

united kingdom

DAVID &
BATHSHEBA

the Kingdom story from creation to revelation

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA

2 Samuel 11:1

One time, in the spring, the time of year when kings go to war, David sent ... his army to fight ... but David stayed behind. ...

2 Samuel 11:2-5

Late one afternoon David got out of bed after taking a nap and went for a stroll on the roof of the palace. As he looked out over the city, he noticed a beautiful woman taking a bath. He sent someone to find out who she was, and he was told, "She is Bathsheba, the ... wife of *Uriah, one of your most trusted soldiers.*" Then David sent for her; and when she came to the palace, *they slept together.* ... Then she returned home. Later, when Bathsheba discovered that she was pregnant, she sent a message to *David to let him know, and there was no doubt that the baby was his.*

2 Samuel 11:6-13

So David sent word to *the commander of his army, to send Bathsheba's husband Uriah home.* When Uriah arrived, David asked *him* how ... the war was *going.* Then *David* told *him to go home and relax.* ... But Uriah didn't go home. He stayed that night at the palace entrance with some of the king's other servants. When David heard *what Uriah had done,* he ... asked *him,* "... Why didn't you go home last night after being away for so long?" Uriah replied, "*The army is sleeping out in the fields. How could I go home and relax?*" ... So David told him *to stay another night.* ... David invited him to dinner and got him drunk. But even then he couldn't get Uriah to go home to his wife. Again *Uriah* slept at the palace entrance.

2 Samuel 11:14-17

So the next morning David wrote a letter to *the commander of his army* and gave it to Uriah to deliver. The letter *told the commander, "Place this soldier on the front lines where the battle is fiercest. Then pull back so that he will be killed."* So *the commander did as he was told.* And Uriah was killed along with several other ... soldiers.

2 Samuel 11:18, 22-25

Then *the commander of the army sent a messenger with a battle report to David. He told him that Uriah had been killed along with others.* ... "Well, tell *the commander* not to be discouraged," David said. "*People are killed in battle! Fight harder next time!*" ...

2 Samuel 11:26-27

When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she mourned for him. When the period of mourning was over, David ... brought her to the palace, and she became one of his wives. *Later* she gave birth to a son. But *God* was displeased with what David had done.

TELLING THE STORY

Why this story?

Despite God's promise to him, King David is not perfect. He sins. He allows his own desires to break his relationship with God.

It begins with just a small thing – King David doesn't go to the battle with his army. But that small thing leads to another ... and another ... bad decision, until he finds himself in a situation where he must decide between his own reputation (perhaps even his own life) or a friend's life. He chooses his own reputation and becomes a murderer. How can someone like David fall to such great depths? And what will happen now to David's relationship with God and to that great promise that God has given him?

Key concepts to include in your story

- Set the scene for the audience. It's springtime, and kings should be on the battlefield. But David stayed at home.
- David wakes up from a nap and sees a woman bathing.
- David sends a messenger to discover her identity, and discovers that she's the wife of one of his most trusted soldiers and most loyal friends.
- David sends a messenger to bring her back to him.
- David and Bathsheba sleep together.
- Bathsheba goes home, discovers she is pregnant and sends a messenger to tell David.
- David brings Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, home from the battle and tries to get him to go home (presumably to sleep with her). He refuses. The second night, David gets Uriah drunk, and he still refuses to go home.
- David writes a letter to the army commander commanding him to put Uriah on the front lines, and sends the letter with Uriah!
- Uriah goes back to battle, the commander obeys the letter and Uriah dies.
- Bathsheba mourns Uriah's death, and after the period of mourning, David marries her.
- Bathsheba has the baby.
- God is not pleased.

Notes about how the story was crafted

Armies normally went to war in the spring, because it was easier to travel on the roads. However, kings were expected to go to the battlefields with their armies. The fact that David chose not to go that year is significant. You may include an explanatory phrase like *David did not go off to war as expected*.

Some names have not been included in the story in order to simplify it. Instead of naming Bathsheba's family in the example story, we have explained the relationship of Uriah to David to highlight the fact that David's sin affected one of his closest friends. Both Bathsheba's father and Uriah were part of David's elite fighting force of thirty men who had faithfully fought with David even before David became king.

... **She sent a message to David to let him know, and there was no doubt that the baby was his.** This is added to the story, based on the text's explanation: "She had just completed the purification rites after having her menstrual period." The text includes this information to prove that the baby must have been David's – it wasn't her husband's baby.

We have not included that Uriah mentioned that the Ark of the Covenant was in the battlefield, because a non-believing audience would not know what that is. However, Uriah's upright, honorable and loyal character is clearly shown in contrast to David's at this point. The soldiers, and even the ark (which represents God's very presence), are in a battlefield, but David is in a comfortable palace.

DISCUSSION POINTS

Retelling the story

- As your group practices retelling this story, help them see the different scenes in this story.
 - Set the scene: David doesn't go to war with his army
 - What happens with David and Bathsheba
 - David brings Uriah back and tries to get him to go home
 - Uriah goes back to the battlefield and is killed
 - David takes Bathsheba as his wife
- One of the surprising things about this story is how many people were actually involved in the situation. When a group visualizes that, they often recognize the scope of what happened. Try appointing a different person to be each messenger, and as you tell the story a second time, have the appropriate messenger walk across the room to "deliver" the message.

Questions for discussion

You don't have to ask all of these questions in your discussion times. These questions are discussion starters, but you will find that often, once people feel comfortable, they talk about many of these things naturally. However, these questions are helpful to keep a conversation going where needed, and they provide a logical sequence of working through the story. Even if you don't ask all the questions in a group, try to ask people what this story means for them personally. You'll find that as you continue to interact with God's Word at a deep level, God's Spirit will reveal things for your life in a wonderful way!

- What do you like about this story?
- What bothered you about this story?
- What does this story show you about God?
- What does this story show you about people?
- What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- How will you remember this story? *(Tell it!)*
- Is there anyone you would like to tell this story to? Or anyone you would like to practice with? E.g. Your children, your best friend, your wife, your husband, a mum at the school gate, your work colleague, your neighbour. (It's true that the best way to learn a story is to tell it. So why don't you give it a go and chat to each other next week about how you found it?)
- How does this story contribute to our understanding of the Gospel? How is this story part of the Gospel?

Questions people may have

This section can never be exhaustive. Remember that during your group discussion times, you want to focus on the above questions rather than get sidetracked by deeply academic issues. Part of the joy of experiencing and studying God's Word in this way is allowing God's Spirit to teach us and reveal His truth to us through the narrative of the individual stories, and ultimately through the narrative of the larger story line. However, we understand that sometimes people feel they need some deeper answers. Sometimes, the storyline has to speak for itself, and we have to trust it to do so. However, if your group needs some deeper answers in order to go on, here are some basics that you can discuss. If you have unresolved questions, please come and ask, and we'll help you find the answers.

- Why was David so adamant about covering up his sin?
 - *The punishment for adultery at that time was that both of them would have been put to death.*

- Why did God allow for innocent people to be harmed because of David's sin?
 - *Uriah showed himself to be a man of integrity and character. He was loyal to his king and nation. It may seem unfair that God would allow this to happen. This could be difficult for some to accept, but they cannot deny the reality that sin causes terrible consequences for the perpetrator of the sin as well as innocent people.*
 - *Adam and Eve sinned in the garden. The result of that sin was broken and distorted relationships ... and death. As people disobey God, innocents are unfairly affected. But God sees all, and (as in the story) He is not pleased.*
- What about Bathsheba? Did she have any guilt in the matter?
 - Most commentators agree that Bathsheba was also to blame in this story – she was most likely not forcefully coerced into sleeping with David. Some have also suggested that Bathsheba did not exercise appropriate modesty when she bathed on an uncovered terrace in the city where anyone could have seen her. There is some debate, however, as to whether Bathsheba would have had the option of refusing the advances of the king.

DAVID AND BATHSHEBA – for children

(NCV with some passages from the NLT)

Introduction

David was king, but sometimes he did wrong things and disobeyed God.

2 Samuel 11:1

Once, when kings normally went out to war, David sent ... his army to fight. ... But David stayed home.

2 Samuel 11:2-13

While his army was away, David disobeyed God. He was afraid that people would find out what he had done wrong so he tried to find ways to cover it up. It got so bad that David ended up killing a man name Uriah – one of his most trusted soldiers on the battlefield! David did this to try to hide his mistakes. This is how David planned to kill Uriah ...

2 Samuel 11:14-17

So David wrote a letter to the commander of his army. ... In the letter David wrote, "Put Uriah on the front lines where the fighting is worst and leave him there alone. Let him be killed in battle." The commander did as he was told. ... Some of David's men were killed. And Uriah ... was one of them.

2 Samuel 11:18, 22-25

Then the commander of the army sent a messenger with a battle report to David. He told him that Uriah had been killed along with others. ... "Well, tell the commander not to be discouraged," David said. "People are killed in battle! Fight harder next time!" ...

2 Samuel 11:26-27

Now Uriah had a wife that David decided to marry. Her name was Bathsheba. When Bathsheba heard that her husband was dead, she cried for him. After she finished her time of sadness, David sent servants to bring her to his house. She became David's wife ... but God did not like what David had done.

TELLING THE STORY – for children

Key concepts to include in your story

All Scriptures for children are taken from the New Century Version unless otherwise noted. The New Century Version has been chosen, because it is not an adult Bible packaged for children. It has been translated directly from the original texts into English with short sentences and simple, modern vocabulary that can be read and understood by children – specifically directed toward those aged between 6 and 12.

The story will need to be simplified at varying levels based on the age group of the children you are teaching. This means that many of the details in the story will need to be summarized. However, you should include the following concepts in your story.

- Set the scene for the audience. Kings should be on the battlefield, but King David stayed at home.
- God chose David to be king, but sometimes David did wrong things and disobeyed God.
- David tried to find ways to hide his sins, and he planned the murder of one of his closest friends – Uriah.
- Uriah's wife Bathsheba mourns her husband's death and later David marries her.
- God is not pleased with what David has done.

Example of a simplified version of the story for children

David was king – just as God promised, but sometimes David did wrong things and disobeyed God. As king, David is supposed to lead his army, but one time David sent his army to fight while he stayed home. While his army was gone, David did something that God didn't like. David was afraid that people would find out what he had done, so he tried to find ways to cover it up. He even planned to kill one of his closest friends to hide his mistakes. David's friend was named Uriah. David wrote a letter to the commander of his army, and he told him to put Uriah in the front of the army where the fighting was the worst. Then the army was supposed to leave Uriah all by himself in the front so that he would be killed in the battle. The commander did what David told him to do. Some of David's men were killed, and Uriah was one of them. When David heard that Uriah and some of his other men were killed, he told the commander not to worry. David said, "People are usually killed in battle. Just fight harder next time." When Uriah's wife Bathsheba found out that her husband was dead, she cried for him. David wanted to marry Uriah's wife so after Bathsheba finished her time of sadness, David told his servants to bring her to his house. Bathsheba became David's wife. But God did not like what David had done.

The following activities can be used to vary your storying sessions with the children and keep the action fresh and exciting. They also help the children learn the stories in different ways. You'll find as children journey through this story set with you, they become more and more capable of learning even complicated stories quickly and well. Varying activities and keeping it fun helps the children write the stories on their heart so that they can pull them out of their toolbox whenever a situation comes up where they can use them!

- **Charades** – Have participants choose one line from the story and use actions to convey that line to the rest of the group. The child that guesses correctly goes next.
- **Skit** – Assign parts to groups and have them act out the story as you or a participant narrates. This can be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, you may choose to have each team act out the whole story, or assign sections and have them perform the skits in chronological order one after the other.
- **Song** – This activity seems to work best in small groups of older and more advanced students. If you believe your group would enjoy this activity, have them write and perform a song based on a story or a portion of a story. To make this task easier, have each group choose a song melody as their foundation and change the lyrics as needed, as opposed to starting from scratch.
- **Sign Language** – This is a great way to incorporate kinaesthetic learning into storying. Work with the participants to develop "sign language" for keywords in the story. This will help them to remember the order and progression of the story. This activity may also be done as a group or in smaller teams. If done in teams, have a participant from each team narrate as the group demonstrates their motions. The more creative, the more likely they are to remember it! Sign language is a good activity if younger and more inexperienced storytellers are part of the group.
- **Perspective Shift** – This creative and critical thinking activity works best later in the story set. Assign groups of children different characters in the story. They then adjust the story they have learned to the perspective of that character. For example, they could tell the Fall story from Adam and Eve's perspectives or the Abraham story from Abraham's perspective.
- **Memory** – The storyteller starts this activity by saying the first line of the story. The story then moves around the circle as each participant tells a line. An alternate method is to go back and forth between partners as they tell the story to each other.
- **Popcorn** – The storyteller also starts this activity. As children remember, they raise their hand. When ready, the storyteller yells "pop" and the name of someone with their hand raised. That person will then jump in until more hands are raised and they shout "pop" to pass the story to another child. You will likely need to demonstrate how this works.
- **Interview** – Children are assigned different characters. A child designated as "interviewer" asks the characters questions about what happened in the story and the character answers according to his or her role. For example, the interviewer could ask Adam about what he witnessed or the actions he took in the garden when he ate the fruit, and Adam would give his answer.
- **Action words** – Before telling the story, the storyteller gives instructions associated with particular words. Children listen for those words in the story, and must do appropriate action when heard. For example, the storyteller would tell the participants to wiggle their arm like a snake anytime they hear the word "snake." There should be multiple words associated with actions in the story. This activity also works well with a younger audience.

Children's Teaching Materials

Sunday mornings will begin in the warehouse with a joint children's worship time led by a youth worship band followed by a storying session with the roving storyteller. Then groups will disperse to their usual meeting locations for the age-appropriate teaching of the story and activities that reinforce that story's message.

Sparks

10:30 Watch VeggieTales: "King George and the Ducky"

Snack – rice cakes

Resources Needed:

- VeggieTales – "King George and the Ducky"
- Rice cakes

11:15 Talk about what the king did wrong and what he should have done

11:20 Music: "Jesus Loves Me"

~ Include the following verse:

"Jesus loves me when I'm good, when I do the things I should.

Jesus loves me when I'm bad, though it makes Him very sad."

- Music: "Jesus Loves Me"

11:25 Play

Little Flames

10:30 Begin with prayer. (Don't repeat a specific prayer, but follow the general idea of the prayer below.)

~ Say "Hi" to God, tell Him we're glad He's there with us and ask Him to help us see Him, hear Him and know Him. Invite Him into everything we'll be doing today.

Keep today's focus in mind: "God is sad when I disobey Him."

Resources Needed:

10:35 Retell the story together multiple times. Use a combination of flannel board and Little People methods where possible. Use a storyboard method – something that is interactive and allows the children to participate in telling the story.

- Blank black poster board (for storyboard)
- Pictures or objects representing the story

10:45 "Knowledge Harvest" conversation: (use similar questions as below)

~ Who made David king?

~ What are some things that David did wrong?

~ When David did bad things, he tried to hide them. What should he have done?

~ Who was David's friend?

~ What did David do to Uriah?

~ Who was Uriah's wife?

~ What did Bathsheba do when she found out her husband was dead?

~ What did David do after Bathsheba had finished being sad?

~ How did God feel about what David had done?

10:50	Active (content-bearing!) game or activity to reinforce the story and the message: "God is sad when I disobey Him."	
10:55	Biscuit break – Use this relatively calm opportunity for a little chat and prayer time. Discussion: ~ Reflect back to them: "God is sad when I disobey Him." Discuss things the children do to make God sad. What should the children do after they've disobeyed God? Tell God you're sorry for not always obeying Him.	• Biscuits
11:00	Popcorn Prayer ~ Have simple prayers, popcorn style: "I'm sorry, Jesus, for _____!"	
11:05	Activity: Pretend Play ~ Allow the children to use Play-dough to make whatever they want. Suggest items from the story they can make. ~ Leaders can play-act with the children.	• Play-dough
11:15	Sing: "Jesus Loves Me" ~ Include the following verse: "Jesus loves me when I'm good, when I do the things I should. Jesus loves me when I'm bad, though it makes Him very sad."	• Music
11:20	Learn the words of the week: "God is sad when I disobey Him." Use visuals for the kids to help them learn the words. (These can be written words even though they can't read yet.)	• Visuals to help learn the phrase
11:25	Wonder Questions: Talk about how the children can make God happy. How do they make Him sad? What can they do to make God happy again? ~ Ask open-ended questions showing interest in the children as individuals. This will show them that we care about what they think, feel, wonder or know.	
11:30	If there is any remaining time (or the previous activities finish early), allow the children to freely choose to do whatever they want to do. Play story-relevant music in the background. Leaders should engage with the children during this time: celebrate them, pray for them, love them. ~ Play with story-oriented toys ~ Role play ~ Play-dough creations ~ Colouring station	• Story-oriented toys • Play-dough • King David colouring sheets • Blank paper • Crayons

Blaze

Resources Needed:

10:35	Welcome and straight-forward telling of the story	
10:45	Retell the story using sequencing	• Whiteboard and markers • Pictures

Discuss the questions:

- ~ What do you like about this story?
- ~ What bothered you about this story?
- ~ What does this story show you about God?
- ~ What does this story show you about people?
- ~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- ~ How will you remember this story? *Tell it!*
- ~ Who will you tell this story to?

11:00 Game: "Consequences"

~ Split into two groups. Stand each group in a line. Give them a situation – such as "I didn't do my homework." The first child in each line then says another sin that would result from the situation – such as "So I lied to my mom." Keep going down the line. This is to show how one sin leads to another.

11:15 Craft: God is not pleased

~ Build a wall using (biscuits? matchboxes?)
~ Give each an object (a "brick"). Have them say something that would hurt God. Attach (with icing or glue) the "bricks" on top of one another to build a wall. Explain how this shows how the wrong things we do build a wall between God and us.

- Biscuits or matchboxes
- Icing or glue

11:25 Circle Time: praying, reflection, responses and offering

- Container for the offering

TNT

Resources Needed:

10:30 Retell the story

10:35 Use Snakes & Ladders game (from first week) to help retell the story

- Snakes & Ladders game

10:45 Split into groups and have the leaders (with help from the children) retell the story

Discuss the questions:

- ~ What do you like about this story?
- ~ What bothered you about this story?
- ~ What does this story show you about God?
- ~ What does this story show you about people?
- ~ What does this story mean for your life? How will you live your life differently having learned this story?
- ~ How will you remember this story? *Tell it!*
- ~ Who will you tell this story to?

Pray for who they want to share the story with

11:00 Game: "Consequences"

~ Split into two groups. Stand each group in a line. Give them a situation – such as "I didn't do my homework." The first child in each line then says another sin that would result from the situation – such as "So I lied to my mom." Keep going down the line. This is to show how one sin leads to another.

- 11:10 Craft: God is not pleased
~ Give each child a piece of paper (a "brick"). Have them draw something that would hurt God on it. Tape the bricks onto lining. Explain how this shows how the wrong things we do build a wall between God and us.
- 11:20 Game: Two truths and a lie. In a circle, have each child say two truths about themselves and one lie. The other children have to guess what the lie is.
- 11:30 (As they leave) Activity pages
- Lining paper
 - Small pieces of paper
 - Tape