

Choosing with God

Focus Scripture

1 Samuel 16:1-13

PURPOSE

To understand how God works with us as we choose.

Lesson Preparation

- ❑ Read 1 Samuel 16:1-13 and the biblical background for March 22.
- ❑ Set up worship table with a purple cloth, Bible, candle, offering basket and Unit 5 logo.
- ❑ Bring a variety of magazine pictures of people, faces and scenes, and a variety of snacks (e.g. crackers, cheese, fruit, raisins, etc.) in separate containers.
- ❑ Prepare 8 body outlines. (Pin 4 sheets of newsprint or newspaper together as shown. With marker draw a simple person shape and cut out. Repeat with 4 more sheets. Then cut one figure down a bit to be smaller than all the others.) Place the paper figures around the walls of the room before class. Put the small figure in an unseen place. Bring Bible marked at 1 Samuel 16:1-13, "Samuel and Nathaniel" teaching picture, and 2 scarves and ties for headdresses.
- ❑ Bring Lenten Cross Calendar, stamp pad, and damp paper towels.
- ❑ Choose the option(s) you wish to use for Integrating the Theme and bring the necessary materials.
- ❑ Check the birthday list.
- ❑ Take time to feel God's presence in the choices you make this week.

1



Opening

Welcome each child by name, and tell them how glad you are to see them.

Lenten Candle: Invite a child to light the candle and think of a way to help spread God's love during Lent.

Sing:

The Lenten Song (tune: Jesus Loves Me)

This is now the season of Lent,
a time to be sorry, a time to repent.
Jesus showed us how to live, love each other and
forgive.

Acknowledge birthdays and receive the offering.

Prayer: Dear God, help us to make wise choices.
Help us to listen for your guidance.
Thank you that you care for us
the way a shepherd cares for the sheep. Amen.



2

Introducing the Theme

Activity: Making Choices

Spread the magazine pictures on the table or floor, with the snacks in containers beside them. Invite the children to choose one of the pictures and one of the snacks.

While they are eating their snack ask them to explain what things they considered as they made their choices.

3

Exploring the Theme

Today's story is about choosing someone who would become king of Israel. It is a story from the book of Samuel. (*Open the Bible to 1 Samuel 16:1-13.*)

Story: A Surprising Choice

There was great excitement in a house in Ramah where the great prophet Samuel lived. He had told his servants to pack up some food because he was going on a journey. Nathaniel, one of Samuel's youngest



servants, was especially excited because Samuel had chosen him to go along. (Show teaching picture “Samuel and Nathaniel.”)

Lately Samuel had been feeling very sad because their king, King Saul, had turned out to be a poor leader of God’s people. Saul had been chosen by God to be Israel’s very first king. At first he had ruled well, but soon Saul had become very proud. He had begun to ignore God’s advice and disobey God’s commands. Samuel knew that soon there would have to be a new king. This leader would have to be chosen secretly so that Saul would not harm him.

God had told Samuel to take a ram’s horn and anointing oil and go to Bethlehem, to visit a man called Jesse. (Have children notice the ram’s horn on the cord over Samuel’s shoulder.) God had chosen one of Jesse’s sons to be the next king of Israel. God said to Samuel, “Go and invite the villagers to a worship service. Then anoint the one I tell you to.”



When they arrived in Bethlehem, Samuel called all the people of the village to come to worship. Jesse and his sons came along with the others. Only Jesse’s youngest son, David, was not there. He stayed out in the fields to look after the family’s sheep. (Invite 2 children to role play Samuel and Nathaniel, wearing head-dresses and standing in front of the group.)

When they had all gathered Samuel looked at Jesse’s eldest son Eliab. (Have someone bring a paper figure forward and hold it in front of Samuel.) Samuel thought to himself, “He is very tall and fine looking. Surely this is the one God has chosen to be king.” But God said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his handsomeness. You are looking at outward appearances. I look into the heart. I have not chosen this one.”



(Have other children bring forward the next 6 sons, one by one. After each one is presented, have “Samuel”

shake his head and say “No, God has not chosen him either.”) By this time Nathaniel was puzzled. Why had God not chosen any of these young men?

Samuel was puzzled too. Hadn’t God said that one of Jesse’s sons would be chosen? The old prophet turned to Jesse and said, “Are these all the sons you have?”

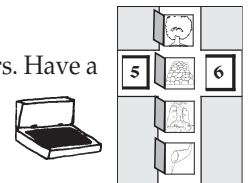
Jesse answered, “I have one more son, David, but he is very young. He is out in the fields looking after our sheep.” Nathaniel was asked to run out to the fields to get him. (Direct Nathaniel to where you have placed the smallest figure.) Soon Nathaniel found David. He was amazed. David was the same age as he was! Could he possibly be the one that God had chosen? He told David that the prophet Samuel wanted to see him. (Bring figure forward.)

As soon as Samuel saw David he heard God’s voice saying, “This is the one I have chosen to be king.” Samuel asked David to kneel down. The old prophet took the horn of anointing oil and poured oil over David’s head. (Invite Samuel to pretend to anoint “David.”) Everyone watched and knew that this was a holy moment. God’s Spirit was with David in a special way, preparing him for the time when he would become king.

As they walked back to Ramah together, Nathaniel asked Samuel, “How did you know which one to choose? All of the older sons looked like they would make great kings!” Samuel explained what God had said. God does not judge by what is on the outside. God sees the inner person. God saw that David would be the best choice and would make a good king. Samuel had prayed and asked God’s help to make the right choice. God helped Samuel and God helps us to make good choices too.

Activity: Lenten Cross Calendar

Bring out the Lenten Cross Calendar and briefly review the symbols behind the first 3 doors. Have a child open door #4. Invite the children to add their fingerprints as drops of oil.



Sing:

God Has Called Us (tune: Jesus Loves Me)

God has called us this we know,
and the Bible tells us so.
Each one has a job to do young and old,
God calls them, too.

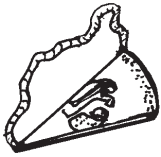
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Integrating the Theme

Option A: Story on a Horn

Materials: white paper, gold glitter, yarn, crayons, glue
In advance: Cut white paper into cone-shaped pieces.

Give each child a large cone-shaped piece of paper. Invite them to draw a picture of Samuel anointing David. Place a line of white glue along the curved edge and sprinkle with gold glitter to represent drops of oil. Show them how to roll their paper and tape it to form a horn shape. Add yarn for strap. Encourage them to take their horns home and re-enact today's story with their family.



Option B: "Psalm 23" Activity Sheet

Materials: crayons

In advance: Make copies of the resource "Psalm 23."

Hand out copies of the "Psalm 23." Explain that when David was out in the fields, looking after the sheep, he would often play his harp and sing songs. Many of the songs that David created are in our Bible. They are part of the Book of Psalms. Read the words of Psalm 23 together. Invite the children to create a border around the Psalm to illustrate some of the images in the verses that they particularly like. Suggest they hang it up in their bedroom where they can read it before going to sleep at night, reminding them of God's love and care for us.

Option C: Dramatizing Choices

In advance: Make a copy of the "Making Choices" resource sheet. Cut out the 6 pictures and place them in a basket.

Divide the class into 2-3 groups. Have each group pick a picture out of the basket and create a human "still" picture of that scene. Give groups a few moments to prepare. As the situation is presented, encourage all the children to think about: "What do you think God wants you to do?" or "What is God telling you inside?" As a whole group talk about the situation and then have that group act out what they would do next. Repeat process with the next group(s).



5

Closing

Gather in a circle and read "Psalm 23" (from resource below or from a child-friendly bible). Invite the chil-

dren to say "Thank you, God" when you pause at the end of each verse.

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd;

I have everything I need.

God lets me rest in fields of green grass

and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.

God gives me new strength

and guides me in the right paths,

as God has promised.

Even if I go through the deepest darkness,

I will not be afraid, Lord,

for you are with me.

Your shepherd's rod and staff

protect me.

You prepare a banquet for me,

where all my enemies can see me;

you welcome me as an honoured guest

and fill my cup to the brim.

I know that your goodness and love

will be with me all my life;

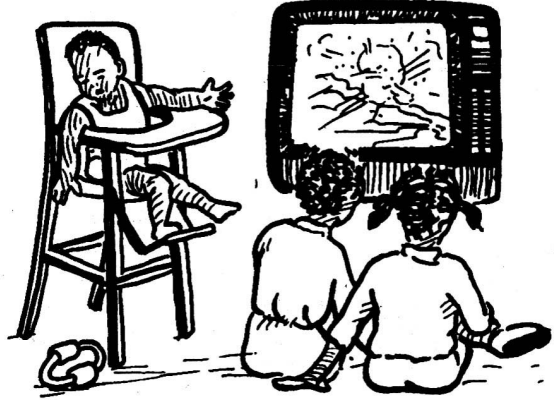
and your house will be my home

as long as I live.

Making Choices



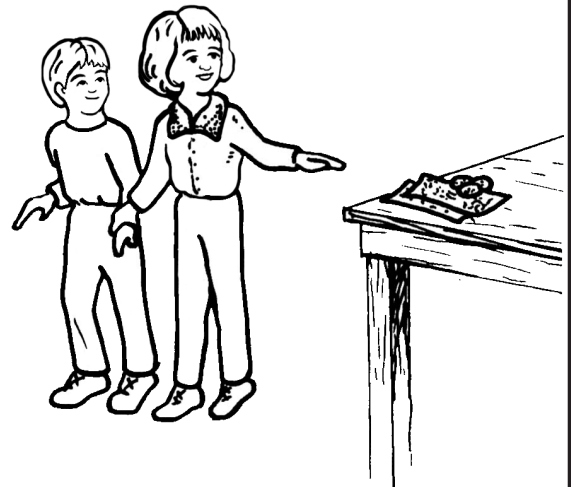
“Oh-h...the poor thing.”



“The baby’s toy fell down.”



“The window broke!”



“Look there is some money.”



“Can I play?”



“Come for a ride.”