

INTRODUCTION

To understand ourselves, sometimes we need to look at the past. To appreciate God's choice of David we have to take a step back in history and understand the world into which David was born. David was most likely born sometime during the reign of Saul, perhaps shortly after Saul became king. David was born into an Israel that was demanding to be like everyone else. They had forgotten that part of their purpose was to be a light to the nations and to show their God is Lord. In demanding to be like everyone else, they had forgotten the point of their existence was to be very *unlike* everyone else. This is still true of God's people today. We are called to be different and to show the greatness of God. Encourage the children you teach to live in a way that brings glory to God.

The following concepts should be clearly conveyed during the club hour:

- **God:** Sovereign—God is sovereign (in control of everything).
- **Bible:** Instruction for Life—God's Word shows me how to live my life.
- **Bible:** Effect on Me—God's Word changes my heart.
- **Man:** Obeying God—I obey God because I love Him.

Demonstrations of
the lessons and songs in
this series are available at:
cefonline.com/freedemos/gnc



SMALL GROUP TIME

"Who Is in Charge?" (Optional discussion)

Who in your life can tell you what to do? (*Allow response. You could include parents, grandparents, teachers, guardians, etc.*) These are some of the people you are supposed to follow because they are in charge. Do you know who is in charge of the entire world? (*Allow response.*) God is! He is the King! He created the world, and it belongs to Him. God is the very best King because He is love and He is perfect. What are some things God is in charge of? (*Allow response, helping children think about the things God made and things in their lives such as school and family. Close in prayer, thanking God for being a good, kind King.*)



WORD UP!

"Follow God!"

I want you to follow me as I do certain things. (*If space and group size allows, form a line and have children follow you around the room as you make certain motions like tapping your head, moving arms, clapping hands, etc. If space is small or group is too large, have children stand in place as they follow you making motions. Make two or three motions and then stop.*) Today in club we are going to talk about what it means to follow God. God loves you so much He wrote His directions down for you in the Bible! Listen today as we learn more about what it means to follow God. Say with me, "Follow God!" (*Say with children.*)

Materials

Word Up! Booklet
(See GNC Resource Pack.)

Show the card and have the children repeat the statement: "**Follow God!**" Tell them that anytime you call out "Word Up!" they are to shout the phrase back. Call it out during transition times, times when they are restless or just anytime!

If you want to add actions to the Word Up!, take both hands and move forward as if making a path when you say "follow." Point up when you say "God."



LESSON

Since the Gospel is condensed in a Christian Growth Bible lesson, you will want to reinforce the message of salvation elsewhere in the club hour. This can be done through a Gospel song. Emphasize the message of salvation truths as you explain the words and concepts of the song. If using a growth song, share the Gospel when applying the song to the unsaved child.

Teacher Help

Every time you say the word “king” have children hold their hands on top of their heads like a crown. You can continue doing this throughout the whole lesson.

Materials

On the Timeline point to “God guides His people through judges.”
(See GNC Starter Resource Pack.)

Preschool Song

“God Made the Mountains High”

Preschool Help

Have the children show you how they look when they feel incredibly sad.

INTRODUCTION

The people of Israel had the perfect King! He was patient and loving even when people disobeyed Him. He rescued them from their troubles and destroyed their enemies. Can you tell me who this great and powerful King is? (*Allow response.*) Their King was God Himself! God provided everything they needed. They just needed to love Him and obey Him.

PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

But the people didn’t want to listen to God. They wanted their own way. This got them into a *lot* of trouble. Then God would send people called judges to help them. God would rescue His people again and they would obey God again for a little while.

Slide 1

This pattern went on for many years. A man named Samuel was one of the judges. He had loved and followed God since he was a little boy. But now Samuel was getting older. He made his two sons judges to take his place. But they were wicked and only cared about money. They were sinning and did not follow God as their King.



What about you? When you don’t follow God as King, you also sin. God is the King over everything. But your heart (the part of you that thinks and feels) is not born wanting to follow God. Instead, you want to go your own way and do wrong things. The Bible calls that sin. (*Read Jeremiah 17:9.*) This sin problem in your heart is the biggest problem in your life. God knows and sees your heart. He sees what you like and what you don’t like. He sees when you do good things and when you do wrong things. God knows this because He made everything and knows everything. Even though He knows all the bad things you have done He still loves you! That is why God sent Jesus, His perfect Son, to earth. (*Read Ephesians 1:7.*) Jesus died on a cross, giving His life’s blood for you, and rose again so your heart could be made clean from sin. God could make this way for you to be forgiven because He is the King over everything! However, when you do not follow God as King, you are like Samuel’s sons.

Samuel’s sons did not follow God as their King but instead went their own way. They were more interested in money and pleasing themselves than in loving and following God.

Slide 2

The people did not like having Samuel’s sons as their leaders because they were so wicked. So they went to Samuel and said, “Give us a king like the other nations have!” Say with me, “Give us a king!” (*Say with children.*)

This made Samuel incredibly sad. God’s people didn’t understand how wonderful it was to have God as their King.

Slide 3

They didn't understand that part of their purpose as a nation was to help the other nations around them know the one true God and follow Him.

Slide 4

The people did not want to have God as their king. They wanted to go their own way by being like everyone else. God had planned all along for His people to have a king, but they were not willing to wait for God's choice. They wanted a king, and they wanted the king *now*.

Slide 5

Samuel prayed, "Lord, they want a king like the other nations have."

God said, (*read 1 Samuel 8:7*). God told Samuel they had not rejected Samuel but rejected God as their King. The people were not following God as King of their country or as the King of their hearts.



If you have believed in Jesus as your Savior, **you can follow God as the King of your heart** by knowing His Word and doing what it says. When Jesus is your Savior, you become part of His Kingdom. But even after you believe in Jesus it can be easy to forget how wonderful it is to follow God as King. You might still want to be like everyone else. Maybe you follow what your friends are doing without thinking about what God wants you to do. Or maybe you want to follow a famous person, copying them or believing what they believe without seeing what the Bible says about it. Or maybe you follow your own heart by doing whatever you feel like doing. Our memory verse talks about how to follow God. (*Quote Psalm 119:9 with children.*) God wants you to take heed (guard) your heart by knowing His Word and following what it says, even when it might look better to be like everyone else.

Slide 6

Say with me, "**Follow God!**" (*Say with children.*) When you have believed in Jesus, remember you are part of God's Kingdom! **You can follow Him as the King of your heart.**

Slide 7

God's people were not following Him as the King of their hearts or the King of their country. They wanted their own way and wanted to be like the other nations.

God told Samuel, "You need to warn the people about what a king will be like." Samuel followed God's instructions and told the people how much a king would change their lives. A king would make them pay taxes and would take the best of the country and the people for himself. The people heard the warnings but still insisted they wanted a king.

Materials

Point to the nations surrounding Israel on the Bible Map.
(See GNC Starter Resource Pack.)

Preschool Song

"I Can Know God" v. 1

Materials

Visualized Bible Verse Booklet
(See GNC Resource Pack.)

Materials

Word Up! Booklet
(See GNC Resource Pack.)

Lesson 1

Preschool Activity

Have the children stand on their tiptoes, pretending to be tall like Saul.

Materials

On Timeline point to "God's people demand a king."
(See GNC Starter Resource Pack.)

Materials

Point to Philistia on the Bible Map.
(See GNC Starter Resource Pack.)

Preschool Activity

The children would enjoy pretending to hide while you pretend to be a Philistine soldier riding past in a chariot.

Preschool Activity

Have children count to seven.

Preschool Activity

Have the children say "Where is Samuel?" and pretend to look for him.

After some time had passed, God told Samuel, (*read 1 Samuel 9:16*). God was giving the people what they asked for. The future king's name was Saul. He was very handsome. He stood a full head taller than most other people in Israel, making him easily stand out in a crowd. Saul looked just like the people thought a king should look!

Slide 8

Samuel met Saul in an unusual way. Saul and a servant were out searching for Saul's father's donkeys that had run away. After traveling for several days looking for the donkeys, Samuel and Saul met, just as God had said they would. Samuel told Saul that the donkeys had been found and that God had chosen him to be the king! How do you think Saul felt when he heard that? (*Allow response.*)

Saul returned home for a short time but then Samuel called all the people together to anoint Saul as the first king of Israel. In Bible times, the prophets kept oil in hollow horns. When a prophet poured oil from the horn on someone's head, it meant he had been chosen for a special job. This was called anointing.

Now Samuel was anointing Saul to be the new king and the people had gotten what they wanted—a tall, handsome king just like the other nations had. The people shouted, "Long live the king!" Shout that with me! (*Say with children.*) Now the people thought they would be happy. They had a king!

Slide 9

But then trouble came. Several years after Saul became king, Israel's old enemies, the Philistines (*fih-LIS-teens*), started a war. King Saul had defeated them once, but now the Philistines were ready to attack again. Saul gathered 3,000 soldiers to fight them.

Slide 10

But the Philistines had 30,000 chariots plus 6,000 soldiers! What good would 3,000 soldiers be against so many?

The Israelites knew they were outnumbered. The sight of all those chariots and soldiers was scary! The people were scared and left their homes. Some people even hid in caves, tombs, and wells to try to protect themselves from the Philistines! Can you look scared and pretend to hide? (*Do with children.*)

King Saul was losing control of his army. More and more soldiers left him every day. Saul knew he couldn't attack the Philistines until Samuel came. Samuel had arranged with King Saul to wait for him for seven days. At that time Samuel would make a sacrifice to the Lord, asking God to give them victory over the Philistines.

But Samuel didn't come. Seven days came and still no Samuel. The people were restless and afraid. King Saul was also getting restless as he watched the people leaving and the Philistines getting closer. Where was Samuel?! Saul was looking at what was happening around him instead of looking to God for help.

So King Saul took matters into his own hands. Samuel was the one who was supposed to offer the sacrifice because that was God's way of doing things. But King Saul made a sinful decision—he offered the sacrifice himself!

Slide 11

As soon as he offered the sacrifice, guess who arrived? (*Allow response.*) Samuel! Samuel asked, “What have you done, Saul?” Saul had insisted on doing things his own way instead of God’s way. Saul was not following God as the King of his heart.



If you have believed in Jesus as your Savior, **you can follow God as the King of your heart.** When you are tempted to follow others or go your own way instead of following God, remember who God is and that you are part of His Kingdom. You can find out what God is like in the Bible as you read your Bible each day. Remembering who God is helps you love Him, follow Him, and keep your life clean from sin.

Slide 12

Say with me, **“Follow God!”** (*Say with children.*) God the Holy Spirit will help you take heed to His Word as more important than what you want or what your friends say. The Holy Spirit will help you obey God. You can also ask a parent, pastor, or *Good News Club* teachers for advice if you are having trouble wanting to follow others instead of God. (*Read Proverbs 4:23.*) This verse is saying how important it is to guard your heart because it affects your entire life, even when you are grown up. Life works best when **you follow God as King of your heart.**

Slide 13

Saul was not following God as the King of his heart. After Samuel asked, “What have you done?” Saul probably didn’t look Samuel in the eye when he answered. “Well, Samuel, you hadn’t come yet, and the people were leaving me. I knew we couldn’t attack the Philistines until the sacrifice was made, so—I forced myself to make the sacrifice.” Saul made it sound like it was hard for him to make the sacrifice.

Samuel replied sadly. “Saul, you have done foolishly! It would have been so much better if you had obeyed God!”

CLIMAX

Then Samuel said, “Saul, God is taking the kingdom from you! God has chosen someone who would follow him as King of their heart. This person will be the king in your place.”

CONCLUSION

Those were hard words for Saul to hear and for Samuel to say. Samuel left and Saul went on to fight the Philistines. Saul fought with the Philistines many times for the rest of his life but never totally defeated them.

The people’s hearts and Saul’s heart were not following God as their King. Because of Saul’s disobedience, the kingdom would not continue in Saul’s family. Who would God choose to be the next king? Samuel said it would be someone after God’s heart—someone who would follow God as King.

Preschool Song
“Hear God’s Word” v. 1

Materials
Word Up! Booklet
(See GNC Resource Pack.)

Preschool Song

"Hear God's Word" v. 1

Materials
Word Up! Booklet
(See GNC Resource Pack.)

Preschool Invitation
When presenting the invitation to preschoolers, use John 3:36a and "believe on" terminology. Ask those who have questions about believing on Jesus to stay with you while the others move on to another activity.

Important Reminder
Remember, it is not the prayer that saves the child. Salvation is the work of the Holy Spirit convicting the child of his or her sinful condition and drawing him or her to trust completely in Christ and His work on the cross. The prayer is the child's expression of that belief to God. (See "Guiding a Child to the Savior" on the inside front cover.)

CHALLENGE



If you have believed in Jesus as your Savior, **you can follow God as the King of your heart.** There will be times when it looks good to follow your friends, a famous person or even your own heart instead of following God. When that happens, remember who God is and that you are part of His kingdom. Listening to and obeying God's Word will help you take heed and guard your heart against sin. You can also ask others who love Jesus for help too. (*Read Psalm 119:9.*) God the Holy Spirit will help you follow Him and obey His Word.

Slide 14

Say with me, **"Follow God!"** (*Say with children.*) Will you start this week to follow God as the King of your heart? Will you read God's Word to help you remember who God is? Will you rely on the Holy Spirit's power to help you follow Him instead of following others or your own heart? Next week you can tell us how God helped you follow Him instead of just following others.

INVITATION



You can't follow God as King of your heart unless you know Jesus as your Savior. Jesus died and rose again so your sins can be forgiven. (*Read Romans 10:9.*) This verse talks about believing (trusting) in your heart. Whom do you trust—yourself or Jesus, who died and rose again to save sinners like you and me? To confess with your mouth means you agree with God that you have sinned and you believe Jesus died for your sins and rose again. When you believe, you will be saved. You will no longer be separated from God, going your own way, but will have a friendship with God. **You can follow God when you believe in Jesus as your Savior.** Will you go God's way by believing in Jesus as your Savior from sin today? Please bow your head and close your eyes. If you would like to believe in Jesus, please show me by raising your hand? (*Acknowledge responses.*) If you raised your hand, meet me (*designate time and location*) and we will look at God's Word to understand what it means to believe in Jesus.