

Jacob's Ladder

Program 10: The King Needs Help

Teaching Plan For Youth

Summary: King Saul's isolation and suspicions lead him to spy on the prophet Samuel. Meanwhile, Samuel laments Saul's choice to exclude him from important decisions. God leads Samuel to anoint a new king, and young David goes on to prove his faithfulness in the battle against Goliath. Questions for discussion are in *italics*.

Scripture: I Samuel 16:1-18:11.

Teaching Themes: God calls us to value and celebrate one another's gifts and work together to further the kingdom. God can use young people and insignificant tools to do a big job.

Take a Pulse (gauge the students' understanding of some key words and get them thinking about the topic):

1. **Teamwork activity** – Provide each student with one popsicle stick. Set a heavy book or other object on the table and challenge a student to pick up the object using his or her popsicle stick. Students will quickly realize that they need to work together, using more than one person's stick to accomplish this task. **The Point:** we need to appreciate each other and work together, using everyone's gifts.
2. **Sling Shot Practice** – Use large rubber bands and large size pom-poms to allow kids to practice their sling shot skills. Have kids aim at a target and see who can hit it. Alternate idea: wear a bicycle helmet and let kids aim at your head and see who can hit it. Play long enough for students to improve their aim. Say: "*You are all getting better as you practice your sling shot skills! What other kinds of skills do you practice regularly in order to improve?*"
3. If your church has anointing oil, arrange to have a bottle on hand in class to show. *What does it mean to **anoint** someone? Have you ever been anointed?*

View the 30-minute video. Discuss initial reactions and any points of confusion.

Explore the Story:

1. *How would you describe King Saul's frame of mind? What is his reaction to those who try to help him?*
2. *What is Saul's opinion of the prophet Samuel?*

3. *Who are some of the Israelite's enemies at this time? Is Saul using all his resources to fight the enemies?*
4. *Who anointed David as the next king? How was he chosen? Why is oil used in the anointing process?*
5. *What special talents does David have? In addition to his many skills and talents, what character traits do you see in him? How does his faith impact his actions?*

Live the Lesson

1. *Think of a baseball team. What types of skills are required to play baseball? Why is it important for all the team members to work together? How would it affect the team if one of the players wanted all the glory and grew suspicious of the rest of the team? What would happen if one player grew jealous of another player's skills?*
2. *Now think of the church. What types of skills and gifts are needed in the church? What would happen if church leaders became jealous of one another and each one wanted personal glory? What sinful attitude might be at the root of such behavior? How would this impact the church?*
3. *Divide the class into groups of three or four. Ask: What special gifts and talents have you been given? Work together in your group to identify each others' gifts.*
4. *Take some time to share some of the specific gifts/talents that are present in the groups. Imagine each of our groups is going to work together to do some sort of work for the Kingdom of God. Think of a job or project that your group would be able to do well, based on your unique gifts. What "giants" or difficulties might you face as you work together for the kingdom?*
5. *Think of a project that your class could do as a team. A service project or a fund raising project would work well (visiting the elderly, raking leaves for a single mother, or cleaning out a church closet, for instance). Think about the various gifts and talents you have in the class. You will need to identify a good leader, one who will help everyone use their gifts to achieve the goal.*
6. *Invite a pastor or other church leader to your class to pray for each of the students individually. Pray specifically for their current and future work in the Kingdom of God. If this is not possible, have the students sit in a circle, and take turns praying for the person on their right. In this way everyone will have a chance to pray and everyone will be prayed for.*

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Program 11: Death Waiting

Teaching Plan For Youth

Summary: The young man, David, is now a leading officer in King Saul's army. As his battle victories pile up, the king's anger and jealousy are not far behind. King Saul secretly fashions elaborate plots to ensure David's death, but to no avail. Meanwhile, King Saul's son Jonathan is caught between his father and his best friend, David. Questions for discussion are in *italics*.

Scripture: I Samuel 18:12-19:10.

Teaching Themes: Peace has more to do with our internal state than our external circumstances. Sometimes we are torn between two opposing allegiances, and we need God's wisdom to help us choose wisely.

Take a Pulse (gauge the students' understanding of some key words and get them thinking about the topic):

1. **Peace Drawings.** Give each student a large sheet of drawing paper and colored pencils. Ask them to draw a scene that represents **peace**. Allow time for students to share their pictures with the rest of the class.
2. **What Makes A Friend?** Divide the class into groups of three to five students, giving each group a sheet of paper and a pencil. Ask each group to list the ten most important qualities of a good friend. After a few minutes, compare the lists and form a master list of only those qualities that appear on more than one list.
3. Invite the class to say the Pledge of Allegiance. Ask: *What does the word **allegiance** mean? How is allegiance different from loyalty? What sorts of things or people do you feel an allegiance to?*

View the 30-minute video. Discuss initial reactions and any points of confusion.

Explore the Story:

1. *Saul's children have grown up as royalty, with wealth and privilege. They've also enjoyed ten years of freedom from military conflict. Yet, their lives are not very peaceful. What is the cause of conflict within their home?*
2. *What is King Saul's emotional state? Why is King Saul unable to enjoy his position and the relative calm in the land?*

3. *How is David showing his allegiance to the king? What is the result of his efforts?*
4. *Why do you think Saul spends so much energy in trying to hurt David, when David is on his side of the battle?*
5. *What two allegiances are pulling at Jonathan? Why might it be hard for Jonathan to do what is right?*
6. *How has Jonathan been a good son? How has he been a good friend?*

Live the Lesson

1. *Some people live in turmoil, even when their environment is peaceful. Others are at peace, no matter what their circumstances. Why?*
2. *How can you find genuine peace?*
3. *Invite the class to re-examine their drawings of peace. Now that you've thought more about peace, is there anything you'd like to change about your drawing? Which drawing gives the best representation of true peace?*
4. *Have you ever been caught between two people you love, as Jonathan was? What was that like and how did you handle it?*
5. *When you are in a conflict, how can you respond more like David and less like Saul?*
6. **Anger Buster Project:** Give each student a medium-sized balloon and have them write "Anger Buster" on the balloons with permanent markers. Using a funnel, fill balloons with play sand and then tie. The "anger busters" can be squeezed to release tension. Agree as a class to use your "anger busters" when you feel anger building and need a release.

Prepared by Vision Video, reproducible for use with *Jacob's Ladder* video series.



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