

25. Heart



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm
139:13-18

David is chosen as king



AIMS

To help the children reflect on the fact that appearances don't always reflect reality

To help them understand that God sees what is inside and that is what matters to him, that no matter what others may say about us or what we may think of ourselves, he looks on us with love

God chose David as king because he knew what was in his heart. God knows what we are really like inside and that is what matters to him more than how we look on the surface.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What is the difference between the way people tend to see things and the way God sees things?
- How do you feel about the fact that God sees the heart and not just the outward appearance?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

► Farmer, Farmer Game

Choose one child to be the farmer. Get them to stand at one end of the hall while all the rest of the children form a long line along the opposite end of the hall. The farmer and the line of children face one another, and the children in the line call out together: "Farmer, Farmer, may we cross your golden river?"

The farmer responds; "Only if..." and adds something relating to their appearance, e.g. "Only if you

have red hair", "Only if you have glasses", "Only if you're wearing blue," etc.

All the children who fit the description the farmer has given can cross the river safely (walk to the other end of the hall). The children who don't fit the description then have to try to cross the river too, but the farmer will try to catch them. If they are caught by the farmer, they have to stay at the farmer's end of the hall and help with catching people on the next round.

► Crisps Challenge

You will need: blindfolds, three or four packets of crisps in different flavours (before coming to the group, open the packets carefully at the bottom, switch the crisps into different bags, and reseal them with some rolled up tape)

(continued overleaf)

Get one or two of the children to volunteer to take part in a challenge. Say that you are going to blindfold them and give them some crisps to eat, and they have to identify the flavours. Make you sure you check for any allergies.

Show the other children the bags as you let the child(ren) taste them but tell them not to say anything about whether they think they are right or wrong. Tell them that you will keep score and reveal how many were correctly identified after all the flavours have been tasted.

The children watching will probably think the child(ren) tasting them are getting all the answers wrong but, actually, appearances were deceptive. It is likely to be those tasting the crisps who really have a better idea of which flavour they are.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap and intro to story

Remind the children that they have been learning about the time when the Israelites were living in the Promised Land. They were struggling to follow God and obey him, so God provided various leaders, known as judges. None of these leaders was perfect but God used them to help his people turn back to him and defeat their enemies.

The last judge was Samuel. We heard last time about how he learned to listen to God's voice when he was just a young boy. He grew up and became Israel's judge but, when Samuel was getting older and planning to retire, the Israelites decided that they didn't want to have a judge any more. They wanted to have a king like the people in the other countries round

about. God chose a man called Saul to be king and at first he was a good king but then he started to turn away from God so God decided he was going to replace him. God sent Samuel to see a man called Jesse and told him that one of his sons was going to be the next king.

▶ Story - David is chosen as king

You will need: sheep toy, small jar or flask to represent jar of anointing oil, image of David and his brothers (from additional document: David and brothers) - optional

Choose eight children to be Jesse's sons and ask them to form a line in order of height and stand facing the rest of the children. If you have less than eight children, you could allow all of them to take part - have some as the eldest two or three sons and one as David; you can imagine the other sons in the middle of the line. Alternatively, you could use the image from the additional document: David and brothers to tell the story. Have the small figure representing David folded behind the others until he comes into the story.

There was a man called Jesse and he had eight sons. One day Samuel was sent to Jesse's house. God had told him that one of Jesse's sons was to be the next King of Israel and Samuel had to go and anoint him.

So Samuel set out for Jesse's house and when he arrived, Jesse got his sons to line up in order of age to meet Samuel. There was one son that wasn't there though. That was the youngest son David who was a shepherd and he was off in the fields looking after the sheep.

(Give the smallest child a toy sheep to hold and send them to stand off at the side of the room.)

Samuel came in and he looked at the first son who was called Eliab. (As you go through the story, work your way along the line of children, pointing out each one in turn.) He was tall and strong and handsome. Samuel thought he'd make an ideal king - he looked the part. But then God spoke to Samuel and he said, "Don't judge by his good looks or his height because this is not the one I have chosen. People judge others by how they look but I judge people by what is in their heart."

So Samuel moved on to the next son, Abinadab. Again he thought Abinadab looked just right to be a king but again God said, "No, this is not the one I've chosen." Samuel moved on to the next son, Shimea, but he wasn't the son that God had chosen either. Samuel worked all the way down the line of sons and each one of them had something good about them which made Samuel think maybe this one would be the king, but none of them was the one God had chosen. Samuel wondered if he'd made a mistake and come to the wrong place.

He said to Jesse, "Have you any other sons?" and Jesse said, "Well, there is my youngest son but he's out in the fields looking after the sheep."

"Send for him," said Samuel. "We must not sit down to eat until he arrives."

So Jesse sent for his youngest son David. (Get the child playing David to come over to join the others.)

When Samuel saw him, he thought there was no way this could be the next king. He was just a boy - he was far too young and small. But Samuel asked God and God said, "This is the one I've chosen to be king."

So Samuel got his flask of olive oil and he poured it on David's head to anoint him, (*mime doing this*) which was what they did when a new king was chosen. Then Samuel went back home. David didn't become king right away but he knew from that point on that he was the one God had chosen to be the next king of Israel.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

You will need pictures of people (from additional document: people pictures)

Ask the children: **Why do you think God chose David to be king?**

Although he was just a young boy, God could see what he was like inside. Read 1 Samuel 16v7 - God says, "People judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts."

If you did the Crisps Challenge above you could refer back to that - it is not what things look like on the outside that really matters, but what is inside.

Show the children some pictures of unfamiliar people.

What words would you use to describe these people? What things can we know about these people by looking at them? (e.g. we can get an idea of their age, we can maybe have an idea of their mood at the time the photo was taken)

What things are impossible to know just by looking at them? (e.g. what they're really thinking and feeling, what their personality is like, what has happened in their lives)

It's easy to make judgements about people just by looking at

them, but it's not fair to do that. I'm sure none of us like it when people judge us without getting to know us.

The Bible says that God knows what each of us are like inside and our character is much more important to him than what we look like or how we seem to others.

▶ Reflection Card Activity

You will need: Reflection Card for each child (from additional document: Reflection Cards), pens or pencils, Bible

Give each child a reflection card. Get them to fold it in half so that the picture of the figure is on the outside and the picture of the heart is on the inside. Give them a moment to think about words that would describe them on the outside - words to do with their appearance or words that others would use to describe them - and get them to write or draw those around the figure on the front of the card.

Then get them to open the card and think about words that would describe them on the inside - how they feel or what they think they're really like.

Sometimes it can feel like people judge us without getting to know us and sometimes they can say nasty things about us.

Sometimes we can feel bad about ourselves when we look inside. All of us make mistakes at times and none of us is perfect, but when God looks at us, he does it with love - no matter what other people think of us or what we think of ourselves, and no matter what wrong things we have done.

David did some good things, but he also did some terrible things. These are some words, he wrote, talking about how God knows us and loves us.

Read Psalm 139:13-18

The Bible teaches that God knows us even better than we know ourselves so we can be honest with him.

Because he loves us, we can go to him as we are, and he will change our hearts so that we can be right with him. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, which we thought about last term, we can be forgiven for the things we have done wrong by trusting in Jesus.

If we ask God, he will change our hearts so that we can live in a way that pleases him more and more.

Lead the children in prayer.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ **Song: Man looks on the outside by Nigel Hemming**

You will need: equipment to play music

This song ties in well with the theme for this session: youtu.be/yoQwSChEhtU