

Oct 11, 2026

Saul - Israel's First King

1 Samuel 8-15

Story: Read the story ahead of time. Practice it. For the younger grades, feel free to summarize, if needed. It's okay to reference the story as you are telling it, but the goal is to know the story well enough that you don't have to read it word for word. :) And, we encourage you to have your Bible open during the telling of the story, so the kids know where this story came from.

★ Introduction & Story:

Quick Recap - We have finished our quick tour of the beginning of the Bible. God made the world. Mankind sinned. Sin is anything we think, say, or do that displeases God. When we sin, we are separated from God. But God still loves us and wants to be with us. He told us that He would send a Savior. But the Israelites (God's chosen family) had to wait until the New Testament for Jesus to show up! While they waited, God showed them how He has a plan and He loves them even though they are not faithful to Him. God loves us the same way!! Last week, we talked about how God used Joshua to take over the places in the Promised Land - He even made the walls of Jericho fall down. Now, we are fast forwarding to the time when God used judges in Israel.

For many years, the Israelites were led by Judges. These were people that God appointed to oversee and lead the Israelites. The last Judge was Samuel.

Samuel was a righteous man. He was a priest and a prophet. He obeyed God and was a good leader. He was going to appoint his sons to be the next judges when he died.

His sons, however, were not good people. They were disobedient and unkind. The elders of Israel decided that they wanted a king.

1 Samuel 8:4-5

So all the elders of Israel gathered together and went to Samuel at Ramah.

They said to him, "Look, you are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways.

Therefore, appoint a king to judge us the same as all the other nations have."

Samuel did not think it was a good idea to have a king. He knew that God should be the people's king.

1 Samuel 8:6-7

When they said, "Give us a king to judge us," Samuel considered their demand wrong, so he prayed to the Lord. But the Lord told him, "Listen to the people and everything they say to you. They have not rejected you; they have rejected me as their king.

God showed Samuel who the new king should be. God told Samuel that a young man named Saul should be chosen as the king.

1 Samuel 9:1-2

There was a prominent man of Benjamin named Kish. He had a son named Saul, an impressive young man. There was no one more impressive among the Israelites than he. He stood a head taller than anyone else.

1 Samuel 13:1

Saul was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty-two years over Israel.

At first Saul was a good and successful king. He led the Israelite army and fought against the enemies of Israel.

1 Samuel 14:47-48

When Saul assumed the kingship over Israel, he fought against all his enemies in every direction: against Moab, the Ammonites, Edom, the kings of Zobah, and the Philistines. Wherever he turned, he caused havoc. He fought bravely, defeated the Amalekites, and rescued Israel from those who plundered them.

God told Saul to attack the Amalekites because they had not been kind to the Israelites when they came out of Egypt. God instructed Saul to destroy everything. All the people and all of the livestock. Saul did not completely obey God. He spared the life of King Agag and the best of the livestock.

1 Samuel 15:9

Saul and the troops spared Agag, and the best of the sheep, goats, cattle, and choice animals, as well as the young rams and the best of everything else. They were not willing to destroy them, but they did destroy all the worthless and unwanted things.

God saw that Saul was no longer being obedient. He did not want Saul to be the king of Israel anymore. He told Samuel what Saul and the army had done.

1 Samuel 15:10-11

Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, “I regret that I made Saul king, for he has turned away from following me and has not carried out my instructions.”

Samuel went to Saul to confront him about the things that the Lord told him. Saul lied to Samuel about what he and his army had done.

1 Samuel 15:13-15

When Samuel came to him, Saul said, “May the Lord bless you. I have carried out the Lord’s instructions.”

Samuel replied, “Then what is this sound of sheep, goats, and cattle I hear?”

Saul answered, “The troops brought them from the Amalekites and spared the best sheep, goats, and cattle in order to offer a sacrifice to the Lord your God, but the rest we destroyed.”

Saul thought that he could make excuses for why they had not completely obeyed the Lord.

1 Samuel 15:22

Then Samuel said: Does the Lord take pleasure in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord? Look: to obey is better than sacrifice.

Saul realized that he had sinned.

1 Samuel 15:24-25

Saul answered Samuel, “I have sinned. I have transgressed the Lord’s command and your words. Because I was afraid of the people, I obeyed them. Now therefore, please forgive my sin and return with me so I can worship the Lord.”

Samuel told Saul that he had been rejected by the Lord from being King over Israel.

1 Samuel 15:25

Samuel replied to Saul, “I will not return with you. Because you rejected the word of the Lord, the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.”

★ **Connection to God’s Overall Story/Plan:**

Saul’s family was not going to continue to rule Israel. Next week we will talk about David who would become the next king. Jesus was born into the family of David. God was keeping his promise to send us a Saviour.

Follow Up: As a church, we are encouraging disciple makers to practice the REAP method as it is one useful tool in learning to read the Bible on your own. Retell, Examine, Application, Prayer. Now this may not be everyone's preference, but it is an easy and consistent way to teach children to pull the meaning out of a passage and not just read it or rely on others to teach them what it means. Trees & Mountains - this is a station.

★ **Retell:** Have kids share what they recall from the story. Fill in any major holes they missed.

★ **Examine:**

- Comprehension Questions:
 - Why do you think that the Israelites wanted a king?
 - Probably because all the other countries had kings.
 - Do you think that sometimes we want what is not best for us but God lets us have it anyway?
 - We have free will. God will let us choose things that are not necessarily the best for us.
 - What does it mean "It is better to obey than to sacrifice?"
- Ask, "What do we learn about God from this story? What does He do?"
 - God allows us to make choices – even if we choose the wrong thing. It was not the best decision for Israel to have a king, but God allowed it and used it in His plan.
- Ask, "What do we learn about humans from this story? What are humans doing?"
 - We want to be like others. God wants us to be set apart and wholly His. These are not the same thing.

★ **Application:** Ask, "What is Jesus asking us to do through this story? Why did God include this in the Bible?"

- God wants us to be obedient because He loves us and wants good things for us. But He allows us to make choices – even if the consequence is going to hurt (Saul was no longer king because he wouldn't be obedient).

★ **Prayer**

Memory Verse: Have the kids use the Bible. They should either share or each have one. If kids have their own Bibles, we can encourage them to use it, but sometimes you may just need to use the class set. Trees & Mountains - this is one station.

★ **Verse:** “We must obey God rather than people.” - Acts 5:29b

Memory Verse Practice:

Verse Look Up: Explain the address of the verse (Book Chapter:Verse). Explain whether it's in the Old Testament or the New Testament. Read and explain the verse.

- Rainbow Tip: Not necessary until we split classrooms.
- Fireweed Tip: Put Post-It notes on the book of the Bible for the memory verse. Then have them find the chapter and verse.

Practice the Verse:

- Rainbow: Not necessary :)
- Fireweed: Have the kids read it with you several times. Since they are learning to read, group practice is the focus.
- Trees & Mountains: Kids should be learning the verse and saying it on their own. We will provide activities - pick one to have the kids practice. We will PM provide: fill-in-the-blank verses, phrases for the kids to put in order, lines for the kids to write the verse out, and a worksheet for the kids to say the verse based on just the first letter of each word in the verse.

Books of the Bible:

- ★ If there is time or if kids have mastered the verse, have the kids practice the Books of the Bible. When we are doing Old Testament stories, have them practice the Old Testament; when in the New, practice the New Testament. We will have some activities for them to practice with.
 - Trees/Mountains currently have pencil cases with sets of cards/bookmarks in them.

Sticky Activities: No need to do all of these! Pick which ones work best for your teaching style and time frame! For the Trees and Mountains - there is enough time for two of the stations to do activities.

★ **Sensory:**

Category	Activity 1	Activity 2
Experiential	Choose a King: Give children several pretend candidates with different qualities. Ask what makes someone a good leader, then explain that God's standards are more important than appearance or popularity.	Obedience Challenge: Give children a series of simple instructions. Occasionally make an instruction unusual or unexpected and see if they listen carefully. Connect this to Saul's failure to fully obey God.
Visual	Saul's Crown: Display a crown and explain that Saul looked like someone people would expect to be king, but being king was about much more than appearance.	Saul's Story Timeline: Create cards showing: Israel asks for a king → Saul chosen → Saul becomes king → Saul disobeys → Samuel confronts Saul.
Smell	Shepherd/Field Scents: Let children smell clean hay or dried grass while talking about Saul's ordinary life before becoming king.	Royal Feast Scents: Use familiar herbs/spices such as cinnamon, rosemary, or mint while discussing what a royal gathering might have smelled like.
Touch	Anointing Oil: Talk about how oil feels. If you want, have a small amount for children to touch. Use this to discuss Samuel anointing Saul with oil.	Obedience Rocks: Give each child a smooth rock to feel. Have them write "OBEY" on and decorate it. Talk about how Saul was given clear instructions by God but chose not to completely obey. Let the kids hold their rocks while discussing ways they can choose obedience.

Movement	Find the King: Hide paper (young) Saul pictures around the room. Kids work together to find them. Discuss how Samuel had to find Israel's first King.	King's Commands: Play “ The King Says ”. Connect the game to the importance of listening carefully and obeying instructions.
Sound	Royal Announcement: Have children practice announcing: “ Saul is king! ” in different ways—quietly, loudly, excitedly, and like a town crier.	
Crafts	Samuel Anoints Saul: Color, cut, and use a brad to attach Samuel's arm.	Obedience Rocks: See Touch Activity.

Send Home Page: Please send home with parents. They are sized 4 to a page.



Saul's Story Timeline:

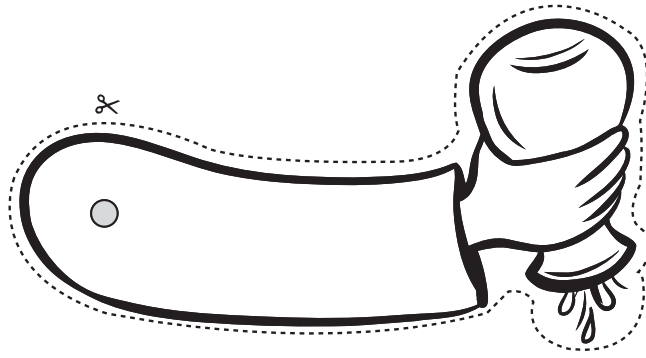
Create cards from the following pages with the phrases (Erin can make them on cardstock if you want to use them - just let her know by Wednesday 10/7):

Israel asks for a king → Saul chosen → Saul becomes king → Saul disobeys → Samuel confronts Saul.

Samuel Anoints Saul:

Color, cut, and use a brad to attach Samuel's arm.





Israel asks
for a King



Saul
chosen



Saul
becomes King



Saul
disobeys



Samuel
confronts Saul



Find the King:

Cut out the images below of young Saul (make multiple copies) and hide them around the room.



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1 Samuel 8:1—10:24

Samuel Chooses a King

Samuel Chooses a King

1 Samuel 8:1—10:24

Samuel grew up to be the leader of Israel. He was called a judge. Now Samuel was getting old. Some people talked to Samuel. They said, "Give us a king like all the other countries around us. We want to be like them."

Samuel was upset because he knew God was the real King of Israel! So he prayed to God. God said, "Samuel, warn them. Tell them a king will make them his servants and will take their land and animals."

Samuel told the people all the things God had said. The people didn't care! They said, "We want a king anyway!"

About that time, a young man named Saul was out looking for his father's lost donkeys. As Saul walked into town, Samuel saw Saul. God said, "Samuel, here's the man I want to be king."

Samuel said to Saul, "I'd like you to come and eat with me. And don't worry, your donkeys have been found." The next morning, Samuel took a small bottle of oil and poured it on Saul's head to show that Saul had been chosen. Samuel said, "The Lord has chosen you to be the leader of His people."

MEMORY VERSE:

October 11, 2026

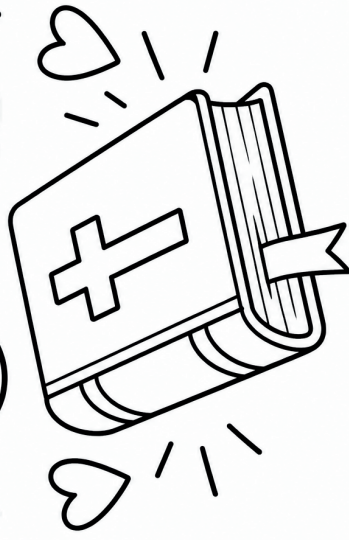
“We must obey God
rather than people.”
--Acts 5:29b

Fill in the Blanks

We ____ obey ____ rather
than ____.
- ____ 5:29b

I can obey God when I _____.

I Choose
to obey
God!

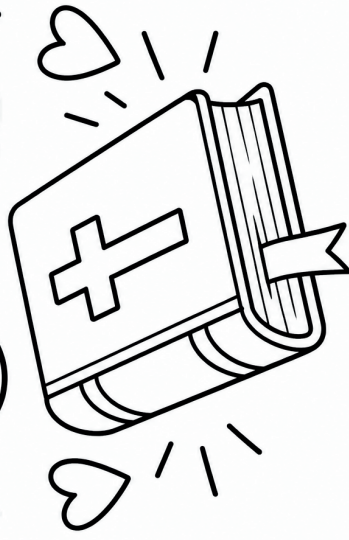


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 YOU CAN DO IT! 

Recite the verse next week & earn a prize!

NEXT WEEK:
David is Chosen as King

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