



God Calls a Shepherd Boy

(based on 1 Samuel 16:1-13)

When he grew up, Samuel was one of God's prophets. One day, God spoke to Samuel.

"Samuel, get ready to go on a journey," God said. "It is time to find a new king. Take some oil as a sign of my blessing and set out. Go to Bethlehem and visit a man named Jesse. One of his sons will be the new king."

So Samuel got ready and left for Bethlehem. When he arrived, Samuel invited all the people to come for worship. Jesse and his sons received a special invitation.

Everyone gathered for worship. Samuel looked at Jesse's oldest son Eliab (ee-LAI-ab) and saw that the young man was tall and strong.

"This must be the one God has called to be king," Samuel thought. "Eliab is tall and strong. He walks like a king, looks like a king, and he acts like a king. He must be the new king."

But God disagreed. "Don't look at his height or how strong he looks," God said. "I look at what a person is like on the inside. Eliab will not be king."

One by one, Jesse presented each of his sons to Samuel, and every time God said, "No, he is not the one."

Samuel was confused. God had told Samuel that one of Jesse's sons would be the new king. Why hadn't God called any of them? Samuel turned to Jesse and asked, "Do you have any other sons?"

"I have one more son, but he is just a boy," Jesse answered. "His name is David, and he's out looking after the sheep."

"Bring him here immediately," ordered Samuel. "I want to meet him." When David arrived, God said, "This is the one I have called to be king."

Samuel asked David to kneel down. Then he poured special oil over David's head. Now everyone knew that David had been set apart to do God's work.

From that moment on, God's Spirit was with David in a special way. Samuel went back home, and David went back to the sheep. God said that David would be king one day, but for now, David would wait faithfully.



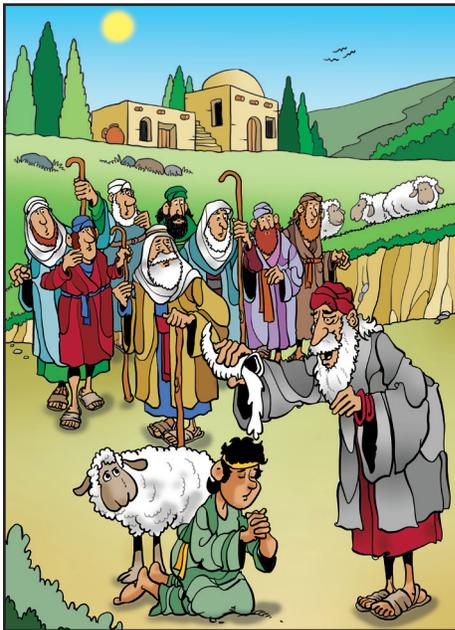
God Calls a Shepherd Boy

(based on 1 Samuel 16:1-13)

Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Read *Everyone Knows What a Dragon Looks Like* by Jay Williams, *A Small Surprise* by Louise Yates, or . . . and *Nick* by Emily Gore with younger children or *The Seeing Stone (The Spiderwick Chronicles Book 2)* by Tony DiTerlizzi or *How to Train Your Dragon* by Cressida Cowell with older children. Talk together about how—like the story of the sons of Jesse—things in these stories are not as they first appear.



Responding to God's Grace

- Help your children discover their gifts by asking them what they like to do. Do they like to sing, draw, run, or read? Are they good at taking care of a pet? Can they put things together? Those ideas are just a start.
- Play a guessing game about what's inside. Put an object inside a box. For smaller children, let them feel what is inside. For older children, let them ask yes-or-no questions to finally guess what the object is. Just like David, what is inside is important.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Pray this prayer together or lead the prayer and have family members repeat your words and actions:

Thank you, God, (*hold praying hands at center of chest then lift above head*) /
for knowing the real me. (*swirl right hand above head and then over heart*) /
Help me (*lift praying hands above head and lower to center chest*) /
to see others as you do. (*look to person on right and left*) /
Make my heart joyful, (*wave both hands in air*) /
loving, (*cross arms over chest*) /
compassionate, (*place hands over heart and then hold outward*) /
and faithful. (*raise arms above head, palms up*) /
Forgive my anger, (*make an angry face*) /
rudeness, (*cross arms angrily*) /
and jealousy. (*pull an imaginary rope toward you*) /
You are good, and I am grateful. Amen.
(*make a circle shape extending arms above head and down to waist*) /