

# A KING MAKES BAD CHOICES

**Bible Basis:** Psalm 51:1–12; 1 Chronicles 29:1–20

**Key Verse:** Wash away all of the evil things I've done. Make me pure from my sin. —Psalm 51:2, NIV

**Bible Point:** God forgave David's sins. God forgives me when I'm sorry for doing wrong things.

**Resource:** *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 12: "A King Makes Bad Choices"

## STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

**Stuff You Need:** masking tape

**Optional:** large appliance box, paint or markers

Use masking tape to mark off a square on the floor to represent a time machine. If you're using the optional appliance box, decorate it to look like a futuristic time machine. Cut away a portion of one side so someone can get inside the box.

Welcome the children and point out the time machine. Say, **Have you ever wished you could go back in time and change something you did? Let's think about the time that has passed since your last birthday. Can you think of something you'd like to change?** Dramatically step into the time machine. Go first and suggest something you would change, such as getting impatient in line or losing your temper with your children or thinking something unkind about a neighbor. Invite the children to make machinery noises and on your signal, everyone should call out something they would change since their last birthday.

- **Why do you want to change what you did in that situation?**
- **What does it feel like to be sorry for something you did?**

Say, **We all do things we know are wrong. That's called sin. Our story today is about a great king of God's people who shows us what it feels like to be sorry.**

## STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

**Stuff You Need:** copies of *The Story for Kids*, Bibles, Repent and Forgive Activity Sheet, pencils, *The Story Elementary Trading Card 12*

**Optional:** Repent and Forgive PowerPoint slides

Tell the story from *The Story for Kids*, Chapter 12. Have the children find Psalm 51 and mark it in their Bibles. Either you or a child in your class can read the Scripture passages listed throughout the story.

## DAVID IS SORRY

Say, **David always tried to do what God wanted him to do, but once he really, really messed up. He saw a woman named Bathsheba. She was married, but David wanted her to be his wife. So he sent her husband into battle where he died. Then David married Bathsheba.**

**God told David that what he'd done was very wrong and David would be punished for his sin. David wrote a song to help him accept God's punishment and ask forgiveness for what he had done. We can read it in *Psalm 51*.**

Give an activity sheet to each child, and make sure everyone has access to a Bible. The Activity Sheet asks children to read *Psalm 51:1–12* and categorize the statements in two columns. Is the statement one of repentance, where David admits his sin and expresses he is sorry? Or, is it a sign of God's forgiveness and how David is asking God to respond? You can read each verse and decide together, or you can have the class work in groups and compare their lists with the large group later. They do not have to copy whole verses onto the list, but rather jot down key words. If you are working as one group, you might prefer to use the optional PowerPoint slides of the verses to keep children focused on one section at a time.

A sample list:

What Is David Sorry For?	What Does David Ask God For?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lawless acts</li> <li>• evil things</li> <li>• not being clean</li> <li>• sinning against God</li> <li>• sinner ever since birth, before birth</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• show favor, faithful love</li> <li>• make pure</li> <li>• truth in my heart</li> <li>• teach wisdom</li> <li>• create a pure heart</li> <li>• give joy</li> <li>• spirit that obeys</li> <li>• whiter than snow</li> </ul>

After groups finish working, gather to review lists. Then say, **God forgave David, and David again obeyed God. Soon Bathsheba had a baby that they named Solomon. That was a happy time in David's palace.**

After you have told the Bible story, give each child a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 12*. Ask the children to look at the picture and tell you about a time when King David sinned and a time when King David followed God. As a class, read the key verse from the back of the card or from the Bible. Ask:

- **How did King David show he was sorry for what he'd done?**
- **What happens when we're sorry for the wrong things we do?**

Say, **God forgave David. We can't do anything to make God stop loving us; he'll always forgive us.**

Collect the cards for now. You'll send them home with the children later.

### STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose any or all of these activity options to help your class explore the lesson further.

#### OPTION 1: Clean as a Penny

**Stuff You Need:** dirty pennies, small container, spoon, vinegar, salt, strainer, large bowl

Do this simple science experiment with your class to talk about God washing away our sins. Mix  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vinegar with a tablespoon of salt in a small container. Stir until the salt is dissolved. Give each child a penny. Have them place the penny in the vinegar solution. As they put the penny in the solution, encourage them to think about something they did wrong. After all the pennies are in the vinegar solution, wait five minutes. Then pour the solution through a strainer into a large bowl. Let each child keep their clean penny to remember the lesson. Talk about how God's forgiveness makes our hearts clean.

#### OPTION 2: SPOT SCRUBBERS

**Stuff You Need:** washable or dry-erase markers, tub of water, soap, disinfectant wipes, toothbrush, toothpaste

Say, **Sometimes when we sin, we try to get rid of the problem ourselves. But what we really need is God to make us clean.** Have children use markers to write or draw on their palms. They can write something that represents a sin, or they can just make a spot. If you'd like, have children write on each other's palms. (Emphasize they may not write anywhere else.) Then have them try three different methods of cleaning the spot and see which one works best: soap and water, disinfectant wipe, or scrubbing with toothpaste and brush (the abrasive in the toothpaste helps clean). Gather for a discussion:

- **Tell me about a time you were sorry. What happened?**
- **Why do you think God wants us to be sorry when we do something wrong?**

Say, **No matter how sorry we are, we're going to mess up again. But every time we mess up, God is ready to forgive us again.**

#### OPTION 3: I Am Really Sorry

**Stuff You Need:** I Am Really Sorry Activity Sheet, pencils

Give an activity sheet to each child. Talk to the group about David's songs that he wrote to God, asking for forgiveness. Prayer and song are great ways to express your feelings and many people use those methods. Perhaps take time to look through the Bible pointing out other instances when people sang to God or prayed for forgiveness or for guidance in making the right choices. Group the

children into small groups and have them write a song or prayer asking for forgiveness. Encourage them to be general in their request or if they want to use examples, use ones that are generic, like lying or fighting. Have the groups write their prayers/songs on the Activity Sheet and share them with the class. Have them take the prayers home to share. If this is especially successful, collect the prayers, photocopy, and give each child a collection of prayers to take home.

### **OPTION 4: APOLOGIES**

Divide the group into smaller groups of three or four. Direct them to write a skit in which an individual or group does something to another and needs to apologize. Have the group write two endings—one with a sincere apology and one with an insincere apology.

Have the groups perform their skits, and as a large group discuss the different apologies:

- **What makes one sincere and true and the other not?**
- **Does God know when we are truly sorry for our wrong-doing? How?**
- **How did he know that David was sorry?**
- **Can we apologize to God over and over? What happens if we continue to do the same things wrong?**

## **STEP 4: GOING HOME**

Pray in small groups asking God's forgiveness from things the children have done wrong. You may wish to have children pray silently or by themselves, and then close the class in prayer. Make sure each child takes home a copy of *The Story Elementary Trading Card 12*, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.

This lesson may bring up questions about salvation. Be available to answer any questions children may want to ask you individually. Be sure to let parents or guardians know about their child's questions.