

Story Time - Read the story to the children
Lesson 81: DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE (TWICE)
1 SAMUEL 23:14 through 24:22, 26

David stayed in hideouts in the hill country of Ziph Desert. Saul kept searching, but God never let Saul catch him. One time, David was at Horesh in Ziph Desert. He was afraid because Saul had come to the area to kill him. But Jonathan went to see David, and God helped him encourage David. "Don't be afraid," Jonathan said. "My father Saul will never get his hands on you. In fact, you're going to be the next king of Israel, and I'll be your highest official. Even my father knows it's true." They both promised the LORD that they would always be loyal friends to each other. Then Jonathan went home, but David stayed at Horesh. Some people from the town of Ziph went to Saul at Gibeah and said, "Your Majesty, David has a hideout not far from us! It's near Horesh, somewhere on Mount Hachilah south of Jeshimon. If you come, we will help you catch him." Saul told them: You've done me a big favor, and I pray that the LORD will bless you. Now please do just a little more for me. Find out exactly where David is, as well as where he goes, and who has seen him there. I've been told that he's very tricky. Find out where all his hiding places are and come back when you're sure. Then I'll go with you. If he is still in the area, or anywhere among the clans of Judah, I'll find him. The people from Ziph went back ahead of Saul, and they found out that David and his men were still south of Jeshimon in the Maon Desert. Saul and his army set out to find David. But David heard that Saul was coming, and he went to a place called The Rock, one of his hideouts in Maon Desert. Saul found out where David was and started closing in on him. Saul was going around a hill on one side, and David and his men were on the other side, trying to get away. Saul and his soldiers were just about to capture David and his men, when a messenger came to Saul and said, "Come quickly! The Philistines are attacking Israel and taking everything." Saul stopped going after David and went back to fight the Philistines. That's why the place is called "Escape Rock." David left and went to live in the hideouts at En-Gedi. When Saul got back from fighting off the Philistines, he heard where David was. Saul led three thousand of Israel's best soldiers out to look for David and his men near a place called Wild Goat Rocks at En-Gedi. There were some sheep pens along the side of the road, and one of them was built around the entrance to a cave. Saul went into the cave to go to the bathroom. David and his men were hiding in the back part of the cave. They whispered to David, "The LORD told you he was going to let

you defeat your enemies and do whatever you want with them. This must be the day the LORD was talking about." David sneaked over and cut off a small piece of Saul's robe, but Saul didn't notice a thing. Afterwards, David was sorry that he had even done that, and he told his men, "Stop talking foolishly. We're not going to attack Saul. He's my king, and I pray that the LORD will keep me from doing anything to harm His chosen king." Saul left the cave and started down the road. Soon, David also got up and left the cave. "Your Majesty!" he shouted from a distance. Saul turned around to look. David bowed down very low and said: Your Majesty, why do you listen to people who say that I'm trying to harm you? You can see for yourself that the LORD gave me the chance to catch you in the cave today. Some of my men wanted to kill you, but I wouldn't let them do it. I told them, "I will not harm the LORD's chosen king!" Your Majesty, look at what I'm holding. You can see that it's a piece of your robe. If I could cut off a piece of your robe, I could have killed you. But I let you live, and that should prove I'm not trying to harm you or to go against you. I haven't done anything to you, and yet you keep trying to ambush and kill me. I'll let the LORD decide which one of us has done right. I pray that the LORD will punish you for what you're doing to me, but I won't do anything to you. An old proverb says, "Only evil people do evil things," and so I won't harm you. Why should the king of Israel be out chasing me, anyway? I'm as worthless as a dead dog or a flea. I pray that the LORD will help me escape and show that I am in the right.

"David, my son--is that you?" Saul asked. Then he started crying and said: David, you're a better person than I am. You treated me with kindness, even though I've been cruel to you. You've told me how you were kind enough not to kill me when the LORD gave you the chance. If you really were my enemy, you wouldn't have let me leave here alive. I pray that the LORD will give you a big reward for what you did today. I realize now that you will be the next king, and a powerful king at that. Promise me with the LORD as your witness, that you won't wipe out my descendants. Let them live to keep my family name alive. So David promised, and Saul went home. David and his men went back to their hideout.

(YOU CAN TAKE A SHORT BREAK HERE IF NECESSARY)

Once again, some people from Ziph went to Gibeah to talk with Saul. "David has a hideout on Mount Hachilah near Jeshimon out in the desert," they told him. Saul took three thousand of Israel's best soldiers and went to look for David there in Ziph Desert. Saul set up camp on Mount Hachilah, which is across the road from Jeshimon. But David was hiding out in the desert. When David heard that Saul was following him, he sent some spies to find out if it was true. Then he sneaked up to Saul's camp. He noticed that Saul and his army commander Abner the son of Ner were sleeping in the middle of the camp, with soldiers sleeping all around them. David asked Ahimelech the Hittite and Joab's brother Abishai, "Which one of you will go with me into Saul's camp?" "I will!" Abishai answered. That same night, David and Abishai crept into the camp. Saul was sleeping, and his spear was stuck in the ground not far from his head. Abner and the soldiers were sound asleep all around him. Abishai whispered, "This time God has let you get your hands on your enemy! I'll pin him to the ground with one thrust of his own spear." "Don't kill him!" David whispered back. "The LORD will punish anyone who kills His chosen king. As surely as the LORD lives, the LORD will kill Saul, or Saul will die a natural death or be killed in battle. But I pray that the LORD will keep me from harming His chosen king. Let's grab his spear and his water jar and get out of here!" David took the spear and the water jar, then left the camp. None of Saul's soldiers knew what had happened or even woke up--the LORD had made all of them stay sound asleep. David and Abishai crossed the valley and went to the top of the next hill, where they were at a safe distance. "Abner!" David shouted toward Saul's army. "Can you hear me?" Abner shouted back. "Who dares disturb the king?" "Abner, what kind of a man are you?" David replied. "Aren't you supposed to be the best soldier in Israel? Then why didn't you protect your king? Anyone who went into your camp could have killed him tonight. You're a complete failure! I swear by the living LORD that you and your men deserve to die for not protecting the LORD's chosen king. Look and see if you can find the king's spear and the water jar that were near his head." Saul could tell it was David's voice, and he called out, "David, my son! Is that you?" "Yes it is, Your Majesty. Why are you after me? Have I done something wrong, or have I committed a crime? Please listen to what I have to say. If the LORD has turned you against me, maybe a sacrifice will make Him change his mind. But if some people have turned you against me, I hope the LORD will punish them! They have forced me to leave the land that belongs to the LORD and have told me to worship foreign gods. Don't let me die in a land

far away from the LORD. I'm no more important than a flea! Why should the king of Israel hunt me down as if I were a bird in the mountains?" "David, you had the chance to kill me today. But you didn't. I was very wrong about you. It was a terrible mistake for me to try to kill you. I've acted like a fool, but I'll never try to harm you again. You're like a son to me, so please come back." "Your Majesty, here's your spear! Have one of your soldiers come and get it. The LORD put you in my power today, but you are His chosen king and I wouldn't harm you. The LORD rewards people who are faithful and live right. I saved your life today, and I pray that the LORD will protect me and keep me safe." Saul answered, "David, my son, I pray that the Lord will bless you and make you successful!" Then Saul went back home and David also left.

81. DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE (TWICE)

1 SAMUEL 23:14 through 24:22, 26



"David's men said to him, "The LORD told you He was going to let you defeat your enemies and do whatever you want with them. This must be the day the LORD was talking about." David sneaked over and cut off a small piece of Saul's robe, but Saul didn't notice a thing.

1 SAMUEL 24:4

81. DAVID SPARES SAUL'S LIFE (TWICE)

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MEMORY VERSE:

"The LORD delivered you into my hands today, but I would not stretch out my hand against the LORD's anointed." **1 SAMUEL 26:23**

TRUE OR FALSE

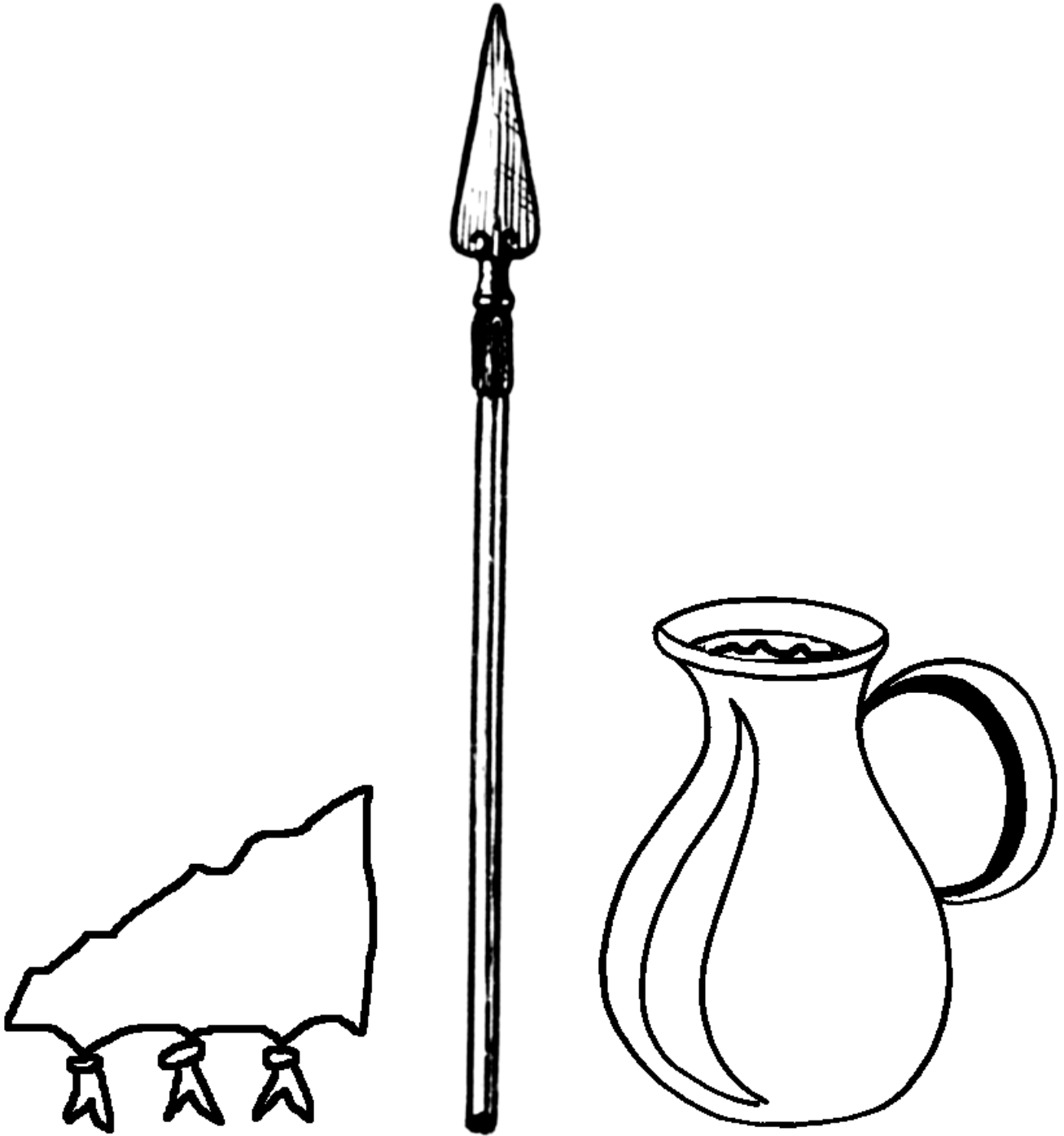
1. Saul looked for David every day, so finally the LORD let Saul catch him.
TRUE or FALSE
2. Jonathan went to encourage David while he was in the wilderness.
TRUE or FALSE
3. Some people from Ziph went to Saul and told him where David was hiding.
TRUE or FALSE
4. Saul was about to catch David when a messenger came and told him that the Philistines were invading Israel. TRUE or FALSE
5. Saul didn't care if the Philistines were invading – he went chasing after David anyway. TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. When Saul went into the cave, what did David do? Did he kill Saul?
2. After David showed Saul that he cut his robe and could have killed him, but didn't – was Saul sorry he was trying to kill David?
3. The second time Saul came after David, did he catch him?
4. When David and Abishai came to the camp where Saul was, what was Saul doing? Was he sleeping?
5. What did David do while Saul was sleeping? What two things did he take from Saul?
6. When David showed Saul that he could have killed him the second time, did Saul finally stop chasing him? Did Saul go home?

Lesson 81

Color the piece of Robe, the Jug and the Spear that David took from Saul:



Lesson 81 Craft

Cave Craft

Our story today centered around how David did the right thing twice when he had the opportunity to take matters into his own hands. David learned to wait on the Lord. This craft will help the children to remember the story.

Use a sheet of dark blue construction paper for the night sky (background). Using brown construction paper, cut out a cave and glue to the blue paper. Next, cut out a black circle using black construction paper. Glue the black circle onto the cave for an entrance. Using white or yellow crayon or chalk, write the memory verse on top of the “night’s sky” and color in stars and moon. For some of the children as an option they can draw the characters from the story in and around the cave.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to wait upon the Lord and not to take matters into their own hands. May others see kindness in their lives and glorify God. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity.