

1 Samuel 19:8-18; 20

## Aim of lesson

To show how jealousy can lead to hatred and wickedness, and how love results in kindness and good deeds.

## Background study

A map showing the area into which David fled. 1 Corinthians 13:4-6.

## Suggested outline of lesson

Begin by questioning the children about the previous lesson in order to discover whether or not they are quite clear as to why the friendship between David and Jonathan was unusual and how difficult the situation was for them. Show how Jonathan became a go-between, torn by loyalty to his father, who was also his king, and by concern for his greatest friend. With wise words he was able to stave off Saul's wicked intentions for a time and even elicited sworn promises that David would not be harmed, so that David was able to return to the palace.

## Safe ... for a while

However, this state of affairs was short-lived. Saul's behaviour was unpredictable and his moods became more and more extreme. The news of David's military successes roused again Saul's jealousy and hatred, which made him want to hurt David. No doubt the children will know how it feels to be so angry that one is driven to say and do bad things which are later regretted and fill one with shame. In his uncontrollable anger Saul again threw a javelin at David, who fled from the palace to his own home and to his loving and anxious wife. It was she who convinced him of the danger he was in and urged him to run away. It is obvious from the account that her love for David was stronger than her loyalty to her father, the king. Describe David's exciting and dramatic escape, emphasizing the great risk Michal took in trying to deceive the king, knowing that his violent temper could cause her life to be threatened, too.

## On the run

David was now on the run. He was an outlaw, and in constant danger. There was only one person left to whom he could turn, and that was Samuel, the aged prophet, though even with him David was not safe for long. Wherever he went Saul's men pursued him, and he had to keep on running.

Point out that David had been living in the royal house at Gibeah and would be expected to join in the "new moon" festivities. He had a special place allotted at the king's table and so, of course, his absence would be most noticeable. David did return to the city and sought out Jonathan. It seems that David had finally learned that he could no longer trust Saul. Jonathan, however, clung to the vain hope that his father's intentions might not

be as bad as David supposed, and agreed to speak to his father again. The conversation between Saul and Jonathan so angered the king that now he turned against his own son to the extent of threatening him with his spear. Saul's bitterness towards David was aggravated by the knowledge that both his son and his daughter sided with his enemy. He must have felt betrayed. For fear of Saul's violence, Jonathan and David could not meet openly, but made detailed plans for the prince to signal his findings to his friend.

### **A vow of friendship**

Through all these frightening and unhappy events David and Jonathan's loyalty and love for each other grew even stronger. They must have anticipated that, once David had severed his connections with the court, they might never meet again. Sadly, and hurriedly, they made a vow that henceforward their two families would be bound together in enduring friendship.

### **Worksheets**

These should be self-explanatory.

### **Prayer**

Dear Lord God, we thank you for the loyalty and love of David and Jonathan. Please help us to so love our friends that, when they do well, we are happy for them. Amen.

### **Memory verse**

"Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast" (1 Corinthians 13:4).

### **Relevance to the children's lives**

Saul was jealous of David because the people loved him for his bravery and success in battle. How did this jealousy affect his attitude towards David? Who suffered most from Saul's hatred? Think how easy it is for people to make themselves unhappy by feeling jealous of others who may have more friends, or who are cleverer or better at sport, or prettier, and how, instead of being pleased and admiring, their jealousy makes them unpleasant and spiteful. Talk about this problem; try to find out why people feel like this and how such feelings can be overcome.