

Jacob's Ladder

Program 12: David on the Run

Teaching Plan For Youth

Summary: King Saul is so suspicious and fearful of David that he decides to kill him. David is forced to flee the castle, but Saul and his men are in pursuit. David's faith brings him refuge, while Saul goes deeper into sin. Questions for discussion are in *italics*.

Scripture: I Samuel 19-22.

Teaching Themes: We must respect all people, but God commands us to show special respect for His anointed ones. Actions will accompany genuine repentance.

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

1. **Music with a Message Activity:** Bring in a variety of styles of music CDs (classical, worship, country, pop, hard rock). Play portions of a few songs, including those with both Christian and secular messages. Ask: *What kind of music do you prefer? Can music change your mood? How? Can it change how you think?*
2. **Find the Fugitive Activity:** Choose an object to represent a "fugitive." A small figurine or toy person would work well. Have half the class wait in the hallway – they will be the "search party." Then hide the "fugitive" somewhere in the room (it could be in someone's hand or pocket!). Explain that those who are in the room are the "fugitive's faithful friends." Their job is to keep the fugitive hidden when the "search party" comes to find him. Invite the search party in and give them five minutes to find the fugitive. The "faithful friends" should do all they can to keep the fugitive hidden, but here's the catch: they need to move the "fugitive" at least one time every minute. Discuss: *What would it feel like to be a fugitive? What skills would help a fugitive survive?*

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

Explore the Story:

1. *When David flees the castle, where does he go for help?*
2. *What is Samuel's advice to David regarding his future? What is his advice regarding King Saul?*
3. *When the soldiers come to the temple to capture David, they are affected by the music and atmosphere of the temple. What do they do? How do their actions show respect for the house of God and the man of God? What is special about this place?*
4. *When Saul comes to the temple, he is also affected by this holy place. What does he do? What do you think of his "repentance?" Even after all he's been through, David wants to believe Saul could change. What will it take for David to fully trust Saul again?*

5. *At the end of this story, David is grieved to learn how many people have suffered because they helped him. Look up I Samuel 22 for a better understanding of these events. What do Saul's actions tell you about his spiritual state?*

Live the Lesson

1. *Are there fugitives in our modern world? Who? How is David's situation the same or different from that of a modern day fugitive? What would it mean to be a fugitive because of your faith?*
2. *Do you think there is a certain kind of music that is better for worshiping God? Why or why not? Does the music you listen to tend to bring you into a closer relationship with God?*
3. *David is well known for the beautiful Psalms he wrote, even in the midst of trials. Look at Psalm 57, which was written by David when he was hiding in a cave from Saul. What sorts of emotions and feelings is David expressing? Have you ever written poetry or music as a way to express your feelings? How about as a way to connect to God?*
4. Divide the class into three groups called "Music," "Art," and "Movement." Students should select their group based on interest and ability. Have the students look up Psalm 47:1-4 (or a Psalm of their choosing) and do the following:
 - a. Music Group – Set a portion of their Psalm to music.
 - b. Art Group – Create a banner to illustrate their Psalm.
 - c. Movement Group – Create motions to demonstrate their Psalm.

Teaching Tip: Bring several different translations for students to work with in interpreting their Psalms. After about 10 minutes, reconvene and allow time for the groups to share what they came up with.

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Program 13: A New King

Teaching Plan For Youth

Summary: Still hunted by Saul, David finds refuge in a cave. When he has an opportunity to kill King Saul, David remembers the advice of Samuel about respecting God's anointed. As the battle heats up, Saul finds God to be silent, and chooses to look elsewhere for advice. Questions for discussion are in *italics*.

Scripture: I Samuel 23, 24, 28.

Teaching Themes: In times of trouble, we have a choice to turn towards God or away from God. God's ultimate plans will be carried out, even if people go astray.

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

1. **Running from God:** Split into teams and make sure each team has a Bible. Instruct the teams to find as many Bible characters as they can that ran away from God. After five minutes, review the lists and have them cross out any that both teams have listed. Reward the team with the most names left.
2. **Good Advice?** Bring a "Magic 8 Ball" to class (this is a ball that gives random answers to questions). Ask students if they want to ask it a question. Pretend like this is a good way to get guidance about life issues. An alternative would be to draw slips of paper out of a hat (the slips would be labeled "yes," "no," "maybe," and "you've got to be kidding!"). After a few minutes of consulting the Magic 8 Ball or the Hat, ask: *Is this a good way to make important decisions? Why or Why not?*

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

Explore the Story:

1. *Describe David's grief at the death of Samuel. What are some of David's fears?*
2. *Do you remember Samuel's advice to David about how he should treat the "anointed of God" (King Saul)? How does David show respect to King Saul, even as Saul hunts him down?*
3. *When Jonathan speaks to David for the last time, we see his heart. Why does Jonathan think David should be the next king? How is Jonathan repenting for the sins of his father?*
4. *When Saul was first crowned king, he became proud and self-absorbed. Then, his jealousy led to his wanting to kill David. Next, rage and hatred drove him to kill the priest and burn the temple. Now, in the midst of battle, Saul tries the three traditional ways of calling on God (dreams, priests, prophets). Does God respond? Where does Saul turn next?*

5. *Do you think the “spiritist” is giving Saul a message from God? What other possibilities could there be?* Teaching Tip: Bible scholars debate the meaning of the Witch of Endor and her message to King Saul, found in I Samuel 28. Stress that consulting a medium is a clear way of rejecting God for something of no value. See Leviticus 20:6 for God’s commands concerning mediums.
6. *Think back through the many events since David was anointed as the next king. Which people have helped God’s ultimate plan come to pass? Who has hindered His plan? How has God triumphed through it all?*

Live the Lesson

1. *During times of trial or uncertainty, where do you turn for advice? What would be a modern version of the “spiritist” presented in the program? Why are some people drawn in by this type of thing as a way of getting answers? What is a better option for finding truth and guidance in life?*
2. *Imagine Saul never became jealous of David. Suppose, instead, he welcomed David as a partner in service to the Lord and the nation of Israel. How would this story be different?*
3. *David finally understands and accepts that he is to be king, not Jonathan. He will be the new leader of the nation. What advice do you have for him as he takes the throne? How do you think his kingship will compare to that of Saul’s?*
4. **Dust of the Earth Activity:** Give each student an eighth of a teaspoon of sand and challenge them to count the grains. *Look up Genesis 28:10-15, the story where Jacob dreams of the ladder to heaven. What is at the top of the ladder? What promises does God make to Jacob? How did God fulfill the promise to “bless all peoples through you and your offspring?”* Teaching Tip: Lead students to discover that Jesus’ saving grace ultimately fulfilled this promise to bless all people.
5. *The stories presented in the Jacob’s Ladder series show some of the real struggles and victories of Jacob’s descendents (the Hebrews) as they lived out a covenant with the one true God. How do you think they did? If you are a Christian, how is your walk with God similar or different from that of the Hebrews? What one truth will you remember from this study of the people of God? How will that change the way you live for God?*

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