

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 8 (B)

Old Testament: 2 Samuel 1:1, 17-27

BACKGROUND

Saul and David have a long and complicated history together. Saul became increasingly ineffective and paranoid and even chased David around the countryside trying to kill him at several points. David and Jonathan have been best friends, and Jonathan has given up so much for his friend, David.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK'S READING

Grief is always complicated, but here David simply laments the loss of two very important people. He also curses the circumstances and warns that this bodes poorly for the country. David shows his honesty with God and puts his emotions right out in public.

THEME

David's Lament for Saul and Jonathan

BEFORE CLASS

Gather supplies for the lament lists or sympathy cards. Choose and learn music.

BEGINNING

Sing "Peace Before Us" from Wonder, Love and Praise - making up movements for each phrase.

OPENING PRAYER

O God, you know everything about us and you know when we feel happy and sad. Make us aware of your presence at all times, and comfort us in our sorrow. Amen.

THE STORY: 2 SAMUEL 1:1, 17-27

Introduce the story by explaining that David has gotten word that Saul and Jonathan have been killed in battle. Remind them that Saul was King before David and that Jonathan was David's best friend. Explain that David sang this song of lament, which mourns his friends and warns his country.

After the death of Saul, when David had returned from defeating the Amalekites, David remained two days in Ziklag.

David intoned this lamentation over Saul and his son Jonathan. (He ordered that The Song of the Bow be taught to the people of Judah; it is written in the Book of Jashar.) He said:

Your glory, O Israel, lies slain upon your high places!
How the mighty have fallen!
Tell it not in Gath,
proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon;
or the daughters of the Philistines will rejoice,
the daughters of the uncircumcised will exult.
You mountains of Gilboa,
let there be no dew or rain upon you,
nor bounteous fields!
For there the shield of the mighty was defiled,
the shield of Saul, anointed with oil no more.
From the blood of the slain,
from the fat of the mighty,
the bow of Jonathan did not turn back,
nor the sword of Saul return empty.
Saul and Jonathan, beloved and lovely!
In life and in death they were not divided;
they were swifter than eagles,
they were stronger than lions.
O daughters of Israel, weep over Saul,
who clothed you with crimson, in luxury,
who put ornaments of gold on your apparel.
How the mighty have fallen
in the midst of the battle!
Jonathan lies slain upon your high places.
I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan;
greatly beloved were you to me;
your love to me was wonderful,
passing the love of women.
How the mighty have fallen,
and the weapons of war perished!

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder if you have ever lost something or someone important to you?
- I wonder if God ever feels sad?
- I wonder how we can express our sadness?
- I wonder what helps you feel better when you are sad?

ACTIVITIES

Lament Slam

Work as a class to create a master list of all things people lament about in our world - both personal hurts and losses as well as national and global concerns. Then work individually or in small groups to create songs, chants, poems or other presentations about some of the laments listed. Perform them for the whole group, like a poetry slam.

Art Projects

Divide a piece of paper in half. On one side, list your laments. On the other, list things that bring comfort or joy. Decorate and illustrate both side, using a range of colors to represent the different emotions. OR Make sympathy cards for those who are hurting in your congregation or community.

Sing

Way, Way, Way (from Wonder, Love and Praise) or Shalom, My Friends (Hymnal 1982) or We Shall Overcome (LEVAS) or Peace Before Us again.

GETTING CLOSURE

Challenge them to look for people who need comfort or encouragement. Brainstorm different ways they can reach out to such people.

CLOSING PRAYER

Loving God, we give you thanks for the many ways you comfort us when we are sad. We know that we can comfort others who are hurting. Give us grace to see your work in the world, and compassion to share your love with others. Amen.