul, so Saul should have known David by the time he killed Goliath. There are two ways to explain this inconsistency: (1) Saul may have asked about David's parentage again so that his family could be rewarded for his bravery and victory, or (2) Saul was already afflicted with an evil spirit so his mental state may have been unstable. Again, to make the story more accessible to young children, this lesson does not go into the details of what Saul said to David.



## Understanding Your Students

Your students need to learn the value of true friendship, the importance of loyalty, and the meaning of kindness. It seems like a lot for them to soak up at such a young age but keep in mind that expressing love by actions doesn't just happen as a natural part of a child's growth, like losing a tooth. Showing love must be learned through repeated positive experiences. That's why it is never too early to begin.

As teachers, we can help them learn to be loyal to each other, to work harmoniously, and to share unselfishly. We can model the love and respect that we want to see the students show. Then they will begin to imitate the words and actions. Children at

this age are great at modeling behavior they see. And when we see a child show love, reinforce and encourage that attitude. For example, "\_\_\_\_\_ (insert child's name), thank you for giving Sam a turn with the toy. That's a way to show love."

Do not expect a child's ability to share and love to fluctuate. A child may willingly share and work harmoniously with others one week but be reluctant the next. This is a normal part of development. Accept the child's reaction. For example, "\_\_\_\_\_ (insert child's name), maybe you'll be ready to share next week. Sharing is a good way to show love." Simply state the Bible principle. Also look for opportunities to put the students' relationships into words. For example, "\_\_\_\_\_ (child A), it sounds to me like you and \_\_\_\_\_ (child B) have fun together. You and \_\_\_\_\_ (child B) are good friends."



## Vocabulary

### **Evil Spirit**

a bad spirit that makes the person it is inside of feel bad

### **Jealous**

when someone feels jealous, he feels upset and a bit angry because he wants something that another person has



## Before You Teach

The relationship between David and Jonathan is a classic example of true friendship. They were loyal and faithful to each other till the end, even though they faced many bumps on the road.

For example, Jonathan and David were technically rivals for the throne. Even if Jonathan did not know it at the beginning of their friendship, at some point, he would have realized that David would take over the throne one day. Even though he was the rightful heir, he would not have the opportunity to become the king of Israel. Yet this knowledge did not make him miserable or cause him to find ways to secure his own kingship. In fact, if we study the things he did for David, we will come to see a man whose intentions were pure and without selfish motives. Jonathan loved David unconditionally, and that is the kind of love God wants to see in all of His believers.

And despite Saul's ill-will towards him, David never thought of Jonathan as anything other than his best friend. After Jonathan's death, the Bible records that David mourned for him (2 Sam 1:11). David also kept his promise to take care of Saul's family for Jonathan's sake (1 Sam 20:14-16; 2 Sam 9:1). The kind of grace he showed to Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, was almost unheard of at that time. In fact, it was common to kill the children of former rulers so that they would not have the chance to regain the throne in the future. But not only did David not do that, he restored all the land that belonged to Saul and even gave Mephibosheth a place at the king's table.

When we read about such friendships, we can only wish we have someone who cares just as much about us in an unselfish manner. And the fact is, we do. Jesus gave His life for us so that we may have eternal life. That is grace. We did not earn it, nor do we deserve it. Yet, Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself. That is why in addition to calling Him our Savior, we also call Him our friend.



## Bible Story

### Our Friends

Today, we're going to talk about some people we all love to spend time with. Does anyone want to guess what kind of people I'm talking about? (Give students time to guess. Be prepared that they might name members of their family.) Yes, we do like to spend time with our family, but I'm thinking about a different group of people—our friends. Friends are wonderful because we can play with them and talk to them. They can also make us feel better when something goes wrong. Let's think about some fun times we've had with our friends. Can anyone give us an example? (Give students time to share.) Friends are great to have during good times, but what about bad times? Can someone talk about a time when a friend made you feel better? (Again, give students time to respond.)

Our friends are actually wonderful gifts from God. In this lesson, we're going to learn about two people who shared a very deep friendship with each other. We're going to learn how David and someone named Jonathan were the best of friends.

### David Plays Music for King Saul

Last week, we learned how David killed a giant named Goliath. Even though all the other soldiers were scared, David was not because he knew God would help him. With a small stone and his sling, he was able to kill Goliath. David had said to King Saul before he went out to meet Goliath that he knew God would help him, just like the way God helped him when he was a shepherd. When a lion or bear came to attack the sheep, God helped him kill the animal so that the sheep would be safe. So David knew that it was God who always kept him safe. And when he had time, David would sing songs to praise God. Actually, David didn't just sing by himself. He knew how to play an instrument. Do you know what it was? He played a harp, which is an instrument with strings (show picture if needed), when he watched his sheep. And he became very good at playing the harp. He played some beautiful music. He was so good that someone told King Saul about him. That person thought David should play the harp for King Saul. But why?

### King Saul Has an Evil Spirit

It all started when King Saul began to get very angry and sad because an evil spirit was inside him. His servants saw how King Saul was unhappy all the time and tried to think of something to make their king feel better.

One of King Saul's servants had an idea.

"King Saul," he said, "we could find someone to play music on the harp for you. When the evil spirit comes, the music might make you feel better."

King Saul thought this sounded like a good idea.

"Find a harp player for me," he commanded.

"David plays the harp very well," another servant said.

So King Saul sent a messenger to find David and bring him to the king's house. Soon, David was playing his harp for the king. Do you think the music helped King Saul feel better? Yes, it did. When David played his harp, the evil spirit would leave King Saul, and he would feel peaceful again. Because of this, King Saul liked David very much, and David was glad to help.

### David and Jonathan Become Best Friends

Because David played the harp for King Saul a lot, he got to know many of the people in the palace, including the king's oldest son. His name was Jonathan. Jonathan was older than David, but soon, they became best friends. They probably did many of the things that we do with our friends. They walked and talked together. They probably played some sports or games together too. They even made a special promise to each other.

"We will always be good friends," they said.

After they made this promise, Jonathan gave David some gifts.

"David, here is my coat," Jonathan said. "You may have my bow, belt, and sword, too."

Can you imagine giving your friend the most valuable things you have? Would you give your friend the things that you love the most? That's what Jonathan did. Jonathan gave these gifts to show that he and David were the very best of friends.

### Saul Is Jealous of David

Even though David was happy, and Jonathan

was happy, and other people in the kingdom were happy, there was this one very unhappy person in Israel. Can anyone guess who that was? Yes, it was King Saul, Jonathan's father.

King Saul still had the evil spirit inside of him, but something else was bothering him too. He was jealous because everyone seemed to love David more. The people in Israel loved David because he had killed Goliath; his son loved David because they were best friends. Even the women praised David more than Saul by singing, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands." That means they thought David was a better soldier than Saul. Saul began to get very upset at David and thought about ways to harm him. Saul didn't want people to like David better than they liked him. When someone is jealous and angry, he will make many mistakes. And Saul made a big mistake. One day, King Saul became so angry that he threw his spear at David while David was playing the harp for him. Thankfully, the spear missed, and David quickly escaped from the room.

### Jonathan Saves David's Life

Do you think Saul felt sorry for what he had done? No, he didn't. In fact, he still wanted to kill David. He told his son Jonathan and his other helpers to kill David. But Jonathan was David's

friend. Do you remember that special promise they made to each other? Well, Jonathan kept his promise. Instead of hurting his friend, he protected and helped David.

"David," Jonathan warned, "my father wants to kill you. Be careful; go and hide. I will talk to my father about you and tell you what I find out."

Then Jonathan went home and took a walk with his father.

He explained, "You should not be angry with David. He has done nothing wrong. Don't you remember how David saved Israel when he beat Goliath? Weren't you so happy about David then? Why do you want to kill someone who has done nothing but good toward you?"

When Jonathan was finished speaking, King Saul agreed.

"Yes," he said, "as God lives, I will not kill David."

Once Jonathan heard that, he ran to bring David back to the palace. David must have been very glad to have Jonathan as his special friend.

We learned from this story that good friends are kind to each other. They help each other and love each other. This is the kind of friendship God wants to see. It makes Him happy when we are kind and helpful to our friends.



### Check For Understanding

1. **Why did King Saul need David to play the harp for him?** (Saul had an evil spirit and when David played the harp for him, Saul felt better.)
2. **Was King Saul jealous of David?** (Yes, he was jealous.)
3. **Who was Jonathan?** (He was King Saul's son.)
4. **What did Jonathan give to David as gifts?** (He gave him clothes, a bow and arrow.)
5. **How did Jonathan help David?** (He helped David escape from King Saul.)

6. **Do you have good friends? What do you do with them?** (Allow students to answer.)
7. **The Bible says that a friend loves at all times. What do you do with your friends that shows love?** (Allow students to answer. Some ideas: letting them choose the toys first, sharing things, helping them, etc.)
8. **How does showing love to our friends tell God we love Him?** (When we show love to our friends, we are following God's command to love others. When we follow God's commands, we are telling God we love Him.)



## Life Application Story

### True Friends

The bell rang. Lunchtime was both Benjamin's favorite and least favorite part of the school day. While he loved eating with his friends, he hated all the noise, and the pushing and shoving that always came with lunchtime. There was this one boy everyone called Bobby the Bully whom Ben was especially afraid of. Even though Bobby was younger, he made up for it in size. He was huge. And whenever he got the chance, he made fun of Ben because of his glasses. But Ben's mom told him, "Just do your best to ignore him. If there's trouble, remember there are always teachers around you, and God is right beside you." Ben grabbed his jacket and hurried to the cafeteria along with everyone else.

Ben's friend Julie found him in the lunch line.

"Hi Ben!"

Ben breathed a sigh of relief. He always felt better when Julie was with him.

"Hi Julie! What do you think you're going to eat?"

Julie looked around at all the food in front of them: pizza, macaroni and cheese, fries, and her favorite, corn dogs.

"Hey, it's corn dog day!" Julie squealed. "It's about time! I'm definitely getting one. Maybe two."

Ben laughed, "I've never seen anyone like corn dogs like you. I think I'll get pizza."

As they made their way through the line, paid for their food, and were about to find the rest of their friends, Ben suddenly heard a loud thud.

He quickly looked over his shoulder to ask Julie what had happened. But then he realized that Julie was not right behind him! Instead, his friend was on the floor with her juice spilled, and her two corn dogs broken into pieces. People all around them were laughing.

"She didn't see my foot," Bobby the Bully howled. "She was the easiest person to trip in the whole world!"

Ben was furious at Bobby, and he wanted to stand up for his friend, but he knew that if he said something, Bobby would make fun of him too. All

Ben wanted to do was to quietly sit down, but he knew that he couldn't leave Julie in the middle of the room like that. So, remembering what his mom told him, Ben put down his tray, helped Julie get up, and then marched right up to Bobby's face.

"You know, you might think that tripping people is funny, but if it happened to you, you wouldn't be laughing. Julie's never done anything to you, and that's not how you should treat her."

Bobby was so surprised, he didn't know what to say. Then, Bobby's surprise turned to horror when he heard the steps of a grown-up behind him.

"Ben is right, Bobby. This is not how we treat people," a soft but stern voice said. Mrs. Rydle, the school's principal, happened to see what was going on. "You need to pick up the food that is on the floor and come to my office when you are done. I will be waiting for you," she finished.

At that point, Bobby had turned red because he hadn't planned on getting caught. His face crinkled as he thought of his mom's reaction. She would not be happy to get a phone call from school again.

When Julie and Ben saw Bobby about to cry, their anger melted away. Ben was the first to bend down to the ground and help Bobby pick up the food. Soon Julie began to help too.

"I guess you feel pretty bad, huh?" Ben whispered.

"It's just that if...if," Bobby sniffled, "if my mom finds out, I'll be in big trouble. This is the third time this month."

"Well, you should have thought about that before you tripped me. That hurt a lot, you know," Julie said, rubbing the elbow that slammed to the floor when she fell.

"I...I'm sorry," Bobby said, "I won't do it again."

"Promise?" asked Julie.

"Yes," he said.

"Fine, then maybe we can all go to the office, and I'll say that it's okay because you learned your lesson."

"You would do that for me?" Bobby asked, not believing what he had just heard.

Julie shrugged, "Sure. If you agree to not go on making fun of people."

After they cleaned up, all three headed to Mrs. Rydle's office. Ben knocked on the door.

"Come in," Mrs. Rydle called. "Ben, Julie," she said with surprise, "are you two all right?"

"Yes, Mrs. Rydle. We just came with Bobby to say that we think he learned his lesson. He says he won't do it again," Ben said.

Mrs. Rydle raised her eyebrows.

"Well, Julie and Ben, this is very kind of you. Bobby, I hope you realize that most people would not do this for you, and I'm glad to hear that you've learned your lesson. I'm looking forward to seeing better behavior from you. But I'm afraid I will still have to call home to let your parents know what happened in school. But you know what? I will tell them about this conversation, and I'm sure they'll be glad to hear that the three of you were able to make peace. Now, I think all three of you still have time for lunch, so why don't you head back to the cafeteria?"



### Activity 1

#### Jonathan's Gifts

Look at the picture of David and Jonathan. Can you find the things Jonathan gave his friend David? Look for a sword, a belt a robe and a bow.



### Activity 2

#### Friends Always...

Look at the pictures. Write down what friends do for one another. Use the words in the word bank to help you.

1. Friends always share.
2. Friends always help.
3. Friends always pray for each other.
4. Friends always stick together.



### Activity 3

#### How to be a Good Friend

As a follow-up to the previous activity sheet, take time to explore what it means to be a good friend. The teacher could present the students with specific scenarios (e.g. what if you were invited to a party but your friend was not, or you got the last piece of

As the three shuffled back, Bobby quietly murmured, "Thank you."

Julie and Ben smiled back.

"That's what our parents and God would want us to do," they said together.

#### Questions to Think About

1. **How did Ben show love to Julie?** (He helped her up and stood up for her.)
2. **How did Julie show love for Bobby?** (She forgave him.)
3. **How can we show love for our friends?** (Allow students to answer.)
4. **Have you gotten mad at your friends before? What would God want you to do?** (Allow students to answer.)

candy and your friend did not get anything), and discuss what friends might do for each other. The teacher can also bring in a video of a children's show that portrays how friends treat one other. Throughout the discussion, remind the students that in order to have good friends they must be a good friend. Here are some of the ways good friends treat each other:

1. Good friends listen to each other.
2. Good friends don't put each other down or hurt each other's feelings.
3. Good friends try to understand each other's feelings and moods.
4. Good friends help each other solve problems.
5. Good friends give each other compliments.
6. Good friends can disagree without hurting each other.
7. Good friends are dependable.
8. Good friends respect each other.
9. Good friends are trustworthy.
10. Good friends care about each other.

Be sure to explain each one by providing the students with examples.

Activity 6:1

### Jonathan's Gifts

Look at the picture of David and Jonathan.  
Can you find the things Jonathan gave his friend David?  
Look for a sword, a belt, a robe, and a bow.

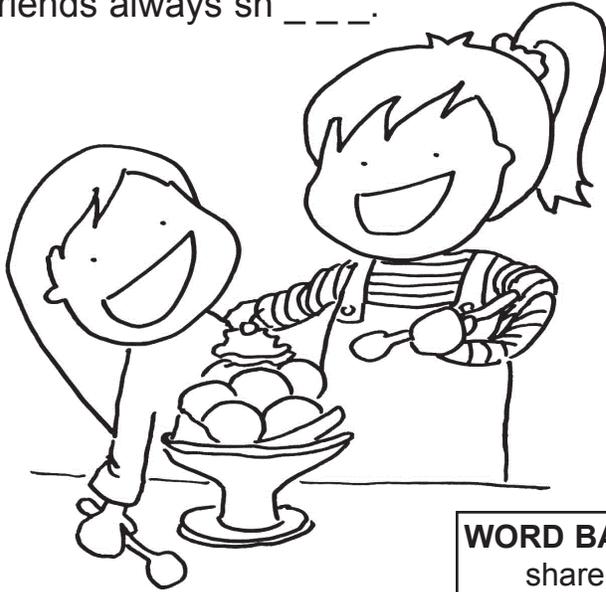


Activity 6:2

### Friends Always...

Look at the pictures. Write down what friends do for one another.  
Use the words in the word bank to help you.

Friends always sh \_\_\_\_.



Friends always h \_\_\_\_.



**WORD BANK**  
share  
help  
pray  
stick

Friends always s \_\_\_\_ k together.



Friends always p \_\_\_\_ for each other.

