Preschool–Grade 6

Samuel Anoints David

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: People judge by the outside; God looks on the heart. He chose the youngest son, out with the sheep, because He was looking for a heart that would follow Him.
Bible passage: 1 Samuel 16. Students read 1 Samuel 16:1–13 and 16:14–23 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." *1 Samuel 16:7 (KJV)* and "And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will." *Acts 13:22 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read 1 Samuel 15:22–23, 1 Samuel 16 and Acts 13:22. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: First Impressions (5–10 minutes)

Ask: *If you had to pick a new class leader in ten seconds, without talking to anyone, what would you go by?* Write the answers on the board (looks, height, clothes, who is loudest, who is popular). Then ask: *What would you want to know if you had a whole year?* Write those answers in a second column (honest, kind, works hard, keeps promises). Say: "The first column is what we see. The second column is the heart. Today a prophet learned which column God reads."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Tell the beginning in your own words: Saul had disobeyed the LORD. Samuel told him, "Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king" (1 Samuel 15:23).

Read out loud: 1 Samuel 16:1–13. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **mourn** (16:1): be sad, grieve; **I have provided me a king**: I have chosen a king for Myself
- **an heifer** (16:2): a young cow, for the sacrifice
- **trembled** (16:4): shook with fear; **Comest thou peaceably?**: Do you come in peace?
- **sanctify yourselves** (16:5): get yourselves clean and ready to come before God
- **the LORD's anointed** (16:6): the one God has chosen; to **anoint** is to pour oil on someone to set him apart for God's work
- **countenance** (16:7): face; **stature**: height; **refused**: not chosen; **seeth**: sees; **looketh**: looks
- **fetch** (16:11): go and get; **hither**: here
- **ruddy** (16:12): rosy and healthy; **withal of a beautiful countenance**: also with a fine face; **goodly to look to**: good-looking
- **in the midst of his brethren** (16:13): in front of his brothers

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Read out loud: 1 Samuel 16:14–23. Old words in this passage:

- **departed** (16:14): left; **troubled**: bothered, tormented
- **a cunning player on an harp** (16:16): a skillful harp player
- **a mighty valiant man** (16:18): very brave; **prudent in matters**: wise in what he says and does; **comely**: good-looking
- **an ass laden with bread** (16:20): a donkey loaded with bread; **a kid**: a young goat
- **armourbearer** (16:21): the helper who carried the king's armor and weapons
- **refreshed** (16:23): felt better, had relief

Point out the contrast: in the same chapter, the Spirit of the LORD came upon David "from that day forward" (16:13) and departed from Saul (16:14). The servant's description of David ends with "and the LORD is with him" (16:18).

The rest of the story. David did not take the throne that day. When Saul sent for him, David was "with the sheep" again (16:19). Paul later told how God "raised up unto them David to be their king" (Acts 13:22).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Samuel was a prophet, and he still judged Eliab by his looks (16:6). What does that tell us about how natural it is to judge by the outside?
2. "Man looketh on the outward appearance" (16:7). Where do you see people being judged by appearance at school or online? Where do you catch yourself doing it?
3. David was not there until Samuel asked, "Are here all thy children?" (16:11). How does it change things to know God sees the person nobody is looking for?
4. God called David "a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will" (Acts 13:22). What does it look like to have a heart after God's heart at your age?
5. David was anointed, but then he was back with the sheep, and then he served Saul (16:19–21). Why might God have David wait and serve before he was king?
6. Saul looked like a king (1 Samuel 9:2) but did not obey (15:23). What is the difference between looking right and being right with God?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in 1 Samuel 16:7: **countenance** means face; **stature** means height; **refused** means not chosen; **seeth** and **looketh** mean sees and looks; the **outward appearance** is the outside. In Acts 13:22, **removed him** means God took Saul away as king; **gave testimony** means God spoke about David; **fulfil all my will** means do everything God wants. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say 1 Samuel 16:7 this week; keep working on Acts 13:22 next week.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "God does not choose by the outside. He sees the heart, and He loves you. But the Bible is honest: 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where do I judge people by the outside? Who have I overlooked?
2. If God looked on my heart today, what would He find? What do I want Him to find?
3. Write a short prayer asking God to give you a heart after His own heart (Acts 13:22).
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: read 1 Samuel 16 again at home. Find one person who gets overlooked and treat them the way God sees them.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You see what no one else sees. Forgive us for judging by the outside. Give us hearts after Your own heart, hearts that obey You and do all Your will. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Told gently on purpose: the evil spirit from the LORD (16:14) is read as the Bible says it, with no added details. If a student asks, say: "Saul had rejected the word of the LORD (15:23), and the Spirit of the LORD departed from him. God is in charge of everything. When David played, Saul was refreshed (16:23)." Don't guess beyond what the text says.

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