

The Friendship Of David And Jonathan

1 Samuel 20

MEMORY VERSE

1 SAMUEL 20:42

“May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants forever.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Several sheets of construction paper, yarn or ribbon and tape.

For each child you will need three strips of cloth or thick yarn approximately 1” thick and 2 yards long.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Buddy System

The goal for this activity is for the children to get to know someone new in the class.

Have the children team up with someone at the beginning of class using the “buddy system.” Have the children do everything throughout class with their “buddy.” This should be someone that they are not already close friends with. They can sit together, sing at praise and worship time together, work together on their crafts and worksheets and work together in serving and cleaning up.

At the end of the class (especially with the older children) have them all sit in a circle and share what they learned about or from their buddy. Examples; hobbies, sports, music, favorite color, pets, collections, etc.

Ask why it is important to be a faithful friend.

LESSON TIME!

In this portion of scripture, we will see David going through a very tough trial. He had already been anointed by Samuel to be the new king of Israel and he also had God's promise that one day he would lead His people. This trial tested his faith and endurance to the very limit. It seemed that every circumstance of his life was saying that he would not even live long enough to become the next king of Israel.

Have you ever felt that your faith in God's promises to you have been tested to the breaking point? Many of us can perhaps relate to the trials David was facing and would face in the future. After David's heroic battle with Goliath, some saw him as a hero, but there was one who began to see him as an enemy.

King Saul became jealous of David because the people seemed to love David more than they loved him. Saul began to see David as his enemy and began to try to destroy him. Saul tried to kill David himself, and then when that failed he hired men to murder David in his own bed.

But through everything that happened, God protected David from death. God had a plan and a purpose for David, so no harm would come to him. But David still had to have faith in God.

David runs away, taking refuge with Samuel in Ramah, and Saul even pursues him there. God's protection of David is awesome, but David still had to trust God to make him the next king in His own time, not David's. As much as Saul hated David, his own son, Jonathan became a very close friend to David. The Bible says that Jonathan loved David "as he loved his own soul" (1 Samuel 20:17). God sometimes seems to work in mysterious ways. But God blessed David and Jonathan's friendship. **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

Do you have a special, or “best friend”? Jonathan was a very faithful friend to David during a very difficult time in his life. In today’s lesson we will be learning about Jonathan and David’s friendship. We will also be learning that **God wants us to be faithful friends** with one another.

1 SAMUEL 20:1-11

Then David fled from Naioth in Ramah, and went and said to Jonathan, "What have I done? What is my iniquity, and what is my sin before your father, that he seeks my life?"

So Jonathan said to him, "By no means! You shall not die! Indeed, my father will do nothing either great or small without first telling me. And why should my father hide this thing from me? It is not so!"

Then David took an oath again, and said, "Your father certainly knows that I have found favor in your eyes, and he has said, 'Do not let Jonathan know this, lest he be grieved.' But truly, as the LORD lives and as your soul lives, there is but a step between me and death."

So Jonathan said to David, "Whatever you yourself desire, I will do it for you."

And David said to Jonathan, "Indeed tomorrow is the New Moon, and I should not fail to sit with the king to eat. But let me go, that I may hide in the field until the third day at evening.

"If your father misses me at all, then say, 'David earnestly asked permission of me that he might run over to Bethlehem, his city, for there is a yearly sacrifice there for all the family.'

"If he says thus: 'It is well,' your servant will be safe. But if he is very angry, then be sure that evil is determined by him.

"Therefore you shall deal kindly with your servant, for you have brought your servant into a covenant of the LORD with you. Nevertheless, if there is iniquity in me, kill me yourself, for why should you bring me to your father?"

But Jonathan said, "Far be it from you! For if I knew certainly that evil was determined by my father to come upon you, then would I not tell you?"

Then David said to Jonathan, "Who will tell me, or what if your father answers you roughly?"

And Jonathan said to David, "Come, and let us go out into the field." So both of them went out into the field.

In this passage, David is running away from Saul. He left Ramah and met with Jonathan, asking him what he had done to cause Saul to want to kill him. Jonathan didn't think his father would do such a horrible thing to his friend. David tells Jonathan that his father knows that they are good friends and that Saul would want to hide his hatred for him from Jonathan.

Here is true friendship, for Jonathan then offers David his help. Jonathan would do anything for his beloved friend. **God wants us to be faithful friends.** David wants to know why Saul is so angry with him and if there is any chance of reconciliation between them. It would seem that David should have remembered that since God had anointed him to one day become King, Saul could not possibly kill him. But, like all of us, it can sometimes be easy to forget what God has done when we are faced with danger.

Instead, David has a plan. He decides that he would be absent during the feast held during the new moon. If King Saul was upset over David's absence, then David would know that there would never be reconciliation between them. But if King Saul was nice about his absence, then perhaps reconciliation was possible. David made sure that Jonathan would grant this request because of their friendship as he had "brought him into a covenant of the Lord with himself." **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

David proceeded to tell Jonathan that if there was sin in him, that Jonathan himself should kill David. Jonathan reassured David that he would help him and that his father would not come between them in their friendship by saying, "Far be it from you; for if I knew certain that evil were determined by my father to come upon you, then would not I tell it to you?" Oftentimes in the crises we face in our lives, we need a true friend who we know will always be faithful to us no matter what.

In Proverbs 17:17 it says, "a friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." Also, Proverbs 18:24 says, "A man who has friends must show himself friendly; and there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother." We have a friend, who is always with us no matter what we go through, who always loves us. His name is Jesus. **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

1 SAMUEL 20:12-23

Then Jonathan said to David: "The LORD God of Israel is witness! When I have sounded out my father sometime tomorrow, or the third day, and indeed there is good toward David, and I do not send to you and tell you,

"may the LORD do so and much more to Jonathan. But if it pleases my father to do you evil, then I will report it to you and send you away, that you may go

in safety. And the LORD be with you as He has been with my father.

"And you shall not only show me the kindness of the LORD while I still live, that I may not die;

"but you shall not cut off your kindness from my house forever, no, not when the LORD has cut off every one of the enemies of David from the face of the earth."

So Jonathan made a covenant with the house of David, saying, "Let the LORD require it at the hand of David's enemies."

Now Jonathan again caused David to vow, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

Then Jonathan said to David, "Tomorrow is the New Moon; and you will be missed, because your seat will be empty.

"And when you have stayed three days, go down quickly and come to the place where you hid on the day of the deed; and remain by the stone Ezel.

"Then I will shoot three arrows to the side, as though I shot at a target;

"and there I will send a lad, saying, 'Go, find the arrows.' If I expressly say to him, 'Look, the arrows are on this side of you; get them and come'; then, as the LORD lives, there is safety for you and no harm.

"But if I say thus to the young man, 'Look, the arrows are beyond you'; go your way, for the LORD has sent you away.

"And as for the matter which you and I have spoken of, indeed the LORD be between you and me forever."

Jonathan and David then reaffirm their friendship. Jonathan faithfully promised David that he would let him know how his father reacts towards David. If it is good, he would let him know, if it is evil, he would send David away safely. Jonathan told David that he would help to deliver him from the evil if it was a real threat.

Jonathan then encourages David in his love and friendship towards him. **God wants us to be faithful friends.** What a beautiful picture of surrender to God's will on Jonathan's part. Being Saul's son he was the next in line to be the king after Saul, yet he gladly yields it to David knowing that David is God's choice for king. He loved David all the more for what God was going to do in his life instead of hating him or being jealous.

Then we see Jonathan asking David if he would remember Jonathan and his family, and show kindness to his house always. Jonathan had faith that God was going to perform everything that He said He would do. If we were to study Jonathan's life, we would see that he had a heart for God and His will.

In verse 17, we are told that "Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him; for he loved him as he loved his own soul." This is a true friendship. It's a love of complete selflessness, which puts aside one's own interests for the interests of the other. It is rare to find such care and concern for others, but we can be that kind of a friend to someone.

In verse 19, Jonathan tells David, ‘Now go and after three days come back again. Come into this field and wait alongside the stone. I will come out from my father’s house to shoot three arrows, and I will bring a boy with me (so no one suspects me). Though we may not be able to talk to each other, I will shoot the arrows. If they land right by you, it will be safe for you to come back home with me; Saul is going to be kind. If however, the arrows fly over your head and go beyond you, go your way, for the Lord has sent you away.’ **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

What a difficult thing for David, for he would either go back to Saul’s house and Jonathan’s friendship, or he would have to go into exile, alone and away from his beloved friend. Under all the pressure of the situation, David is in a place of waiting.

Friends Are a Gift from God

For this craft you will need construction paper, yarn or ribbon and tape.

Form pairs and have each child make a gift from construction paper. For younger children you can cut out the shape for them (square). Next, make a bow out of either the yarn or ribbon and use the tape to hold in place. Write their name on one side and the theme on the other side. For the older children, use scraps of construction paper and make a multi-colored gift. Have the children cut out a shape of a gift (square). Then they can glue small pieces of different colors of construction paper. Then they can glue the gift onto a 1/2 sheet of paper, tape a bow and then write the theme (**God wants us to be faithful friends.**) and their names. Then have them exchange them with someone else in class or take them home to give to a friend.

Explain to the children that friends are a gift from the Lord. In order for us to have good friends, we ourselves need to be a good friend to others.

1 SAMUEL 20:24-34

Then David hid in the field. And when the New Moon had come, the king sat down to eat the feast.

Now the king sat on his seat, as at other times, on a seat by the wall. And Jonathan arose, and Abner sat by Saul's side, but David's place was empty.

Nevertheless Saul did not say anything that day, for he thought, "Something has happened to him; he is unclean, surely he is unclean."

And it happened the next day, the second day of the month, that David's place was empty. And Saul said to Jonathan his son, "Why has the son of Jesse not come to eat, either yesterday or today?"

So Jonathan answered Saul, "David earnestly asked permission of me to go to Bethlehem.

"And he said, 'Please let me go, for our family has a sacrifice in the city, and my brother has commanded me to be there. And now, if I have found favor in your eyes, please let me get away and see my brothers.' Therefore he has not come to the king's table."

Then Saul's anger was aroused against Jonathan, and he said to him, "You son of a perverse, rebellious woman! Do I not know that you have chosen the son of Jesse to your own shame and to the shame of your mother's nakedness?"

"For as long as the son of Jesse lives on the earth, you shall not be established, nor your kingdom. Now

therefore, send and bring him to me, for he shall surely die."

And Jonathan answered Saul his father, and said to him, "Why should he be killed? What has he done?"

Then Saul cast a spear at him to kill him, by which Jonathan knew that it was determined by his father to kill David.

So Jonathan arose from the table in fierce anger, and ate no food the second day of the month, for he was grieved for David, because his father had treated him shamefully.

David hides himself in the field and waits. How agonizing the three days must have been for him, not knowing what the outcome would be. On the day of the feast Saul sat at the table, in the place of honor. On the first day Saul said nothing about David's absence. But on the second day Saul asked Jonathan where David was. Jonathan answered as he and David had agreed upon. Saul becomes very angry with this and with Jonathan. He calls Jonathan a "son of a perverse woman" or son of a perverse and rebellious woman, meaning Jonathan was a perverse and rebellious man.

Saul knew Jonathan loved David and also knew that as long as David lived, Jonathan would never become king. Saul wants David brought to him to be killed. Jonathan replies, "My father, why shall he die? What has he done?" Saul became so angry that he hurls his javelin at Jonathan, adding to all his other sins, his attempt to take the life of his own son. Jonathan saw that his father had firmly resolved to put David to death, and rose up from the table angry himself, and didn't eat that day. His heart deeply grieved over David. **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

1 SAMUEL 20:35-42

And so it was, in the morning, that Jonathan went out into the field at the time appointed with David, and a little lad was with him.

Then he said to his lad, "Now run, find the arrows which I shoot." As the lad ran, he shot an arrow beyond him.

When the lad had come to the place where the arrow was which Jonathan had shot, Jonathan cried out after the lad and said, "Is not the arrow beyond you?"

And Jonathan cried out after the lad, "Make haste, hurry, do not delay!" So Jonathan's lad gathered up the arrows and came back to his master.

But the lad did not know anything. Only Jonathan and David knew of the matter.

Then Jonathan gave his weapons to his lad, and said to him, "Go, carry them to the city."

As soon as the lad had gone, David arose from a place toward the south, fell on his face to the ground, and bowed down three times. And they kissed one another; and they wept together, but David more so.

Then Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, since we have both sworn in the name of the LORD, saying, 'May the LORD be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.' " So he arose and departed, and Jonathan went into the city.

Now we see Jonathan facing perhaps the most difficult task of his life. It was with a very sad heart that Jonathan went out with the arrows and a boy to the waiting David. Jonathan knew that his father was determined to kill David. Jonathan may have wondered if this would be the last time he would ever see David.

As David anxiously watched Jonathan come and shoot the arrows, he hears the message that God is sending him away. Alan Redpath said, "If David dared to linger now, after this word from heaven, he would lose his life, the crown, and everything that God had for him. This man's life was being emptied from vessel to vessel, like wine, in order to preserve its freshness and keep it from going musty. Every prop upon which he had leaned was taken away from him; now he must stand alone."

Though David was leaving behind all earthly comforts, he had the most important thing anyone could ever have, God. God would become his all in all. David and Jonathan had to say goodbye, never knowing if they would ever see each other again. And Jonathan said to David, "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the Lord, saying, the Lord be between me and thee, and between my seed and thy seed forever." And he arose and departed; and Jonathan went into the city.

It takes a great love and trust in the Lord to walk away from all you know and love and from your best friend. But God is always faithful to us in everything. In David's dark hour, God was with him, "never leaving him or forsaking him." (Hebrews 13:5b). David goes through a painful discipline, but we must remember that he is being prepared for the work God had for him, to be king over His people. **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

We all go through difficult times, sometimes it seems we are all alone, and that even God may have forgotten about us. But we must remember that we are loved very much by God and He did give us the promise that He would never leave us or forsake us.

Sometimes the “arrows” that come into our lives may leave a scar on our hearts, but we will be able to look back and see His hand upon our lives, guiding and directing us in the preparation for the work He calls us to do for Him. Remember how much God loves you.

Braided Belts

For this craft you will need three strips of cloth or thick yarn approximately 1” thick and 2 yards long. You will need three strips for each child.

This craft will teach the children the value of working together with a friend. Form pairs. Give children each three strips of fabric. Have one child hold the ends of three of the strips. Show the other child how to braid the strips and then tie each end. Then have partners switch roles. When both partners have completed their braids, show the children how to tie the belts around their waists.

Read Proverbs 17:17 as a class. Explain that friends are people who become part of our lives, just like these separate pieces of cloth became part of our belts. God can “knit” our hearts together with other Christians. Tell your partner one thing you’ll do to be a loving friend this week. **God wants us to be faithful friends.**

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be a faithful friend. Have the children ask the Lord to help them to choose their friends wisely and then be a good friend to those whom the Lord brings into their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.