

DAVID

THE FLAWED AND BELOVED KING

re:form

ANCESTORS

PREPARE

KEY PASSAGES

- 1 Samuel 16 | David Is Anointed
- 1 Samuel 18, 20 | David and Jonathan's Friendship
- 2 Samuel 2, 5 | David Becomes King
- 2 Samuel 11 | David and Bathsheba
- 1 Kings 2:1-9 | David's Final Words to Solomon

WHAT'S BEHIND ALL THIS?

The stories of David are among the most well-known in the Old Testament. They occupy almost half of Psalms, plus large portions of 1 and 2 Samuel, 1 Kings, and 1 Chronicles. David's defeat of the giant Philistine warrior Goliath is told in Sunday school and Vacation Bible School. It also pops up in modern culture whenever an underdog prevails over the presumed victor.

The Bible tells the complete story of David from his boyhood life as a shepherd through his rise to king and ultimately to his deathbed. David was—and is—an important figure to the people of Israel, but David wasn't perfect. Biblical authors presented a full picture of David as a complex man who was full of flaws and experienced as much tragedy as triumph. Like many others God chose, David was anointed at an early age to become the next king of Israel. He enjoyed a favorable relationship with Jonathan, King Saul's son. As king, David presided over numerous military victories and was considered a huge success. But David was not so successful in his personal life. After getting caught in an adulterous affair with Bathsheba, he orchestrated the death of Bathsheba's husband. As a result, David and Bathsheba lost their son who was conceived during their affair. Through all his successes and failures, David remained grounded in his faithfulness and devotion to God.



CONSIDER THIS

"David . . . was God's choice for king, a man after [God's] own heart. David lived by the words of the Torah, keeping the Lord always before him. When he sinned . . . he was beside himself with sorrow, because he knew he had turned from God."

Ray Vander Laan, *That the World May Know Ministries*,
www.followtherabbi.com

Tear here for easy use!

WHERE ARE TEENS AT?

- Most high school teens are still working hard to fit in with friends, teammates, and coworkers. They compare themselves to their peers and are very aware of their shortcomings and failures as friends, athletes, students, and family members. As your group talks about David, emphasize the fact that David wasn't perfect, but God used him anyway. God wants us to be who we are, even though nobody is perfect.
- At this age, many teens in your group have experience in romantic relationships. Many of them will have had experience with cheating, whether they cheated or were cheated on by a girlfriend or boyfriend, or have a parent who was unfaithful. Remind them that David's story shows us that there are consequences to this kind of behavior, but in the end, God still loves us.
- High school youth have likely experienced modern-day ageism. Older siblings pick on younger siblings. Seniors rule the school, and first-year students are newbies who don't yet know what's going on. The story of David, the youngest son who is anointed to be the future king, stands this ageist system on its head and raises up the youngest underdog. Encourage teens to see this as a wake-up call. God doesn't pick favorites and we shouldn't either.

ENCOUNTER

15 MINUTES

Make sure you've got the obvious stuff for this session—re:form Ancestors video (DVD or download), Anti-Workbooks, Bibles, pens or pencils, paper, tape, etc.

VIDEO

1. SET UP

Of well-known Bible stories, David and Goliath is one of the most often referenced in popular culture. In a battle with Goliath, God works through young David to prevail against the giant. Set up your target. Pass out rubber bands, tape, and pens to teens. Give them two minutes to make a slingshot using the supplies provided and then hurl cotton balls at the target. Have teens compete to see who can hit the target from the farthest distance. Ask teens what they remember about the story of David and Goliath. Then ask them what else they remember about David. Remind teens that there's more to David than a slingshot and a stone.

2. WATCH

"David: The Flawed and Beloved King," Chapter 11

3. UNPACK

- What did you learn about David that you didn't know before the video?
- What kind of a person was David when he was a boy? When he was a young man? When he was king?
- How would you describe David's relationship with God?

WHAT ABOUT THE BIBLE?

Tell the teens in your group they have been accused of breaking a rule or law (not doing their homework, missing curfew, denting the car). Have them pretend they're guilty and come up with a lie to cover it up. Ask teens questions about their lies. Where were you? What happened? Why did your best friend say you were there? Most likely, even the best liar's story will begin to unravel. Form groups of 3–5 and read the story of David and Bathsheba from 2 Samuel 11:1—12:24. Ask groups to revisit David's abuse of power, his attempts to cover it up, and what happens afterwards.

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- Make a list of David's failures. How does one failure lead to the next?
- Who do you think suffered the most from David's abuse of power?
- What kinds of connections are there between this story and your life?
- How effective is lying in covering up bad choices?

GET THIS STUFF

Rubber bands. Cotton balls.
Target. Prize (optional).

CAPTURE IT

Take photos of teens shooting cotton balls at the target and post them to the re:form Gallery!

ENGAGE

25-30 MINUTES

Choose 1, 2, or all 3 activities from pages 26-27 of the Anti-Workbook for your Engage time together.

1. DAVID'S CAMPAIGN

Where's this going? Teens examine David and his shortcomings through the lens of a modern political campaign.

Form 2 groups and announce that everyone is now an activist in David's next political campaign. Assign 1 group as the Pro-David group and the other as the Anti-David group. The Pro-David group must present David as a strong candidate with impeccable moral fiber. The Anti-David group must showcase all of David's bad decisions. Offer the Key Passages as a starting reference point. Each group must create a 30-second advertisement, ending with a "Paid for by..." personal endorsement. Allow time for both groups to perform their ad. Then have teens use their AW to design a Pro- or Anti-David campaign button or bumper sticker, depending on which way they were swayed by the ads.

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- What are David's significant achievements? What shortcomings damage his character?
- Would you vote for David? Why or why not?
- How do today's politicians compare with David?

2. DIY PSALM

Where's this going? Youth put themselves in David's shoes by expressing themselves through the art of writing a psalm.

Remind youth that the Bible contains 150 different psalms, 73 of which are attributed to David. With a partner, have teens pick a psalm at random, read it, and decide how the author was feeling. Ask pairs if their psalmist was happy or sad and what their psalm says about God. Have youth spread out with their AWs and work alone to write a psalm about an event in their recent past. Ask these questions to get teens started: What's one event that was particularly emotional? What emotions were you feeling? How do you think God was or wasn't there during the event? Remind teens that their psalm could be a happy psalm of praise, a sad psalm asking for help, an angry psalm asking why God wasn't helping, or anything in between. Ask for volunteers to share their psalms with the group.

BACK IT UP

"His kingdom? Like I said, kings are nothing but trouble."

re:form Ancestors DVD

HERE'S A TIP

Encourage teens to devise clever names for their campaign groups: "Fathers Against Adultery" or "The Association against Lyre Liars."

CAPTURE IT

Use a video camera to record the political ads. Post them on the re:form Gallery.

BACK IT UP

"David was an accomplished composer and soon found favor with the entire court."

re:form Ancestors DVD

CAPTURE IT

Have youth add their psalms as Words posts on the re:form Gallery.

HERE'S A TIP

If teens are writing a psalm of praise, direct them to Psalms 7, 8, and 9 for help. If they're working on a psalm of lament, consult Psalms 6, 12 and 13 for ideas.

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- How does writing a psalm compare with how you usually deal with emotional events?
- Why do you think David wrote psalms?
- Do you think it was easier for David to write psalms at the beginning or end of his life? Why?

3. THINGS OF IMPORTANCE

Where's this going? Youth learn how to set their own priorities by examining David's priorities.

Form groups of 4 or 5. Using the Key Passages as a reference, have groups review the inventory of David's values and motivations in the AW. They can write additional ones on sticky notes. Then have teens decide how David might have prioritized these things and fill in the list in their AWs. Have small groups share with the whole class their interpretation of David's priorities. Ask them where they think God was in David's list of priorities. Then have teens spread out and work alone in their AWs to prioritize the motivating factors in their lives.

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- How did David demonstrate that God was his priority?
- What did it feel like to order someone else's priorities based on their actions?
- What did making your own list of priorities reveal about your life?
- Where is God in your list of priorities?

CONSIDER THIS

"The Greek term *psalmos* originally referred to the plucking of a stringed instrument. . . . The Hebrew title for the book [of Psalms] is *tehillim*, 'praises.'"

Ed. William H. Gentz, *The Dictionary of Bible and Religion*, 852

GET THIS STUFF

Sticky notes.

BACK IT UP

"David, despite his flaws, was assuredly a man after God's own heart."

re:form Ancestors DVD

CONSIDER THIS

"Action expresses priorities."

Mohandas Gandhi

RESPOND

15-20 MINUTES

REGROUP

Label one section of the wall “Positive” and the other section “Negative.” Give each teen 5 or 6 sticky notes. On each note, have them write down a character trait they remember from David’s story. Have teens stick their traits on the wall in the “Positive” or “Negative” section. Read them aloud and instruct teens to find a spot in their AW to jot down a few of David’s characteristics, both positive and negative, they identify with.

SHARE

Close the session with an opportunity for youth to share what they have learned about the character and how that connects with their life. Identify aspects of their work and recall points of discussion that can serve to recap the session for youth.

QUESTIONS FOR CONVERSATION

- What are some characteristics of David you identify with?
- Despite the fact that we all make good choices and bad choices, why do we know that God still loves us?
- What does it mean to you that David continued to find favor with God despite the fact that he was flawed?

SEND

Have teens open their Bibles to Psalm 139, one of David’s psalms, and take turns reading it aloud. As an alternative, search online for audio or video recordings of Psalm 139 and play them for the group. Encourage teens to remember that it was David’s devotion to God that allowed him to take his place as Israel’s beloved king. As they leave, give each teen a smooth stone to remind them of young David’s unlikely victory over Goliath.

GET THIS STUFF

Sticky notes. Smooth stones, 1 per teen.

BACK IT UP

“The Lord forgave David and Bathsheba and blessed them with another son, Solomon. And God continued to hold David in very high favor.”

re:form Ancestors DVD

CONSIDER THIS

“Life is a long lesson in humility.”

J. M. Barrie, author of *Peter Pan*

“Of all acts of man, repentance is the most divine. The greatest of all faults is to be conscious of none.”

Thomas Carlyle, historian and essayist

CAPTURE IT

Use a digital camera, camcorder, scanner, web cam, or audio recorder to capture group conversation and individual pieces of work. Upload them to the re:form Gallery or ask teens to do so.