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Note: Bold text that begins with ► indicate instructions. All other lines indicate points to make, things to say, or questions to ask. Lines in italics are quotes directly from the New International Reader's Version of the Bible.

OT 56 David Spares Saul's Life

Reference: 1 Samuel 22, 24, and 26

Big Idea: God loved his enemies, and so should you!

Verse: Matthew 5:44 - But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... (ESV)

**Note: The resources to be used with this lesson are found in the corresponding Resource file.*

A. INTRODUCTION, Length: 5-10 min.

Due to the length of this week's lesson, there is no Introduction Activity.

B. LESSON, Length: 20-25 min.

Resources: Paper Crown Instructions¹, Blanket Fort Instructions

Materials: Color shirts (2), electrical tape, plastic army men, foam pool noodle, chairs, blankets, tableknife, Shirt and fabric for Saul², extra blanket, pillow, binder clips, water pitcher

¹ If you already have a crown to use, you don't need to make one.

² For Saul, you need a color shirt for him to wear and a strip of fabric that is the same color.

Setup:

- Turn the color shirts inside. Using the electrical tape, make a large letter "D" on one and a letter "A" on the other.
- Using the Blanket Fort Instructions as a guide, create the Blanket Fort/cave on the right side of the teaching area using the chairs and the blankets.

Notes:

- *In this lesson plan, you'll be instructed to draw various items. Use the Story Drawing Resource as a example for what to draw.*
- **Yellow bolded text** indicates something you need to do. **Green bolded text** indicates something you need to draw.

Introduce 1 Samuel:

- Today's story is from the book of 1 Samuel.
 - **► Show the children how to find 1 Samuel in your Bible.**
- The book of 1 Samuel is about three people: Samuel, and the first two kings of the Israelites. The first king of Israel was Saul.
 - **► Select a "Saul" to wear a CROWN and stand on the left side of the teaching area.**
 - **► Give Saul his SHIRT to wear (the colored shirt that you have a piece of fabric to match).**
- But Saul decided to sin, which means to...? (Disobey God.)
- Because of this, God told Saul he would pick another king. When Saul died, his son wouldn't become king. Who did God pick to be the next king? (David.)
 - **► Select a "David" to wear the D SHIRT and stand on the right side.**
- Saul was so jealous of David that he tried to kill him with spears!
 - **► Hand the FOAM POOL NOODLE to Saul.**
 - **► Tell him to throw it at David, who should duck out of the way.**
- Saul threw a spear at David at least three times, but God helped David get out the way each time. After that, David had to run away from Saul. And Saul started hunting David down... *to kill him!*
 - **► Have Saul sit down in the LEFT CHAIR.**
 - **► Have David stand in front of the TENT FORT.**

Begin the story:

- Let's read what happened next from the book of 1 Samuel, chapter 22.
- ¹ *David left Gath and escaped to the cave of Adullam*
 - **► Tell David to crawl into the TENT FORT and sit there.**
- *His brothers and the other members of his family heard about it. So they went down to join him there. ² Everyone who was in trouble or owed money or was unhappy gathered around him. He became their commander. About 400 men were with him.. - 1 Sam. 22*
 - **► Attach the 400 SOLDIERS SIGN to the Fort using tape.**
- David escaped and had about 400 fighting men with him.
- Let's keep reading.

Continue the story:

- *1 Saul returned from chasing the Philistines. Then he was told*
 - **► Select a “Messenger” to stand by Saul and repeat:**
 - *David is in the Desert*
 - *of En Gedi.*
 - **► Have the Messenger sit back down.**
- *² So Saul took 3,000 of the best soldiers from the whole nation of Israel. He started out to look for David and his men.*
 - **► Tell David to hide behind the TENT FORT.**
- *He planned to look near the Rocky Cliffs of the Wild Goats.*
 - **► Tell Saul to walk over to the TENT and look around.**
- *³ A cave was there. Saul went in...*
 - **► Tell Saul to crawl into the TENT FORT.**
- *...Saul went in to go to the toilet. David and his men were far back in the cave. - 1 Sam. 24:1-3*
- The Bible tells us that this was a pretty deep cave. David and his men were far back in the cave that Saul couldn't see him. I couldn't make a cave that big out of blankets, so you'll have to use your imagination. You'll have to pretend that David was already inside of the cave as we keep reading.

Continue the story:

- **** ⁴ David's men said...*
- **► Have all the children repeat:**
 - *This is the day*
 - *the Lord told you about.*
 - *[The Lord] said to you...*
 - *I will hand your enemy*
 - *over to you.*
- *So David came up close to Saul without being seen.*
 - **► Hand a TABLE KNIFE to David.**
 - **► Have him sneak into the cave.**
- *He cut off a corner of Saul's robe. - 1 Sam. 24*
 - **► Hand the PIECE OF FABRIC to David in the cave.**
 - **► Tell David to sneak back out of the CAVE and hide behind the back again.**

Continue the story:

- *⁵ Later, David felt sorry that he had cut off a corner of Saul's robe.*
- **** ⁶ [David] said to his men...*
 - *May the Lord keep me*
 - *from doing a thing like that*
 - *again to my master.*
 - *He is the Lord's anointed king.*
 - *So I promise*
 - *that I will never*
 - *lay my hand on him.*
- *⁷ David said that to correct his men.... He didn't allow them to attack Saul. So Saul left the cave and went on his way. - 1 Sam. 24*
 - **► Have Saul leave the cave, look around, then sit back in his chair.**

Continue the story:

- ⁸ Then David went out of the cave.
 - ► **Have David stand in front of the cave.**
- *** [David] called out to Saul...
 - King Saul!
 - My master!
- When Saul looked behind him, David bowed down. He lay down flat with his face toward the ground.
 - ► **Have David kneel towards Saul.**
- *** ⁹ He said to Saul...
 - ¹⁰ Some of my men begged me to kill you.
 - But I didn't.
 - ¹¹ Look at this piece of your robe in my hand!
 - ► **Have David stand and hold up the PIECE OF FABRIC.**
 - I cut off the corner of your robe.
 - But I didn't kill you.
 - I haven't done anything to harm you.
 - But you are hunting me down.
 - ¹² ...may the Lord pay you back
 - because of the wrong things
 - you have done to me. - 1 Sam. 24

Continue the story:

- ¹⁶ When David finished speaking...
- *** Saul asked him a question.
 - David
 - is that your voice?
- And Saul sobbed out loud.
 - ► **Have Saul stand, then pretend to cry.**
- ► **Have Saul repeat:**
 - ¹⁷ You are a better person than I am.
 - You have treated me well.
 - But I've treated you badly.
 - ¹⁸ The Lord handed me over to you.
 - But you didn't kill me.
 - ²⁰ I know for sure that you will be king.
 - ²¹ Promise me that you won't kill the children of my family.
- ²² So David made that promise to Saul.
 - ► **Have David place his hand over his heart and repeat:**
 - I promise
 - I won't hurt you
 - or your family.
- Then Saul returned home.
 - ► **Have Saul sit down.**
- But David and his men went up to his usual place of safety. - 1 Sam. 24
 - ► **Have David go back into the CAVE.**

Discuss the story so far:

- Was it okay for Saul to try to kill David? Why? (No, because God says, "Do not murder.")

- Do you think David liked having to hide in caves from Saul? (No.)
- It'd be pretty easy for David to hate Saul and want to get Saul back! Jesus once said this:
- **► Have the kids repeat:**
 - ⁴³ *You have heard*
 - *that it was said,*
 - *'Love your neighbor.*
 - *Hate your enemy.'* - Matt. 5
- It's easy to love people who are nice to us, like a mom or a dad. And it's easy to hate our enemies and to want to get them back.

Discuss loving your enemies:

- But listen to *all* of what Jesus said.
- **► Have the kids repeat:**
 - ⁴³ *You have heard*
 - *that it was said,*
 - *'Love your neighbor.*
 - *Hate your enemy.'*
 - ⁴⁴ *But here is what I tell you.*
 - *Love your enemies.*
 - *Pray for those who hurt you.* - Matt. 5
- Jesus doesn't say to hate your enemy. He says to love and pray for them!. Would Jesus want David to hate his enemy, Saul? (No.)
- Does Jesus want David to kill his enemy, Saul? (No.)
- David had a chance to get Saul in the cave. But instead of killing Saul, he just cut off a piece of Saul's robe. When Saul saw the piece of his robe, he knew that David could have killed him. But David didn't kill him.
- Let's read if Saul decided to leave David alone.

Continue the story:

- ¹ *Some people... went to Saul... They said...*
 - **► Have all the children repeat after you:**
 - *David is hiding*
 - *on the hill of Hakilah...*
 - **► Have David hide in the "cave."**
- ² *[Saul] took 3,000 of the best soldiers in Israel with him. They went to the desert to look for David.*
 - **► Have Saul stand up and look around for David.**
- The Bible tells us that the leader of Saul's army was there with him. His name was Abner.
 - **► Select an "Abner" to hold a SWORD near nearl.**
- ⁵ *Then David started out. He went to the place where Saul had camped. He saw where Saul and Abner were lying down.*
 - **► Have Saul "sleep" on the floor in front of his chair using the BLANKET and PILLOW.**
- *Saul was lying inside the camp. The army was camped all around him*
 - **► Have Abner "patrol" in a circle around Saul.**
- The Bible says that, right by where Saul slept, there was a water jug and a spear.
 - **► Set the WATER PITCHER and the FOAM NOODLE on the floor next to Saul.**

Continue the story:

- David had some of his men with him. One was named Abishai.
 -

- Here's what the Bible says he said to them.
- ***⁶ *[David] asked them...*
 - *Who will go down with me*
 - *into the camp to Saul?*
 - **► Select an "Abishai" to hold a SWORD next to David.**
- *** *Abishai said...*
 - *I'll go with you.*
- ⁷ *So that night David and Abishai went into the camp. They found Saul lying asleep inside the camp.*
 - **► Have David and Abishai sneak a few steps towards Saul.**
- *[Saul's] spear was stuck in the ground near his head.*
 - **► Set the the FOAM NOODLE vertically next to Saul.**
- *Abner and the soldiers were lying asleep around him.*
 - **► Have Abner sleep on Saul's side of the room.**
 - **► Have David and Abishai sneak over to Saul.**
- ***⁸ *Abishai said to David...*
- **► Have Abishai whisper:**
 - *Today God has handed your enemy*
 - *over to you.*
 - *So let me pin him to the ground.*
 - *I can do it*
 - *with one jab of my spear. - 1 Sam 26*

Discuss the previous verses:

- The book of 1 Samuel tells us that David had a second chance to get Saul. Saul was sleeping and Abishai, David's soldier friend, wanted to jab him with his spear.
- Do you remember what Jesus said about your enemies? (Don't hate your enemy; love them.)
- Let's read if David let Abishai attack Saul.

Continue the story:

- ***⁹ *But David said to Abishai...*
- **► Have David whisper;**
 - *Don't destroy him!*
 - *No one can do any harm*
 - *to the Lord's anointed king*
 - ¹¹ *Now get the spear and water jug...*
 - *that are near his head.*
 - *Then let's leave.*
- ¹² *So David took the spear and water jug that were near Saul's head.*
 - **► Have David pick up the SPEAR and the WATER PITCHER.**
- *Then he and Abishai left.*
 - **► Have David and Abishai walk back to the "CAVE."**
- *No one saw them. No one knew about what they had done. In fact, no one even woke up. Everyone was sleeping. That's because the Lord had put them into a deep sleep. - 1 Sam. 26*

Continue the story:

- Remember that Abner is the leader of Saul's army. Let's read about his reaction the next morning.
- ¹³ *[David] stood on top of a hill far away from Saul's camp.*
 - **► Set a CHAIR in front of the "CAVE" and have David stand on it.**

- *** ¹⁴ [David] said...
 - Abner!
 - ► Have Abner “wake up.”
 - ¹⁵ You are a great soldier, aren't you?
 - So why didn't you guard the king?
 - Someone came into the camp
 - to destroy him.
 - ¹⁶ Look around you.
 - Where are the king's spear and water jug...? - 1 Sam. 26:13-15
 - ► Have David hold up the SPEAR and the WATER PITCHER.
 - ► Direct Abner to raise his fist and growl at David.

Continue the story:

- ¹⁷ Saul recognized David's voice.
 - ► Tell Saul to sit up.
- *** [Saul] said...
 - My son David,
 - is that your voice?
- *** ¹⁸ David replied...
 - Yes it is, King Saul...
 - ¹⁸ Why are you chasing me?
 - What evil thing have I done?
- *** ²¹ Then Saul said...
 - I have sinned.
 - My son David, come back.
 - Today you thought my life
 - was very special.
 - So I won't try
 - to harm you again.
 - I've made a huge mistake.
- *** ²² David answered...
 - Here's your spear.
 - Send one of your young men
 - over to get it.
 - ► Direct David to drop the NOODLE on the floor.
 - ²³ [The Lord] handed you over to me today.
 - But I wouldn't lay a hand on you.
 - You are the Lord's anointed king.
- *** ²⁵ Then Saul said to David...
 - May the Lord bless you.
 - You will do great things.
 - You will also have great success.
- So David went on his way.
 - ► Tell David and Abishai to sit with the rest of the children.
- And Saul returned home.
 - ► Tell Saul to sit with the rest of the children.

Discuss the second half of the story:

- In the first part of the story, David snuck up on his enemy, Saul, in the cave. Did David attack his enemy, Saul, then? (No.)
- Instead, he cut off a piece of Saul's clothes. He did this to show Saul that he *could* have hurt him, but he *didn't*.
- In the second part of the story, David snuck on his enemy, Saul, when he was sleeping. Did David attack his enemy, Saul, this time? (No.)
- Instead, he took Saul's spear and water jug. Once again, he did this to show Saul that he *could* have hurt him, but he *didn't*.
- David knew that God had put Saul as king over Israel. And even though Saul was being very mean to David, David knew it wasn't his job to hurt Saul.

Discuss being enemies with God:

- Saul was David's enemy. Did David hurt his enemy or did he love him? (He loved him.)
- Do you know that the Bible says you and I were somebody's enemies? Listen to this verse:
- ²¹ *At one time you were separated from God. You were enemies in your minds because of your evil ways. - Col. 1*
- We were *God's* enemies because we disobeyed God. God gave us commands he wanted us to follow and do you know what we said? NO!
- How does it feel to find out that you were, or maybe you still are, God's enemies? (Various responses.)
- This seems like really bad news, but I have another verse for you from the Bible book of Romans.
- **► Have the kids repeat:**
 - ⁸ *But here is how*
 - *God has shown*
 - *his love for us.*
 - *While we were still sinners,*
 - *Christ died for us. - Rom. 5*
- You and I were enemies of God because he disobeyed him. We are supposed to be punished forever for being God's enemies. But God loved us so much that he sent his only Son to live with us. Who was that? (Jesus.)
- Instead of punishing God's enemies, Jesus was punished for our sins and died on a cross, a piece of wood shaped like the letter "t". He was punished for all the times you and I sinned.
- And the good news is, he rose from the dead. How many days later did Jesus rise from the dead? (Three.)
- Remember what Jesus said: don't hate your enemies; love them!
- That's what God did. He could have just punished us, but he didn't. He loved us and sent Jesus to die to forgive our sins!

Introduce the big idea:

- This is what we should remember about today's story. David loved his enemy, Saul, by not hurting him when he could have. God loved his enemies, us, by sending Jesus to die for our sins. God loved his enemies, and so should we! That's our big idea: God loved his enemies and so should we!
 - **► Teach the kids the motions for the big idea.**
 - **► Say the big idea and do the motions with the kids several times.**

Motions for the Big Idea: God loved his enemies and so should we!

- God - point up
- Loved - place both hands over your heart
- Enemies - hold up your fists like you're ready to fight
- We - point to yourself with both thumbs

C. APPLICATION/INSTRUCTION ACTIVITY, Length: 15 min.

Resources: Instruction Verse

Materials:

1. Review the story and big idea:

- a. What is today's big idea? (God loved his enemies and so should we!)
- b. Who was David's enemy in today's story? (Saul.)
- c. What was Saul trying to do to David? (Kill him.)
- d. We might not have enemies that are trying to kill us, but we've probably all been around other people who were just plain mean to us.
- e. If we want to know how God wants to treat our enemies, where should we look? (The Bible.)

2. Discuss Matthew 5:43:

- a. **► Set the Instruction Verse on the table.**
- b. This verse from the book of Matthew is something Jesus said as he was teaching a big group of people.
- c. **► Read verse 43:**
 - i. *You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor, hate your enemy." - Matt. 5:43*
- d. In this verse, Jesus is telling us how most people think.
- e. Most people think we should love friends who are nice to us.
- f. **► Write "Love Friends" in the top right corner of the board.**
- g. And most people think we should hate enemies who are mean to us.
- h. **► Write "Hate Enemies" in the top left corner of the board.**
- i. **► Draw a vertical line right down the middle of the board.**
- j. What are some things people do to show their friends that they love them? (Various responses.)
- k. **► Record their answers on the board in the "Love Friends" section of the board.**
- l. What are some things people do to show their enemies that they hate them? (Various responses.)
- m. **► Record their answers on the board in the "Hate Enemies" section of the board.**
- n. Now, this is what most people *think* we should do with our friends and enemies.
- o. But Jesus wasn't done speaking yet!

3. Discuss Matthew 5:43-44:

- a. **► Read verses 43-44:**
 - i. *43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.' 44 But here is what I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you. - Matt. 5:43-44*
- b. Did Jesus tell us to hate our enemies? (No.)
- c. **► Erase the word "hate" on the board.**
- d. Should we do any of the hateful things we have written on the board here? (No.)
- e. **► Read each item under the "Hate" section, then erase it.**
- f. What are the two things Jesus said to do for our enemies? (Love, pray.)
- g. **► Write "Love" and "Pray" on the board where "Hate" used to be.**
- h. Let's remember all the ways we said we show our friends how we love them.
- i. These are the things Jesus wants us to do for our enemies.
- j. **► Read all the things listed on the "Love Friends" section.**
- k. **► As you read each, draw an arrow from it over to the "Enemies" section.**

4. Discuss the third section of the verse:

- a. Let's read everything Jesus said about loving enemies.
- b. **► Read the entire Instruction Verse.**
 - i. *43 "You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor. Hate your enemy.' 44 But here is what*

I tell you. Love your enemies. Pray for those who hurt you. 45 Then you will be sons of your Father who is in heaven. - Matt. 5:43-45

- c. Jesus said that if we love our friends...
- d. ► **Point to “Love Friends” on the board.**
- e. ...and we love and pray for our enemies...
- f. ► **Point to “Love, Pray, Enemies” on the board.**
- g. ...then we’ll be like kids who are acting just like our Father in heaven.
- h. Who is our Father in heaven? (God.)
- i. We’re supposed to love our enemies because God, our Father in heaven, loved his enemies.
- j. Who are God’s enemies? (Sinners, people who disobey God.)
- k. ► **Write “Sinners” under the enemies section.**
- l. And how many people in this room are sinners? (Everyone.)
- m. Sinners, God’s enemies, deserved to be punished for what they’ve done.
- n. But how did God love his enemies? (He sent Jesus to die for their sins.)
- o. God loved his enemies by sending his Son, Jesus, to die and take the punishment for all of their sins.
- p. ► **Write “Jesus died for sinners” under the “Enemies” section of the board.**
- q. So, did David love his enemy, Saul? (Yes.)
- r. Did God love his enemies, the sinners? (Yes.)
- s. Should we love our enemies, too? (Of course.)
- t. ► **Repeat the big idea and the motions with the children a few times.**
 - i. God loved his enemies, and so should we.

Motions for the Big Idea:

God - point up

Loved - place both hands over your heart

Enemies - hold up your fists like you’re ready to fight

We - point to yourself with both thumbs

D. VERSE ACTIVITY, Length: 15 min.

Resources: Verse T-Shirt Instructions

Materials: Old t-shirt, markers, scissors

Verse: Matthew 5:44 - But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... (ESV)

Setup:

- Prepare the old t-shirt according to the Verse T-Shirt Instructions.

1. Discuss the verse and the activity:

- ▶ **Read the verse as a group.**
- By now, you've heard this verse a bunch of times today, and we'll try to learn it by heart.
- There is one big word in here: persecute.
- To persecute is to be hurt or treated mean by others.
- Enemies are people who persecute you.
- As we try to learn this verse, we'll use scissors to cut apart an old shirt.
- ▶ **Hold up the old t-shirt.**
- Who cut apart a shirt in today's story? (David cut a piece of King Saul's shirt to show that he could have hurt him, but he wouldn't)

2. Do the activity:

- ▶ **Hold up the t-shirt.**
- ▶ **Hand the scissors to a child.**
- ▶ **Have them cut one of the strips off of the old-t-shirt.**
- ▶ **Tie that strip around their forehead like a bandana.**
- ▶ **Erase the words from that shirt strip from the board.**
- ▶ **Read through the verse as a group.**
 - Note: teach them the motions below, not all at once, but when those words are erased from the board.
- ▶ **Repeat the above process until all the words have been erased from the board.**

Motions for the Verse:

I say - make your hand talk like a puppet

You - point to another person

Love - place your hands over your heart

Enemies - make a mean face and put up your fists

Pray - fold your hands in prayer

Persecute - punch your palm

E. REVIEW ACTIVITY, Length: 15 min.

Resources: Review Activity Cards

Materials: flyswatters (2)

1. Describe the activity:

- a. In today's story, King Saul was hunting for David.
- b. As we answer questions about today's story, we'll pretend we're King Saul, trying to find David.
- c. We'll put these cards face down on the table...
- d. ► **Hold up the cards.**
- e. Only one of these cards has David on them.
- f. Whoever finds David is the winner.
- g. And the way you'll pick one of these cards is by smashing them with a fly swatter!
- h. ► **Hold up a fly swatter.**

2. Do the activity:

- a. ► **Shuffle the Review Activity Cards and spread them out face down on the table.**
- b. ► **Hand two children fly swatters and have them stand on different sides of the table, facing each other, with the cards on the table between them.**
- c. ► **Have the two children answer a question together from below.**
- d. ► **On a count of three, have the children slap their flyswatter on a card.**
 - i. Note: if they slap the same card, the swatter on the bottom gets that card, and the one on top must slap a different card.
- e. ► **Turn over the cards.**
 - i. If someone found David, they won the round.
 - ii. If no one found David, remove those two card. Repeat steps D and E until David is found.
- f. ► **Shuffle the cards and repeat the above steps until all the questions have been asked.**

Questions // Answers

1. Who was trying to hurt David? (King Saul.)
2. What did David take from Saul while Saul was in the cave? (Cut off a piece of his robe.)
3. Why did David sneak and cut off a piece of Saul's robe? (To show that he was close enough to hurt Saul, but he didn't want to hurt him.)
4. What did Jesus say we're supposed to do to our enemies? (Love and pray for them.)
5. What did David take from Saul while he was sleeping? (His spear.)
6. Why did David sneak and take Saul's spear? (To show that he could have hurt Saul, but he didn't want to hurt him.)
7. After David let Saul escape two times without hurting him, what did Saul do? (Sent David on his way.)
8. Who were you and I enemies with and why? (God, because we sinned.)
9. How did God love his enemies? (Sent Jesus to die for their sins.)
10. What is today's big idea? (God loved his enemies and so should we!)
11. What is today's Bible verse? (Matthew 5:44 - But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... ESV)

Parent Email Information

To help your students' parents reinforce the lesson, you may wish to email the following information

OT 56 David Spares Saul's Life

Reference: 1 Samuel 24 and 26

Big Idea: God loved his enemies, and so should you!

Verse: Matthew 5:44 - But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you... (ESV)

Motions for the Big Idea:

God - point up

Loved - place both hands over your heart

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We - point to yourself with both thumbs

Motions for the Verse:

I say - make your hand talk like a puppet

You - point to another person

Love - place your hands over your heart

Enemies - make a mean face and put up your fists

Pray -fold your hands in prayer

Persecute - punch your palm

Questions to Ask Throughout the Week

1. Who was trying to hurt David? (King Saul.)
2. What did David take from Saul while Saul was in the cave? (Cut off a piece of his robe.)
3. Why did David sneak and cut off a piece of Saul's robe? (To show that he was close enough to hurt Saul, but he didn't want to hurt him.)
4. What did Jesus say we're supposed to do to our enemies? (Love and pray for them.)
5. What did David take from Saul while he was sleeping? (His spear.)
6. Why did David sneak and take Saul's spear? (To show that he could have hurt Saul, but he didn't want to hurt him.)
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