

Saul

**A four part programme
for 3-11 year olds exploring
the life of King Saul**

Mustard  Seeds

.....
faithful • creative • effective

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Since 1993 TnT Ministries has been resourcing and equipping people to teach the Bible to children and teenagers more faithfully, more creatively and more effectively.

Our comprehensive range of printed material covers the entire 18 month to 18 year age range. It is used right around the world in over 27 countries and has been translated in part or in whole into twelve different languages.

We have conducted live children's ministry training in churches and theological colleges in South Africa, Singapore, Dubai, Zimbabwe, Uganda, Kenya, Rwanda, Germany, Norway, Hong Kong, Australia and throughout the United Kingdom.

Mustard Seeds is our new range of electronic material and will ultimately be a comprehensive four year syllabus for 3 to 11 year olds.

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We firmly believe that the Bible is God's word to mankind and that it contains everything we need to know in order to be reconciled with God through faith in Jesus Christ and live in a way that is pleasing to him. Therefore, we believe it is vital to teach the Bible accurately to children, being careful to teach each passage's true meaning in an age-appropriate manner, rather than selecting a 'children's message' from a Biblical passage.

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Saul

Week 1	A Human King	<i>pg. 6</i>
	<i>1 Samuel 8:1-22</i>	
	Aim : To teach that any desire to be like the world is a rejection of God and his rule.	
Week 2	A Reluctant King	<i>pg. 20</i>
	<i>1 Samuel 9:1-10:27</i>	
	Aim : To teach that the right response to God's word is to listen and obey, trusting that God will supply all we need.	
Week 3	A Disobedient King	<i>pg. 33</i>
	<i>1 Samuel 13:1-14:45</i>	
	Aim : To teach that those who trust God will obey his word wholeheartedly and seek his will as of first importance.	
Week 4	A Rejected King	<i>pg. 48</i>
	<i>1 Samuel 15:1-35</i>	
	Aim : To teach that ongoing and deliberate disobedience will be judged by God.	

Series Aims

- To understand that those who love God will listen to, trust and obey his word wholeheartedly.
- To understand that we reject God when we desire to be like the world instead of seeking his will.
- To understand that God will judge repeated and deliberate disobedience.

Series Context

The establishment of kingship in Israel marked another turning point in the history of God's people. While the surrounding nations were ruled by kings, God had deliberately given his people judges to lead them in the Promised Land. The reason for this was simple: God was their true king. In asking for a human king Israel rejected God, ignoring his warning about what would happen, because they wanted to be the same as the nations around them.

The story of Saul, Israel's first king, is a sad one. His repeated disobedience and self-reliance led God to reject him as king, to withdraw his Spirit and to choose another instead. Many kings, both good and bad, followed Saul, but none of them were able to lead God's people perfectly. However, long after the

kingdom had been divided and the kings of Israel had disappeared came a new kind of king. As God and man, Jesus obeyed God's will completely and never disobeyed his word. He is God's promised chosen king – the one who all Israel's other kings pointed to – and he will rule God's people forever.

Series Overview

This series examines Saul's brief kingship and his many failures to rule as God's king. Each lesson explores what it looks like to reject God as our ultimate king through two groups of people:

1. **Israel** – did not trust in God's provision and desired to be like the world instead (week 1). They preferred a sinful, weak and greedy human king to their faithful and powerful God!
2. **Saul** – repeatedly ignored God's word spoken through his prophet, Samuel (weeks 2, 3 and 4); he doubted God's power to change and equip him, trusting instead in his own qualifications (weeks 2 and 3); and when confronted with his sin he made excuses and tried to hide (weeks 3 and 4).

Israel's and Saul's mistakes are a warning and a lesson to those who love God to live differently.

Instead of rejecting God's rule as they did we must submit to his kingship. We do this by obeying his word wholeheartedly and completely, trusting his provision and putting his will before our own sinful desires. Ultimately this means submitting to God's perfect chosen king, Jesus, who will never fail as Saul did and whose reign will endure forever.

Memory Verse

"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in obedience to him." **Psalm 128:1** [NIV]

Using This Resource

This programme is designed to be adaptable. It can be used for a mixed 3-11s group or more age-specific groups.

Text in blue is generally applicable to younger children (3-7 years); green text is aimed at older children (7-11 years); and black text is applicable to all-age groups, at the leader's discretion.

Leaders are encouraged to engage with the study material in a devotional manner, seeking to apply God's word to their own lives before attempting to teach others.

We trust that you will be blessed as you do that. We also hope that once you have done that, your application of God's word to the children you teach will be more deliberate and relevant.

Note: All page numbers in this document are hyperlinked – simply click on the number to jump to that page.

Craft Symbols

We make use of the following symbols for the craft activities:

 Apply glue here

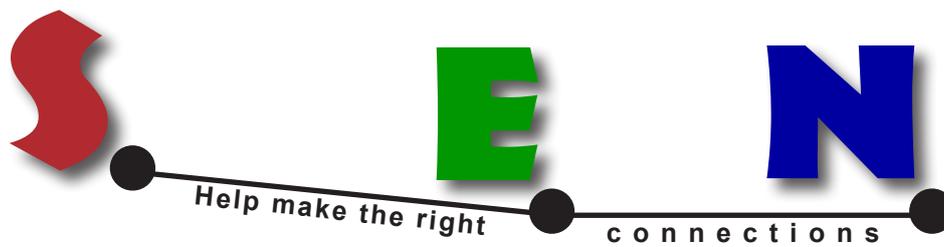
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 Cut out this shaded area

 –  – Fold outwards along this dashed line

 –  – Fold inwards along this dashed line

 Staple here



A child with special educational needs (SEN) may provide some challenges to your group. It is therefore essential that you are well prepared for your lessons and that you have carefully thought about how to include all the children. You may need to make some changes to your existing programme to make it accessible for everyone.

A key principle to consider is that, as with all children in your church, each child is an individual and will have different needs, strengths and weaknesses. It is important that you get to know the children you teach as well as possible and that you make an effort to build a relationship with them.

In terms of the lesson itself, you may need to consider the following:

- A child with SEN may need to have an additional adult to support them.
- Consider the environment in which you teach and try to eliminate potential distractions. Where you are seated and where the children are seated, the temperature of the room and noise levels all affect the sense of calm and orderliness of the class.
- Think about the class size and ratio of adults to children.
- It may be appropriate, at times, for a troubled or disruptive child to be accompanied by an adult and to be moved away from the group to a quiet area. Here they can engage in something related to the lesson which is calming and quiet.
- Use clear and child appropriate language.
- When giving instructions; tell them to the whole group, demonstrate, then check that the child with SEN understands what needs to happen.
- Balance the amount of open ended and closed questions you ask.
- Be careful of rhetorical questions; the child with SEN will want to answer them.
- If a child wants to ask too many questions, which may distract from the lesson, tell them that for now we are going to listen and that later you will come back to their questions. **Make sure that you do spend some individual time with the child going through their questions.** You may find that by the time you go back to them, their questions have either been answered or forgotten or they are not that important anymore.

- Break up your lesson into different sections; short, sharp sections work best as this keeps children engaged and therefore able to manage their behaviour.
- Children with SEN like structure and routines; you may like to start the session with the same song or greeting time or keep the structure the same each week. For example; start with a song, a recap from last week, a short introduction to the new lesson, a song, the Bible story, a craft, the application and then a game for consolidation and further application.
- Use repetition (chants or songs with simple tunes to teach main Bible truths).
- Use lots of different kinds of aids to teach your lesson (movement, pictures, multimedia, props, music, textures, drama, etc.). Consider different learning styles.
- Use simple pictures (too much detail can be distracting).
- Think about how much reading and writing you are expecting the children to do; too much may cause the child with SEN to become anxious and distressed about failing.
- On worksheets, consider making them accessible by asking children to draw some of the answers, rather than write them. If there is a lot of writing or reading required, pair up the SEN child with an adult or with a more able peer. You can also write the answers on a board for them to copy down.
- Children with SEN may find it more difficult to think about application as this requires them to put themselves into a situation which is, at times, hard to do.
- For a child who is non-verbal, find out what their communication is from parents and try to use these as much as possible in your lessons and interaction (Makaton or BSL signing, eye gazes, communication switch boxes, symbols, photos, pictures, objects of reference, etc).

–Toni Edmonds-Smith
Special Needs Teacher

A Human King

1 Samuel 8:1-22

Big Idea : Israel demanded a human king so they could be like the other nations because they had rejected God as their king.

Aim : To teach that any desire to be like the world is a rejection of God and his rule.

Series Context

The Series Context on page 3 provides important information to help you understand this series in its historical context.



Leader's Study Notes

Read Deuteronomy 17:14-20 to understand the background to this passage. Then read 1 Samuel 8:1-22 noting the two reasons the people gave for wanting a king.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passage in more detail.

After Joshua's death God established judges to rule over his people in the Promised Land. These judges were called by God to rescue and govern Israel and were different to the kings who ruled the other nations. There was no division between civil and religious life; the judges led God's people under God's ultimate rule. Samuel was the last of these judges to lead Israel before Israel demanded a human king.

Deuteronomy 17:14-20

17:14-20 Even before the Israelites had entered the land of Canaan God anticipated their desire and request for a human king. This passage does not indicate God's approval so much as his awareness of the human heart. God set out clearly these guidelines as to how a king should live and what they should be like: an Israelite, one of God's own people, ruling with God's word in mind.

He would need to avoid excessive wealth, wives and possessions as these could easily lead him astray and he should never take the people back to Egypt where they were slaves. God promised that the king who lived and ruled according to God's law would have sons to continue ruling after him.

1 Samuel 8:1-22

8:1-3 Like Eli's sons before him, Samuel's sons were wicked and did not take after their father. Unlike kings, the role of judge was not hereditary yet Samuel seems to have appointed them to help him rule.

8:4-5 The elders were rightly concerned about the corruption of Samuel's sons, but they used this as an excuse for their own demands. They asked Samuel for a king because they had seen the way in which other nations were ruled and wanted to be like them. The Israelites wanted the political and military security of a king, fearing what would happen after Samuel died.

8:6-18 Israel's request was not simply a rejection of Samuel as judge, but rather of God as their king. They should have trusted God's plan for ruling his people, but they desired instead to be like everyone else. This was not a new sin – Israel had been turning away from God and following the nations around them ever since they had been rescued from Egypt.

God warned the people through Samuel about what a human king would be like. He would rule harshly and ruthlessly, taking from the people and serving his own interests. God's willingness to grant them a king does not show that he approved of their demand. He was giving them what they wanted, giving them over to their sin.

8:19-22 Despite Samuel's warning, the people were determined to have a king. Their motivation is clear – they wanted their king to lead them in battle just like the surrounding nations. They would no longer be a nation distinct from the other nations, with God as their king leading them in battle.

Monarchy was a concession to human weakness, but by God's grace and mercy it was also part of his plan for salvation in the person of Jesus. As both God and man Jesus is the only true and perfectly obedient king of God's people.

Reflect

- What reasons did the elders give for wanting a king? Do you think their concerns were reasonable? Why/why not? How does this reveal their lack of trust in and desire for God's rule?
- Are there ways in which your life is distinct from the world? In what ways are your desires the same as the world? How should your trust in God and his rule make your life different from those around you?
- Give thanks that God has appointed the perfect king to rule over his people. Ask him to help you live for him, submitting to his rule and trusting in his provision.

Series Intro Idea

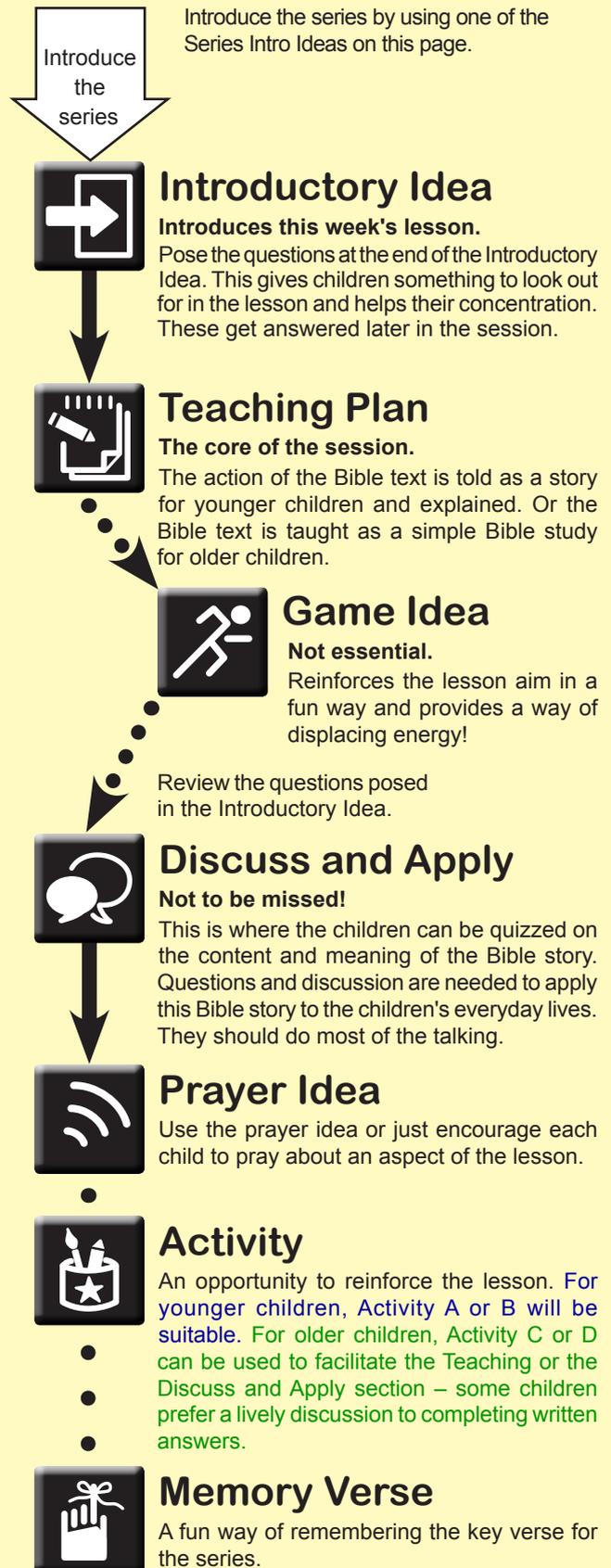
Option 1: Timeline. Enlarge the pictures on page 11 and place them randomly on a board or peg them to a washing line/string. Can the children help you to arrange them in the correct order? [Creation, fall, flood, Abraham, exodus and judges.]

Remind the children that Samuel was the last of these judges, but he was also the first of the prophets. This next series of true stories from the Bible took place when Samuel was an old man.

Option 2: Good Job, Bad Job. Before the lesson gather some pictures of different people with jobs that the children will recognise e.g. doctor, dentist, teacher, baker.

Place the pictures on a board or wall and get the children to identify what the different jobs are. How could they tell whether someone was good or bad at their job? What would a good doctor do? What would a bad baker be like? This series is about a job that God wanted someone to do and whether they were good or bad at it.

Session Outline





Introductory Idea

Option 1: Look Alike. Before the lesson try to find something that you could wear which has a popular brand logo on it e.g. shoes, shirt, bag. Ask the children if they are wearing anything with this brand on it and get them to show you. Which other brands of shoes, jeans, tops do they wear? Why do they choose those brands? Explain why you chose your brand of shoes/shirt/bag. Many children want to wear the well known brands to be like other 'cool' people.

In today's true story from the Bible the people of Israel wanted to be like everyone else. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Option 2: Good Swap, Bad Swap. Tell the children that you'd really like to be like them so you've swapped some of the things that you own for items that the children probably have. You could show them a toy car and explain that you have swapped your real car for this because there are children in this group who have toy cars. You've swapped a real friend for an invisible friend. You've swapped money that you've earned for Monopoly money. You've swapped your real pots and pans for plastic ones.

Explain that even though they can't do what the things you swapped them for can do you still think it's worth it to be the same as all the children. Do they agree that it was a good swap Why/why not? In today's true story from the Bible the people of Israel wanted to be like everyone else so they made a swap, but it wasn't a very good idea! [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Bridge Questions

The children must listen carefully to today's true story from the Bible to discover the answers to the following questions:

- Who did the Israelites want to be like? [*The nations around them* (8:5, 20)]
- In what way? [*Having a human king* (8:5, 19-20)]
- Why was this a bad idea? [*It was a rejection of God as king* (8:7)]



Teaching Plan

You may need to provide some background for this series if you've not yet covered 1 Samuel 1-7. Samuel was chosen by God to be the leader of his people because Eli's sons were wicked and not fit to lead God's people. Samuel was a good leader for God's people because he heard, obeyed and spoke God's word. He was the last of the judges and the first of the prophets to lead Israel. At this point in the history of Israel, Samuel was an old man and sadly his sons were wicked just like Eli's sons. Nevertheless he appointed them to

succeed him as leaders of God's people. Remind the children that God was Israel's king and they were supposed to live under his rule in the land that he had given them. This made them different from all the other nations around them.

The story is very simple and can be divided into four main sections:

1. **The People's Demand** (8:1-5)
2. **God's Response** (8:6-9)
3. **Samuel's Warning** (8:10-18)
4. **The People's Answer** (8:19-22)

You could use models or simple pictures for each scene. Pictures to help the children visualise the different aspects of Samuel's warning are provided on pages 12 and 13. Work at engaging the children by asking relevant questions at key points in the story. The people could see that Samuel's sons would not be good leaders and so they asked Samuel to give them a king. What should they have done instead? Do the children think this was a good idea? Why/why not?

God warned the people what would happen if they chose a king instead of him. What do the children think a king would do? Would he make an army? Would he take some of the people's money to pay for the army? Would he take some of the men to serve in the army? Do the children still think that having a human king was a good idea? Why/why not?

Finish by explaining that the people wouldn't listen to God's warning – they didn't trust him and they wanted to be like everyone around them.

For older children – divide the study into four sections and then tell the story as above, asking some of the following questions for each section. You can build the tension in the story so that the decision by Israel to go against God's warnings is seen to be as silly as it really is.

Read 8:1-5

- What was wrong with Samuel's sons? (8:3)
- What reasons did Israel give for wanting a human king? (8:5)
- Does this seem like a reasonable concern?

Read 8:6-9

- How did Samuel feel about the people's request? (8:6)
- According to God what was the real reason for their request? (8:7)
- Was this the first time this had happened? (8:8)

Read 8:10-18

- What were some of the bad things God said would happen if Israel had a human king? (8:10-18)

Read 8:19-22

- Why did Israel really want a human king? Who were they trying to be like? (8:19-20)
- How did God answer the people? (8:22)



Game Idea

Option 1: For younger children – Copy King.

Choose one child to go out of the room while you choose another to be the king. The king and the rest of the children stand in a circle and copy the actions of the king without making it obvious who the king is.

Bring the child who is outside back into the room and have them stand in the middle of the circle. They can watch the actions the other children are making and have three chances to guess who the king is. They could indicate who they have chosen by placing a crown on that child's head.

Play a few rounds of this game, giving different children a turn to be the king and the one to guess. Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible the Israelites wanted to copy the other nations. They wanted to have a king just like the people around them.

Option 2: Who's In Charge? Choose two children to stand at the front of the room and place a crown on one child's head. Explain that they are the king and the other children must copy whatever actions they make. The second child can perform different actions to try to confuse the other children.

After a few minutes take the crown off the king's head and place it on the other child's head instead. Did the children continue to copy the king or did they start to copy the child with the crown? Talk about why they did this and why it was so confusing. Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible the Israelites wanted to copy the other nations. They wanted to have a king just like the people around them instead of having God as their king.

Option 3: For older children – Look Around. The children sit in a circle or around a table. Using a deck of shuffled cards, deal out one card to each child facedown. When you say 'go' the children turn over their cards. Look at all their cards and then declare the child with the lowest ranking heart card to be the winner, awarding them one point. It's unlikely that no heart card will be dealt, but if that is the case simply repeat the first round until someone does get a heart card. Do not tell the children why that child has won – they need to figure this out for themselves!

Play a few more rounds of the game to give the children time to figure out what the winning card should be. For every subsequent round simply deal the same number of cards as there are children in the group faceup. When you say 'go' they must each choose a card. The child with the lowest ranking heart card is once again declared the winner.

After a while stop the game and ask the children if they know which card was the winning card. Reveal the secret and then talk about why the children chose a particular card. The cards which other children had chosen in previous rounds affected which one they chose in the next round. In today's true story from the Bible Israel wanted to be like the other nations around them by having a human king.



Discuss and Apply

Israel's demand for a king may at first seem reasonable given that Samuel was old and his sons were corrupt. They were concerned for their political and military security if Samuel were to die. The way they dealt with the problem, however, revealed their hearts: they rejected God's means of governing his people and instead turned to follow the nations around them. Israel should have cried out to God in their time of need rather than seeking to imitate the surrounding nations. They were supposed to be different with God as their king, living under his rule. Appointing a human king would not bring them the salvation they needed.

There are two key issues with the way that Israel tried to solve their leadership crisis: they did not trust God and they did not desire to live distinctly as his people. Help the children to understand that God had specifically told his people how they were to live in the land under his generous, loving rule. This was the best way to live and would have been a sign to other nations that God was wise and loving (cf. Deuteronomy 4:5-6). They needed to trust that God's way was better than their own or even than the ways of others around them.

Remind the children that living under God's rule involves living in a way which is different to the rest of the world. He has given us his word to help us know how to live in God's world God's way. When we choose not to live that way and instead live the same way as those who do not know and love Jesus we are rejecting God as our king. This is always a very foolish thing to do.

Spend some time talking about when the children find it difficult to live differently and when they are tempted to think that living like everyone else is better. Try to think of some practical examples e.g. marriage, revenge, materialism, greed, using and abusing people. Some of these topics are not immediately relevant to children, but they are being discussed increasingly in schools and it's important that children understand the truly Christian position on these issues. How could we help each other to remember that God's way is better when other people laugh at us or mock us for doing so?

You could finish by talking about the fact that even though God was right to warn the people that the kings of Israel would get things wrong, many years later God raised up another king who lived and ruled his people perfectly. Jesus is the perfect king that we should follow.

For older children – discuss as above and then spend some time discussing why God allowed the people to have a human king when it was not what was best for them. Sometimes he lets us face the consequences of our rebellion rather than preventing it in the first place. You could use some of the following questions to help the children think about this in more detail:

- What did Samuel say would happen if the people chose to have a human king? Did this change the people's desire for a king?
- Why do you think God allowed the people to choose a king if it was such a bad idea? Are there other times in life when God lets people have what they want even when it's not a good idea? What might he be trying to teach them using these consequences?
- Who did Israel want to be like? What were the other nations like? What are some of the ways in which God had called Israel to be different from those around them?
- Why should having God as their king and living in obedience to his laws have made the other nations want to be like them instead of the other way around? (cf. Deuteronomy 4:5-6)
- How are those who trust in Jesus called by God to be different from the rest of the world? What are some of the things that mark Christians out as different from those who do not trust Jesus? Explore examples in various aspects of daily life including money, marriage, poverty, revenge, response to persecution, etc. What do those who do not trust in Jesus believe about these issues?
- When do the children find it difficult to live distinctly as Christians? Why is it sometimes hard to believe (and express) a different viewpoint to those who don't follow Jesus?



Prayer Idea

Print page 14 onto paper/card (one copy for every eight children) and cut out the crowns.

Give one to each child and encourage them to write down/draw a picture of one way in which they want to be different from other people because they live with God as king. Let them share what they have written or drawn and then ask them to pray about it. They can either pray for themselves or for the person to their left if they're sitting in a circle.

With younger children you could think of a few age-appropriate examples and draw simple pictures to represent each. Explain what each of them mean and place them on the floor. The children can each choose one and pray for that to be true of them.



Activity

For 3-7s – choose either Activity A (pages 15 and 16) or Activity B (page 17).

Activity A – Print page 15 onto paper/card (one copy for each child) and print page 16 onto paper (one copy for every five children).

Before the lesson cut page 15 as marked. The top part is the slip and the bottom part will be made into a sleeve. Cut away all the hatched areas on the slip then fold and glue the sleeve as marked. You should be able to see the crown through the window in the sleeve. The left side of the sleeve should be either glued shut or stapled about 1cm from the edge.

Cut along the bold lines on page 16 to produce one Samuel and one crowd for each child.

The children colour in the pictures on the sleeve, Samuel and the crowd. They can then glue Samuel onto the right side of the sleeve window and the crowd to the left. Help them to insert the slip into the sleeve from the right. The human king will be hidden from view behind Samuel. Pulling the arrow moves the human king into view and pulls the cross over the crown to show the people's rejection of God as their king.



Remind the children that the Israelites wanted a human king so that they could be like all the other people around them. God said that this was because they had rejected him as their king.

Activity B – Print page 17 onto paper (one copy for each child).

The children draw lines to connect the son and daughter to the various things that represent what the king would do with them – he would make the daughters serve as perfumers, cooks and bakers; the sons would serve as soldiers, work his fields and make weapons for war. They can also draw lines to connect the human king to what he would take from the people – one tenth of all their grain and grapes and he would use their cattle and donkeys for himself.

Remind the children that even though Samuel warned them about all these things they still wanted a human king. They did this because they had rejected God as their king.

For 7-11s – print either Activity Sheet C (page 18) or Activity Sheet D (page 19) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



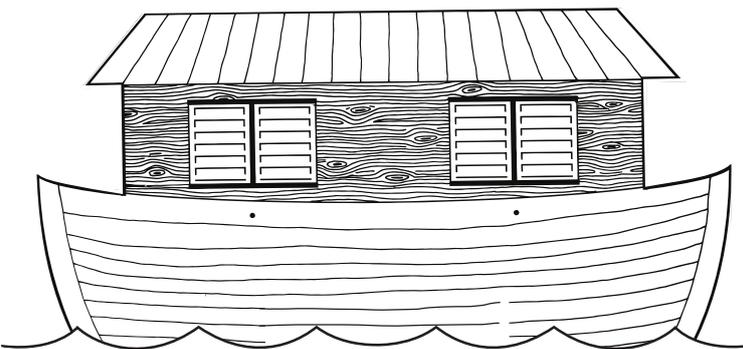
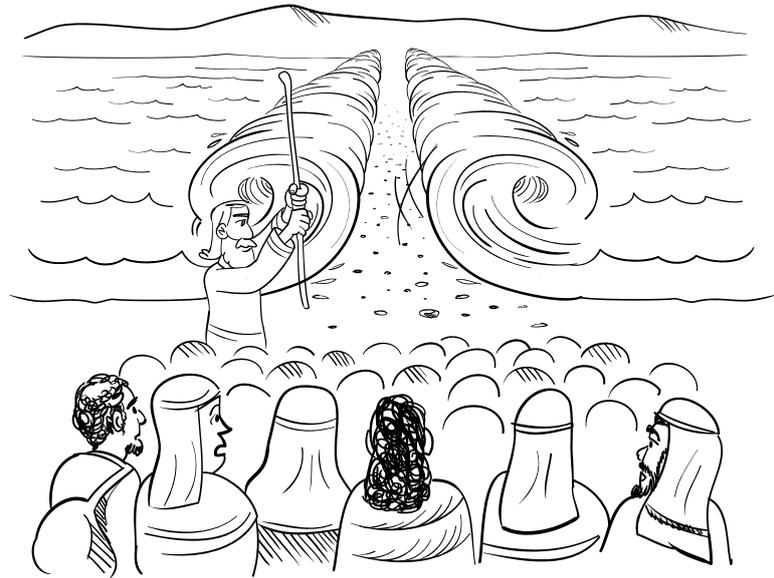
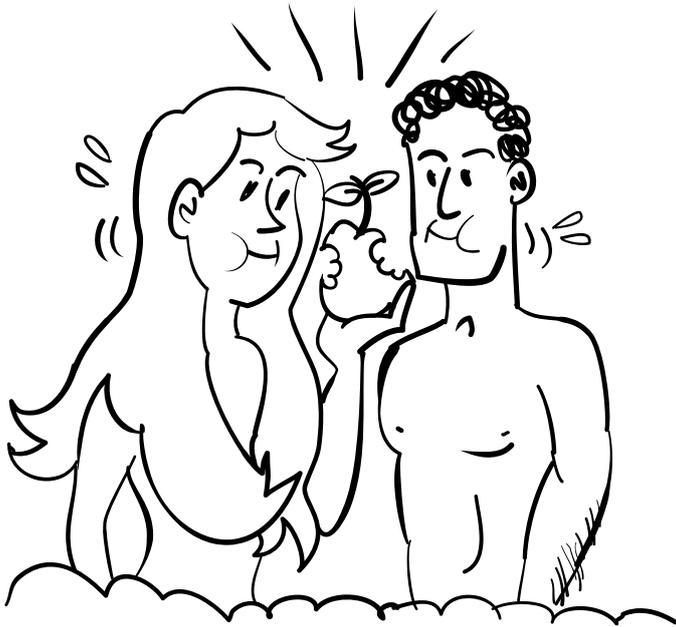
Memory Verse

"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in obedience to him."

Psalm 128:1 [NIV]

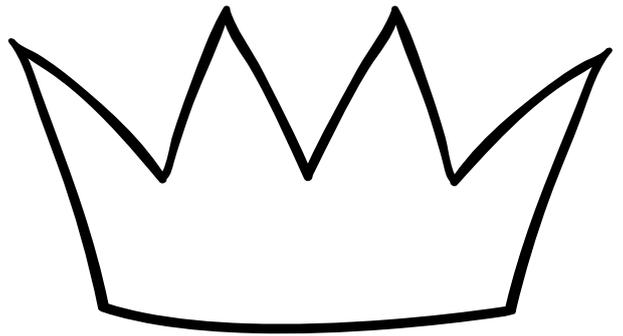


Saul – Week 1
Series Intro – Option 1

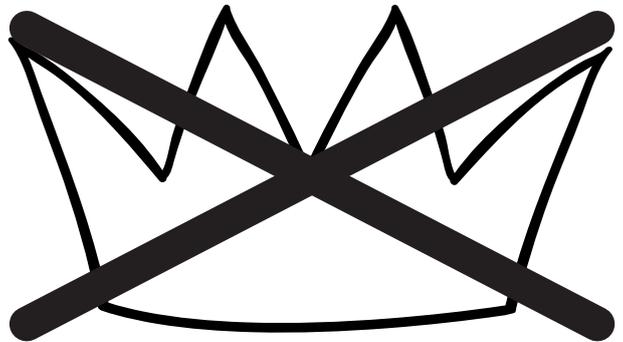




Samuel



God



God rejected



Israelites



Son



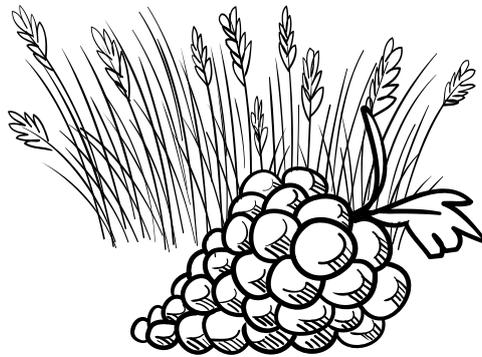
Human king



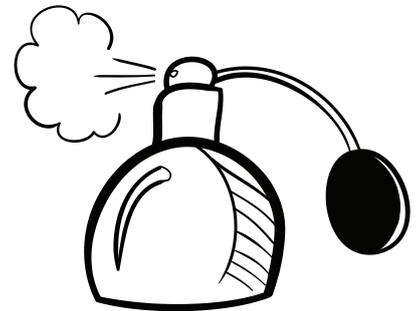
Daughter



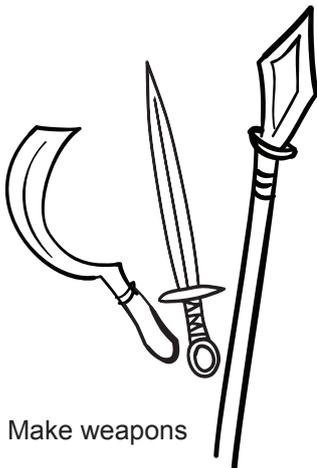
Soldier



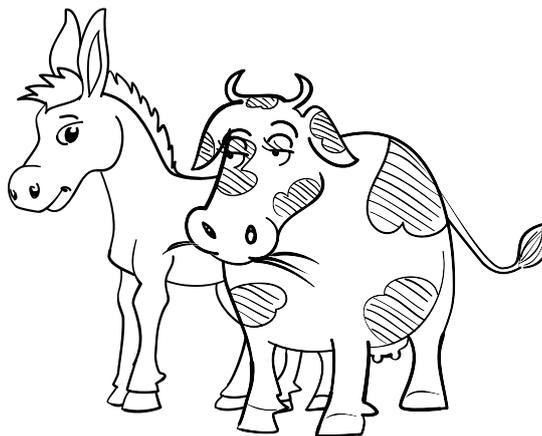
Tenth of grain and vineyards



Perfumer



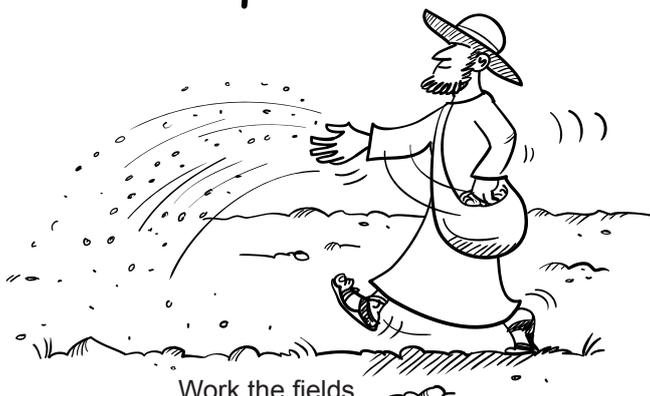
Make weapons



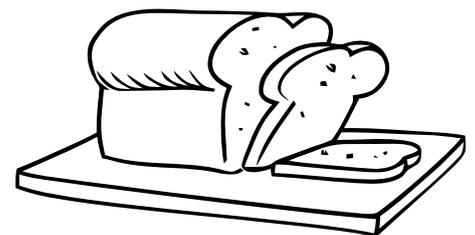
Donkeys and cattle



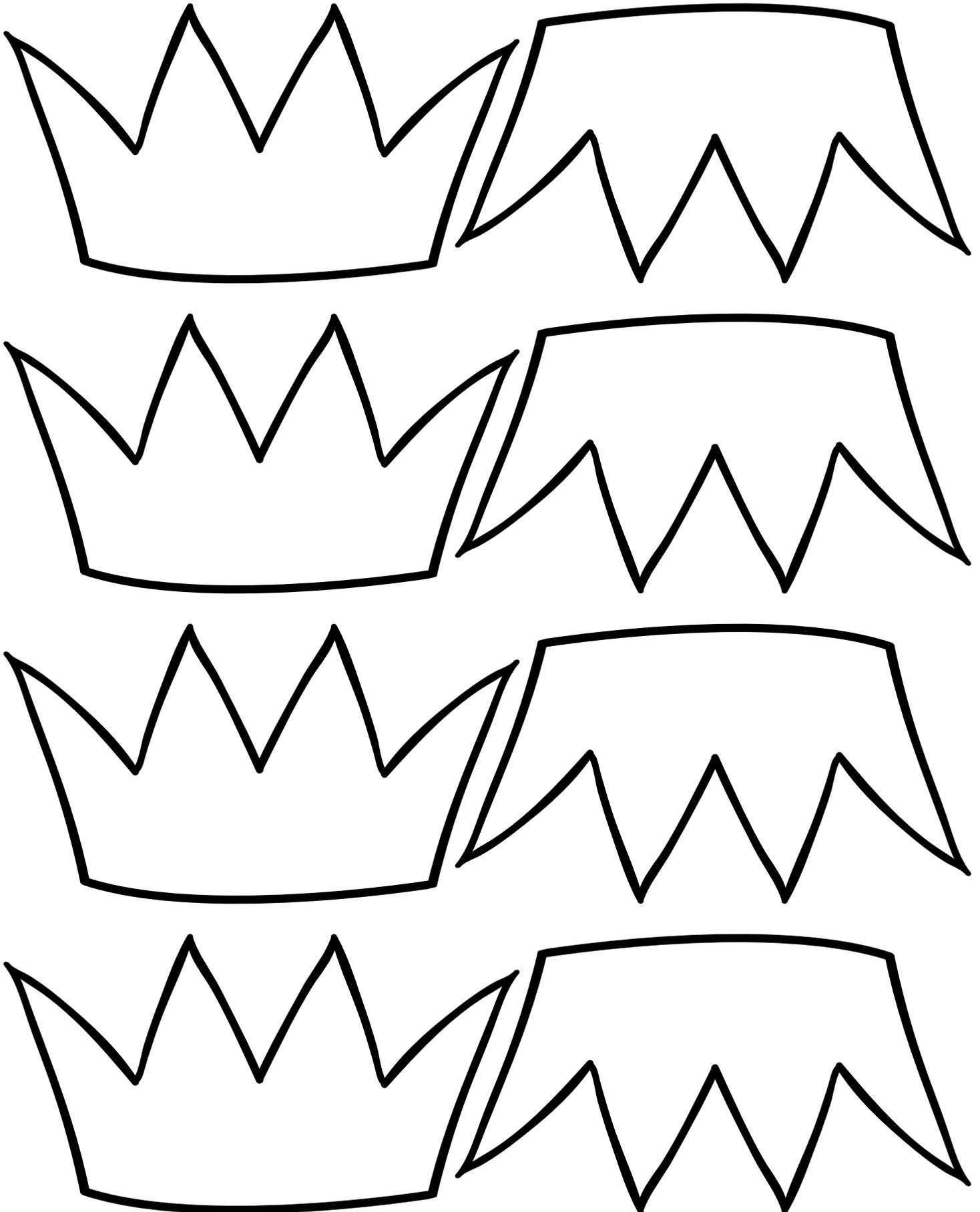
Cook

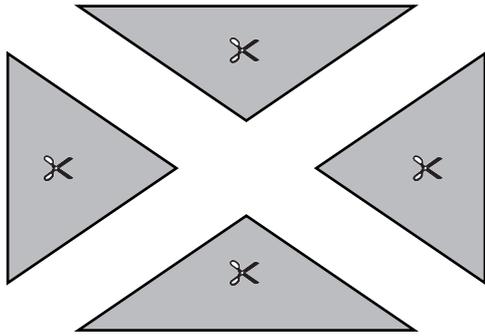


Work the fields



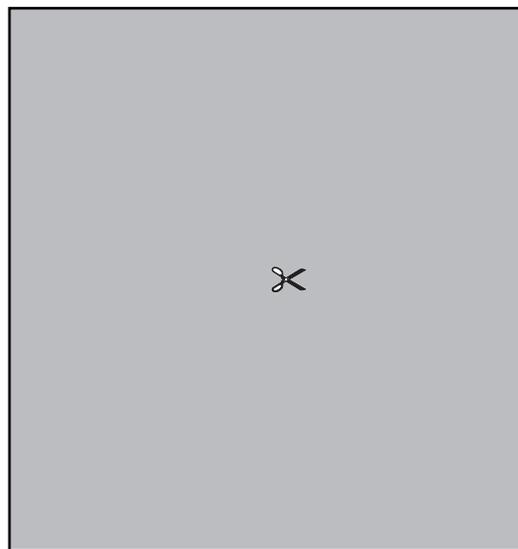
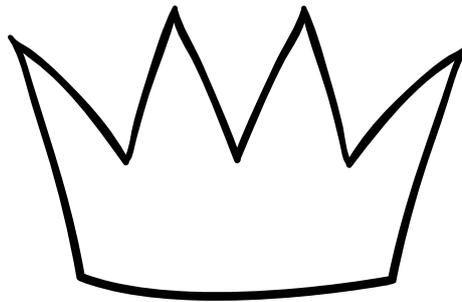
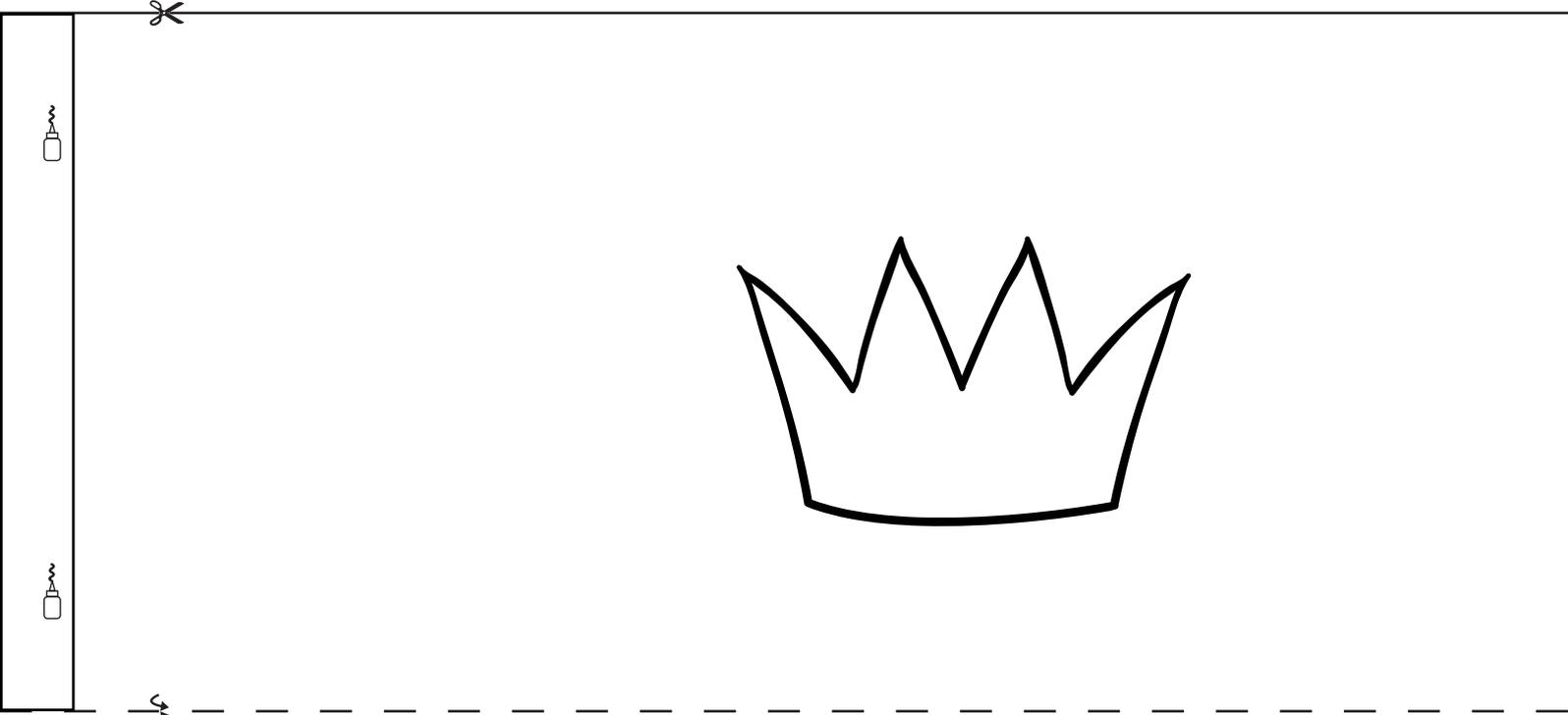
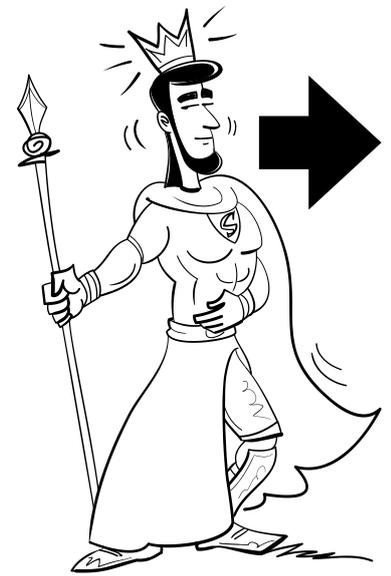
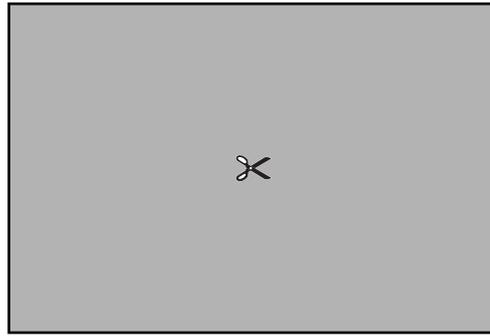
Baker

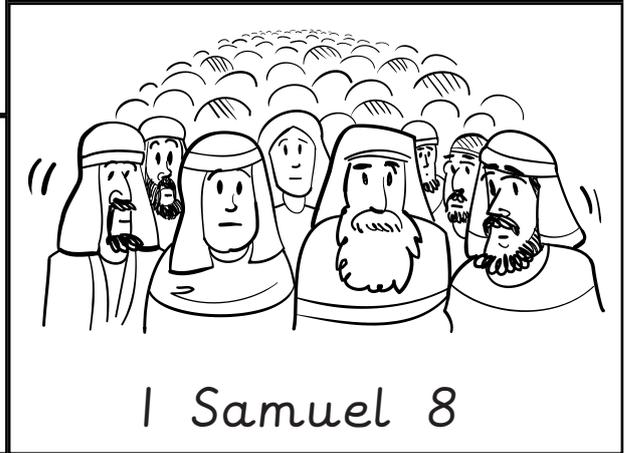
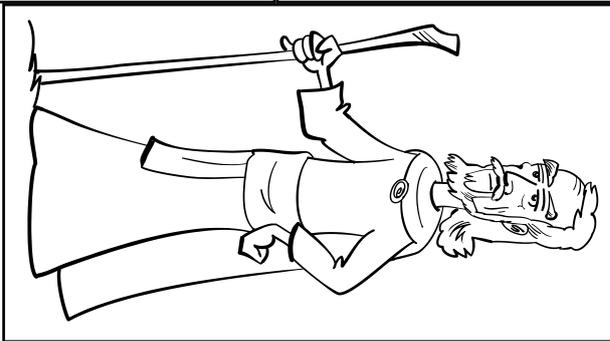
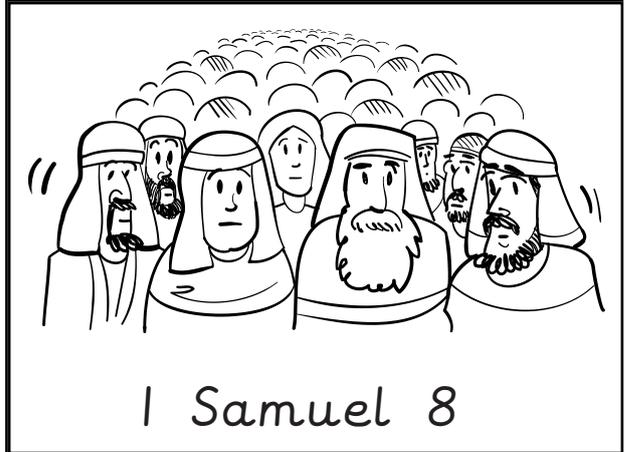
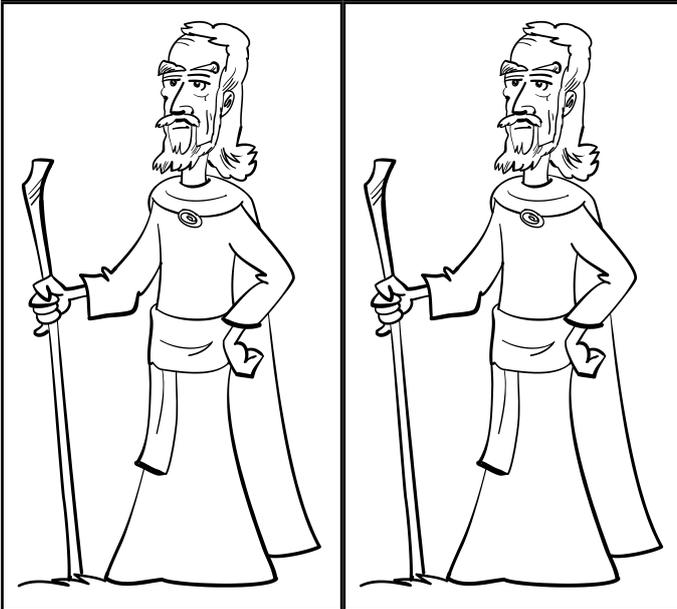
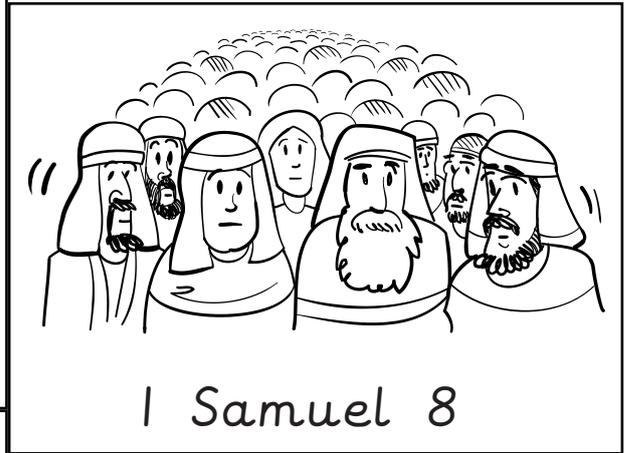
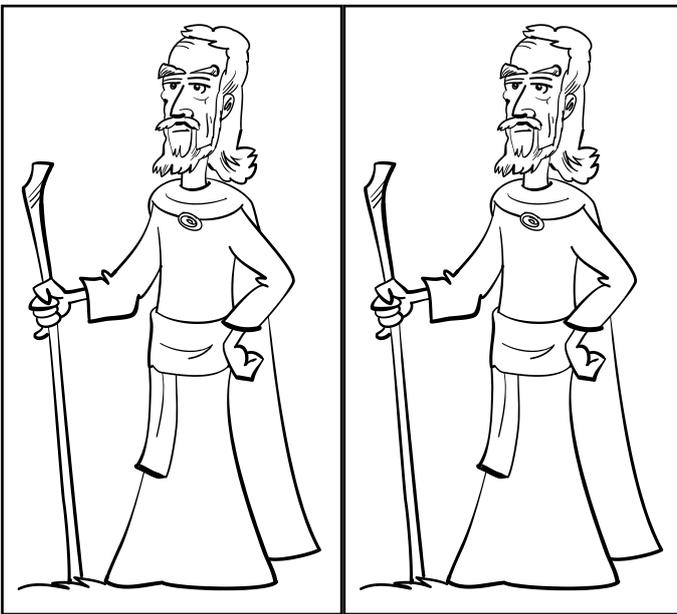




...they didn't want God to be their king.

Israel asked Samuel for a human king because...







Draw lines from the boy and girl to what the king would make them do.

Draw lines from the king to the things that he would take for himself.

Samuel told the people what a human king would do with their sons and daughters and what he would take for himself, but they would not listen.

1 Samuel 8.



A Human King

The true story can be found in 1 Samuel 8:1-22

Discover

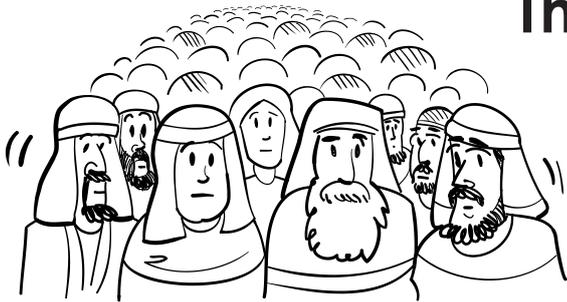
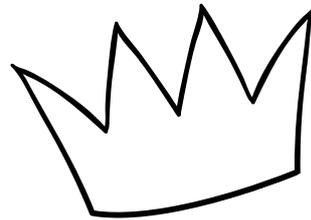
What did the Israelites ask Samuel for? (8:5) _____

Why did they say they wanted this? (8:3-5)

Samuel was o _ _ and his sons were d _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _ .

What was the real reason that they wanted a king? (8:19-20) Tick the correct box.

- They wanted someone who loved God to rule them.
- They wanted to be like the other nations.
- They wanted to the nations to like them.



Think Spot

Who was Israel's true king?
Who were they rejecting as king?

How did God respond to their demand?

1. He w _ _ _ _ _ them about what a k _ _ _ would do. (8:9)
2. He told S _ _ _ _ _ to g _ _ _ _ them a king. (8:22)

DISCUSS

Who was supposed to rule Israel? How was this different to the nations? Why was Israel supposed to be different?

How are Christians supposed to be different to those around them? How does this show in your life?

When do you find it hardest to live like this?

What does it mean to live with God as our king?

Why do you think people often reject God's rule?



A Human King

The true story can be found in 1 Samuel 8:1-22

Discover

What did the Israelites ask Samuel for? (8:5) _____

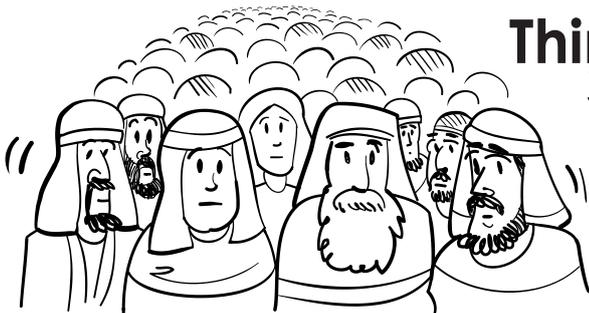
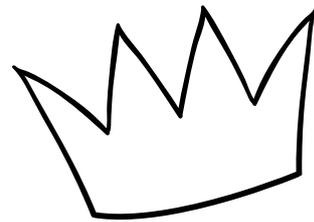
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Think Spot

Who was Israel's true king?
Who were they rejecting as king?

How did God respond to their demand?

1. _____ (8:9)

2. _____ (8:22)

Discuss

Who was supposed to rule Israel? How was this different to the nations? Why was Israel supposed to be different?

How are Christians supposed to be different to those around them? How does this show in your life?

When do you find it hardest to live like this?

What does it mean to live with God as our king?

Why do you think people often reject God's rule?

Why do you think God gave Israel a king if it was such a bad idea? Why does God sometimes allow us to experience the consequences of our sin?



A Reluctant King

1 Samuel 9:1-10:27

Big Idea : Samuel anointed Saul as God's chosen king of Israel, but Saul was reluctant and not everyone accepted him.

Aim : To teach that the right response to God's word is to listen and obey, trusting that God will supply all we need.

The Story So Far

Week 1:

- Israel rejected God as their king and demanded a human king so they could be like the other nations.
- Samuel warned them what a human king would do, but they insisted so he agreed to anoint a king.



Leader's Study Notes

Read 1 Samuel 9:1-10:27 noting how Saul responded to his call to kingship.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passage in more detail.

In the previous lesson God surprisingly commanded Samuel to anoint a human king for Israel even though their request for such a king was a blatant rejection of God's rule (1 Samuel 8:7). This passage reveals the man whom God had chosen to be this king, but there are a number of indicators in this passage that Saul was not going to be the ideal king for Israel despite his outward appearance.

- 9:1-5 Benjamin was the smallest tribe in Israel, but Kish and his son, Saul, were both impressive men. Saul obeyed his father and went to search for the lost donkeys. When he became discouraged, however, he tried to return home.
- 9:6-14 Ramah, Samuel's home town, was in the district of Zuph. Saul's servant recognised that the seer (prophet) lived there and encouraged Saul to seek him.
- 9:15-21 The Lord told Samuel in advance that he had chosen Saul to lead and deliver his people in response to their plea. Saul doubted Samuel's words because he was from an insignificant tribe and clan.
- 9:22-26 The portion of meat that was given to Saul had been set aside for him at the time

that Samuel had arranged the feast. God had already told Samuel that Saul would arrive the next day (9:15-16). It should have been clear that Saul was the man God had chosen.

9:27-10:8 Anointing with oil was a symbol of kingship. Samuel anointed Saul privately at first, commissioning him to lead God's people. Not even Saul's servant knew about this. Samuel told Saul what would happen to him, who he would meet and what God would do. These signs and their fulfilment should have been obvious to Saul and have made him recognise that this was God's plan.

10:9-16 God changed Saul's heart by his Spirit and enabled him to prophesy (speak God's words). But Saul didn't tell his uncle that Samuel had anointed him as king over Israel.

10:17-27 Samuel called all Israel together to witness the choosing of their new king. He spoke God's words to the people, reminding them of God's past provision and their rebellion in asking for a king. Saul was chosen out of all the people and publicly declared to be king. Although Saul's heart had been changed he was still reluctant to accept God's calling and hid. Most of the Israelites accepted Saul as king, but there were some who doubted his ability to rule and to rescue God's people.

Although the people had demanded a king, it was God who chose who that would be and who decided what the job would involve. God is still the real king, but now working through a human ruler. The success of Saul as king would depend on his response to the word of the Lord in the mouth of his prophet. Saul seems to waver between doubt and trust, reluctance and confidence in God's plan. It's a shaky start!

Reflect

- In what way is Saul's doubt about his credentials/ability actually a lack of trust in God's word and his provision?
- When are you tempted to distrust God's word and doubt his ability to equip you to act in obedience?
- Give thanks that when God calls his people to live for him he also provides all that they need to do so. Ask God to change your heart so that you will depend on him and have the courage to live in obedience.

Session Outline



Review

Review the previous lesson using the questions provided as well as any of the visual aids that were used for the previous lesson. This is helpful for children who may have missed that session.



Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

Pose the questions at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.



Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is told as a story for younger children and explained. Or the Bible text is taught as a simple Bible study for older children.



Game Idea

Not essential.

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!

Review the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.



Discuss and Apply

Not to be missed!

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children, Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.



Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



Review

Review the previous lesson using the following questions:

- Who did the Israelites want to be like? [*The nations around them* (8:5, 20)]
- In what way? [*Having a human king* (8:5, 19-20)]
- Why was this a bad idea? [*It was a rejection of God as king* (8:7)]



Introductory Idea

Option 1: Job Swap. Have a range of pictures which represent different jobs.

You will need to include some jobs that most people would not want to do. Place these facedown on a board and invite one child to choose one of the pictures and turn it over to reveal their job. Talk briefly about that job and ask them whether they feel qualified (able) to do it.

A second child may then choose a picture, but has the choice of swapping their job with the one already revealed by the first child. Why did/didn't they swap? What was it about the job they originally received that they did/didn't like? A third child may then do the same, but can swap with either the first or the second child. Continue in this way until all the pictures have been revealed.

Which children are happy with their job? Which are not? Why? Do they think that they would be able to do their job well? In today's true story from the Bible someone was chosen to be king, but he didn't seem very happy about this. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Option 2: Got What it Takes? Tell the children that you are electing a king, queen and court jester, but for those jobs the children will need to have certain qualities. Start with all the children standing up. If the statement you make is not true of them then they must sit down; if it is true they must remain standing.

Start with statements that are true for most of the children in the class e.g. wearing shoes; have eyes; go to school; under ten years old. After a few rounds start making statements which will exclude more children. Eventually there should be just one child left standing who fits all the criteria you have mentioned; that child is designated king.

Repeat the process to find out who will be the queen and the jester. Did those children expect to be chosen? Who decided that they would be king/queen/jester? Do they feel fit for the job? Why/why not? In today's true story from the Bible a king was chosen for Israel, but that man didn't believe he was the right man for the job. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Bridge Questions

- Who was chosen to be king? [*Saul* (9:17, 10:1)]
- Who chose him? [*God* (9:17, 10:24)]
- How did he respond? [*He hid among the baggage* (10:22)]



Teaching Plan

This is a long passage with many details that do not contribute to the main teaching aim. You will not have time to cover everything so be selective in the amount of detail you include. Some basic visual aids are provided on pages 26 and 27. Resizeable colour versions of all the pictures can be downloaded by logging into the profile used to purchase this resource on www.mustard-seeds.net.

There are essentially three parts to the story and you will need to cover the following key points for each:

1. Saul's Search (9:1-14)

- Saul and his servant went looking for their lost donkeys.
- Saul and his servant sought the prophet Samuel's help to find them.

2. Saul's Secret Anointing (9:15-10:8)

- God told Samuel that he had chosen Saul to be king.
- Samuel told Saul that he had been chosen as king.
- Saul told Samuel that he wasn't important enough to be king.
- Samuel anointed Saul as king privately.

3. Saul's Public Anointing (10:9-27)

- God changed Saul's heart and the Spirit enabled him to speak God's words.
- Saul didn't tell his uncle about his anointing.
- Samuel gathered the people and declared Saul to be the king.
- Some people were not happy about Saul being king.

For younger children – the second and third sections above are more important than the first so only deal very briefly with Saul's search. You might choose to use models and a simple map to tell the story. You will need a model of Saul, his servant, Samuel, a crowd of people, some oil and baggage for Saul to hide amongst. Try to highlight the fact that he was clearly chosen by God and instructed by God's messenger, but that Saul continued to refuse God's call. It's always helpful to directly quote important speeches or words from the Bible. In this passage God's actual words in 9:16-17; Samuel's words in 9:20b; and Saul's words in 9:21 can be read

directly from the Bible. You could also read Samuel's speech in 10:18-19 and his words in 10:24. This helps children to clearly see that this is a Bible story.

For older children – there is too much text to read all in one lesson. Use the break-up above to focus your study and highlight the main points.

9:1-14

- What did Saul's father send him to do? How did Saul respond? (9:3-4)
- Who did Saul and the servant seek to help them? (9:6-8)

9:15-10:8

- What did God tell Samuel about Saul? (9:15-16)
- What did Samuel tell Saul that God had said? (9:20b)
- What was Saul's response? Why did he not think this could be true? (9:21)
- What did Samuel say and do when he and Saul were alone? (10:1)
- What did Samuel say would happen to Saul as signs that this was true? Were these signs fulfilled? (10:2-8)

10:9-27

- What did Saul tell his uncle? What did he keep a secret? (10:16)
- Who gathered to hear Samuel? What did he remind them about? (10:17-20)
- Who was chosen by God as king? (10:20-21) Why couldn't the people find him? (10:22)
- Who decided what the job of being king would involve? (10:25)
- How did the people respond to Saul being made king? (10:24, 27)



Game Idea

Option 1: For younger children. Seeking Saul.

Choose one child to be Saul and ask them to hide while the other children close their eyes and count to ten. Ask the other children to find Saul and bring him to you. When they do so, place a crown on his head and say, "Do you see the man the Lord has chosen?" Encourage the children to respond with, "Long live the king!" then point to one child as you say, "But some scoundrels said" and get them to say, "How can this man save us?" Repeat this a number of times, choosing a different child to be Saul each time and pointing to a different child to be the scoundrel.

Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible Saul didn't believe that he could be the king. Instead of trusting God's word he hid among the baggage.

If you have a large group of children you could divide

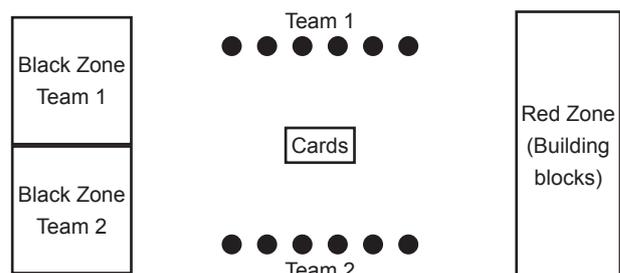
the group into two or three teams and give each team a paper crown in a different colour. Choose one child to be Saul and to hide somewhere in the room while the rest of the children close their eyes and count to ten. The other children can then search for Saul; the first team to place their colour crown on Saul's head and take him to the leader wins. Play a few rounds of the game, choosing another child from each team to be Saul.

Option 2: Make a King! Divide the group into two teams and have them line up in their teams at one end of the room. Place a number of dress-up items which the children can use to make one of their team members a king at the other end of the room in two piles e.g. a crown, robe, ring, sceptre. You can either provide the crown and sceptre or show them pictures of these and get them to make these items themselves using card/newspaper. The leader stands in front of these items ready to hand them out to the children.

The children choose one child in each team to be their king. They then take turns to run to the leader and ask for what they need; they cannot take any of the items themselves. They can then dress their teammate as a king using the items the leader provides.

Did the person in your team look anything like a king at the start? How were they able to make the person in their team into a king? Did they have what they needed or were they given what they needed? Could they have done it without being given anything? Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible Saul didn't believe that he could be the king. Instead of trusting God's word he hid among the baggage; he didn't trust that God would help him to carry out the task he had been given.

Option 3: Get What You Need. Divide the group into two teams and have each team sit opposite each other down the sides of the room. Create a red zone at one end of the room and a black zone at the other end. The black zone needs to be divided down the middle to form one half for each team. Place a large number of wooden building/Lego blocks in the red zone, but leave the black zone empty. Place a deck of well-shuffled cards facedown on the floor in the middle of the room between the two zones (see diagram below). Promise the children that you will make sure they have everything they need to complete the challenge and to build a block tower in their teams regardless of which zone they are sent to.



The first child in each team runs to the middle of

the room and takes the first card from the top of the pile. The colour of that card determines which zone they need to go to in order to exchange their card for a block. If they draw a red card they place it in the red zone and collect one block to take back to their team. If they draw a black card they must place it in their team's portion of the black zone, but there will be no block to collect. At the end of the game you will give each team a block for every black card in their portion of the black zone, but don't let the children know this yet!

Play the game for a set time, counting down until the end. The children can then use their blocks to build a tower in their teams. Compare the towers and then ask the children how they felt when they drew a black card? Did anyone draw a black card and not bother to place it in the black zone? Did anyone place a black card in the red zone in order to get a block? Did any of the children hesitate in going to the black zone or think it was a waste of time?

Give each team an additional block for every black card in their portion of the black zone to add to their towers. Which tower is now the highest? Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible God chose Saul to be king, but he didn't think that he had what it took. Instead of obeying God's call he hid among the baggage; he didn't trust that God would help him to carry out the task he had been given.



Discuss and Apply

It is clear from this passage that God had chosen Saul to be the first human king even though Israel's request for a king was a rejection of the Lord as their ruler. Yet despite many assurances Saul was reluctant to accept the task. From the passage it seems that his reluctance came from a lack of confidence in his own credentials and abilities – he was from the smallest tribe in Israel and the least of the clans of Benjamin. His objections here are similar to the ones made by Moses in Exodus 3 and the disobedient spies in Numbers 13. Ultimately these excuses stem from a distrust of God's clear command and a denial of God's ability to supply what is necessary for the task he has called these men to perform. It may at first appear to be humility, but instead it reveals a trust in self rather than God. It becomes apparent in the rest of Saul's life that he does not trust and obey God's word.

Help the children to understand that when God commands his people to act in a particular way, he also provides everything they need to be obedient – they simply need to trust him and act. Our actions always reveal the object of our trust. When we shy away from doing what God has commanded in the Bible it shows our lack of obedience to his words; our lack of trust in his ability to provide; and our reliance on ourselves.

Think of some of areas of the Christian life where we

might be tempted to disobey because we doubt our ability to live as God has commanded. This might be true in the area of personal evangelism. Do we sometimes feel that we don't know enough to tell others about Jesus? Or there might be a particular sin which keeps tripping us up and we find it hard not to fail, but we keep trying in our own strength. When God calls his people to live holy lives he gives us his Spirit to help us to live for him.

Jesus is the perfect example of someone who, when faced with a difficult task, trusted God and carried out his commands. In Gethsemane Jesus prayed asking God to take the cup from him, but determined that if that was not the Father's will he would still obey.

None of us perfectly obey God or completely trust his words which is why we need Jesus' death in our place. But our constant prayer should be that God would give us what we need to do his will just as Jesus did. When we are struggling with temptation we should look to God for help not to our own ability or strength of will. The more we read God's word the more confidence we will have to trust him and obey him.

For older children – discuss as above using some of the following questions to engage the children with the application of this truth to their lives:

- Why do you think Saul didn't want to be king? Why didn't he think he was the right man for the job?
- What was Saul trusting in? Who was he failing to trust to help him?
- Whose decision was it that Saul should be king? Who was Saul ignoring/disobeying when he hid from the task?
- Where can we find out about the way that God wants us to live? When do you find it hardest to trust that God will help you to live for him?
- What did Samuel say God would do to help Saul live as king?
- How does God help Christians to live for him and carry out his commands?
- What happened when God changed Saul's heart? Where was Saul when the people were gathered to appoint their king? How long did Saul's change of heart seem to last? What does this tell us about Saul and his kingship?
- Can we still call ourselves Christians if we sometimes fail to trust or live for God as we should? Why/why not?
- In what ways is Jesus a better king than Saul? How did Jesus' life show his dependance on God and obedience to his commands?
- What can we learn from Jesus' example when he faced temptation in the wilderness and at Gethsemane? Who did he look to for help? What was his attitude towards God's word?



Prayer Idea

Get the children to think of a particular situation where they find it hard to be obedient to what God has commanded. What might they need in order to obey God in that situation? Is God able to supply that? Have they ever asked that of God? Encourage them to ask for it now.



Activity

For 3-7s – choose either Activity A (pages 28 and 29) or Activity B (page 30).

Activity A – Print page 28 onto paper (one copy for every two children) and page 29 onto paper or card (one copy for every six children). Each child will also require one lollipop stick and a paper cup.

Before the lesson cut out the cup sleeves on page 28 and cut along the bold lines on page 29 as marked. Also pierce a hole in the bottom of each cup.

The children colour in the picture and the cup sleeve.

Help them to fold and glue the picture of Saul around a lollipop stick. They will also need help gluing the sleeve around the cup. Push the stick through the bottom of the cup and pull down to partially hide Saul among the baggage.

Push the stick upwards to show Saul coming out from hiding to be anointed publicly as king. Remind the children that Saul didn't think that he could be king because he came from a tribe and family that weren't very important.

Activity B – Print page 30 onto paper (one copy for every child). The children colour in the page.

Remind them that not everyone was happy to have Saul as their king. Some people grumbled and didn't give him gifts.

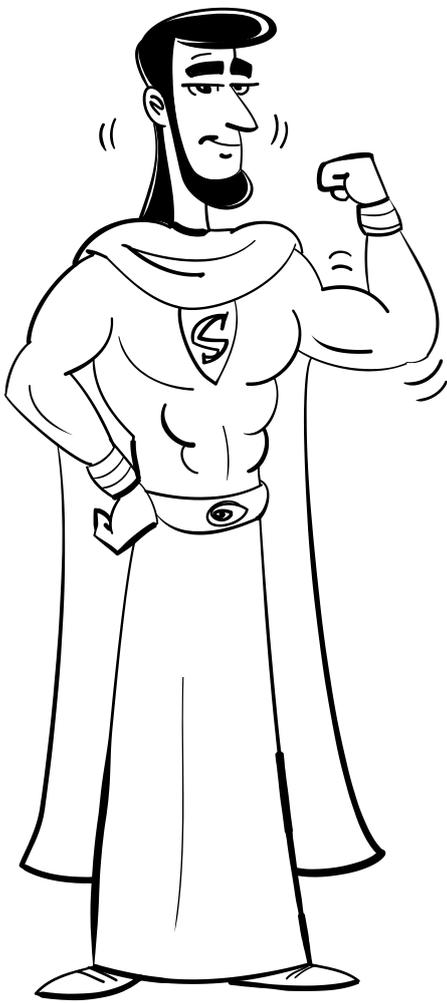
For 7-11s – print either Activity Sheet C (page 31) or Activity Sheet D (page 32) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



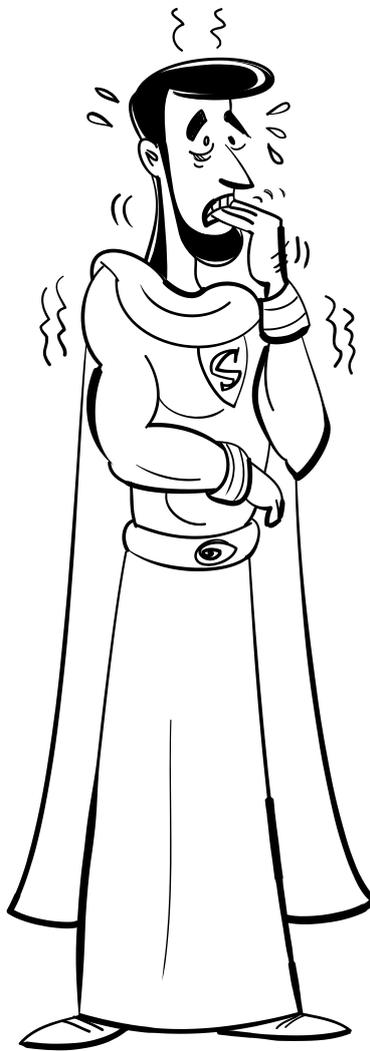
Memory Verse

"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in obedience to him."

Psalm 128:1 [NIV]



Impressive Saul



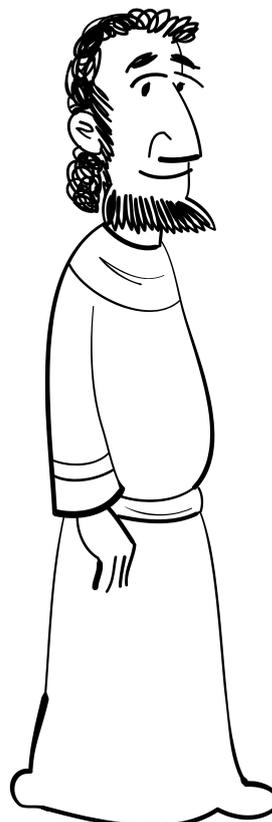
Scared Saul



Samuel



King Saul

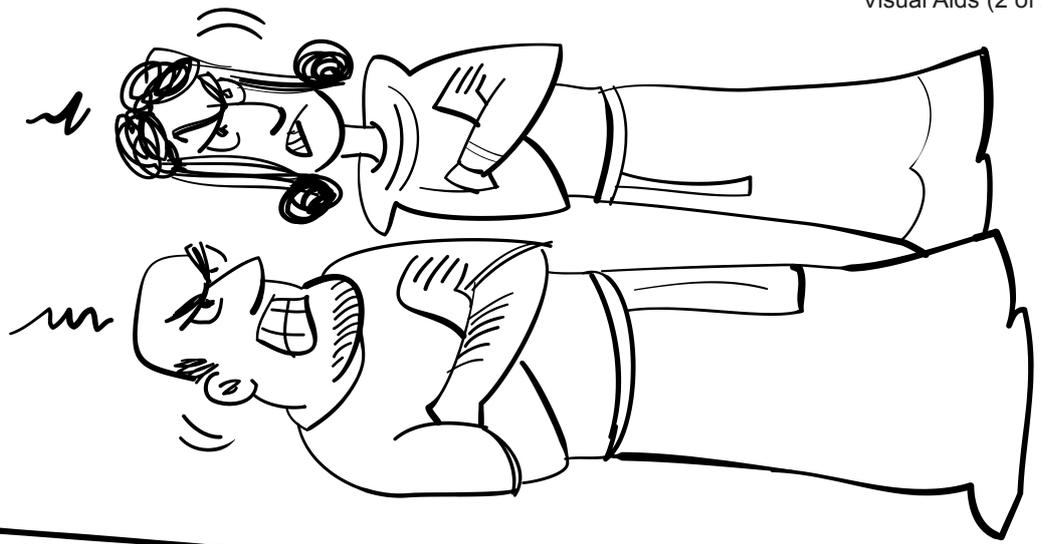


Saul's servant



Saul's uncle

Unhappy Israelites



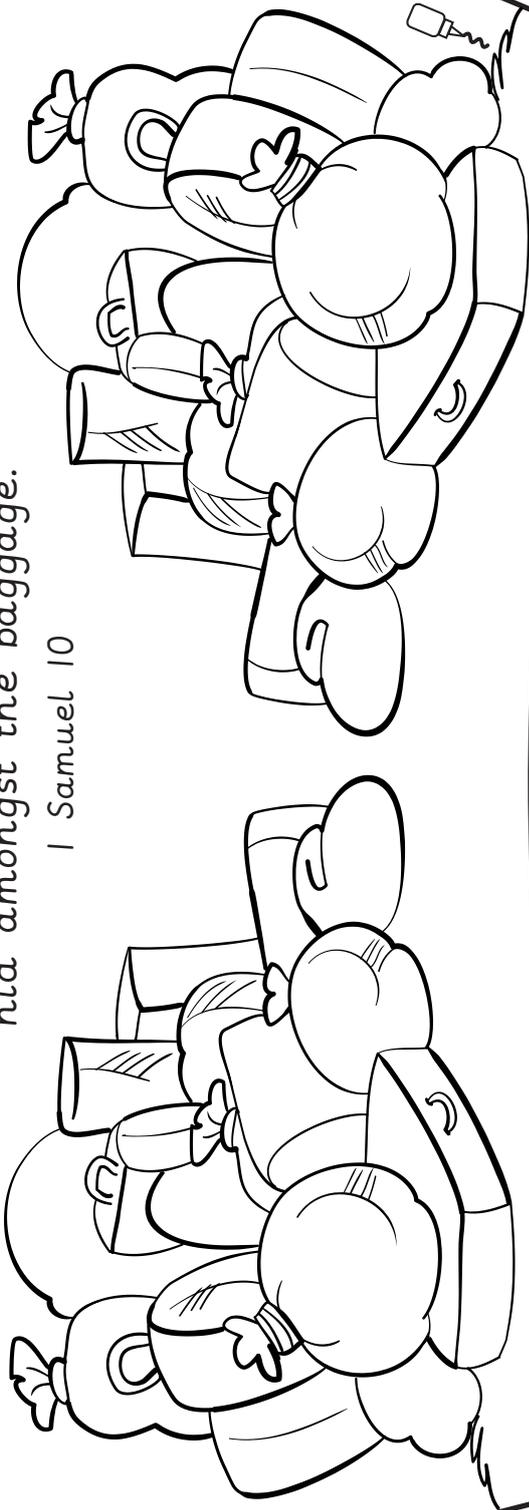
Samuel anointing Saul



Saul hiding

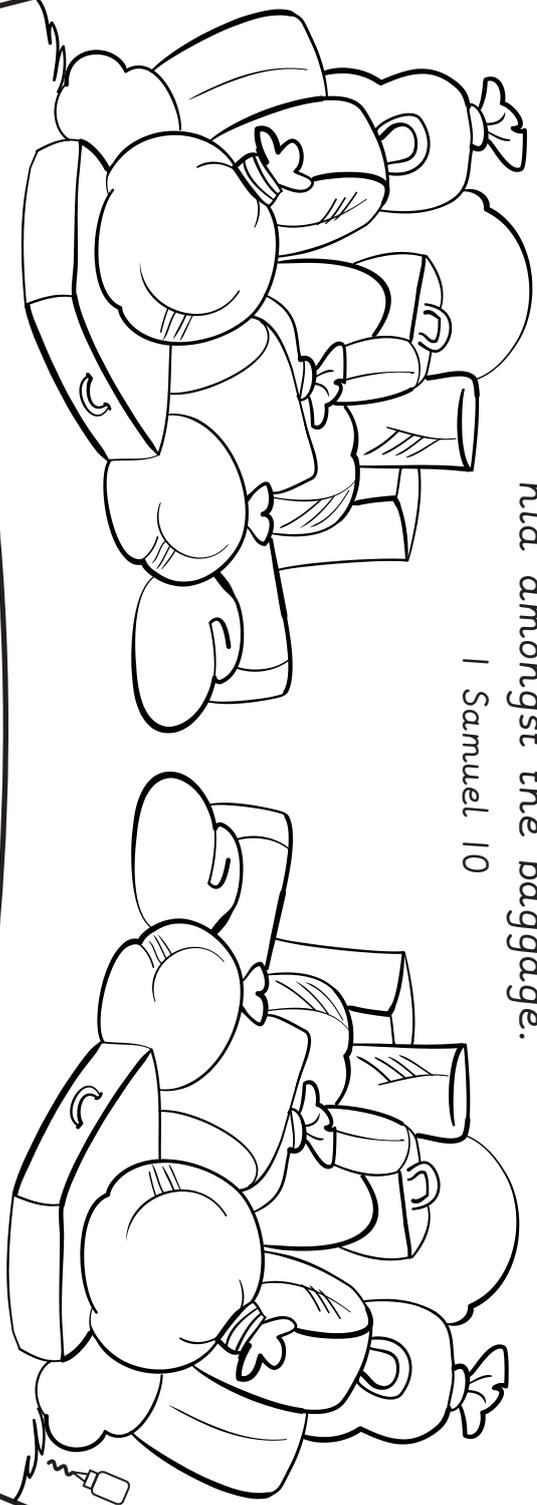
Saul didn't want to be king so he hid amongst the baggage.

1 Samuel 10



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1 Samuel 10



	<p>Saul did not think that he could be king because he did not come from a very important tribe or family.</p> <p>1 Samuel 9:21</p>		<p>Saul did not think that he could be king because he did not come from a very important tribe or family.</p> <p>1 Samuel 9:21</p>
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Long live
the king!



Samuel anointed Saul as king of
Israel, but some people didn't think
he could save them.

1 Samuel 10

A Reluctant King

The true story can be found in 1 Samuel 9:1-10:27

Discover

Who did Saul meet on his journey? (9:14) S _ _ _ _ _

What had God told this man to do? (9:15-17) Tick the correct box.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help Saul find his donkeys | <input type="checkbox"/> Anoint Saul as king of Israel |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Give Saul his Spirit | <input type="checkbox"/> Send Saul into battle |



Why didn't Saul think he could be king? (9:21) Circle the correct words.

He was from the **largest** / **smallest** clan of **Judah** / **Benjamin** and the **largest** / **smallest** tribe in Israel.

How did God equip Saul to be king? (10:7, 9-10)

He gave him his S _ _ _ _ _ and c _ _ _ _ _ Saul's h _ _ _ _ _ .

How did Saul try to avoid becoming king? (10:20-24)

Draw a picture of Saul hiding in the space below.



Think Spot

Who had decided that Saul should be king? Who was Saul ignoring/disobeying?

Discuss

Why didn't Saul want to be king? Who was he trusting in?

Who should he have trusted to help him?

How does God help Christians to live for him?

What commands has he given us?

How can we find out about the way God wants us to live?

When do you find it hard to trust God and obey his word?



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Who had decided that Saul should be king? Who was Saul ignoring/disobeying?

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Why didn't Saul want to be king? Who was he trusting in? Who should he have trusted to help him?

How does God help Christians to live for him?

What commands has he given us?

How can we find out about the way God wants us to live?

When do you find it hard to trust God and obey his word?

In what ways is Jesus a better king than Saul? What can we learn from his example? Who did he trust to help him? What was his attitude towards God's word?



A Disobedient King

1 Samuel 13:1-14:45

Big Idea : Saul was an impatient and impulsive king who made offerings in Samuel's place, took foolish oaths and was willing to kill his own son.

Aim : To teach that those who trust God will obey his word wholeheartedly and seek his will as of first importance.

The Story So Far

Week 1:

- Israel rejected God as their king and demanded a human king so they could be like the other nations.
- Samuel warned them what a human king would do, but they insisted so he agreed to anoint a king.

Week 2:

- Samuel anointed Saul as God's chosen king of Israel.
- Saul was reluctant to be king and not everyone accepted him.

to Gilgal and wait for him there before engaging in battle (10:8). Saul only now obeyed. His impatience led him to assume the offices of priest and prophet by making the sacrifice that Samuel was meant to make and failing to wait for his instruction from God.

13:11-14

Saul had not sought the Lord's favour in the first attack on the outpost, but he used this as his excuse for doing Samuel's job. His inability to control his men and submit himself to the word of the Lord is a sign of things to come. Samuel rebuked Saul and pronounced God's judgment on him and his household. Although God had allowed a human king to rule his people, that king would need to be someone who submitted to his word as spoken through his prophet. This judgement is fulfilled in chapters 15 and 16.

13:15-22

Saul's army had been reduced from 3,000 to just 600 men all united under Saul and Jonathan. The Philistines had prevented Israel from having access to blacksmiths for the purposes of making weapons and had a monopoly on the entire blacksmith trade. Saul's army was therefore not only small, but also ill-equipped for battle.

13:23-14:14

With the Israelite army in such a condition victory would not have been expected. Strangely, in this battle it was Jonathan who took decisive action and initiated the attack. Saul seems out of touch with what was going on around him and didn't even enquire of the Lord, despite having access to the ephod containing the urim and thumim used to receive guidance from the Lord (14:3).

Jonathan displayed courage and a trust in the Lord's ability to give them victory (14:10), something we would have expected from King Saul.



Leader's Study Notes

Read 1 Samuel 13:1-14:45 noting what Saul's impatience led to and who was affected.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passage in more detail.

As king, Saul led Israel in a number of military victories over their enemies. He was confirmed as king by the people, including those who had first doubted his ability to lead them (cf. 10:27, 11:15). Yet although he had proved himself quite capable in battle these chapters reveal that he still had the same attitude towards God's word and God's prophet.

13:1-7 Saul appeared to start well with his military campaign by drafting a permanent army and strategically placing them in two places – Jonathan leading one division and Saul leading the other himself. But the first attack brought a swift response from the Philistines and left the Israelites in disarray with some even fleeing across the Jordan.

13:8-10 Samuel had previously told Saul to go

- 14:15-23 It was only when Saul saw the Philistine army melting away that he called for the ark of God. As the battle grew more chaotic, however, Saul abandoned his plan to consult God and instead rushed into the fight. Victory had clearly come from God and Saul's army finished the pursuit.
- 14:24-30 Saul's foolish and impulsive oath was unknown to Jonathan and had put the troops in a difficult position. The soldiers needed food in order to fight well in battle. Saul's action might seem spiritual, but lacked common sense and was not required by the Lord who had already given them victory.
- 14:31-35 Saul's rash oath placed an unnecessary burden on the men and eventually caused them to break God's law against eating raw meat (cf. Leviticus 19:26; Deuteronomy 12:23). They were clearly starving. Saul tried to put things right and did not want to sin against God.
- 14:36-45 Saul again began to make plans of his own and was prompted by the priest to enquire of the Lord. He did so, but received no response. Realising that something was wrong he made another rash oath to put to death whoever was responsible for the Lord's anger. Jonathan was singled out as the culprit for breaking Saul's initial oath and Saul was ready to put him to death, but the men rebelled and swore to protect Jonathan.

Saul may have been impressive by appearance, but his actions betrayed the fact that he was not willing to submit to God's word. He was quick to make foolish oaths and conduct religious ceremonies, but slow to enquire of the Lord and then act in obedience. He also lacked the ability to command the respect and obedience of his men. It's clear that Samuel was absolutely right in his assessment of Saul and his promise of judgment: Saul was not a king after God's own heart.

Reflect

- What did Saul repeatedly fail to do? What did he choose to do instead? Whose guidance was he following?
- Where does obedience to God's word and seeking his help fit into your decision-making process? How and when do you include God in the decisions that you make?
- Give thanks to God that he has revealed himself so clearly in his word. Ask him to help you to turn to his word for guidance in all situations.

Session Outline



Review

Review the previous lesson using the questions provided as well as any of the visual aids that were used for the previous lesson. This is helpful for children who may have missed that session.



Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

Pose the questions at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.



Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is told as a story for younger children and explained. Or the Bible text is taught as a simple Bible study for older children.



Game Idea

Not essential.

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!

Review the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.



Discuss and Apply

Not to be missed!

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children, Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.



Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



Review

Review the previous lesson using the following questions:

- Who was chosen to be king? [*Saul (9:17, 10:1)*]
- Who chose him? [*God (9:17, 10:24)*]
- How did he respond? [*He hid among the baggage (10:22)*]



Introductory Idea

Option 1: Why Wait? Have a discussion with the children about waiting. What are

some of the events in life for which they have to wait? You could get two or three children to share a time that they remember having to wait – what did they find particularly hard? Did they succeed in waiting? Were there other times where they failed to wait? What were the consequences?

Today's true story from the Bible is about waiting – Saul had to wait for someone to arrive, but he found it very hard! [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Option 2: Consequences. Before the lesson gather a number of items or pictures of items which represent scenarios where people would have to wait e.g. oven timer, lollipop lady (school crossing patrol officer), level crossing lights, hourglass timer, buffering sign on a computer (throbber animation), progress bar, calendar with date circled. Many of these pictures can easily be found on the internet.

Show the children each picture in turn and ask them what they might need to wait for if they saw this in real life. What could happen if they didn't wait for the right amount of time? Explain that in each case there would be consequences for not waiting for the full length of time to pass e.g. uncooked food, road accident, computer crash, missing an event.

Today's true story from the Bible is about waiting – Saul had to wait for someone to arrive, but he found it very hard! [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Bridge Questions

- Who was Saul meant to wait for? [*Samuel (13:8)*]
- What did he do instead? [*Made the sacrifices in Samuel's place; broke God's commands (13:9, 13)*]
- What happened because of this? [*Samuel told him his kingdom would fall (13:13-14)*]



Teaching Plan

There are three parts to this story which each highlight a particular flaw in Saul's character. Care should be taken not to go into too much detail and therefore miss the main point of the lesson. It's helpful to summarise the story and quote key texts or conversations directly from the Bible. A rough outline of the key points and texts might be as follows:

1. Saul's Impatience (13:1-14) [*Alarm clock*]

- Saul had been told by Samuel to go to Gilgal and wait there until he arrived to make a sacrifice (10:8)
- Saul assembled an army and divided the group of men into two; one group went with him and the other with Jonathan (13:1-4)
- Jonathan attacked the Philistines and the Israelites hid (13:5-7)
- Saul impatiently made an offering to God and Samuel rebuked the king (13:8-14)

2. Saul's First Promise (13:15-14:35) [*No food/drink*]

- Israel had no weapons and were not fit for battle (13:15-22)
- Jonathan attacked the Philistines on his own (13:23-14:14)
- The Lord saved Israel (14:15-23)
- Jonathan unknowingly broke Saul's promise about food by eating honey (14:24-30)
- The men hungrily ate meat that was not allowed by God's law because of Saul's rash promise (14:31-35)

3. Saul's Second Promise (14:36-45) [*Skull*]

- God wouldn't answer when Saul sought him because of the trouble Saul's promise had caused (14:36-37)
- Saul made another rash promise to kill whoever had broken the first (14:38-39)
- Saul tried to kill Jonathan to keep his promise, but the men saved Jonathan (14:40-45)

You could tell the story using the outline provided above together with models of a Philistine army, Saul, Jonathan, Samuel and two groups of soldiers (one for Saul and one for Jonathan). A picture of Saul and a key image to represent each of the scenes are provided on pages 39 and 40. Other pictures related to this story are provided on pages 41 and 42. Resizeable colour versions of these pictures can be downloaded by logging into the profile used to purchase this resource on www.mustard-seeds.net.

Pause after each section of the story and add the key image next to the picture of Saul.

For older children – break the study up into three sections and retell the story as described above. For sections 1 and 3 you could read the text in full and then ask some of the following questions. You will need to summarise section 2 yourself before discussing the questions below as this is a long passage. It's always better to have a leader read long sections than to let the children struggle through it. You could tell the children what to look out for as you read the text.

1. Saul's Impatience (13:1-14)

- What had Saul been told to do after being made king in 1 Samuel 10:8?
- What did Jonathan do with his men? (13:3-4) What was the result of this attack? (13:5-7)
- Why was Samuel angry with Saul? (13:13) What had Saul failed to do? (13:8-12) Why didn't Saul wait for Samuel to make the offering to God? (13:8, 11-12)
- What did Samuel say would happen because of Saul's disobedience? (13:13-14)

2. Saul's First Promise (14:1-33)

- What did Jonathan and his armour-bearer do without telling Saul? (14:1-14)
- What happened after Jonathan attacked the Philistines? Who was really behind this victory? (14:15-23)
- What oath had Saul made while Jonathan was away? Who broke this oath? Why? Why did Jonathan think this oath was a bad idea? (14:29-30)
- What did the rest of the army do first when they defeated the Philistines? What was wrong with what they did? (14:31-33)

3. Saul's Second Promise (14:36-45)

- Why do you think God didn't answer Saul? What did Saul think the problem was? (14:36-37)
- What did Saul promise would happen to whoever had broken his oath? Who was 'taken by lot'? What had he done wrong? (14:38-39)
- What did Saul try to do to Jonathan, his son? (14:44) Who stopped him from doing this? Why? (14:45)



Game Idea

Option 1: Just Do It Right. Before the lesson draft a list of tasks for the children to perform e.g. run to the opposite end of the room and back again; do ten press ups; dribble a ball to the end of the room; toss a beanbag into a bucket from behind a line.

Divide the group into two or three teams and have them sit in their teams at one end of the room.

For each round both teams must nominate one representative to perform the task for their team. The children will naturally think that the first person to complete each task earns a point for their team, but you will actually be awarding points to the person who most accurately obeys your instructions. Do not tell the children this until the end of the game, but make sure they know that you are keeping score. You can do this secretly on a clipboard, awarding points to the child who most accurately performs the task.

At the end announce the winning team and explain how you allocated the points. Why had some of the children failed to correctly perform the tasks? Were they in a rush or too impatient? Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible Saul was impatient and failed to obey God's word.

Option 3: Honeycomb Race. Before the lesson cut out some hexagons from yellow paper/card, enough for each child in your group. Put all the hexagons together in a bowl and place it at one end of the room. Divide the children into two teams and have them line up at the other end of the room. The children take turns to run to the bowl; collect one hexagon; and bring it back to their team. The next child can only run once the previous child has put down their hexagon.

The children continue to run in relay, arranging their hexagons next to each other to form a honeycomb shape in a set amount of time. The children will most likely think it is a race to build the biggest honeycomb and so will not wait for the next person to place their hexagon before running themselves. Watch carefully to see whether or not the children obey the instructions.

When the time is up explain that neither team won because both teams cheated – they didn't wait for their team members to add their piece to the honeycomb. Why didn't the children wait? Were they in a rush or too impatient to win? Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible Saul was impatient and failed to obey God's word.



Discuss and Apply

In this passage we begin to see that Saul is not the sort of leader that Israel needs.

He is impulsive, does not seek the Lord's will and disregards the word of God spoken by his prophet. There are a number incidents in this passage where no clear moral judgement on the actions of those involved is given. Was Saul right to make the first promise? Was Jonathan right to speak against the king's promise and act independently on a number of occasions? Was Saul right to want to put his son to death? Were the men right to interfere? The purpose of this passage is not to answer these questions, but to show us what Saul was like in character and in deed.

It was clearly God who rescued Israel from an impossible battle through the acts of Jonathan (who

seemed to be a better leader than his father). Yet because of Saul's foolishness, Jonathan would never be king. Nevertheless the passage teaches important truths about what God is like, how he relates to his people and what their response should be. It also reveals, by contrast, what the character of a king after God's own heart should be.

God's word was revealed to Saul through his prophet and in the Scriptures. Help the children to understand that today we hear God's word to us through the Bible. Living as a Christian means that we not only trust God to rescue us from our sin, but that we trust him each day as we listen to his word and seek to obey it. As we read the Bible we understand how God wants us to live even though we don't always get it right.

Saul seemed to be obeying God at times – he made sacrifices and a number of promises to God, but there were simple instructions that he failed to obey completely. Saul chose when and how he would come to God for guidance rather than listening to God's directions about how to do this. Help the children to understand that living as a follower of Jesus means that we obey him in everything all the time, not just when we come to church or meet with his people. Everything that we do in life should be out of wholehearted obedience to God, trusting that he will help us. Can the children think of situations or direct commands from God that they find hard to obey? In what ways do we sometimes only obey part of God's instructions? Is it easy to forgive your enemies and pray for those who hurt you? Is it always easy to honour your parents or love God more than anything else?

Remind them that Jesus is the perfect king of God's people. Unlike Saul he always obeyed all of God's word. He is the one that we should be like in the way that we live. He is also the one who took the punishment for all the things we get wrong.

For older children – discuss as above, but then spend some time talking about what wholehearted obedience looks like and how everything we do should be influenced by what God has said in the Bible. Children this age will begin to experience pressure to conform to the world. It is helpful for them to understand that the relationship that they have with God through Christ is not something that they occasionally partake in or add to other aspects of their lives like a hobby, but something which should govern every aspect of their lives. If God has changed their hearts then they will be consumed with wanting to know his word and live in obedience to it. You could use some of the following questions to help the children think about how this applies to them in more detail:

- Which part of Samuel's instructions in 10:8 did Saul obey? Which part did he not obey? What does this show about his attitude to God's word spoken through his prophet?

- Are there parts of the Bible that you sometimes choose not to obey? What are they and why?
- How should we respond when we fail to listen to God and to obey as we should?
- Did Saul need to make either of these oaths? What was the result of Saul's foolish promises? Can you think of any man-made rules that make it harder for people to obey God? Why should we be careful to avoid doing this?
- What does wholehearted obedience look like? How is this different to the way that Saul obeyed God at times? How often do you obey God's word wholeheartedly?
- How many times did Saul consult God about what he should do? Whose idea was it each time? Why is it important for us to think about what God desires in everyday situations? When should we do this? How often?

For 7-11s – print either Activity Sheet C (page 46) or Activity Sheet D (page 47) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



Memory Verse

"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in obedience to him."

Psalm 128:1 [NIV]



Prayer Idea

Ask the children to think about one situation where they might seem to be obeying God on the outside, but their heart is not really in it. They might be doing this to make their parents or teachers happy. Encourage them to pray, asking God to change their hearts so that they would not only hear God's word, but wholeheartedly obey it.



Activity

For 3-7s – choose either Activity A (pages 43 and 44) or Activity B (page 45).

Activity A – Print page 43 onto paper (one copy for every child) and cut the bold lines around the symbols then fold along the dashed line to create windows. Print page 44 onto paper (one copy for every two children) and fold in half as marked.

The children colour in the pictures. Help them to glue the strip of pictures behind the windows on page 43 being careful to align the strip along the right edge of page 43 so that all the pictures are visible through the windows.

Show the children how to fold back each window to reveal what happened each time Saul did something that was either wrong or very unwise.

Remind the children that Saul was not a good king because he did not carefully obey God's word and acted without asking God for help.

Activity B – Print page 45 onto paper (one copy for every child).

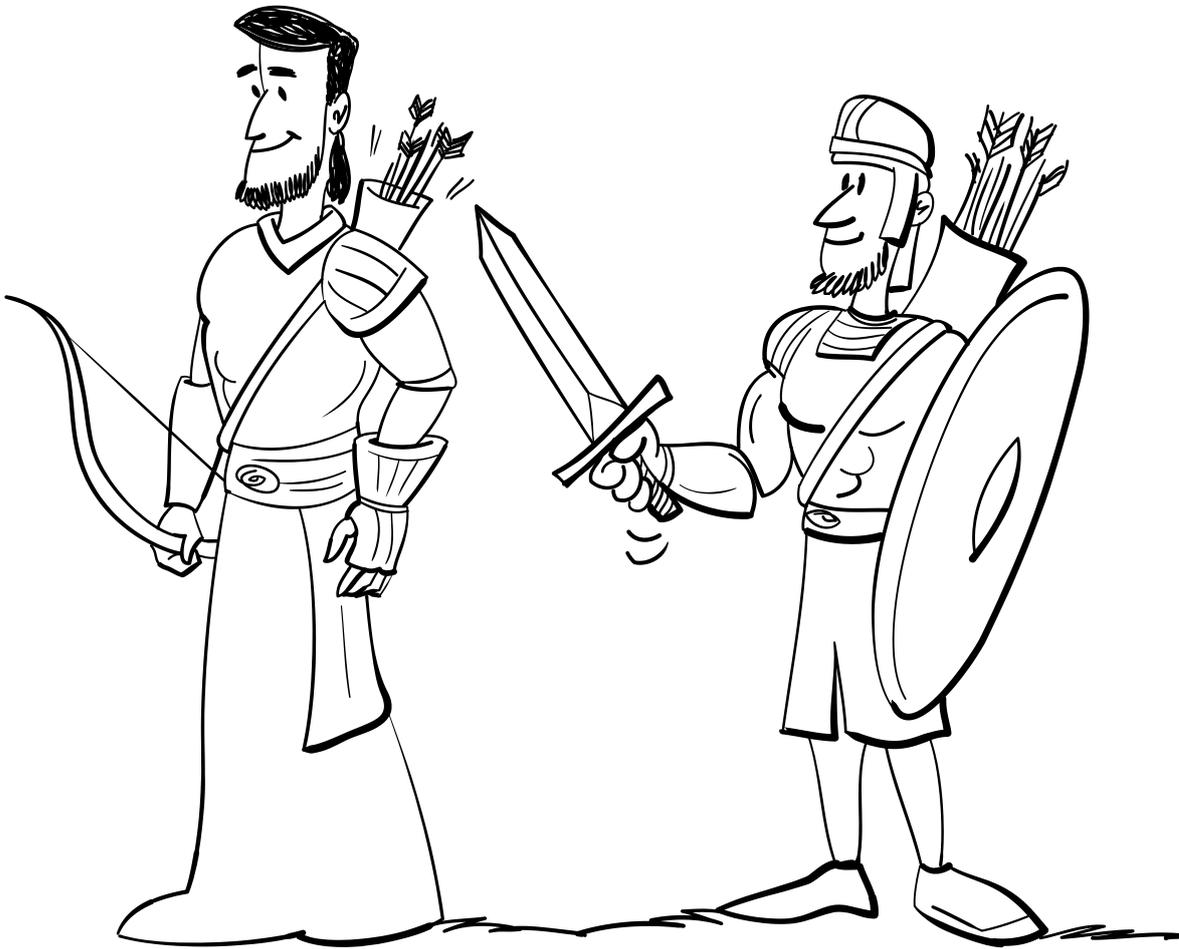
The children colour in the picture.

Remind the children that Saul was not a good king because he did not carefully obey the word of God spoken through the prophet Samuel.

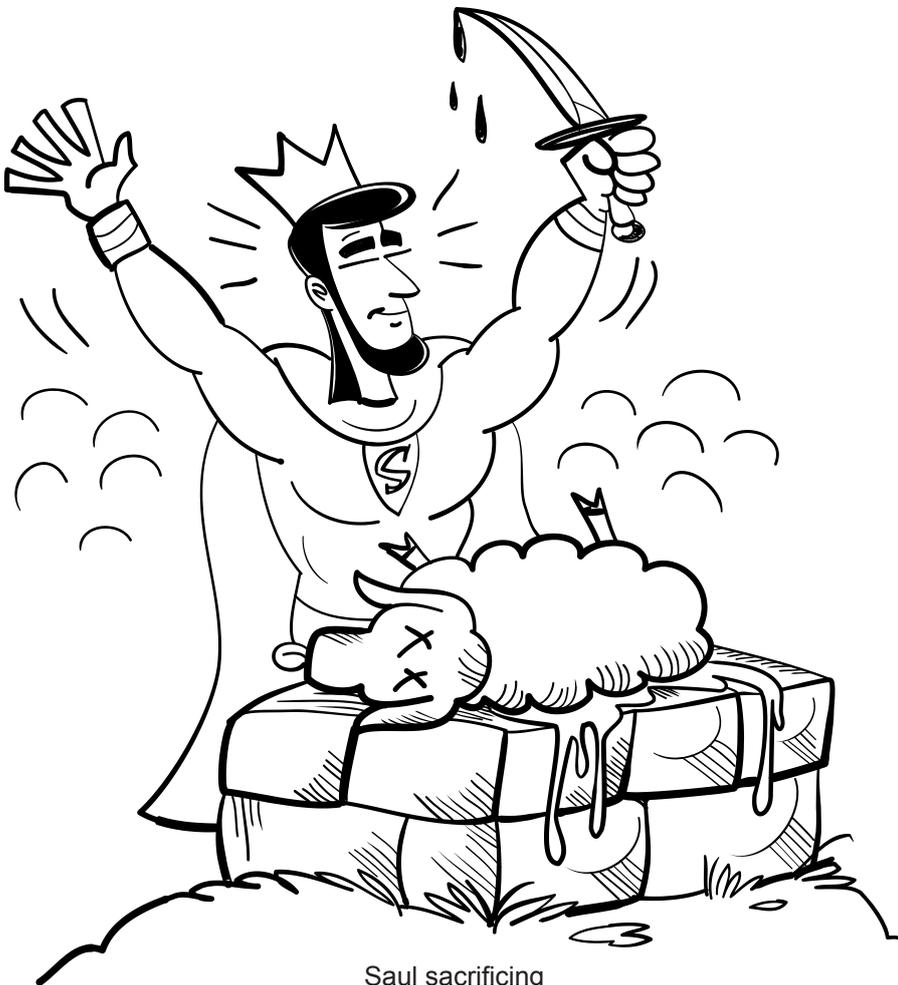




King Saul



Jonathan and armour-bearer



Saul sacrificing



Samuel angry



Men eating meat with blood



Jonathan eating honey



Men defending Jonathan

Saul was not a good king
because...



1 Samuel 13-14

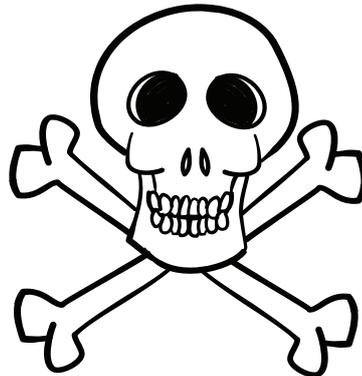
he didn't wait
for Samuel...



he said his army
couldn't eat...



he promised to kill
anyone who ate...



...to make the sacrifice.



...to make the sacrifice.



...but they were so hungry they ate raw meat.



...but they were so hungry they ate raw meat.



...but his son didn't know and ate honey.



...but his son didn't know and ate honey.



Samuel was angry with Saul
because he didn't carefully
obey God's word.

1 Samuel 13



A Disobedient King

The true story can be found in 1 Samuel 13:1-14:45



Discover

What did Saul do when he thought Samuel wouldn't arrive? (13:8-10)

Made the o _ _ _ _ _ to God instead of S _ _ _ _ _ .

What excuse did he give? (13:11-12) Tick two correct boxes.

- Samuel was too old
- He was trying to be helpful
- The Philistines were coming
- Samuel was late

How did Samuel respond? (13:13-14) Fill in the speech bubble below.



You have been f _ _ _ _ _ .
 You have not kept God's c _ _ _ _ _ .
 Your k _ _ _ _ _ will not last.

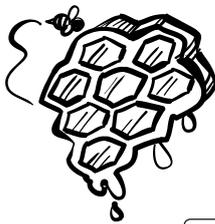


Why did Saul try to kill his son, Jonathan? (14:27, 33-34)

He had broken Saul's foolish o _ _ _ by eating h _ _ _ _ .

Why did the soldiers stop Saul? (14:45) Cross out the wrong words.

Jonathan / **Saul** had **defeated** / **rescued** Israel from the Philistines.

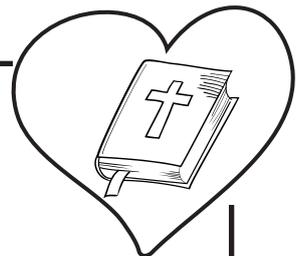


Think Spot

Do you think Saul was a good leader of God's people? Why/Why not?

DISCUSS

Look up 1 Samuel 10:8. How had Saul disobeyed God?
 Which parts of Samuel's instructions had he obeyed?
 Why is partial obedience the same as disobedience?
 What does wholehearted obedience look like?
 How often do you obey God's word wholeheartedly?
 Are there parts of God's word you sometimes ignore? Why?



A Disobedient King

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Discover

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|--|--|
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How did Samuel respond? (13:13-14) Fill in the speech bubble below.



You have been f _____ .
You have not kept God's c _____ .
Your k _____ will not last.



Why did Saul try to kill his son, Jonathan? (14:27, 33-34)

Why did the soldiers stop Saul? (14:45) _____



Think Spot

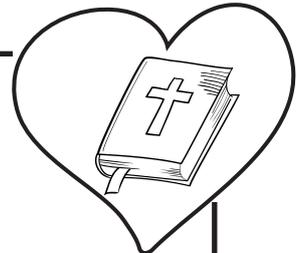
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DISCUSS

Look up 1 Samuel 10:8. How had Saul disobeyed God?
Which parts of Samuel's instructions had he obeyed?

Why is partial obedience the same as disobedience?
What does wholehearted obedience look like?

How often do you obey God's word wholeheartedly?
Are there parts of God's word you sometimes ignore? Why?
How should we respond when we fail to listen to God and to obey as we should?



A Rejected King

1 Samuel 15:1-35

Big Idea : Saul's failure to completely obey God's commands was a rejection of God and so God rejected him as king.

Aim : To teach that ongoing and deliberate disobedience will be judged by God.

The Story So Far

Week 1:

- Israel rejected God as their king and demanded a human king so they could be like the other nations.
- Samuel warned them what a human king would do, but they insisted so he agreed to anoint a king.

Week 2:

- Samuel anointed Saul as God's chosen king of Israel.
- Saul was reluctant to be king and not everyone accepted him.

Week 3:

- Saul proved himself to be an impatient and impulsive leader with little regard for the word of the Lord.
- Saul made a rash vow and was willing to kill his own son because of it, but his men would not let him do this.

was to totally destroy the Amalekites, including all their livestock. The warning given to the Kenites shows that God was not on a murderous rampage; he was carrying out a specific judgement on the Amalekites for attacking his people when they came out of Egypt (cf. Exodus 17:8-16). The Amalekites were wicked people who had rejected God and taken advantage of his people when they were weak and weary (15:18).

15:4-9 Saul and his army only obeyed God's instructions in part. When he was confronted by Samuel it's clear that Saul allowed his greedy men to take the best of the livestock because he was afraid of them and wanted them to think well of him (15:24, 30).

15:10-12 The Lord described Saul's partial obedience as a total rejection of God. God's grief over making Saul king is not because he was unable to foresee Saul's downfall or that he had changed his mind (cf 15:29). Instead it shows that Saul had fallen short of all that a king was meant to be.

Saul's heart is exposed in the self-glorifying monument he set up. There's no doubt about who he attributed his success to!

15:13-26 Saul's lack of remorse over his disobedience and his attempts to justify his actions highlight the fact that he was unsuitable as Israel's king. He even attempted a religious cover-up by claiming that the livestock was intended for sacrifice. He was more concerned about outward appearances than wholehearted obedience. It was because of this rejection of the word of the Lord, spoken by his prophet Samuel, that God rejected Saul as king. To reject the word of the Lord is to reject the Lord himself.



Leader's Study Notes

Read 1 Samuel 15:1-35 noting how Saul responded when Samuel confronted him with his disobedience.

Use the following notes to help you think about the passage in more detail.

This chapter, and those that follow, form the backdrop to David's rise as Israel's second king. They describe the final act in Saul's ongoing failure to carefully keep all that the Lord commanded him to do. When Saul was confronted by his sin his real motives were revealed.

15:1-3 Samuel reminded Saul that although he was king, he had been anointed by Samuel and was to remain subject to the Lord's word spoken by his prophet. God gave specific instructions to Saul that he

15:27-35 Samuel confirmed that God had given his kingdom to someone else (cf. 13:14). The Lord would not change his mind despite Saul's desperate pleas. Saul was more concerned about his reputation among the people. Samuel carried out God's instructions to Saul by killing the Amalekite king.

When confronted by his sin Saul seems at first to be blind to it, but then tried to justify his actions, even giving them the appearance of religious devotion. He eventually confessed and repented, but it was obvious he could never be the king that Israel needed. Saul, like all of us, was a fickle sinner blind to his own shortcomings. He was more concerned about his reputation amongst people than his relationship with God. It is because of this that he never wholeheartedly and completely obeyed God's commands.

Reflect

- Think of a time when you were confronted with a particular sin. How did you respond? Did you accept responsibility or did you try to justify yourself?
- What can we learn from Saul about how not to respond to our sin? In what ways might your attitude need to change with regard to your sin and God's word?
- Thank God that he has dealt with your sin in Jesus. Ask him to help you cultivate a godly distrust of your own righteousness and a firm trust in the grace he has given you in Christ.

Session Outline



Review

Review the previous lesson using the questions provided as well as any of the visual aids that were used for the previous lesson. This is helpful for children who may have missed that session.



Introductory Idea

Introduces this week's lesson.

Pose the questions at the end of the Introductory Idea. This gives children something to look out for in the lesson and helps their concentration. These get answered later in the session.



Teaching Plan

The core of the session.

The action of the Bible text is told as a story for younger children and explained. Or the Bible text is taught as a simple Bible study for older children.



Game Idea

Not essential.

Reinforces the lesson aim in a fun way and provides a way of displacing energy!

Review the questions posed in the Introductory Idea.



Discuss and Apply

Not to be missed!

This is where the children can be quizzed on the content and meaning of the Bible story. Questions and discussion are needed to apply this Bible story to the children's everyday lives. They should do most of the talking.



Prayer Idea

Use the prayer idea or just encourage each child to pray about an aspect of the lesson.



Activity

An opportunity to reinforce the lesson. For younger children, Activity A or B will be suitable. For older children, Activity C or D can be used to facilitate the Teaching or the Discuss and Apply section – some children prefer a lively discussion to completing written answers.



Memory Verse

A fun way of remembering the key verse for the series.



Review

Review the previous lesson using the following questions:

- Who was Saul meant to wait for? [*Samuel* (13:8)]
- What did he do instead? [*Made the sacrifices in Samuel's place; broke God's commands* (13:9, 13)]
- What happened because of this? [*Samuel told him his kingdom would fall* (13:13-14)]



Introductory Idea

Option 1: Pick and Choose. Before the lesson draft a list of ten challenges e.g. eat a biscuit, do ten press-ups, hop on on one foot, sing a song, recite a nursery rhyme, etc. Make sure that there are some challenges which are unappealing!

Ask two children to come to the front then explain that they each need to complete at least five out of ten challenges. Each time they have the choice of saying 'no' to a challenge which will force the other child to do the challenge instead, but they can only say 'no' three times. If one child says 'no' to a challenge, the other child must complete it.

Why did they say 'no' to certain challenges? Why did they choose to do some of them? In today's true story from the Bible Saul was given instructions from God, but he only chose to obey some of them and Samuel had to complete the task for him. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Option 2: Recipe Race. Before the lesson print out the recipes on page 53. You will also need two slices of bread; butter/margarine; some cupcake sprinkles; and two cookie cutter shapes.

Choose two children to race to make the recipe. Give each child a slice of bread, some butter, sprinkles, a cookie cutter and a copy of the recipe. They must complete the challenge within a set amount of time (this should be impossible because of the nature of the instructions!). Be sure to watch for any instructions that the children miss out or do not finish completely.

Talk about why they chose to leave out certain instructions and to carry out others. In today's true story from the Bible Saul was given instructions from God, but he only chose to obey some of them. [Use the Bridge Questions below to create a link with the lesson.]

Bridge Questions

The children must listen carefully to today's true story from the Bible to discover the answers to the following questions:

- What did God tell Saul to do? [*Totally destroy the Amalekites and their animals* (15:3)]
- What did Saul do? [*Attacked and destroyed most of the Amalekites and their animals* (15:9)]
- What didn't Saul do? [*Kill the Amalekite King Agag or the best animals* (15:9)]



Teaching Plan

The story can be broken down into four scenes:

1. **Samuel's Instruction** (15:1-3)
2. **Saul's Disobedience** (15:4-9)
3. **The Confrontation** (15:10-31)
4. **Samuel's Resolution** (15:32-35)

Tell the story using the pictures provided on pages 54 and 55. Resizeable colour versions of these can be downloaded by logging into the profile used to purchase this resource on www.mustard-seeds.net. They can be made into models by gluing them to rings of toilet roll tubes so that they stand upright. You could also make a model of a city to show where the battle took place, perhaps by drawing buildings on the side of an upturned cardboard box. Move the figures around as you summarise what happened. Be careful not to provide more detail than the age group you are teaching can handle without being distracted from the main point. Concise clear stories are better than long detailed ones! You could read out God's words to Samuel (15:2-3, 11) and Samuel's confrontation with Saul (15:22-29) straight from the Bible. Remind the children that the Amalekites were enemies of God and his people, but the Kenites were not.

Emphasise God's clear instructions and how Saul had disobeyed to help them to understand the reason why God was angry with Saul. Finish by reminding the children that this was not the first time that Saul had disobeyed God's word. Samuel had previously told Saul that there would be consequences for (problems because of) his actions. Saul had repeatedly rejected God and so God rejected Saul as king.

For older children – summarise the story as above then use some of the following questions to help them think about the passage in more detail:

- What were God's instructions to Saul? (15:3)
- Why did God tell Saul to do this? (15:2)
- Why did Saul tell the Kenites to leave? (15:6)
- What did Saul and his army do? What didn't they do? (15:4-9)
- How did God respond to what Saul had done? (15:10-11)
- What did Saul do at Carmel? (15:12)
- What did Saul tell Samuel he had done? Was this true? (15:13)
- Who did Saul blame for his disobedience? What excuse did he give? How many times did he do this? (15:15, 20-21)
- What did Samuel say was wrong with what Saul had done? What was the consequence of Saul's rebellion? (15:22-23)
- What did Saul ask Samuel to do? How many times did he do this? What was Samuel's response each time? (15:24-31)
- How did Samuel finish the task that God had given Saul? (15:32-35)



Game Idea

Option 1: For younger children –

Sheep Hunt. Before the lesson print pages 55 and 56 onto paper. You will only need a picture of a sheep from page 55. Cut along the bold lines on page 56 and glue as marked to produce a crown.

The children sit in a circle on the floor. Choose one child to be Samuel and have them stand in the middle of the circle with the crown. Samuel must close his eyes and count down from ten. Give the sheep cut out to one child in the circle to hide somewhere on their person while Samuel counts down. When Samuel has finished counting he can look around the circle and place the crown on the head of the child he thinks has hidden the sheep. If he guesses correctly they must swap places so that the child with the sheep now becomes the new Samuel.

Play a few rounds of the game, choosing a different child to hide the sheep each time. Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible Saul disobeyed Samuel's instructions from God and kept some sheep for himself. This wasn't the first time Saul had ignored God's word and so God rejected Saul as king.

Option 2: Relay Rules. Divide the group into two or three teams and have them line up in their teams at one end of the room. Place a cone/upturned bucket at the other end of the room opposite each team and give the first child in each team a beanbag. The children must walk/run in relay to the other side of the room around the cone and back to their team while balancing a beanbag on their heads. If a child drops the beanbag or touches it with their hands they must go back to their team and start again. Watch carefully for any child that cheats, but do not point it out to them until the end. The first team to finish and sit down without cheating wins.

When the teams have both finished tell them who has won – this could be neither team! Remind them that you told them very carefully what to do if they dropped or touched the beanbag while walking and why one/neither team has won. In today's true story from the Bible Samuel told Saul exactly what God wanted him to do, but Saul disobeyed. This wasn't the first time Saul had ignored God's word and so God rejected Saul as king.

Option 3: For older children – Excuses, Excuses!

Before the lesson write a list of about ten 'crimes' that someone has committed e.g. eaten your lunch; put a frog in the classroom; smashed a vase. Print page 57 onto paper and cut roughly around the crowns.

The children sit in a circle on the floor. If you have a large number of children you could play this game in smaller groups independently of each other. You will need two kings from a deck of playing cards and enough numbered cards to make up the total number of children in each group. Be sure to remove any other picture cards from the deck.

At the start of each round read out one of the crimes from your list. Shuffle the cards and deal out one card facedown to each child. When you count to three the children turn over their cards. The two children with the king cards must come up with a reason for committing that crime. When you count to three again the rest of the children in the circle point to the child they think had the best excuse. The child with the most 'votes' is given one crown.

Play several rounds of the game in this way and then count up the crowns. The child with the most crowns loses (don't reveal this until the end)! Remind the children that in today's true story from the Bible Saul disobeyed Samuel's instructions from God. He made lots of excuses, but none of them were very good! This wasn't the first time Saul had ignored God's word and so God rejected Saul as king.



Discuss and Apply

This chapter exposes Saul's continual disobedience as he once again failed to completely obey all of God's commands. When confronted by his sin he was quick to shift the blame to his men and hide behind religious activity. Even once his guilt was made clear and he admitted his fault, Saul still seemed more concerned about his reputation than his wrongdoing. He had been exposed as the half-hearted, self-serving king that he was, but was unwilling to admit to it and to repent.

You could start by encouraging the children to think of a time when they did something wrong and tried to get out of trouble. What did they do? Who/what did they blame? Why is it embarrassing to have to admit that you've done wrong? What might others think of you if they know you've done something wrong?

Help the children to understand the difference between making a mistake and deliberately disobeying God repeatedly. This was not the first time that Saul had ignored God's word and Samuel had already spoken to him about it. He chose to keep on disobeying God. When we make mistakes or even choose to disobey sometimes we need to admit the things that we have done and say sorry for the way that we have treated God. Explain that obeying only part of God's word is the same as disobeying. We cannot pick and choose what to obey.

Spend some time discussing the way that we should respond when our sin is found out by contrasting Saul's reaction. Does God know when we have done wrong? Is it possible to hide anything from God? What does God think of our sin? Talk about how God has dealt with our sin at the cross and why trying to hide our sin from God or pretending that it's not serious is a silly thing to do. Jesus' perfect obedience made him the perfect king; when we trust in his death in our place we can be forgiven for all our sin. Help the children to understand that when we are truly sorry and ask God to forgive us because of

what Jesus did we can be certain that he will forgive us. We need to ask God to change our hearts so that we want to obey all his commands.

For older children – discuss as above, but then spend some time talking about why Saul disobeyed God and why God rejected Saul as king. Despite Saul's desperate pleas to Samuel God had already decided to give the kingdom to someone else and he would not change his mind (cf. 13:13-14, 15:28-29). God doesn't change his mind about how he deals with disobedience or how he feels about our sin.

Talk about the reasons that Saul gave for his disobedience. Whose opinion was he most concerned about? (15:24-25, 30) Who did he honour? (15:12) Help the children to understand that Saul was more interested in what people thought of him than he was about fully keeping God's commands. He chose to do what the people wanted rather than what God had explicitly told him to do.

You could also use some of the following questions to help the children think about the meaning of the passage in more detail:

- How did Saul disobey God? Why was this so serious? What does this show about his attitude to God's word? What does this show about his attitude towards God?
- Are there some things in the Bible that you choose not to obey? Why/why not? How should we treat God's word?
- What does the Lord delight in more than sacrifices or religious activities? Which of these do you tend to do more?
- What did Saul do when Samuel confronted him about his sin? Why do you think Saul made so many excuses? Do you find it hard to admit when you get things wrong? How should we respond when we sin? How does knowing that God already knows what we have done wrong help us to admit our faults to him?
- Even when Saul had confessed his sin, what was he still most concerned about? Was there any indication that Saul's attitude towards God had changed?
- What does God's rejection of Saul tell us about the sort of king he wanted for his people? Who was the only king who ever achieved this? How does Jesus' total obedience help us when we sin?



Prayer Idea

Remind the children that being truly sorry about something includes a commitment to not do that thing again. We don't always get this right which is why we need God's help. Encourage them to think about the times that they have got things wrong this week and to say sorry to God. They can then pray out loud, asking for God's help to not do those things again and giving thanks that Jesus has already taken their punishment.



Activity

For 3-7s – choose either Activity A (page 58) or Activity B (page 59).

Activity A – Print page 58 onto paper for each child.

Before the lesson cut the page as marked.

The children colour in the pictures. Help them to glue the picture of Saul over the cattle and sheep as marked. Show them how to fold the picture of Saul to the left to reveal the sheep and cattle.

Remind them that Saul did not fully obey God's command to destroy everything belonging to the Amalekites. Because Saul rejected God's word, God rejected him as king.

Activity B – Print page 59 onto paper (one copy for every child).

Before the lesson cut the page as marked to produce a strip of paper with a crown and two ears. Use a craft blade to cut the four vertical slits above Saul's head.

The children colour in the pictures. Help them to weave the strip through the slits starting from the underside of the page on the right side and alternating in and out towards the left.

Help the children to tape a toothpick with the sharp ends cut off to the back of the strip near the ear with the cross through it. This will prevent the strip being pulled all the way out.

Show the children how to pull the ear without the cross over it to move the strip from left to right. This will make the ear with the cross through it appear and the crown disappear.

Remind them that Saul did not listen to God or fully obey his command to destroy everything belonging to the Amalekites. Because Saul rejected God's word, God rejected him as king.

For 7-11s – print either Activity Sheet C (page 60) or Activity Sheet D (page 61) onto paper for each child. Choose whichever is appropriate for your children and use it to reinforce the lesson or as a discussion starter.



Memory Verse

"Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in obedience to him."

Psalm 128:1 [NIV]

Fairy Bread Recipe

Follow all the instructions carefully!

1. Place a slice of bread on a plate
2. Turn the bread over 3 times
3. Do 10 star jumps
4. Spread butter evenly onto the bread
5. Count to 20
6. Count out 1000 sprinkles
7. Place the sprinkles evenly over the buttered bread
8. Run around the room
9. Use a cookie cutter to cut out shapes
10. Enjoy eating your fairy bread!

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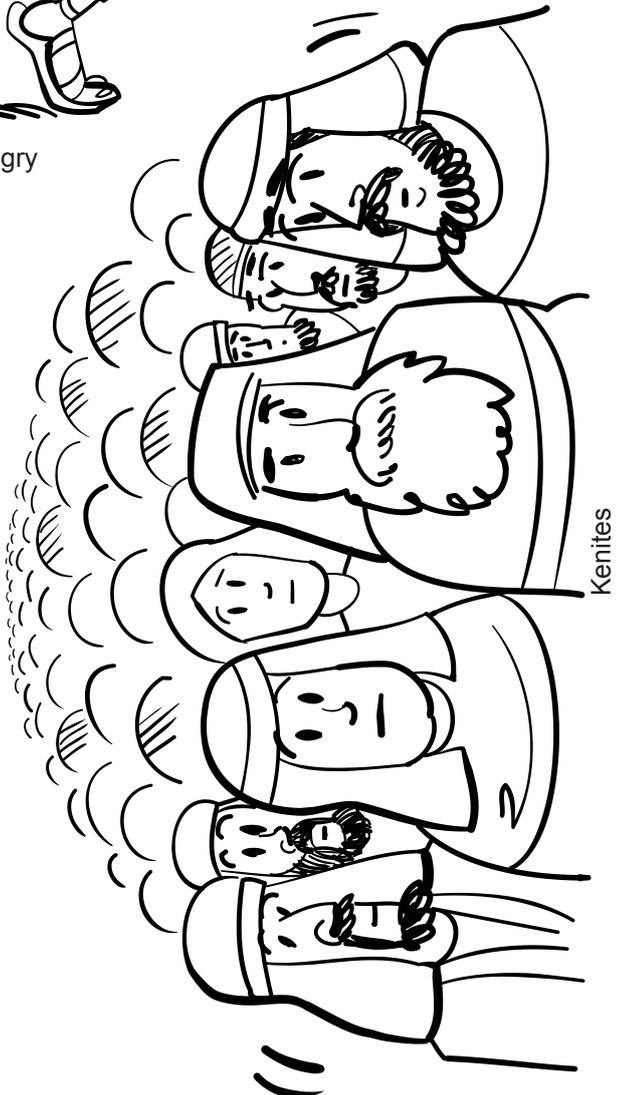
King Saul



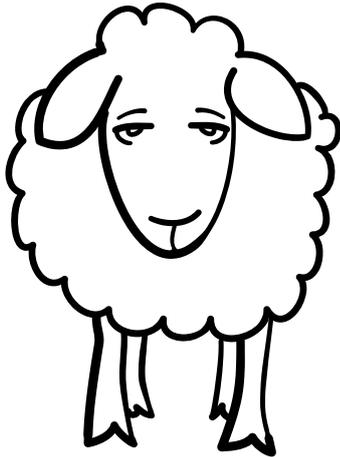
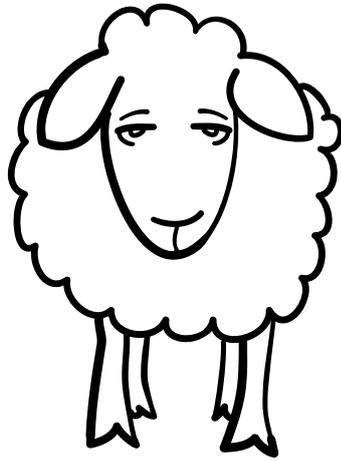
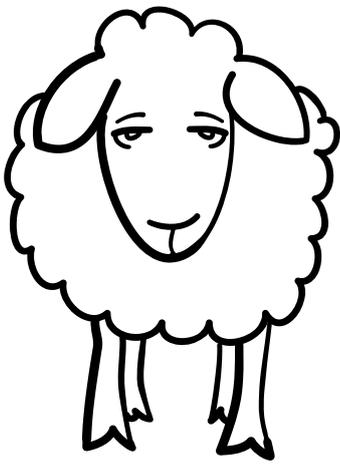
Samuel angry



Amalekites



Kenites



Sheep



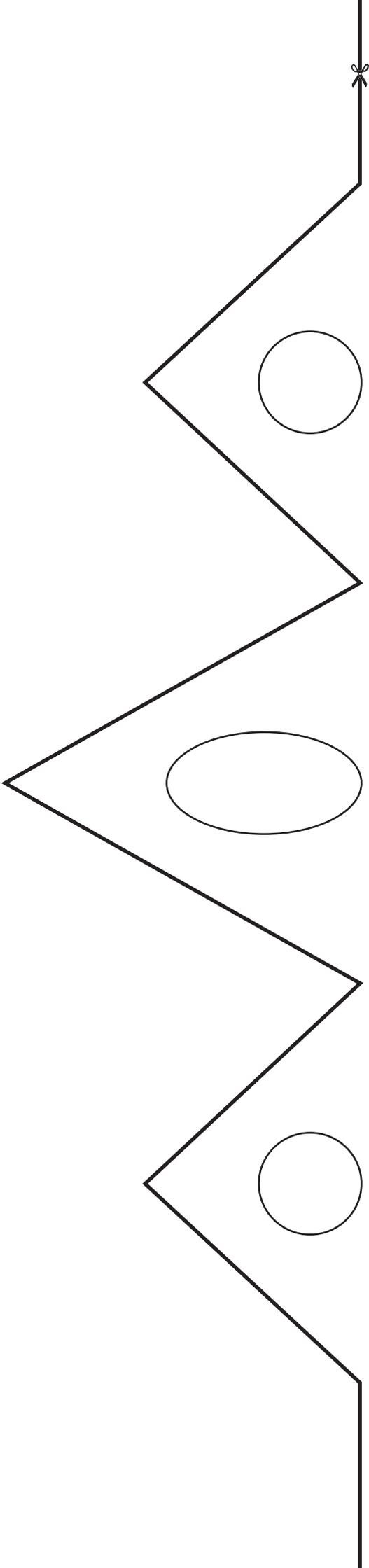
Saul pleading with Samuel



Samuel killed King Agag

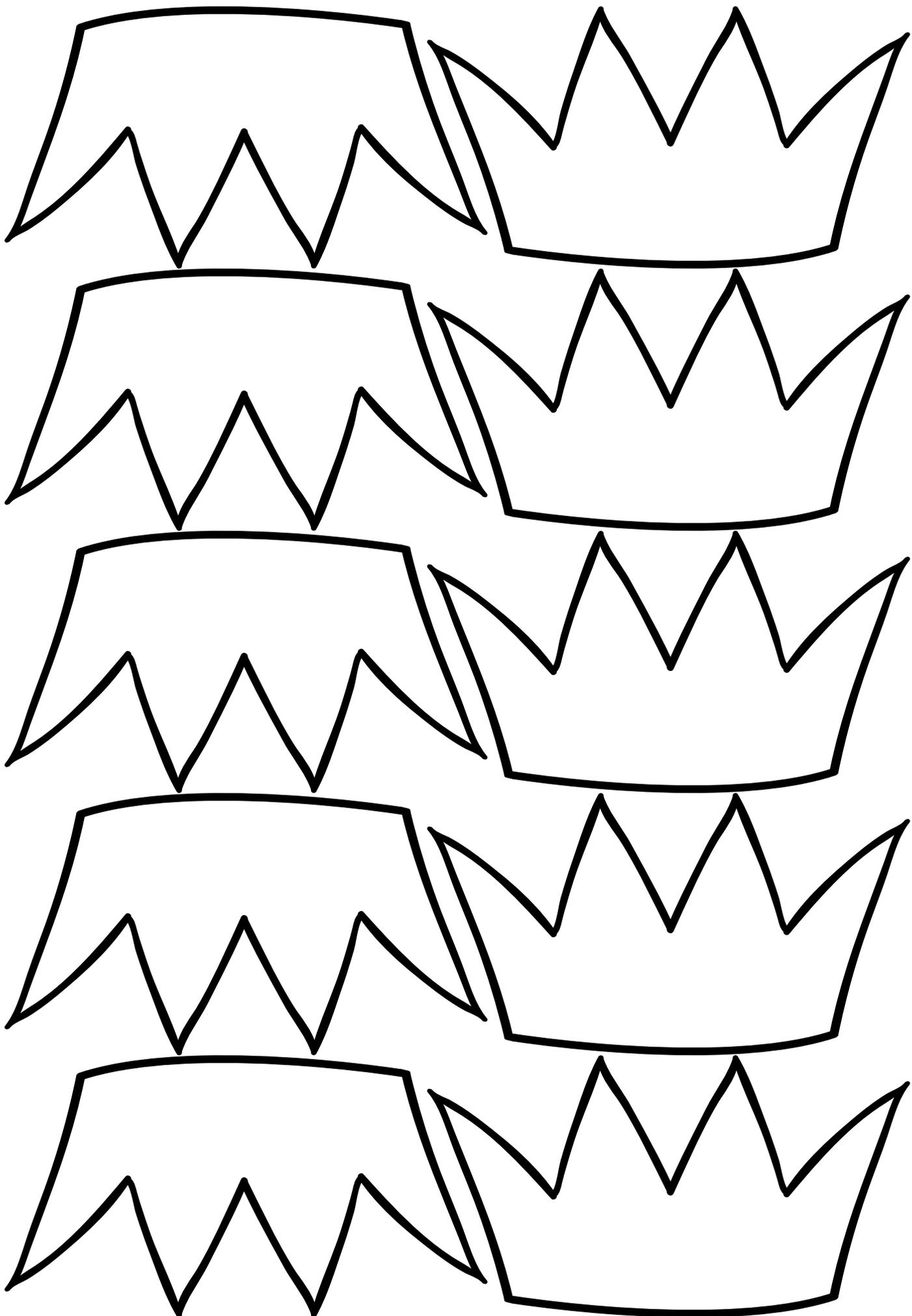


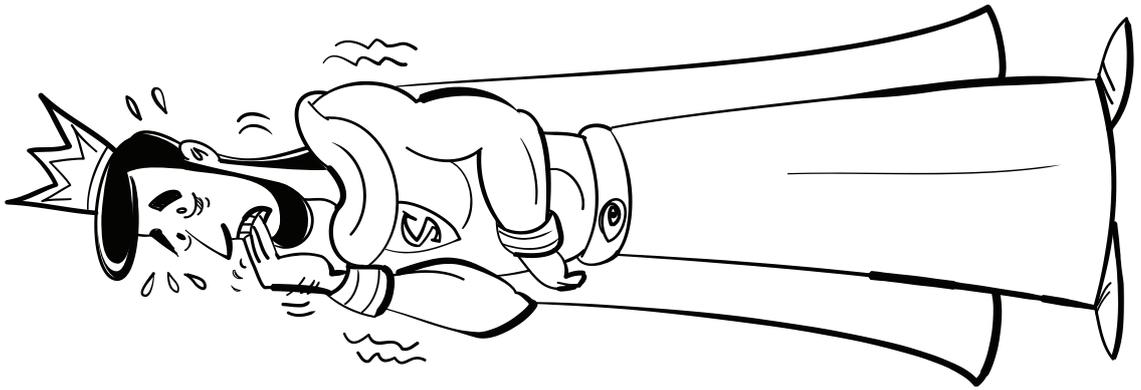
King Agag



Saul – Week 4
Game Idea – Option 1





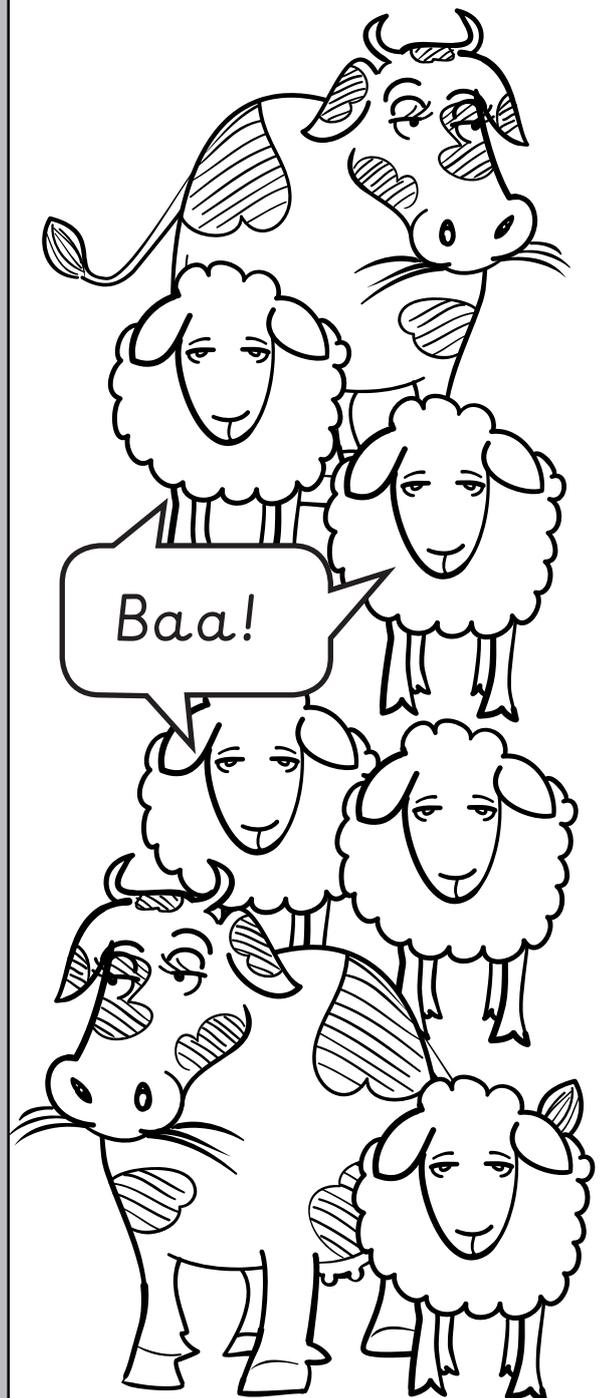


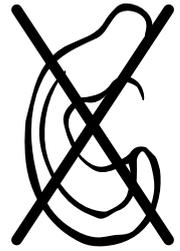
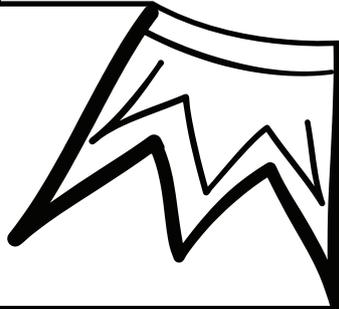
Saul did not fully obey
God's command.

Because you
have rejected
the word of
the Lord, he
has rejected
you as king.



1 Samuel 15





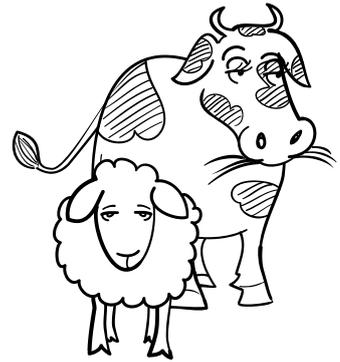
Saul did not fully
obey God's command.

1 Samuel 15



A Rejected King

The true story can be found in 1 Samuel 15:1-35



Discover

What instructions had God given Saul? (15:2-3)

1. Attack the A _____ .
2. Totally d _____ everything that belongs to them.

Which instructions did Saul obey? (15:7-9) Circle the correct answer.

None of them

Some of them

All of them



Think Spot

Why is partial obedience the same as disobedience?
Was this the first time Saul had disobeyed God?

What did Saul tell Samuel? (15:13, 15, 20-1, 24) Tick all the correct boxes.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> They had done everything God wanted | <input type="checkbox"/> It was the soldiers' fault |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They kept some things for sacrifices | <input type="checkbox"/> He was afraid of the people |

What did Samuel tell Saul? (15:26) Fill in the speech bubble below.



You have r _____
God's w _____ so God has
r _____ you as k _____ .



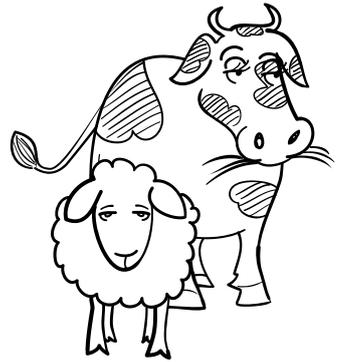
Discuss

How did Saul disobey God? Why was this so serious?
What does this reveal about his attitude towards God and his word?
Why do you think Saul disobeyed? How did he respond when he had been found out? When are you tempted to ignore God's word?
How should we respond when we get things wrong?

A Rejected King

The true story can be found in 1 Samuel 15:1-35

Discover



What instructions had God given Saul? (15:2-3)

1. Attack the A _____ .
2. Totally d _____ everything that belongs to them.

Which instructions did Saul disobey? (15:7-9) _____



Think Spot

Why is partial obedience the same as disobedience?
Was this the first time Saul had disobeyed God?

What did Saul tell Samuel? (15:13, 15, 20-1, 24) Tick all the correct boxes.

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> They had done everything God wanted | <input type="checkbox"/> It was the soldiers' fault |
| <input type="checkbox"/> They kept some things for sacrifices | <input type="checkbox"/> He was afraid of the people |

What did Samuel tell Saul? (15:26) Fill in the speech bubble below.



You have r _____
God's w _____ so God has
r _____ you as k _____ .



DISCUSS

How did Saul disobey God? Why was this so serious?
What does this reveal about his attitude towards God and his word?
Why do you think Saul disobeyed? How did he respond when he had been found out? When are you tempted to ignore God's word?
How should we respond when we get things wrong?
Why did God reject Saul? What sort of king does he want for his people? Who is the only king who ever achieved this?