Preschool–Grade 6

David and Jonathan

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: A good friend loves you all the time.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 18–20. Read it yourself before class.
Memory verse: "A friend loveth at all times" *Proverbs 17:17 (KJV)*. The old word **loveth** means loves.
You need: a Bible, a chair or a pillow to be the stone, 3 paper arrows cut from paper (or 3 pencils), crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at 1 Samuel 18. Put the chair or pillow in the middle of the room.

1. Opening game: Hide by the Stone (5 minutes)

Kids crouch down behind the chair or pillow, the "stone," and hide quietly. Lay a paper arrow close to them and say, "The arrow is on this side. Come out!" Everyone pops up and cheers. Then lay an arrow far away and say, "The arrow is beyond you. Go away!" Everyone tiptoes quickly to the wall and back to the stone. Play three or four times. Say: "Today we will hear a true story about two best friends and a secret arrow message."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to 1 Samuel 18. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.
Jonathan was the king's son (1 Samuel 19:1). David was a shepherd boy who beat a giant (1 Samuel 17). *(Put a pretend crown on your head.)*
Jonathan and David became best friends. Jonathan loved David (18:1). *(Hug yourself.)*
They made a promise to always be friends (18:3). *(Shake hands with a friend.)*
Jonathan gave David his robe, his sword and his bow (18:4). *(Pretend to hand a present to a friend.)*
King Saul was angry. He wanted to hurt David (19:1). *(Make an angry face.)*
But God kept David safe (18:14, 19:10). *(Cross your arms over your chest.)*
David hid in a field by a big stone (20:19, 20:24). *(Crouch down and hide.)*
Jonathan shot an arrow and called, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" (20:37). That meant, "Go away, David, to be safe!" *(Pretend to shoot a bow.)*
David and Jonathan said goodbye. They were sad, and they cried (20:41). *(Rub your eyes.)*
But they stayed friends forever (20:42). **Say it with me: "Friends forever!"**
Say it with me: "A friend loves at all times!"

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3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. Who were the two best friends? *(David and Jonathan, 1 Samuel 18:1)*
2. What did Jonathan give David? *(His robe, his sword, his bow, 18:4)*
3. Where did David hide? *(In a field, by a big stone, 20:19)*

4. Act it out (5 minutes)

One child is David and hides behind the chair or pillow. You are Jonathan, and one or two children are the boy who runs to find the arrows. Toss a paper arrow far across the room and say, "Is not the arrow beyond thee?" The boy runs and picks up the arrow, then goes back to "the city" (a corner of the room). David comes out from behind the stone, and Jonathan and David wave goodbye. Take turns so every child gets a part.

5. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "God's Word says, 'A friend loveth at all times.' That means a good friend loves you all the time, on happy days and sad days." Teach the motion: point to a friend on "A friend," hug yourself on "loveth," and make a big circle with your arms on "at all times." Say the verse with the motion three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "Proverbs 17:17" and clap three times.

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6. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "Jonathan was a good friend to David. Jesus is the best friend of all! God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
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.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, for my friends.
Help me be a good friend. In Jesus' name, amen."

Activity: give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw David and Jonathan, with a bow and an arrow. While they color, ask: "What did Jonathan give David? Where did David hide?"

Tips for little ones: let every child have a turn hiding behind the stone. Keep the story happy and safe: God kept David safe. Send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

What this lesson leaves out: the preschool story says only that King Saul was angry and wanted to hurt David, and that God kept David safe. It does not tell about Saul throwing his javelin, a spear (1 Samuel 18:11; 19:10), or that he wanted David killed (19:1). If a child asks why the king was angry, say simply: "King Saul was jealous of David. But God was with David." If a child is worried, remind them that God loves them and takes care of them.

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