

Lesson Plans that Work
Year B– Proper 5
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: 1 Samuel 8: 4-11, 16-20

Background: This story marks the origins of the very long saga of Saul and David as Kings over Israel - a tale taking up much of the attention of the Hebrew Scripture authors. From humble beginnings of a fearful grumbling band of tribes, comes the longstanding, successful reign of David. After a bumpy start with their first king, Saul, the people are ruled by David - shepherd boy, defeater of giants, musician, and unifier of the kingdom.

A Notation for This Week

This is a bit of foreshadowing in the people's cry for a king, and God's prediction that they will be sorry. They wanted to be like the other countries around them, and they saw only the things a king would provide for them. They wanted to feel safe and cared for. But God knew that this was a form of rebellion against his dominion, and that no human king could provide what they really needed. He also knew that they were fickle and self-centered, and that eventually any king would fail them. But he told Samuel to grant their request anyway. Perhaps we should be careful in what we ask God for, or at least acknowledge that God can redeem even our worst choices.

Theme: The People Want a King

Before Class: Gather materials to make lists and draw pictures.

Beginning: Gather the children and sing "Come into God's presence" (My Heart Sings Out). If you and the children are up to it, try it as a round.

Opening Prayer: O God, our King, help us to know that you alone rule the earth. Amen.

The Story: 1 Samuel 8:4-11, 16-20

This story works well when told by many voices – you can either read the scripture, or invite people to read the parts found in the script at the end of this lesson.

Contemporary English Version (CEV)

One day the nation's leaders came to Samuel at Ramah and said, "You are an old man. You set a good example for your sons, but they haven't followed it. Now we want a king to be our leader, just like all the other nations. Choose one for us!" Samuel was upset to hear the leaders say they wanted a king, so he prayed about it. The Lord answered: Samuel, do everything they want you to do. I am really the one they have rejected as their king. Ever since the day I rescued my people from Egypt, they have turned from me to worship idols. Now they are turning away from you. Do everything they ask, but warn them and tell them how a king will treat them. Samuel told the people who were asking for a king what the Lord had said: If you have a king, this is how he will treat you. He will force your sons to join his army. Some of them will ride in his chariots, some will serve in the cavalry, and others will run ahead of his own chariot.

The king will take your slaves and your best young men and your donkeys and make them do his work. He will also take a tenth of your sheep and goats. You will become the king's slaves, and you will finally cry out for the Lord to save you from the king you wanted. But the Lord won't answer your prayers. The people would not listen to Samuel. "No!" they said. "We want to be like other nations. We want a king to rule us and lead us in battle."

Reflection Questions:

- Why did the people want a king?
- What did Samuel think about their request? What did God think?
- I wonder why God granted their request?

Activities:

Play "The King/Queen Says" (Simon Says). Let everyone lead who wants a chance. Afterward, ask how it felt to be the leader and how it felt to be the follower. Ask them to name times when they like to lead and when they prefer to follow.

Pros/Cons:

In small groups or pairs, invite them to make lists of all the great things about being a king or queen and all the ways it would be difficult or challenging. (Option: Have other groups make list of advantages and disadvantage of being ruled by a king or queen.) Come back together and share.

"If I were king or queen" pictures:

Invite the students draw what they would do if they were in charge.

Sing: Seek Ye First (Hymnal 1982) (This also works as a round.)

Closing Prayer: O God, our King, help us to know that you alone rule the earth. Amen.

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Narrator: One day the nation's leaders came to Samuel at Ramah and said,

Leaders: "You are an old man. You set a good example for your sons, but they haven't followed it. Now we want a king to be our leader, just like all the other nations. Choose one for us!"

Narrator: Samuel was upset to hear the leaders say they wanted a king, so he prayed about it. The Lord answered:

God: Samuel, do everything they want you to do. I am really the one they have rejected as their king. Ever since the day I rescued my people from Egypt, they have turned from me to worship idols. Now they are turning away from you. Do everything they ask, but warn them and tell them how a king will treat them.

Narrator: Samuel told the people who were asking for a king what the Lord had said:

Samuel: If you have a king, this is how he will treat you. He will force your sons to join his army. Some of them will ride in his chariots, some will serve in the cavalry, and others will run ahead of his own chariot. The king will take your slaves and your best young men and your donkeys and make them do his work. He will also take a tenth of your sheep and goats. You will become the king's slaves, and you will finally cry out for the Lord to save you from the king you wanted. But the Lord won't answer your prayers.

Narrator: The people would not listen to Samuel.

People: "No! We want to be like other nations. We want a king to rule us and lead us in battle."