

# SABBATH SCHOOL

## Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

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Level 5 • Unit 6 • Week 2

### SAUL AND DAVID

#### OBJECTIVE:

To explain the meaning of authority, who created it and why we should give respect to those in authority. And to contrast Saul's reaction to his sin with David's reaction to his sin.

#### ATTENTION GETTER:

Say: Emperor, czar, Caesar, and kaiser are names for those who rule over many nations. They have the legal power to exercise authority over others.

Ask: What are some of the names for a person who rules over one nation? [King, president, prime minister, shah, sovereign, etc.]

How many positions of authority can you name? [Help them out if they get stuck—congressman, governor, mayor, policeman, judge, sheriff, general, admiral, etc.]

Name those who have direct authority over you. [Parents, ministers, teachers, principals, etc.]

Say: As you can see, there are a quite a few jobs, offices or positions in which people have been given the legal power to exercise authority over others. However, there are also laws that set bounds to prevent abuse of that authority.

Ask: Can anyone tell me who has created these positions of authority?

Say: Open your Bibles to Daniel 4:17 and let's read what God says. [Select a child to read the verse.] Daniel 4:17 says: "This decision is by the decree of the watchers [angels, guardians], and the sentence by the word of the holy ones, in order that the living may know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, gives it to whomever He will and sets over it the lowest of men."

Ask: Why should we show respect to those God has put in positions of authority.

Say: Turn to Job 25:2. [Select a child to read the verse.] Job 25:2 Dominion [the power or right of governing] and fear [reverential awe, deep respect] belong to Him, He makes peace in His high places.

Since God has the power and the right to establish positions of authority and give it to whomever He pleases, respect should be given to those whom he has put in positions of authority.

### **BIBLE LESSON:**

Do: Make a copy of the Bible lesson "Saul and David" for each child in your class.

Say: Today's lesson is about the first two kings of Israel and how they ruled. As we take turns reading, pay special attention because I will be asking questions on authority and Saul's reaction to his sin and David's reaction to his sin.

## **Saul and David**

Tending to the entire government of Israel was becoming too much for Samuel in his old age, so he appointed his sons, Joel and Abijah as judges. They soon began to abuse their power by taking bribes and perverting judgments. All the elders of Israel went to Samuel protesting the conduct of his sons. "Make us a king like the pagan nations," they demanded (1 Samuel 8).

Displeased and upset that Israel wanted a king to rule over them, Samuel took the problem to God. "Do not be upset, Samuel," God said. "It is not that they don't want you as their leader, but it is Me that they do not want as their ruler. Tell them I will give them a king and tell them also of the danger and tyranny of being ruled by a man."

God selected a young Benjamite named Saul, to be anointed by Samuel as the first king of Israel. Saul was handsome, athletic and stood head and shoulders above everyone else. He was also little in his own eyes [humble]. Though many were happy to have Saul as their king, he did not have the full support of all the people (1 Samuel 9).

God gave Saul victory over the Ammonites and he became a hero overnight. After that the people accepted him as their king because they felt that he could protect them from their enemies. But being inexperienced in the responsibilities of a king, Saul was a weak leader and did not use his authority properly. Soon the people began returning to paganism and lawlessness, and again, God allowed the Philistines to take over part of Israel (1 Samuel 11 and 12).

In the second year of Saul's reign, he successfully led his army against a small Philistine garrison. Fearing retaliation and lacking courage, most of Saul's ill-equipped army deserted him. Discouraged, Saul sent for Samuel. The messenger returned with word that Samuel would be there in seven days.

On the seventh day Saul became so worried that he personally made burnt offerings and peace offerings, hoping that God would be moved and somehow save Israel. Samuel arrived just as Saul finished. "You have been most unwise to direct spiritual matters. That is a responsibility for God's ministers. You have overstepped your authority and God has made it known to me that your days as king of Israel are numbered," said Samuel. Even though God rejected him, He allowed Saul to rule Israel for another 20 years (1 Samuel 13).

However, God saved Israel that day by causing the whole Philistine army to become confused, panic-stricken, and ready to fight each other. The Israelite lookouts reported to Saul that they could hear angry shouting and fighting and could see soldiers fleeing the camp in all directions (1 Samuel 14).

"Bring the ark of God," Saul said to Ahijah the priest. "I want to inquire of God what I should do." (At that time the ark of God was with the Israelites. It was no longer kept in the Holy of Holies—ever since Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas took it from there, many years ago.) Distracted by the increasing noise of men fighting, Saul and his men rushed off to fight the enemy, not waiting for an answer. They found dead and dying Philistines everywhere. Saul's men finished off those who were left and then collected the swords and fighting equipment of the Philistines to equip their army. Those who had deserted Saul returned. God gave him victory after victory over the enemies of Israel and Saul took back the kingdom (1 Samuel 14).

Because God did not immediately remove him from the leadership of Israel, Saul began to think Samuel was wrong. He began to take matters into his own hands and ignore God's instructions. With each victory Saul began to think that it was his doing that won the battles and in time his humble attitude was replaced with pride and arrogance.

Saul was caught in a lie when he told Samuel that he had followed God's instructions to utterly destroy the Amalekites and all that they had. When Saul realized that Samuel knew the truth, he tried to justify his actions. When that didn't work, he tried putting the blame on the people. Saul had backed himself into a corner and having no place to turn, finally admitted he had sinned. "You have rejected God by rebelling and now God has rejected you," said Samuel, as he left the camp (1 Samuel 15).

God instructed Samuel, "Go to Bethlehem and find a man named Jesse, for I have selected one of his sons to be the new king." At Samuel's request Jesse sent for his sons. When Jesse's youngest son, David, arrived, God made it known to Samuel that David was the one to be anointed king of Israel. After Samuel poured olive oil on David's head, God's Spirit came upon David and gave him great power from that day onward. God withdrew His Spirit from Saul, and sent an evil spirit to trouble him with depression, fearfulness and jealousy (1 Samuel 16).

Because David played the harp well, he was selected to play for Saul whenever the evil spirit troubled him. The soothing music put Saul in a much better mood. While David lived at the fortress palace with Saul, he learned much about governing and using authority.

After David slew Goliath, Saul made him commander of his troops. This added to David's experience in using authority when he became king. When the victorious Israelite army was returning home, the

people cheered David more than they cheered Saul. Saul became angry and jealous because the people credited David with having killed tens of thousands and Saul with only thousands (1 Samuel 17 and 18).

"Next they'll be making him their king," Saul thought to himself. From that time on King Saul kept a jealous watch on David. He tried to kill him several times but David escaped. Finally, Saul banned him from his presence and demoted him to captain. David continued to succeed in everything he did because God was with him (1 Samuel 19).

Jonathan, Saul's son, begged his father not to harm David. Finally Saul agreed and vowed that David would not be killed. Jonathan and David thought that all was well, but one day as Saul was listening to David play the harp, he picked up his javelin and hurled it at David. He dodged just in time and fled from the palace. From that time on, David was a fugitive (1 Samuel 20).

Saul and his army continued to search for David, who was hiding with his band of six hundred men on the other side of the mountain. Searching through many caves and climbing over hot boulders, Saul decided to go into one of the caves. It so happened that it was the same cave in which David and some of his men were hiding. "God has delivered him into your hands," exclaimed his men. David quietly crept up behind Saul and with his sword carefully cut off the hem of Saul's robe. Suddenly, he realized that he had done a childish thing and was conscience stricken. "I shouldn't have done it," said David to his men. "God ordained Saul as our king and it is wrong to do anything to him, even to cause him embarrassment" (1 Samuel 24)

After Saul left the cave and was some distance away David shouted to him, "I could have killed you while you were in the cave but I will never harm you because you are the Lord's anointed. To prove it, I have the hem of your robe that I cut off with my sword."

When Saul realized it was David, he said. "You are a better man than I am, for you have repaid me good for evil. Now I realize that you are surely going to be king, and rule over all Israel.

Ask: Where did Saul and David get the authority to rule over Israel? [The authority to rule over Israel came from God.]

What kind of a ruler was Saul? [He was a weak ruler and disobeyed God's commands.]

Do you think Saul was truly sorry that he disobeyed God's instructions? [Saul lied, justified and blamed others before he would admit he had sinned.]

Do you think David was truly sorry for having cut off the hem of Saul's robe? [As soon as he cut off the hem of Saul's robe, he was conscience stricken and admitted to his men that he shouldn't have done it.]

**LESSON APPLICATION:**

Ask: Can anyone give me the definition of the word symbol?

Say: A symbol is something (a letter, picture, emblem, token, sign) that is used to represent something else.

As we have seen, there are many positions of authority and some have symbols that denote authority. When one sees a crown, we automatically think of a king, when we see a gavel, we think of a judge. Let's see how many symbols of authority we can come up with. It can be symbols used at this time or anytime in history. [If the children get stuck, help them with a few of these.]

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| 1. Scepter                                | 7. A badge (of a sheriff or policeman)                   |
| 2. Throne                                 | 8. Four stars on the shoulders of a uniform              |
| 3. Royal robe                             | 9. Uniforms in the military (denote levels of authority) |
| 4. Judge's robe                           | 10. The Constitution                                     |
| 5. A seal of office (like the state seal) | 11. The Magna Carta                                      |
| 6. A country's flag                       | 12. The Bible  |

**MUSIC:**

Teacher's choice from the United Church of God hymnal.

**MEMORY VERSE:**

Proverbs 29:2 "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan."

# *family activity*

## **THE POINT:**

The first part of this week's lesson was about authority, who gives authority and why we should respect authority. The second part contrasted Saul and his reaction to his sin with David and his reaction to his sin (1 Samuel 15 and 24).

## **FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:**

Enlarge upon this week's lesson by using the analogy of a kingdom. A kingdom consists of: territory, a ruling authority (a king), laws and subjects.

Explain that a family is like a small kingdom. Use your family as an example. The territory is the home and the yard around it. Mom and Dad are the ruling authority (king and queen) who make the laws that are best suited for the family. They also see to it that the laws are justly carried out for the benefit of everyone in the family. The children are the subjects of the kingdom.

Because dad is a king and mom is a queen, the children are princes and princesses. They are in training for the time when they will become kings or queens and this is a very great responsibility. Talk with them about some of those responsibilities. For example, right education, doing their share of the work. Ask your child to name other responsibilities that they have. Liken their room to a piece of the territory over which they can "rule" in order to gain experience by taking care of it (keeping it clean and orderly). Within limits they can make "laws" governing their territory. For example, no one can use any of their things unless they give permission. Their pet can be their subject and they must provide for its needs just like Dad (king) and Mom (queen) provide for the spiritual as well as the physical needs of their children (subjects).

Talk with your child about the importance of having a ruling authority (someone in charge), and why they should be respected. Ask your child to name some of the rules (laws) in your home. Listen to your child's thoughts on the subject.

## **MEMORY VERSE:**

Proverbs 29:2 "When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan."