

INTRODUCTION

The God we serve is full of kindness and grace! The story of David and Mephibosheth is not merely the story of a gracious king bestowing favor on the grandson of a dead enemy. It is a glorious picture of God's kindness and grace lavished upon us. In fact, the word translated *kindness* in the Biblical text is the word *grace*. We are all Mephibosheths—hopeless, unworthy, enemies of the King. But because of God's great lovingkindness (grace), we are given hope, worth, and status as not just subjects of the one true King, but His *children*. We have unlimited access to His presence and one day will all sit at His great banquet table, forgiven, cleansed, and dearly loved. What grace! What a salvation is yours and mine!

As you teach this lesson, let the awe of salvation wash over you and help the children see that they, like Mephibosheth, are dearly loved by the great King.

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

- **God:** Merciful/Gracious—God shows me mercy (doesn't give me the punishment I do deserve) and grace (gives me blessings I don't deserve).
- **Man:** God's grace in my life.
- **Jesus:** Delivers me from a hopeless life.
- **Bible:** Effect on Me—God's Word changes my heart.
- **Topic:** God's greatest command is to love Him and love other people.

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

SMALL GROUP TIME

"God Is Kind" (Optional activity)

(Give each child a piece of paper with the outline of a crown on it and a crayon or pencil.) Who is the greatest King of all? *(Allow response.)* God is! He is an amazing King because He is perfect and never does anything wrong. Today we're going to learn something else about what God is like. I'm going to spell a word, and as I give each letter, I want you to write the letter down inside the crown. *(Spell "kind" one letter at a time, making sure all children have written it down.)* On the count of three shout out what the word is. *(Do with children.)* Kind! God is the King, and He is kind, which means He is good and loving all the time. No one is kinder than God. God is even kind to those who do not deserve His kindness. Let's pray now and thank God for being kind and ask Him to help us learn new things about Him today. *(Close in prayer.)*

Teacher Help

If you have a large group, rather than providing each one with a paper and pencil, have them watch and shout out each letter as you write "K-I-N-D" on a whiteboard, chalkboard or piece of paper.

Materials

"Crown" reproducible
(See GNC Resource Pack.)
Crayons

WORD UP!

"God is kind!"

What are some things we have learned that God is like? *(Allow response.)* God is love, God is in charge of everything, God has all power, and God knows everything. Today we're going to learn something else about what God is like. God is kind! Another way to say "kind" is "gracious." Grace is giving someone what they don't deserve. Because of God's kindness, He made a way for you and me to be forgiven of our sins—that is grace! Say with me, "**God is kind!**" *(Say with children.)*

Materials

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

Show the card and have the children repeat the statement: "**God is kind!**" 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! point up when you say "God." Form your hands into the shape of a heart when you say "kind."



LESSON

INTRODUCTION

Optional Introduction

Materials:
"GNC TV" skit reproducible
(See GNC Resource Pack.)

Reporter: This is Jim from GNC TV, coming to you live from King Saul's palace. The news from the battlefield is not good—early reports say King Saul, Prince Jonathan, and King Saul's two other sons have been killed in the battle with the Philistines. The cities are in an uproar with people running for their lives. I managed to catch up with one of the palace servants, a nurse. Thank you for stopping to talk to me on such short notice.

Nurse: (*Panicked.*) I can't stay long! I need to get Mephibosheth to safety!

Reporter: Who is Mephibosheth? An important official?

Nurse: No! Mephibosheth is King Saul's grandson, Prince Jonathan's son! He is not safe!

Reporter: I understand. Can you tell us where you're going to take him?

Nurse: I don't know! I just know we have to leave! He's only five years old—I will take him where no one knows he is of royal blood! The new king will probably try to kill him!

Reporter: Well you'd better get going. Thank you for your time. There you have it, folks—chaos in the kingdom. It remains to be seen if the Philistines will continue to attack. And only time will tell who will be the next king of Israel. This is Jim from GNC TV signing off.

Preschool Activity

Have the children pretend to carry someone as they run in place.

Preschool Activity

Have the children point at their feet and say "his feet got hurt—ouch!"

Preschool Song

"I Believe the Bible" v. 3

"The king is dead! Prince Jonathan is dead! They were killed in battle! Run for your lives! When the new king and his family take over, we will all be killed!" Mephibosheth (*meh-FIB-oh-sheth*) was only five years old when his father, Prince Jonathan, and his grandfather, King Saul, were killed in battle. The people were upset and afraid. Would the enemy attack? Would they be safe? Who would be their new king?

PROGRESSION OF EVENTS

One of the people most worried about this news was a nurse, the woman who took care of Mephibosheth. She knew he was in great danger! Why? When the new king took over, the nurse knew he would probably have King Saul's family members, especially the men and boys, killed. Kings in that time did this so the family members could never take their place as king.

Mephibosheth was King Saul's grandson. The new king might consider him an enemy. That meant his life was in danger. What would the nurse do? She had to save Mephibosheth from the new king! What would you have done if you were the nurse? (*Allow response.*) She picked up Mephibosheth and ran, hoping to save his life. He was too heavy for her because he was no longer a baby. But she knew he would not be able to run quickly enough to get away because he was too little. How many of you are five years old? If I tried to pick up one of you and run as quickly as I could down the street, do you think I'd be able to run very well? (*Allow response.*) No!

Slide 1

As she ran, Mephibosheth suddenly slipped from her arms and landed on the hard ground. His feet were badly injured in the fall.

But there was no time to stop. They had to keep going to escape. Poor Mephibosheth! He had lost everything important in his life. His father and grandfather had died, he had to leave his home and live in a strange place, and now he would have trouble walking for the rest of his life because of his fall. There was nothing he could do about these things. It seemed he was in a hopeless situation.



Everyone in the world is born into a hopeless situation because of sin. (*Read Ephesians 2:12b.*) Sin separates you from God right now and will separate you from Him forever if you are not forgiven. Why? It is because the wrong things you do are against God. When you become angry and hit your brother because things are not going your way that is sin. When you are mean instead of kind to others, that is against God. You are in a hopeless situation because you are separated from God now if you are not His child. There is nothing you can do about that without God's forgiveness. We are born in a hopeless situation because of sin.

Mephibosheth was in what might have seemed like a hopeless situation. He had lost everything important to him in just one day. The nurse and Mephibosheth traveled until they found a safe place with a kind family who took them in. Mephibosheth grew up there in hiding, possibly afraid of what the new king would do if he knew Mephibosheth was alive.

Slide 2

But since King Saul was dead, the people of Israel needed a new king. Who should rule over them? Who did God choose to be the king many years before? (Allow response.) David—a man after God’s heart! David was king over part of the land, but he was trusting God’s plan and waiting until God’s time was right for him to be king over all of the land.

It was an exciting day in Israel when David was finally made king! Let’s cheer for King David! (*Cheer with children saying, “Long live King David!”*) David had waited for God’s time and now he was finally king! What God had promised so many years before had happened.

Slide 3

Do you remember who David’s best friend was? (*Allow response.*) Prince Jonathan! Do you remember the promise David and Jonathan made to each other? (*Allow response.*) They promised to care for each other’s families as long as they lived.

Several years after David became king of Israel he remembered the promise he made to Jonathan. Who do you suppose reminded David of his promise? (*Allow response.*) God! God reminded David of his promise to show kindness to Jonathan’s family.



If you are a child of God, **God wants you to show His kindness to others.** God showed you the biggest kindness of all when He forgave your sins!

Slide 4

Say with me, “**God is kind!**” (*Say with children.*) When you realize how much kindness and grace God has given to you, God begins to change you to want to become more and more like Jesus. If you allow God to change your life, He helps you want to show kindness to others. Maybe some people said something mean about you. God can help you not say something mean back to them but try to work it out instead. God can help you be kind to them because God has been so kind to you. He will help you want to be kind. Maybe your friend wants to color but you want to play a game instead. God can help you treat your friend kindly by doing what they want to do this time. Can you be kind to him or her by yourself? Probably not. But God the Holy Spirit will help you show kindness to that person. When you remember how kind God has been to you in forgiving you, He helps you show that same kindness and love to others and really mean it. (*Read Ephesians 4:32.*) Showing others kindness is a way to help them see how much God loves them. If you are a child of God, **God wants you to show His kindness to others.**

Teacher Help

There may be children in your club who feel trapped in a hopeless situation due to the conditions in their home, struggles at school, or an addiction. Be sure the children understand that God cares about their situation and so do you. Let them know they are welcome to talk with you or another teacher if they feel hopeless. Be sympathetic in your responses to the child. Their problems may not seem that bad to you, but they are significant to the child. Keep in mind that Jesus showed compassion for the multitudes who came to Him with problems that paled in comparison to the deeper catastrophe of sin that He came to save them from.

As a *Child Evangelism Fellowship* volunteer or worker, you need to be aware of and abide by your state’s child abuse reporting requirements. If you suspect abuse, contact your local CEF director and they will help guide you on what to do. If your club is in a school setting, you may need to report to school officials as well.

Preschool Activity

The children would enjoy pretending to pick up a crown and put it on King David’s head.

Materials

Word Up! Booklet
(See GNC Resource Pack.)

Preschool Song

"Jesus' Love Is Sweet and Wonderful"

Preschool Activity

If possible, act out this scene by having teachers play the parts of David and Mephibosheth. The children can play the part of Ziba, the servant, talking with David then going to fetch Mephibosheth.

Slide 5

God was the one who reminded David of his promise to show kindness to Jonathan's family. King David called in his servants and asked, "Is there anyone alive in Saul's family, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

Slide 6

A servant named Ziba (*ZIE-bah*), who had worked for King Saul, was found and brought to King David. The king asked, "Are you Ziba?" Ziba replied, "I am he." (*Read 2 Samuel 9:3a.*) David wanted to show God's kindness to anyone left in Jonathan's family! Do you remember who was left in Jonathan's family? (*Allow response.*) Mephibosheth! God had not forgotten about him. He loved Mephibosheth!



God has not forgotten about you either. He sees you right where you are and He loves you very much. (*Read John 3:16a.*) Because God is perfect, His love for you is always perfect. You are special to God. He made you, and He also created a wonderful world for you to enjoy. He made birds, clouds, trees, and flowers! He shows His kindness to you in many wonderful ways. What are some ways God shows His kindness to us each day? (*Allow response.*) God wants you to know He loves you. He will never forget about you.

God had not forgotten about Mephibosheth either. Because He loved Mephibosheth, God reminded David of his promise to Jonathan. Ziba told David, "Jonathan has a son who cannot walk well." Then Ziba told the king where Mephibosheth was living.

"Go bring him," David ordered.

The servant of King David came to Mephibosheth's house and told him, "King David wants you to come to the palace." Show me on your face how you think Mephibosheth felt when he heard this news. (*Allow response.*)

Perhaps Mephibosheth wondered, *How did he find me? Why did he find me?* Maybe Mephibosheth was afraid to go because he thought he might be killed. But he knew he must obey the king's orders. He went to the palace with the servant.

Slide 7

King David spoke kindly, "Mephibosheth."

"I am your servant," answered Mephibosheth. But the king did not invite Mephibosheth to come to the palace to be his servant. He had something else in mind. He said, "Don't be afraid! I will surely show you kindness for the sake of your father, Jonathan." King David was showing Mephibosheth God's kindness and grace in his hopeless situation!



In a far greater way God shows His kindness and grace to you in your hopeless situation. Many years after this true story happened, God sent His Son, the Lord Jesus, from heaven to earth to pay for your sin and mine because we can't take away our own sins. Jesus is the perfect one who never sinned. But He was willing to die and take the punishment for your sins and mine. Wicked men beat Him, spat on Him, and nailed Him to the cross. Why did He allow men to do this? So that you and I would no longer be in the hopelessness of sin, separated from God. (*Read Ephesians 2:12b-13.*) Because Jesus died on the cross, the Bible says you can be brought from the hopelessness of sin into friendship with God! That is God's greatest kindness to you. We call that grace—kindness you don't deserve. What happened to Jesus after He died? (*Allow response.*) He came back to life and is alive today in heaven ruling over everything! When you receive Jesus by believing on (trusting) Him, you are saved from the hopeless situation of being lost in your sin. God's kindness and grace to you is amazing!

King David was showing God's kindness and grace to Mephibosheth, keeping his promise to his friend Jonathan.

Mephibosheth's eyes must have opened wide in surprise as he listened to the king's words, "I will give you the land your father owned and from now on you will come and eat at my table." David was giving back to Mephibosheth his land and giving him a home in the palace because David was keeping his promise!

CLIMAX

Slide 8

Mephibosheth's life was forever changed! God showed His kindness to Mephibosheth through David, and now he would be part of the king's family for the rest of his life!

CONCLUSION

King David ordered Ziba, his sons, and servants to farm Mephibosheth's land and to treat him as David's own son. From then on Mephibosheth's life was different because of David's kindness to him. Mephibosheth had not done anything to deserve it, but God showed him kindness in making him part of King David's family!

Preschool Song

"I Can Know God" v. 2

Preschool Activity

The children would enjoy pretending to eat at the king's table and talking about foods they think a king would eat. If possible, you may choose to serve a simple snack for the children to taste.

Lesson 5

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.)

INVITATION



Today, although you have done nothing to deserve it, God showed His great kindness to you by making the way for you to become part of His family! Jesus, God’s perfect Son, died on the cross and came back to life so you can have your sins forgiven. (*Read John 1:12.*) To receive means to take Jesus as your own. To “believe on His name” means you are trusting in Jesus alone to save you from the hopelessness of sin. When you believe, your sin is forgiven and you are given the right to become God’s child—a member of God’s family. You are still part of your family at home, but you will be part of God’s family too! God will care for you always and will never leave you. Someday you will live with Him forever in heaven. **You can become a child of God by believing on Jesus as your Savior!** Will you believe on Jesus today? Please bow your head and close your eyes. If you want to believe on Jesus, show me by raising your hand. (*Acknowledge responses.*) You may all open your eyes. Those of you who raised your hands may meet me (*designate time and location*) so I can show you from God’s Word what it means to be God’s child.