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# The Story of Ruth

*Scripture: Ruth 1:1-4:22*

**Theme: God works through ordinary faithfulness to accomplish His plan**

*4th-6th Grade (Ages 9-11)*

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Free curriculum for small and rural churches

## Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: David and Bathsheba , Sin, Repentance, and Grace Opening: "A Moment of Mistake" Start by asking kids, "What's one thing you wish you hadn't done, something that felt wrong, but you didn't stop?" Draw them in with a simple example like ignoring a rule or lying. Explain that even though David's sin was big (1 Samuel 11, 12), God didn't give up on him. Today, we'll see how God's grace is stronger than our mistakes. The Story: David's Downfall Read 2 Samuel 11, 12 in kid-friendly terms (e.g., "David saw Bathsheba bathing, felt tempted, and took her. God sent Nathan to tell him he was in trouble."). Pause to ask: "Why do you think God sent Nathan? How would you feel if someone pointed out your sin?" Show that even though David disobeyed, God still loved him. Repentance: Turning Back Read Psalm 51 (or summarize it). Ask: "What does 'purify my heart' mean? How can we ask God to clean us up?" Let kids pray a simple version (e.g., "Lord, forgive me for... thank you for loving me."). Highlight that David's heart changed, he didn't stay angry but turned to God. Grace: God's Forgiveness End with 2 Samuel 12:13 ("I will always have you in my heart!"). Share that even when we mess up, God's grace (love + forgiveness) covers it. Ask: "If David was forgiven, how can we trust God when we feel guilty?" Challenge them: "This week, ask God for help to live a little cleaner, even if you don't get it perfect!" Closing: Grace to Go End with a heart check: "Who can tell me one thing they're thankful God forgives them for?" Leave them with hope, God's grace is bigger than their sins! Encourage them to share with a friend how God's love works. Teacher Notes: - Use visuals (e.g., a "temptation" drawing). - Allow 5, 10 mins for reflection after Psalm 51. - Praise kids who share personal truths (e.g., "Wow, thank you for trusting God with that!").

## Bible Story

Sunday School Lesson: David and Bathsheba , Sin, Repentance, and Grace

One summer, King David was resting on his palace roof, looking out over Jerusalem. The weather was hot, and he had been far from God for a long time. While he should have been praying and serving his people, David's thoughts wandered to the beautiful woman bathing on the palace wall. She was married to another man, but David couldn't stop thinking about her. He sent for her, and soon, Bathsheba gave birth to a baby boy. David was overjoyed, until the child grew ill and died. David's heart was broken, but his grief didn't change his sinful choices.

That's when God sent the prophet Nathan to talk to David. Nathan told a story about a poor man who stole the only lamb from a rich man, and David was furious. When Nathan said, "You are that man!" David knew he had sinned. He admitted his wrongdoing and begged God for forgiveness. Even though David had done what he shouldn't, God's love and mercy showed through. Nathan told David, "The Lord forgives your sin, so you will not die. But you must pray for the child, and the Lord will bring him back to you."

David spent time in the temple, confessing his sin and asking for God's help. Though he didn't know if the child would live, he trusted God. The next day, the baby was healthy and strong, and God honored David's faith. Yet, David still faced consequences, his family became divided, and he later had to deal with more trouble. This shows that even after repentance, sin still had effects.

God's forgiveness was amazing! David had done something terrible, but God forgave him and restored his relationship with Him. This teaches us that when we sin, God wants us to turn back to Him. Repentance means admitting our wrongs and asking for God's help. Just like David, we can trust God's love even when we make mistakes.

Deeper Questions: - What do you think made David act so badly? How can we avoid the same mistakes? - Why do you think God sent Nathan to talk to David? What did David learn from this? - How does God's forgiveness change us? What does it teach us about His love?

Personal Application: Have you ever made a mistake that you regretted? How can you ask God for forgiveness, like David did? God loves us so much that He forgives our sins, just like He forgave David's. Let's ask Him today to help us stay close to Him and avoid wrong choices.

Why This Story Matters: This lesson shows that God forgives us when we ask for it, but it also reminds us that sin still has consequences. David's story helps us see that God's love is greater than our mistakes, and that repentance brings healing. Just like David, we can trust God's grace when we need it most!

## Key Verse

### Ruth 1:16

A Pure Heart and a Strong Spirit This Bible verse is like a special prayer asking God to help us feel clean inside and have a heart full of kindness and courage. Psalm 51:10 is from King David's time, when he felt really sorry for making mistakes and needed God's help to start fresh. Imagine your heart is like a garden. When we follow God's rules and love others, our garden grows flowers of goodness, like kindness and honesty. But when we make choices that hurt ourselves or others, our garden gets weeds, like anger or pride. This verse is asking God to help us pull out the weeds and replace them with fresh, healthy growth. It's a reminder that even if we've done something wrong, God wants us to start over with a clean slate. God's heart is like a big, loving sun that warms everything around it. Just like sunlight helps flowers grow bright and healthy, God's love helps us grow strong and kind. This verse tells us that we can ask God to help us feel pure inside, not because we've earned it, but because He loves us. When we pray this prayer, we're telling God, "Help me to be the best version of me that I can be." Let's think about what it means to have a steadfast (or brave and loyal) spirit. A steadfast spirit doesn't waver when things get hard, it keeps going even when others might give up. For example, if you help your family even when it's boring, or stand up for someone who's being treated unfairly, you're showing a steadfast spirit! This verse encourages us to ask God to help us stay brave, even when it's tough. Deep Questions for You: 1. What's one thing you've done lately that made you feel a little guilty? How can God help you feel pure inside again? 2. Do you think it's easier to be kind when no one is watching? Why or why not? 3. If your heart felt "dirty" inside, what would be one small step you could take today to feel cleaner? Personal Application: Start your day by praying this

verse: "God, help me to feel clean inside today. Give me a heart full of kindness and a spirit that doesn't give up." Notice how it feels when you tell God you need help, it's like opening a window to let His love into your heart! Even small prayers like this can make a big difference. Would you like to try writing your own prayer today? You're doing great!

## Activities

### Activity 1:

Students create a visual map of David's sin with Bathsheba, then reflect on how their own choices might lead to consequences, and God's grace.

1. Discuss the Story: Begin by asking, "How do you think David felt after seeing Bathsheba bathing? What might have been going through his mind?" (Write their responses on the board.)
2. Create the Map: In groups, give each child a piece of poster paper. Ask them to draw David's house (a tower or castle) on one side and the ocean/river (where Bathsheba was bathing) on the other. Use arrows to show how David's actions connected the two places.
3. Label Consequences: Have students write or draw consequences (e.g., "His army deserted him," "He was punished by God") alongside the arrows. Add a "Grace" sticker at the bottom, labeling it: "God forgave David, what does that mean for us?"
4. Reflection: Ask, "If you were David, how would you handle this sin? How can you ask God for forgiveness, like David did in Psalm 51?" (Share Psalm 51 aloud.)

### Activity 2:

Kids role-play David's repentance and practice applying God's grace to their own lives with a creative storytelling activity.

1. Read the Story: Read 2 Samuel 11, 12 aloud, emphasizing David's sin and God's grace. Ask, "Why do you think God forgave David? What does that say about God's love?"
2. Write a Letter: Give each child an index card. Ask them to write as David a "letter to God" confessing their sin (e.g., "I was wrong... I need your forgiveness").
3. Role-Play Repentance: In groups of 3, 4, one student plays David, another plays Bathsheba, and others act as witnesses. The David character reads their letter, then asks God for forgiveness (e.g., "Don't punish me, save me!"). The group discusses what David learned.
4. Personal Application: Have students share one way they can respond to God's grace today. Ask, "What's one sin you've confessed to God before? How can you show gratitude for His forgiveness?"
5. Notes:
6. For deeper discussion, use prompts like "Why do you think Bathsheba's family didn't punish David?" or "How can we avoid David's mistakes?"
7. Time each activity to fit within 10, 15 minutes while leaving room for reflection.
8. Would you like adjustments for smaller groups or additional cultural connections?

## Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions about David and Bathsheba that encourage deeper reflection, critical thinking, and personal application for upper elementary students (ages 9-11):
- Choosing Between Good and Bad Choices
- In David's story, he made a choice that led to serious consequences, first, he saw Bathsheba and wanted her, then he lied to cover it up, and finally, he had to face the consequences of his sin. How do you think David felt when he realized what he had done? What kinds of things might make a person want to do something they know is wrong? Have you ever felt tempted to act in a way that you knew wasn't right, like lying, cheating, or hiding

something? What made you stop? How do you think God feels when people choose to turn away from Him?

- (Deeper reflection: What would have happened if David had stopped at the first temptation? How could he have handled it differently?)
- Repentance and Forgiveness
- David's story shows that even after he made a big mistake, he asked for God's help and confessed his sin. He wrote a prayer in Psalm 51 asking for forgiveness and a new heart. Have you ever done something that you knew was wrong, and then regretted it? How did you respond when you realized you had gone wrong? Did you ask for forgiveness from someone, like a parent or friend? How did that help you feel?
- (Personal application: If you ever find yourself in a situation where you need to ask for forgiveness, what would make it harder for you? How can you be brave enough to do it?)
- The Power of Grace
- Even though David's sin was serious, God didn't punish him forever. He forgave David and promised to always love him. David later became a king again, and he even became a great leader. How do you think David felt when he realized God forgave him? Do you think God forgives people just because they ask, even if they make mistakes over and over? Why or why not?
- (Deeper question: If someone made a mistake that really hurt you, would you be able to forgive them like God forgave David? Why or why not?)
- Living Like David After His Mistake
- David's story doesn't just teach us about his big sin, it also shows us how he tried to live better after. Even though he had a lot of trouble because of his choices, he still trusted God and did what was right in the end. Have you ever made a mistake that you had to deal with for a long time? How did it change you? What did you learn from it? How can you try to grow from your mistakes, like David did?
- (Personal connection: Think of one small or big mistake you've made. What would you like to do differently next time? How can you show God you care about living a good life?)
- These questions encourage students to think about the story from different angles, connect it to their own lives, and reflect on what it means to live with God's help. Would you like any adjustments to fit a specific lesson focus?

## Prayer Focus

*Here's a heartfelt, age-appropriate prayer for upper elementary students that weaves in the story of David, Bathsheba, and God's grace while inviting reflection and personal application: Prayer: "Lord, Help Us Choose Wisdom Like David's Heart" Heavenly Father, We come to You today with David's story, a man who made big mistakes but still knew You. Like David, we've all faced choices where our hearts wanted something different from what You asked. When we see someone beautiful or feel tempted to turn away from You, help us remember: Your love is always bigger than our sin. Just as David repented and asked for forgiveness, teach us to ask for Your help when we wander. Help us to see when we've strayed and trust that Your grace is stronger than our mistakes. You know our hearts, Lord, even when we hide them from others. David's story shows us that even when we mess up, You don't leave us alone. Just like You forgave David, teach us to forgive ourselves and others too. When we feel guilty or ashamed, remind us that You love us and that Your mercy is new every morning. Help us to trust that no matter what happens, You're always with us, waiting to cleanse our hearts and give us a fresh start. We're also praying that we never forget how kind You've been to us. David knew that even when he fell, God was still faithful. Teach us to be like him, confident in Your love but quick to turn away from sin. When we see others making choices that hurt them, help us speak up or pray for them gently, just as David did when he wrote Psalm 51. Show us how to live like we believe: that You forgive, that You heal, and that Your grace is always enough. Lord, today we ask for Your help in our own lives. When we feel tempted to turn away from You, remind us that You're watching, and that we're never alone. Help us to grow in wisdom, like David did, so that we can choose You every*

*single day. We love You, Lord, and we trust in Your love for us. Amen. Deeper Questions for Reflection (teacher prompt): - What's one way you've felt like David, like you messed up but God still loves you? - When have you turned away from God, and what did you learn about His forgiveness? - How can we pray for others who've made bad choices, like David did in Psalm 51?*

### >> Missions Spotlight

In many cultures around the world, shame is a powerful force. Missionaries working in Japan, where shame runs deep, share David's story to show that God's grace is greater than our deepest shame. The Gospel offers forgiveness, not just behavior change.

### -> To the Cross

David sinned terribly, adultery and murder. Yet when he truly repented, God forgave him. This points to the amazing truth: no sin is too great for the cross. Jesus died for ALL our sins, even the ones we're most ashamed of.