Preschool–Grade 6

David and Jonathan

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: A true friend loves at all times and stays faithful.
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, 3 paper arrows cut from paper (or 3 pencils), a chair to be the stone, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put bookmarks in your Bible at 1 Samuel 18:1, 1 Samuel 20:37 and Proverbs 17:17. Put the chair at one end of the room.

1. Opening game: Which Side? (5 minutes)

Kids line up at the far end of the room. You stand in the middle with the 3 paper arrows. Lay an arrow on the floor and call out one of two signals. If you say, **"The arrows are on this side of you!"** the kids take one step toward you. If you say, **"The arrows are beyond you!"** they turn and walk quickly back to the chair. Mix them up, and say them slowly so everyone can listen. Whoever reaches you first gets to call the next signal. Say: "Today we will hear about two best friends who used arrows to send a secret message."

2. Bible story: Friends Forever (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to 1 Samuel 18, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

David was the shepherd boy who beat the giant Goliath. After that, David came to talk with **King Saul**. Saul had a son named **Jonathan**. When Jonathan met David, they became best friends. **Read 1 Samuel 18:1 from your Bible:** "...the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul." **Knit** means tied together, like yarn. It means Jonathan cared about David as much as he cared about himself. They were true friends!

Jonathan and David made a **covenant**, a serious promise made before God, to be faithful friends (18:3). Then Jonathan gave David his own **robe**, his clothes, his **sword**, his **bow** and his **girdle**, which is a belt (18:4). Jonathan gave his very best to his friend.

The LORD was with David (18:14). But when the women sang, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," King Saul was very angry (18:7–8). He was jealous of David. Saul even threw his **javelin**, a spear, at David, but David got out of the way and got away (18:11; 19:10).

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The story continues: Saul wanted David killed, but Jonathan stood up for his friend. He told his father good things about David and said David had done nothing wrong (19:1, 19:4). Later David came to Jonathan and asked, "What have I done?" (20:1). Jonathan said, "Whatsoever thy soul desireth, I will even do it for thee" (20:4). That means, "Whatever you need, I will do it for you."

So they made a plan. David would hide in the field by a big rock called the **stone Ezel** (20:19). Jonathan would find out if his father was still angry. Then he would come to the field and **shoot three arrows** and send a **lad**, a boy, to find them (20:20–21). If Jonathan told the boy, "the arrows are on this side of thee," David was safe and could come back. But if Jonathan said, "the arrows are beyond thee," David had to go away, because he was not safe (20:21–22).

At the king's dinner, Saul got very angry with Jonathan, and Jonathan knew for sure that his father still wanted to hurt David (20:30–33). In the morning, Jonathan went out to the field with a little lad (20:35). He told the boy to run and find the arrows, and as the boy ran, Jonathan shot an arrow beyond him (20:36). **Read 1 Samuel 20:37 from your Bible:** "...Is not the arrow beyond thee?" David heard the signal. He knew he had to go away.

The boy picked up the arrows and went back to the city (20:38, 20:40). Then David came out of his hiding place. The two friends said goodbye, and they cried together (20:41). Jonathan said, "Go in peace," and reminded David of the promise they had made in the name of the LORD: the LORD would be between them, and between their children, forever (20:42).

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Whose son was Jonathan? *(King Saul's son, 1 Samuel 19:1)*
2. What did Jonathan give David? *(His robe, his clothes, his sword, his bow and his girdle, a belt, 18:4)*
3. What did Jonathan and David make? *(A covenant, a serious promise before God, 18:3)*
4. Where did David hide? *(In the field, by the stone Ezel, 20:19, 20:24)*
5. What did Jonathan shout to the boy? *("Is not the arrow beyond thee?" 20:37)* What did that mean for David? *(He had to go away, 20:22)*

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4. Memory verse: Pass the Arrow (5 minutes)

Say the verse in four parts: *A friend loveth / at all times, / and a brother is born / for adversity. / Proverbs 17:17.* 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 you when things are hard. Kids sit in a circle. Pass a paper arrow around the circle; each child who gets the arrow says the next part of the verse. Go around until everyone has said a part. Then say the whole verse together, and everyone points to a friend on "A friend!"

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jonathan was a true friend. He loved David at all times, even when it was hard. But the best friend of all is Jesus. Jesus 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 very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). He died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (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.

This week: be a true friend. Stand up for a friend, share something good, and be kind even when it is hard.

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6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **David and Jonathan word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/david-and-jonathan-word-search), the **David and Jonathan maze** (vbshq.com/puzzles/david-and-jonathan-maze), or the **David and Jonathan craft**, a paper field where David hides behind the stone Ezel and pulls up out of his hiding place (vbshq.com/crafts/david-and-jonathan-craft).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for good friends like Jonathan. Help us be true friends who love at all times. Thank You that Jesus loves us most of all. In Jesus' name, amen."

About King Saul: this lesson says Saul was jealous and angry, and that David got away when Saul threw his javelin (1 Samuel 18:11; 19:10). It leaves out the evil spirit that troubled Saul (18:10), Saul's plans against David (18:17–25), and how Michal let David down through a window (19:11–12). It also says simply that Saul got angry with Jonathan (20:30–33), without telling that Saul threw the javelin at Jonathan too. If a child asks why the king wanted to hurt David, say simply: Saul was jealous, and jealousy can make people do very wrong things. God was with David and kept him safe (18:12, 18:14). If a child is worried, remind them that God loves them and takes care of them.

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