

David Chosen by God

Main Lesson, Activity and Discussion

Ages 5 to 11 | Read Aloud Lesson | Scripture Centered | Christ Centered

1

LESSON OVERVIEW

Week and Date	Week 26 June 28, 2026
Lesson Title	David Chosen by God
Primary Scripture	1 Samuel 16
Timeline Placement	Right after God rejects Saul as king, God sends Samuel to anoint a new king from the family of Jesse in Bethlehem.

Big Idea: God looks at the heart, and He chooses people the world overlooks. That points us to Jesus, the King God promised.

2

OPENING BIBLE FOUNDATION

Good morning, friends. Before we begin, let's remember what this special book is. The Bible is God's true Word. It has 66 books, written by more than 40 different people, across many years and many places. Yet it tells one big story, because God is the true Author behind every page. And that one big story is all about Jesus. Today we are going to read a true account that happened long before Jesus was born, and yet it points straight to Him. So let's open God's Word together and see what really happened.

**The LORD does not look
at the things people look at.
People look at the outward appearance,
but the LORD looks at the heart.**

1 Samuel 16:7

This is our memory verse for the week. It tells us a secret about how God sees. People notice how tall someone is, or how nice their clothes are, or how strong they look. But God looks deeper. God looks at the heart, which means who you really are on the inside. Let's try it together. I will say a line, and you say it back to me. Ready?

Last week we met a boy named Samuel who learned to listen to God. Samuel grew up to be a prophet, which means someone God chose to speak His words to the people. By the time of our account today, Israel had a king named Saul. Saul was tall and strong and looked just like everyone thought a king should look. But Saul stopped obeying God. So God told Samuel it was time to choose a new king. Listen carefully today for one big surprise: the kind of person God picks is not the kind of person people expect.

Close your eyes for just a moment and picture a green hillside. The grass is soft. The sun is warm. Sheep are scattered everywhere, nibbling and wandering. And a boy is watching over every single one of them. He knows them by name. He keeps them safe from lions and bears. Nobody important is watching him. Nobody thinks he is special. He is just the youngest boy in his family, out in the field, doing the job no one else wanted. His name is David. And God is about to choose him to be the next king of Israel.

Now open your eyes. Today we get to watch something amazing. We get to watch God pick a king. But God does not pick the way people pick. And that is the very heart of our lesson.

Our true account begins when God speaks to Samuel. God says, Stop being sad about Saul. Fill your horn with oil and go. I am sending you to a man named Jesse, who lives in a small town called Bethlehem. One of his sons will be the new king.

Now here is something honest. Samuel is afraid. If King Saul finds out that Samuel is going to anoint a new king, Saul might try to hurt him. Have you ever had to do something even when you felt scared? Samuel knows that feeling. But watch this closely. God does not tell Samuel to lie. God gives

Samuel a real and good thing to do. He tells Samuel to go to Bethlehem and offer a sacrifice to worship God, and to invite Jesse's family. So Samuel obeys God even while his heart is pounding. That is what trusting God looks like. We can obey God even when we are afraid, because God is with us.

So Samuel walks the dusty road to Bethlehem. When he arrives, the leaders of the little town come out shaking, wondering if something is wrong. Samuel tells them he has come in peace, to worship. Then he invites Jesse and his sons to come.

Now watch what happens, because this is where our memory verse comes alive. Jesse brings out his oldest son, whose name is Eliab. Eliab is tall. Eliab is strong. Eliab looks exactly like what everyone pictures when they imagine a king. Samuel takes one look at him and thinks to himself, This must be the one God has chosen. Surely this is the new king.

But God stops him. And God says something we must never forget. God says, Do not look at how handsome he is, or how tall he is. I have not chosen him. And then God says the very words of our memory verse. Children, say it with me. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

Did you hear that? Even Samuel, a man who loved God, almost picked the wrong person, because Samuel was looking at the outside. Only God could see the inside. That should make us stop and think. We do the same thing, do we not? We decide who is important by how they look. But God never does that.

So Jesse brings out his next son. God says no. Jesse brings out another son. God says no. One by one, seven tall, strong, impressive sons walk in front of Samuel. And one by one, God says, Not this one. Not this one. Not this one. Seven times.

Samuel must be so confused. He turns to Jesse and asks, Are these all the sons you have? And Jesse says something surprising. He says, Well, there is still the youngest. But he is out in the field, keeping the sheep.

The youngest. The one nobody thought to bring in. The one left outside doing the lowly job while everyone else got dressed up for the special day. Jesse did not even call him. Nobody expected God to want him. But Samuel says, Send for him right now. We will not sit down to eat until he comes.

So someone runs out to the field to get David. And here he comes, walking in from the hills, probably smelling a little like sheep, his cheeks healthy from the sun, his eyes bright and alive. He has no idea what is about to happen. And God speaks quietly to Samuel and says, Rise up and anoint him. This is the one.

Imagine the surprise in that room. The boy with the sheep. The one left out. The one nobody picked. That is exactly the one God picks. Samuel lifts the horn of oil and pours it over David's head, right there in front of all his big brothers. And the Bible tells us that from that day on, the Spirit of the LORD comes powerfully upon David.

Now this is important, so let's slow down. David did nothing to earn this. He was not standing in line trying to be chosen. He was simply being faithful out in the field, taking care of his sheep, when God's love came looking for him. God chose David because God wanted to, not because David was the biggest or the best.

And here is something that might surprise you. Right after David is anointed, he does not march off to a fancy palace. He goes right back to the sheep. But soon something sad happens to King Saul. Because Saul had turned away from God, a troubling spirit comes over him, and he cannot find any peace. His servants think that music might help calm him. And do you know who they send for? They send for the shepherd boy who plays the harp so beautifully. They send for David. So the boy God has just chosen to be the next king begins by quietly serving the very king he will one day replace. David plays his harp, and Saul feels better and finds rest.

Is that not interesting? God chose David, but David still had to wait many years before he would actually become king. God's promises are always sure, but they do not always happen right away. Sometimes God says yes, and then He asks us to trust Him while we wait. David learned to trust God out in the quiet field. He learned to trust God while serving in the palace. And he learned to trust God in the long waiting in between. God was with him through all of it.

Someone might wonder, Did this really happen? That is a fair question. God does not ask us to turn off our minds. His Word tells us the real town this happened in, the real family who was there, and the real words God spoke. And the rest of the Bible keeps treating David as a real king and a real person, all the way down to Jesus, who came from David's family. This really happened.

Let's say our memory verse again, because now it means even more. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. Think about why God looks at the heart. A person can look wonderful on the outside and still be unkind on the inside. And a person the whole world ignores can have a heart that loves God. God is never fooled. He sees all the way down.

Now this is good news, and it is also serious news. It is good news because it means God sees you even when nobody else does. But it is serious news too. Because if God can see all the way into our hearts, then God also sees the wrong things in there. He sees when we are selfish. He sees when we are angry. He sees the parts we try to hide from everyone else.

And this is where we begin to see our need for Jesus. Here is the truth. Not one of us has a perfect heart. Not one. Even David, who loved God so much, would sin later in his life. So God's plan was never just to go looking for people with good enough hearts. God's plan was to send a Savior who could give us brand new hearts.

David was anointed in the little town of Bethlehem. Now here is the beautiful part. Many years later, in that very same little town of Bethlehem, another King would be born. His name is Jesus. David was a shepherd who became a king. Jesus is the true Shepherd King, who left heaven to come and find us, the way a shepherd goes after a lost sheep. David was filled with God's Spirit on the day he was anointed. And when Jesus was baptized in the river, God's Spirit came down on Him like a dove, and the Father spoke from heaven, and the Son stood in the water. Right there we see the one true God:

the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, all at the same time. One God in three Persons. The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. And there is only one God.

Jesus is the King that God always promised. But Jesus did something no other king ever did. Jesus, the only one with a perfect heart, went to the cross and died for people whose hearts were full of sin. He took the punishment that we deserved. And three days later, He rose from the grave, alive forever. Now everyone who trusts in Jesus is forgiven and is given a brand new heart.

So listen closely, because this changes everything. We do not obey God to make Him love us. Look at David. God loved him and chose him first, before David did a single thing. God loves and chooses us first too. Let's say our memory verse one more time, and let it remind us of the God who looks past the outside and sees us. People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

Children, hear the good news today. You do not have to be the tallest, the smartest, the strongest, or the most popular for God to see you and love you. The God who chose a shepherd boy in a forgotten field sees you, right where you are sitting. He knows your name like David knew his sheep. And He sent Jesus to make your heart new. That is the best news in the whole wide world.

6

WHY WE CAN TRUST GOD'S WORD

God's Word told us the real town, the real family, and the real words God spoke that day. The Bible does not hide the hard parts, like Samuel being afraid, because the Bible tells the truth. We can trust it because the same God who chose David kept His promise all the way to Jesus. And remember, honest questions are always welcome. God is not afraid of our questions, and He gave us His Word so we could find true answers.

7

WHAT THIS SHOWS US ABOUT JESUS

David was the overlooked shepherd, anointed in Bethlehem and filled with God's Spirit. He points us straight to Jesus, the true Shepherd King, born in that same Bethlehem. This account shows us our need. We cannot make our own hearts clean. Jesus is the answer to that need. He lived without sin, He died on the cross for sinners, and He rose again on the third day. Everyone who trusts Him is forgiven and given a new heart and new life.

8

GOD REVEALED AS TRINITY

God is one God in three Persons. We see this clearly later, when Jesus is baptized. The Son, Jesus, stands in the water. The Holy Spirit comes down like a dove. And the Father speaks from heaven. The Father is God. The Son is God. The Holy Spirit is God. The Father is not the Son. The Son is not the Spirit. The Spirit is not the Father. And yet there is only one God. We may not be able to explain it fully, but we can believe it, because God tells us so in His Word.

Because Jesus loves us and has made our hearts new, we can stop trying to impress everyone on the outside. When you feel small, or left out, or like nobody notices you, remember that God saw a shepherd boy in an empty field, and God sees you too. When you are tempted to judge another child by how they look or what they wear, remember that God looks at the heart. And when you do something wrong, you do not have to hide it. You can run to Jesus, tell Him, and ask Him to keep making your heart more like His.

A friend might say: How could a shepherd boy really become a king?

You can say: Because God chose him. God does not pick the way people do. He looks at the heart, and He can use anyone He wants.

Verse to remember: People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7

Say it kindly: Share it like good news, with a smile, not like you are trying to win a fight.

Core Questions for All Ages

Who did everyone think would be the new king, and who did God actually choose?

Everyone expected the oldest, tallest brother, Eliab. But God chose David, the youngest, who was out in the field with the sheep. *1 Samuel 16:6 to 12*

What does God look at that people often forget to look at?

God looks at the heart, which means who we really are on the inside, not just how we look on the outside. *1 Samuel 16:7*

Was David chosen because he was the biggest and the best?

No. David was simply being faithful with his sheep. God chose him out of love, not because David earned it. *1 Samuel 16:11 to 12*

Samuel was afraid to go. What did he do anyway?

He obeyed God even while he was scared, and God was with him. Being afraid is not a sin. *1 Samuel 16:4*

What happened to David right after Samuel anointed him?

The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him. God was getting him ready for what was ahead. *1 Samuel 16:13*

Optional Deeper Questions

Why is it good news and also serious news that God can see our hearts?

It is good news because He sees and loves us even when others ignore us. It is serious news because He also sees the sin in our hearts, which is exactly why we need Jesus. *Psalms 139:23 to 24*

How does David point us to Jesus?

David was a shepherd anointed in Bethlehem and filled with the Spirit. Jesus is the true Shepherd King, born in that same Bethlehem and anointed by the Spirit. *Acts 13:22 to 23*

God chose David before David did anything. What does that teach us about how God loves us?

God loves and chooses us first, by His grace. We do not obey to earn His love. We obey because He already loves us. *1 John 4:19*

Can you say our memory verse from memory? What does it teach us about God?

It teaches us that God looks past the outside and sees the heart. He is never fooled, and He sees each of us fully. *1 Samuel 16:7*

12	HANDS ON ACTIVITY
Activity Name	Outside and Inside
Purpose	Help children see that God looks at the heart, not the outside.
Supplies	One sheet of paper per child, folded in half. Crayons or markers.
Time Needed	About 10 minutes.
Preparation	Fold each sheet of paper in half before class.

Step by step: On the front of the folded paper, children draw how a person looks on the outside, such as their face, their clothes, or how tall they are. Then open the paper. On the inside, children draw or write something only God can see in a heart, like loving God, being kind, telling the truth, or being thankful.

Scripture connection: People look at the outside, but God looks at the heart. We just made a picture of that very truth.

Debrief: Which part can your friends see? Which part can only God see? What kind of heart is God helping you grow?

For younger children: Have them simply draw a happy heart on the inside while you talk about loving God.

For older children: Have them write a short prayer on the inside, asking God to shape their heart to be more like Jesus.

13**OPTIONAL REVIEW GAME**

Game Name	Heart or Outside?
Purpose	Review the big idea that God looks at the heart.
Supplies	None needed.

How to play: Call out something about a person. If it is something people look at on the outside, children point to their eyes. If it is something God looks at in the heart, children point to their chest. For example: how tall someone is, whether they love God, what shoes they wear, whether they are kind.

Review questions:

Who did God choose to be king? David, the shepherd boy. What does God look at? The heart. Say the memory verse together: People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

14**TEACHER CLOSING**

Friends, today we watched God choose a king. He passed by the tall and impressive brothers and chose David, the boy out with the sheep, because God looks at the heart. But the very best part is this: none of us has a perfect heart, so God sent Jesus, the true King, to die for us and make our hearts new. You do not have to earn God's love. You can simply trust Jesus. He loves children, and He loves you. Let's say our verse one last time: People look at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

Prayer: Father, thank You that You see us and love us, even when others do not notice us. Thank You for sending Jesus to make our hearts new. Help us to trust You and follow You. In Jesus' name, amen.

15**TAKEAWAY TRUTH**

God looks at the heart, and Jesus is the King who makes our hearts new.