

Aim of lesson

To appreciate what God values when he looks at us.

Bible background

1 Samuel 16; 17; Psalm 23.

Outline of lesson

The LORD looks on the heart

Ask the class if they have ever assumed that, because David was chosen by God, he was loved, wanted, respected, well treated, listened to and valued by his family. If so, think again. Sometimes the youngest child can be the darling of the family; sometimes he can just be ignored and trodden on. Think about the way Joseph's brothers treated him. Read together 1 Samuel 16:1-13. The different characters could be read by different members of the class.

David and his family

Go through the first section in the workbook, discussing each question together and looking at the references.

1. David was the youngest son – the class can find confirmation in 1 Chronicles 2:15.
2. From 1 Samuel 6:5 it is clear that David was not even regarded as a member of the family. Jesse's sons are consecrated, but David is not included – he is left to look after the sheep.
3. When Samuel anoints David (1 Samuel 16:11-13), it seems from Psalm 23:5 that it was 'in the presence of my enemies' – his brothers?
4. 1 Samuel 17:28 – When David took food for his brothers, Eliab, the eldest, treats him with scorn
5. David's job of looking after the sheep was regarded as a menial one '... with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness?'
6. But he was left to do this lonely and dangerous job without any help from his family – it was David, not his brothers, who slew both lions and bears.

Ask the class to think about how they would feel if treated in a similar way. Collect on a blackboard or a large sheet of paper their feelings for example, we would feel unwanted, miserable, frustrated, hurt, lonely, let down, frightened. David also felt like that.

A man after God's own heart

This phrase (1 Samuel 13:14) has become a cliché in English, and it is easy to use it without thinking what it means. We can get a sense of it when we see a picture painted 'after Rembrandt', for instance; it doesn't mean that it was painted later than Rembrandt, it means that it was in the same style. To say that David was a man after God's own heart means that he thought in the same way as God thought – his heart was like God's.

Work through the second section in the workbook together, bringing out the character of David which made Samuel describe him as 'a man after God's own heart'.

1. David was a humble man who did not have an exaggerated opinion of his own importance.
2. He did not complain about being left out when his brothers were brought before Samuel.
3. When Eliab was rude to him he did not answer in an aggressive way.
4. In Psalm 27:10; 69:8 it seems that David was disowned by his family – think about how in turn Jesus' family reacted to him (Mark 3:21, 31-35).
5. It is clear from Psalm 23 that just as David cared for and guided his sheep, he had come to see himself as a sheep guided by a greater shepherd.
6. David trusted in God to protect him, even against Goliath.

The Lord is my shepherd

If there is time, look together at Psalm 23. Because of verse 5 have the class consider it as a psalm that David may have written after the events of 1 Samuel 16. Ask each of the class to think of what this shows them about David's feelings about God. You may like to give them one verse each to look at, or divide the class into two and give three verses to each group.

Digging deeper

Some more Bible books

This section revises the books of the Bible covered so far in this school year and suggests continuing learning the names of the books of the Bible in order.

Relevance to our lives

Ask the class to think during the week of about some things that God considers important about them, and that their friends, teachers or family consider unimportant. Spend a few minutes next week discussing their ideas.

Prayer

Lord, help us to learn from David how to have a heart that is like yours. Help us to learn to value other people, as you do, for what they are like inside.

Other suggestions for activities

- Assuming that the class is familiar with the story of David and Goliath, Psalm 8 can be looked at as possibly having been written during the night following David's victory (see especially verse 2). Getting the class to put the Psalm into their own words would help them to see David's appreciation of God.
- Look at Psalm 23 to see the work of a shepherd. Consider, together, how God is like a shepherd to us; our protector, leader, and provider.