Preschool–Grade 6

David and Jonathan

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: Jonathan was a true friend to David: he loved him at all times, stood up for him and kept his covenant, even when it cost him.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 18–20. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity." *Proverbs 17:17 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), 3 paper arrows cut from paper, paper and a pencil for each team, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board (see part 4).

1. Opening game: Secret Signal (5–10 minutes)

Put kids in teams with paper and a pencil. Say: "Your friend is hiding, and you need to tell them whether it is safe to come out, but other people are watching, so you can't just say it. You have two minutes to invent a secret signal." Let each team show its signal. Then say: "Jonathan had to do exactly that for his best friend David. Listen for the signal he used." Ask afterward: *Why did the signal need to look like something ordinary?*

2. Bible story: A Friend Who Loveth at All Times (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 18. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Two friends. After David beat Goliath, he spoke with King Saul, and Saul's son Jonathan was there. **Look up 1 Samuel 18:1.** "The soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." **Knit** means tied together. Jonathan cared about David as much as he cared about himself: they were true friends. **Look up 1 Samuel 18:3.** They made a **covenant**, a serious promise made before God. **Look up 1 Samuel 18:4.** Jonathan gave David his robe, his garments, his sword, his bow and his **girdle**, a belt. Jonathan was the king's son, and he gave his best to a shepherd.

A jealous king. David behaved himself wisely, and the LORD was with him (18:14). But the women sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands" (18:7), and Saul was very **wroth**, very angry (18:8). Saul cast a **javelin**, a spear, at David, but David got away from him twice (18:11). Saul became David's enemy (18:29).

Jonathan stands up for David. Look up 1 Samuel 19:1–2. Saul told Jonathan and all his servants to kill David, but Jonathan "delighted much in David" and warned him to hide. **Look up 1 Samuel 19:4.** Jonathan spoke good of David to his father: David had not sinned against Saul, and his works had been very good. Saul listened for a while (19:6), but later he threw his javelin at David again, and David escaped that night (19:10).

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The plan. David came to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done?" (20:1). **Look up 1 Samuel 20:4.** "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee." David would hide in the field (20:5). The two friends went out into the field and made their covenant again in the name of the LORD (20:11–17). Jonathan asked David to show the **kindness of the LORD** to his family forever (20:14–15). **Look up 1 Samuel 20:17.** "He loved him as he loved his own soul."

The signal. Look up 1 Samuel 20:19–20. David would wait by the **stone Ezel**, and Jonathan would shoot three arrows. **Look up 1 Samuel 20:21–22.** If Jonathan told the **lad**, the boy, "the arrows are on this side of thee," David was safe. If he said, "the arrows are beyond thee," David had to go away.

The answer. At the new moon feast, David's seat was empty. When Jonathan spoke up for David, Saul was furious with him, and even cast a javelin at Jonathan. Then Jonathan knew his father had decided to kill David (20:27–33). Jonathan was so grieved for his friend that he ate nothing that day (20:34).

Goodbye. In the morning Jonathan went to the field with a little lad (20:35) and shot an arrow beyond him (20:36). **Look up 1 Samuel 20:37.** "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" The lad knew nothing; only Jonathan and David knew what it meant (20:39). When the lad was gone, David came out and bowed three times, and the two friends wept together (20:41). **Look up 1 Samuel 20:42.** "Go in peace, forasmuch as we have sworn both of us in the name of the LORD..."

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jonathan was the king's son. Why do you think he gave his robe and his sword to David (18:4)?
2. Jonathan stood up for David to his own father (19:4). Why is that hard to do?
3. Why do you think Jonathan used arrows instead of just telling David the news?
4. The memory verse says a true friend is "born for adversity," for hard times. When did Jonathan show that?
5. What makes someone a true friend? How can you be one this week?

Recall questions

1. How many arrows did Jonathan say he would shoot? *(Three, 1 Samuel 20:20)*
2. Where did David hide? *(In the field, by the stone Ezel, 20:19, 20:24)*
3. What did Jonathan say to David at the very end? *("Go in peace," 20:42)*

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4. Memory verse: Arrow Toss (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **loveth** means loves, and **adversity** means hard times. "A brother is born for adversity" means a true friend, like a brother, is there to help in hard times. Kids stand in a circle. Toss a paper arrow to a child, who says the first word of the verse and tosses it to someone else, who says the next word. Keep going until the verse and the reference are done. Erase one word from the board each round, and play until kids can say it without the board.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jonathan loved David at all times, even when it cost him. But Jesus showed the greatest love of all. He said, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends' (John 15:13, KJV). God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."

Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

This week: be a friend who loves at all times. Stand up for someone who is being treated unfairly.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point. For early finishers: the **David and Jonathan crossword** (vbshq.com/puzzles/david-and-jonathan-crossword) or **worksheet** (vbshq.com/worksheets/david-and-jonathan-worksheet).

1. 1 Samuel 18:3: What did Jonathan and David make? *(A covenant)*
2. 1 Samuel 18:14: Who was with David? *(The LORD)*
3. 1 Samuel 19:4: What did Jonathan speak of David to Saul? *(Good)*
4. 1 Samuel 20:5: What was "to morrow"? *(The new moon)*
5. 1 Samuel 20:19: What was the name of the stone? *(Ezel)*
6. 1 Samuel 20:35: Who went with Jonathan to the field? *(A little lad)*
7. 1 Samuel 20:39: Who knew what the arrows meant? *(Only Jonathan and David)*
8. 1 Samuel 20:40: What did Jonathan give the lad to carry to the city? *(His artillery, his weapons)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for the friendship of David and Jonathan. Help us love our friends at all times, stand up for what is right, and keep our promises. Thank You for Jesus, who laid down His life for us. In Jesus' name, amen."

About King Saul: tell Saul's anger plainly but simply, as the lesson does: he was jealous, he threw his javelin, and David got away (1 Samuel 18:11; 19:10; 20:33). The lesson leaves out the evil spirit that troubled Saul (18:10; 19:9), Saul's plans against David through his daughters (18:17–27), Michal and the image in the bed (19:11–17) and Saul at Naioth (19:18–24). If a child asks why Saul acted this way, say: Saul was jealous because the LORD was with David and had departed from Saul (18:12). Jealousy can lead to very wrong things, but God kept David safe.

About "loved him as his own soul": keep the words as the Bible says them (18:1, 18:3, 20:17). They mean Jonathan cared about David as much as he cared about himself. They were true, faithful friends.

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