Preschool–Grade 6

David and Mephibosheth

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

Main point: God shows us kindness we could never earn, so we show His kindness to others, even to people who can give nothing back.
Bible passage: 2 Samuel 9:1–13. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And David said unto him, Fear not: for I will surely shew thee kindness for Jonathan thy father's sake, and will restore thee all the land of Saul thy father; and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." *2 Samuel 9:7 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: What Would You Do? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Kids stand up if they think it would be easy to be kind, and stay seated if it would be hard. 1) A new kid stands at lunch with a tray and no place to sit. 2) A kid who was mean to you last week drops all their books. 3) Someone who can't run as fast as you wants to be on your team. 4) A kid nobody talks to sits alone at recess. Ask: *Why is it harder to be kind to some people? Do you have to get something back to be kind?* Say: "Today we'll see a king who was kind to someone who could give him nothing at all."

2. Bible story: The Kindness of God (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to 2 Samuel 9. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Before the story. Jonathan, King Saul's son, loved David "as his own soul" (1 Samuel 18:1). Jonathan once asked David never to cut off his kindness from Jonathan's house, his family (1 Samuel 20:15). Later, Saul and Jonathan died in a battle (2 Samuel 1:4), and David became king.

David looks for someone. Look up 2 Samuel 9:1. David wanted to show kindness to anyone left of the house of Saul, for Jonathan's sake. A servant of Saul's house named Ziba was called to the king (9:2). **Look up 2 Samuel 9:3.** David wanted to **shew** (show) the kindness of God. Ziba said Jonathan had a son who was **lame** on his feet, which means his feet could not walk. He was living in the house of Machir, the son of Ammiel, in **Lo-debar** (9:4). King David sent and **fetched** him, which means he had him brought to the king (9:5).

Fear not. When Mephibosheth, the son of Jonathan, came to David, he fell on his face and **did reverence**, bowing low to honor the king (9:6). David said his name, "Mephibosheth," and he answered, "Behold thy servant!" (9:6). **Look up 2 Samuel 9:7.** David told him not to be afraid. He would **restore** (give back) all the land of Saul to him, and Mephibosheth would eat bread at the king's table **continually**, which means always.

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"A dead dog." Look up 2 Samuel 9:8. Mephibosheth bowed and asked why the king would look on "such a dead dog as I am." He meant he was worth nothing to the king. But David kept his word.

Ziba's job. The king told Ziba, "I have given unto thy master's son all that pertained to Saul and to all his house" (9:9). Ziba, his sons and his servants would **till** the land (plow and plant it) and bring in the fruits, so Mephibosheth's family would have food (9:10). **Look up 2 Samuel 9:10.** Ziba had 15 sons and 20 servants! Ziba said he would do all the king commanded (9:11).

One of the king's sons. Look up 2 Samuel 9:11. Mephibosheth would eat at the king's table "as one of the king's sons." He had a young son named Micha, and everyone in Ziba's house served Mephibosheth (9:12). **Look up 2 Samuel 9:13.** He lived in Jerusalem and ate at the king's table continually, and he was lame on both his feet.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. David said he wanted to show "the kindness of God" (2 Samuel 9:3). What is the difference between being nice and showing the kindness of God?
2. Mephibosheth called himself "a dead dog" (9:8). Have you ever felt like you didn't matter? What would you want someone to say to you?
3. Why was David kind to Mephibosheth? *(For Jonathan's sake, 9:1, 9:7.)* What does that teach us about being kind to the family and friends of people we love?
4. David kept his promise to his friend even after Jonathan died (1 Samuel 20:15; 2 Samuel 9:1). Why does keeping a promise matter?
5. Who is someone at school or church you could "make room for" this week?

Recall questions

1. What town was Mephibosheth living in? *(Lo-debar, 2 Samuel 9:4)*
2. How many sons and servants did Ziba have? *(15 sons and 20 servants, 9:10)*
3. What was the name of Mephibosheth's young son? *(Micha, 9:12)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **thee** and **thy** mean you and your, **surely** means for sure, **shew** means show, **for Jonathan thy father's sake** means because of your father Jonathan, **restore** means give back, and **continually** means always. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Mephibosheth did nothing to earn his place at the king's table. God shows us kindness like that. The Bible says, 'the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us' (Titus 3:4–5, 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: show the kindness of God to someone who can't pay you back. Make room for them at your table, on your team or in your game.

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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.

1. 2 Samuel 9:2: What was the name of the servant of the house of Saul? *(Ziba)*
2. 2 Samuel 9:4: Whose house was Mephibosheth living in? *(The house of Machir, the son of Ammiel)*
3. 2 Samuel 9:6: What did Mephibosheth answer when David said his name? *("Behold thy servant!")*
4. 2 Samuel 9:7: What two words did David say first? *("Fear not")*
5. 2 Samuel 9:8: What did Mephibosheth call himself? *(A dead dog)*
6. 2 Samuel 9:10: What would Ziba bring in from the land? *(The fruits)*
7. 2 Samuel 9:11: How would Mephibosheth eat at the king's table? *(As one of the king's sons)*
8. 2 Samuel 9:13: In what city did Mephibosheth live? *(Jerusalem)*

Or choose the **Mephibosheth word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/mephibosheth-word-search), crossword (vbshq.com/puzzles/mephibosheth-crossword), maze (vbshq.com/puzzles/mephibosheth-maze) or worksheet (vbshq.com/worksheets/mephibosheth-worksheet).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for Your kindness to us, which we could never earn. Help us show Your kindness to others, especially people who can't pay us back, and help us keep our promises like David did. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks how Mephibosheth became lame: answer simply and gently. 2 Samuel 4:4 tells that he was hurt when he was five years old. "Lame" is the Bible's word for someone whose feet could not walk. Keep the focus on the kindness of God, and never let the word be used to tease anyone.

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