

General Church Education



David and Jonathan's Covenant

1 Samuel 20

Lesson 13

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 5: The Lord Is King of Kings

For ages 10-11

David and Jonathan's Covenant

1 Samuel 20

Teacher Background

David went to Shiloh to meet Jonathan. Jonathan could not believe his father was angry with David. Together they made a plan to discover whether this was still true. Saul would expect David at the feast of the new moon. Jonathan would tell him that David had to attend a family feast in Bethlehem. If Saul was angry about his absence and planned to harm him Jonathan would give David a special signal by shooting three arrows. If he said, "the arrows are beyond you" David would know he was in danger. Saul was furious about David's absence, so Jonathan gave the danger signal. The men parted, sad that they might not meet again.

Jonathan showed his loyalty to David by putting his own life in danger to protect him. In doing so, he appeared to be disloyal to his father. This story models a willingness to remain a friend whatever the situation. Since children judge others from outward appearances this is sometimes a struggle for them. However adolescents need wise council from parents about how to protect and care for their friends while remaining faithful to the Lord.

Focus Points

- David and Jonathan met and made a plan to help David remain safe from Saul.
- Jonathan tested his father and found that Saul was still plotting to kill David.
- Jonathan warned David as they had planned and David went into hiding.

Readings from the Writings

"Jonathan, as the son of a king, signifies the truth of doctrine." *Apocalypse Explained* 357

"Everyone's will and thought, and, as far as can be, his speech and actions, are the product of his essential nature. For example, a loyal person has loyal thoughts and intentions." *True Christian Religion* 145

The potential for genuinely loving others more than ourselves, a heavenly love, may be seen in sincere friendship, in that perils will be undergone for our friends; and even from polite and feigned friendship, that would emulate real friendship in offering the better things to those to whom we wish well, making great professions even when they do not come from the heart. And finally its possibility is evident from the very nature of love, which finds its joy in being of service to others, not for the sake of self but for the love's own sake. See *Arcana Coelestia* 548

"Every covenant is for the sake of conjunction, that is, for the sake of living in mutual friendship." *Arcana Coelestia* 1038

Teacher Activity Overview

The lesson offers students the following choices:

Recitation

Learn the Lord’s Word by heart.

Then Jonathan said, “Go in peace,
Since we have both sworn in the name of the Lord,
Saying, ‘May the Lord be between your
Descendants and my descendants, forever.’” (1 Samuel 20:42)

Projects and Activities (see back for answers)

True or False?

Decide if each statement is true or false.

A True Friend

What qualities do you look for in a good friend? Jonathan’s friendship with David offers a model of what true friendship can be. Complete a Venn diagram that compares the qualities Jonathan shared with his friend David with the qualities you value in a true friend.

Jonathan and David Song

Listen to or learn a song about the friendship between Jonathan and David. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-jonathan-and-david/>

Additional Project and Activity Choices for Parents and Teachers

An Arrow Shot Activity

This outdoor activity encourages children to guess how far Jonathan shot three arrows. You will need a space where you can take at least 200 steps. You will not be throwing anything so there is no need to worry about parked cars! Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-david-and-jonathan-an-arrow-shot-1samuel20.pdf>

Jonathan Helps David Book-in-Hand-Theater

A book-in-hand play about Jonathan helping David to escape Saul’s anger. At <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/play-jonathan-helps-david-1-samuel20.pdf>

David and Jonathan's Covenant

1 Samuel 20

Vocabulary

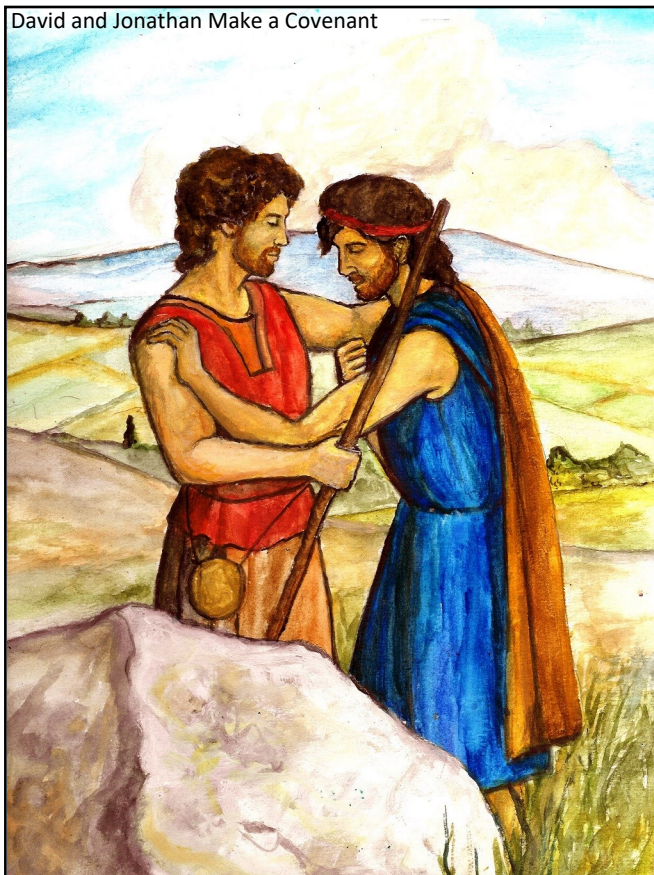
retrieve—bring back

loyal—faithful or true

vow—a promise to be true to the Lord or to another person

David Returns to Shiloh to See Jonathan

David left Ramah where he was living with Samuel to prevent Saul from finding him. He returned secretly to Shiloh to meet with his friend Jonathan. Jonathan could not believe his father was trying to kill David. Jonathan thought that if his father planned to kill David he would have told him. But David insisted that his life was in danger. Together, they thought of a way to find out if Saul was still angry with David.



David and Jonathan's Covenant

The next day was the new moon. At the time of the full moon Saul made a sacrifice and held a special feast that lasted for several days. Since David was captain of the king's guard he was expected to sit at the table with the king. Saul would certainly notice if he was missing.

The plan was for Jonathan to explain to his father that David had gone to Bethlehem with his family for a yearly sacrifice. Jonathan would know that David was safe if Saul was not upset that he was not at the feast. But if Saul planned to harm David he would be angry that David was not there.

The Signal

Jonathan needed a way to let David know if he was safe. The two friends went into a field where no one could hear them, and

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arranged a special signal. David would hide for three days and then return to the field. He would stay out of sight behind a large rock. In three days, Jonathan would come back with a servant. He would shoot three arrows, as though he was shooting at a target. Then he would send the servant to fetch the arrows.

If David was safe from Saul, Jonathan said to the servant:

“Look, the arrows are on this side of you; get them and come.” (1 Samuel 20:21)

To let David know he was still in danger Jonathan said:

“Look the arrows are beyond you.” (1 Samuel 20:22)

At the Feast

When the New Moon came, king Saul sat down at the feast. On the first day that David’s place was empty he said nothing. On the second day, when it was still empty, Saul asked Jonathan why David had not come. Jonathan told him what he and David had planned, that David was in Bethlehem offering a sacrifice with his family.

Saul was furious! He lashed out at his son! He was angry with Jonathan for choosing David as his friend. He asked how he could be loyal to David when it meant that he was throwing away his chance to become the next king.

But Saul knew that Jonathan would not become the king after him for as long as David was alive. Saul commanded Jonathan to bring David to him to be killed. But Jonathan asked,

“Why should he be killed? What has he done?” (1 Samuel 20:32)



David Misses the Feast of the New Moon

This made Saul’s even angrier. He picked up his spear and threw it at his son. Jonathan left the feast, angry and ashamed of the way his father had treated his friend. David had been Saul’s faithful servant. Jonathan must also have been sad that his father would threaten him like that.

Jonathan Signals to David

Jonathan went to the field where David was hiding. As they had planned, he brought a servant boy with him, and his bow and arrows. He shot the arrows and said the words that would warn David that Saul still wanted to kill him,

“Is not the arrow beyond you.” (1 Samuel 21:37)

After the boy had gathered the arrows Jonathan sent him back to the city.

David and Jonathan Part

When it was safe and he and Jonathan were alone David came out of hiding. He knew that from now on he would be a fugitive for as long as Saul was alive. He would be constantly running away and hiding from Saul. The two friends said a very sad goodbye. They knew they might never see each other again, but they renewed their vows and friendship.

“May the Lord be between you and me, and between your descendants and my descendants, forever.” (1 Samuel 20:42)

Covenants and Loyalty

This is a remarkable story about loyalty. David and Jonathan promised to be loyal to each other by making a covenant. Throughout the Word the Lord proposed covenants with the Israelites. He told them of all the wonderful things He could do for them if they would obey Him.

Jonathan and David asked the Lord to be a part of their covenant. They knew it would be hard to keep their relationship strong without the Lord’s help. They also knew they would need to be loyal to each other and to the covenant. Jonathan refused to break his covenant by listening to his father and going against the Lord’s commandments.

There are times when we may need to appear disloyal. If a friend is in danger we will have to let people know even if our friend wants us not to tell anyone. If a sibling is planning to do something wrong, we need to let our parents know. This type of behavior is loyalty. Loyalty is sometimes protecting people, even when they wish we would not. The Lord gives us many chances to be loyal to others. But most importantly, we must be loyal to the Lord and His commandments.



Activity Overview

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

‘Then Jonathan said, “Go in peace,
Since we have both sworn in the name of the Lord,
Saying, ‘May the Lord be between your
Descendants and my descendants, forever.’” (1 Samuel 20:42)

Projects and Activities (answers at back)

Choose one or two.

True or False?

Decide whether statements are true or false.

A True Friend

What qualities do you look for in a good friend? Jonathan’s friendship with David offers a model of what true friendship can be. Complete a Venn diagram that compares the qualities Jonathan shared with his friend David with the qualities you value in a true friend.

Jonathan and David Song

Listen to or learn a song about the friendship between Jonathan and David. Online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-jonathan-and-david/>

True or False?

Decide if each statement is true or false. Mark your answer with a T for true or F for false.

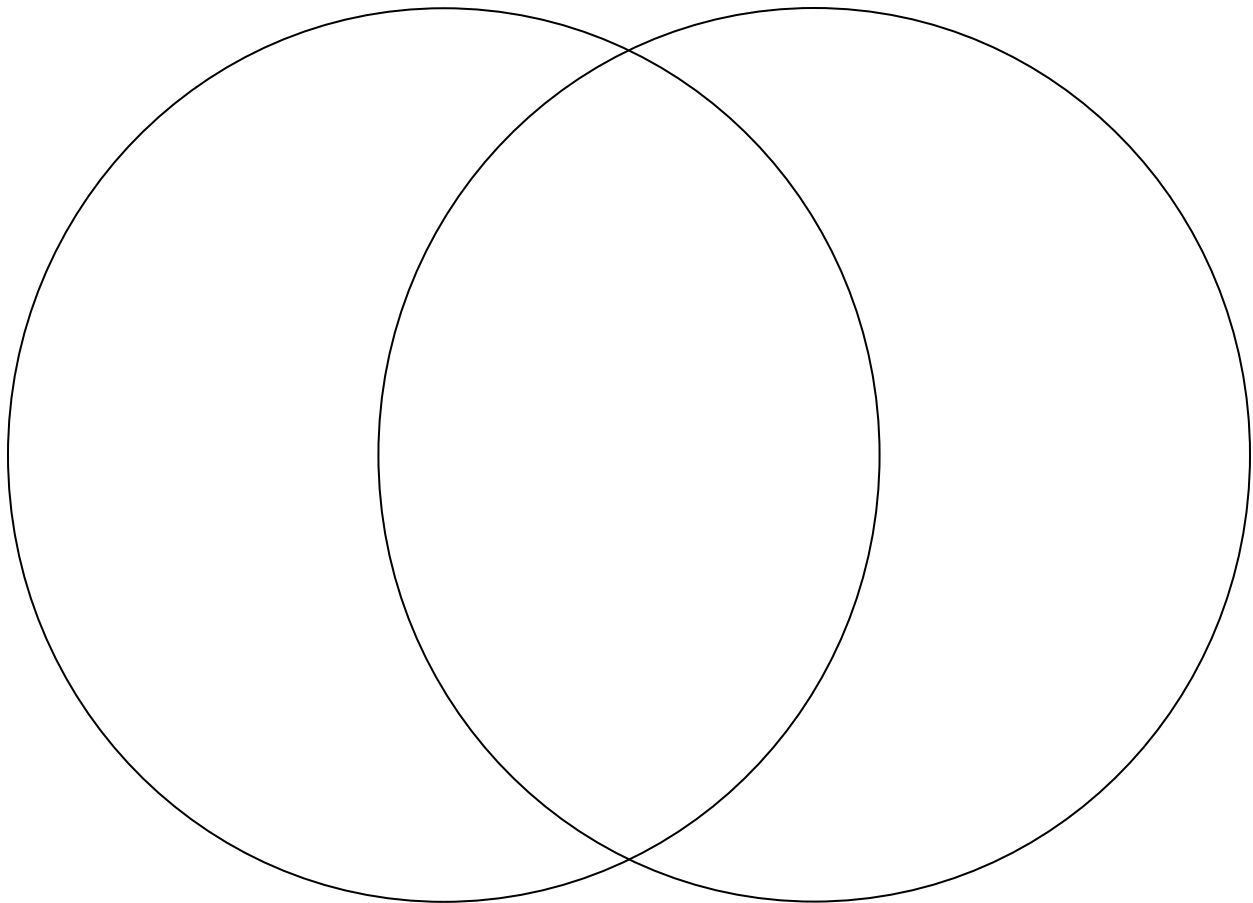
1. ____ At first Jonathan doubted that Saul was trying to kill David.
2. ____ If Saul was angry that David was absent from the feast, David would know that he was safe.
3. ____ David and Jonathan arranged a signal to tell David whether or not he was safe.
4. ____ David had to go to Bethlehem to offer a special sacrifice with his family.
5. ____ King Saul held a feast during the time of the full moon.
6. ____ On the first day that David was absent from the feast, Saul did not get angry.
7. ____ The second day David was absent from the feast Saul did not get angry.
8. ____ Saul tried to kill his own son with a spear.
9. ____ When Jonathan shot his arrows, he called out to the lad that they were beyond him.
10. ____ David and Jonathan didn't even get a chance to say good-bye.

A True Friend

Jonathan risked his life for his good friend David. If Saul found out that Jonathan had made a secret plan he would be furious! Saul even tried to kill Jonathan because of David! Which of Jonathan’s qualities made him a good friend? What qualities do you look for in a friend? Sort the words below into the Venn diagram. You do not need to use all of the words. You can add words of your own. When you’re finished see if there is overlap between Jonathan’s qualities and the qualities you like in a friend. If so, you would probably like a friend like Jonathan.

Jonathan’s Qualities

Qualities I Look for in a Friend



brave	smart	honest	helpful
adventurous	trustworthy	calm	loyal
generous	respectful	dependable	funny
caring	hopeful	polite	serious

Answers

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True or False?

1. T, 2. F, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T, 6. T, 7. F, 8. T, 9. T, 10. F.