

Lesson

Engaging Introduction

Good morning, boys and girls! Today, we're going to dive into a very interesting story from the Bible, full of excitement, drama, and important lessons. We're going to explore a chapter from the book of 2 Samuel, in the Old Testament. Have you ever had a disagreement with a friend or sibling? It's not always easy to fix those problems, right? Well, in 2 Samuel 18, we meet a family with deep conflicts and a battle that is going to change everything.

Now imagine a time long, long ago, when kings ruled the land, and messages were sent by runners instead of texts and emails. In today's story, we'll meet King David, a man chosen by God who had a big family. One of his sons, Absalom, decided he wanted to be king instead, and that's where our story gets complicated!

As we journey through this lesson, we're going to learn about what happened in the battle between David's men and Absalom's followers. More importantly, we'll discover how David felt about what happened and the lessons we can take from this story for our own lives. Imagine having to face someone you love on the opposite side of a conflict—what do you do? Let's jump into our Bible story and find out!

Main Teaching Points

1. The Heart of a Father

Let's start by talking about King David. David was not only a great king but also a father. He loved his son Absalom deeply, even though Absalom did something very wrong by trying to overthrow him to become king himself. This shows us David's kindness and his great love. Despite Absalom's actions, David didn't want to see his son get hurt. He even gave strict orders to his commanders to "be gentle with the young man, Absalom."

Think about it this way: if you've ever been in trouble but your mom or dad still love you and care for you despite what you did, that's similar to how David felt. It's a beautiful picture of unconditional love, like God's love for us, even when we make mistakes.

2. The Battle in the Forest

The second part of our story takes place in a dense forest. Absalom's army faced off against David's soldiers. Imagine running through a thick forest, trying to find your way, while a battle is going on! The Bible tells us that more men died because of the forest than by the sword. This means it was a very difficult place to fight.

As the battle raged on, something surprising happened. Absalom got caught by his hair in the branches of a tree. Imagine swinging from the monkey bars and suddenly getting tangled—it's not fun and can be quite scary! Absalom was hanging there, unable to escape. Even though David asked for mercy for Absalom, one of his commanders, Joab, didn't listen and took Absalom's life.

This teaches us a lesson: sometimes people don't follow directions, and that can lead to tragic results. Joab chose to disobey David's order, which teaches us about the importance of following guidance and the consequences of our actions.

3. David's Grief

Now, after the battle, something very sad happened—King David wept for Absalom. The news of Absalom's death broke David's heart, and he cried out, "If only I had died instead of you, Absalom." David's sadness was profound, showing us the deep love he had for his son despite all that happened.

This part of the story shows us that it is okay to be sad when things don't go the way we hoped. It also helps us see how important forgiveness and love are in our relationships, even when we're hurt. Just like when we say sorry to a friend and make up after a disagreement, David's reaction reminds us of how healing and forgiving love can be.

These teaching points bring us to the heart of the lesson for today: love and forgiveness are powerful. Even in difficult situations, we can learn from David's love for Absalom and how, no matter the hurt, love remains.

Personal Application for Elementary Students

Let's bring these lessons into our own lives now. One of the biggest lessons we learn from 2 Samuel 18 is about forgiveness and love. You might not have a brother or sister trying to become king over you, but you probably know what it's like to have disagreements or fights with friends and family.

Imagine a friend at school who hurt your feelings by saying something unkind. It might be really easy to stay mad and not want to play with them anymore. But remember how David felt about Absalom—he didn't stop loving him, even when Absalom did things that were wrong. David showed grace and hoped for good, just like we can choose to forgive and move on with our friends.

Another important lesson is listening and following guidance. Remember how Joab didn't listen to David's instructions about Absalom? God gives us parents and teachers to guide us because they care about us and want the best for us. Listening to their advice can help us make better decisions.

Lastly, when we feel sad or upset, it's important to talk to someone about it, just as David poured out his heart when he was grieving. You can talk to your parents, friends, or even God in prayer whenever you're feeling troubled.

Remember, God loves each of us deeply, even when we make mistakes. By learning to forgive and listen, we can become more like Him in our everyday lives.

Interactive Discussion Questions

Now that we've talked about these important lessons, let's think about some questions together. These questions are designed to help us think more deeply about what we've learned, and how we can apply it to our lives.

Question 1: Why do you think King David gave orders to be gentle with Absalom even though Absalom wanted to be king instead?

- Teaching Guidance: Encourage students to recognize the love and bond between a parent and child that doesn't break even when mistakes are made. Discuss how love sometimes means wanting the best for someone and caring for them regardless of their actions.

Question 2: What could Absalom have done differently if he wanted to solve his disagreement with

King David without fighting?

- Teaching Guidance: Guide students to think about talking things out, seeking advice, or finding peace without resorting to conflict. This encourages them to think about peaceful resolution of conflicts in their own lives.

Question 3: How do you feel when someone forgives you for something you did wrong? How can you show forgiveness to others?

- Teaching Guidance: Discuss how forgiveness can make everyone feel better and how holding onto anger can be hurtful. Explain the freedom and joy that comes from forgiving, just like God's love and forgiveness for us.

As we conclude our lesson, let's remember the great example of David's love for Absalom and think about how we can show love and forgiveness to those around us. It's not always easy, but with God's help, we can do it!