God doesn’t want us to seek revenge.

Bible Verse
“Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good” (Romans 12:21).

Growing Closer to Jesus
Students will
- discuss who gets hurt when revenge is sought,
- learn how David spared Saul’s life,
- think about alternatives to revenge, and
- pray for people they have conflict with.

Teacher Enrichment

Bible Basis
- David spares King Saul’s life.
1 Samuel 24

What are the chances, you might think! Saul is set on killing David, God’s chosen successor to the kingdom. While pursuing David and his men in a mountainous region, Saul goes alone into a cave to relieve himself. Unbeknownst to him, David and his men are hiding far back in the cave. It’s no wonder David’s men thought this was a chance provided by God for David to get rid of the king who wanted him dead and who stood in the way of David becoming king!

But as the passage tells us, David would have no part in taking Saul’s life. Saul’s desire to kill David was not strong enough reason for David to kill Saul. David was even ashamed that he secretly cut a corner from Saul’s robe. In David’s eyes, Saul was the man God had chosen and anointed king of Israel, and David was not going to be the one to take justice into his own hands if it meant killing God’s anointed.

When David pointed out to Saul the opportunity David had passed up to kill him, Saul seemed truly repentant for his attitude toward David. He seemed to concede that God had chosen David to replace him and would reward David for his kindness. Saul even pleaded for kindness to his descendants. However, we find that just two chapters later, in 1 Samuel 26:2, Saul hunted David once again.

Prayer
- Think about people you’d like to see fail—or get revenge on. How does this verse apply to your attitude toward such people?
- Pray: God, thank you that I don’t receive what I deserve. Help me to respond to others with kindness even when I’m treated badly. Help the children in this class see that kindness is the better way.
**Before the Lesson**
- Collect the necessary items for the activities you plan to use, referring to the Classroom Supplies and Learning Lab Supplies listed on the chart.
- Make photocopies of the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) to send home with your students.
- Pray for your students and for God’s direction as you teach the lesson.

**This Lesson at a Glance**

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<td><strong>Enemies!</strong>— Pretend to give food and drink to an enemy, and listen to Matthew 5:43-45 to discover what the Bible says about enemies.</td>
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<td><strong>Closing</strong></td>
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<td>Bibles, fabric pieces from “Sparing Saul's Life” activity, masking tape, markers, CD player</td>
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**Welcome**

As kids arrive, ask them how they put last week’s lesson into action. Ask questions such as, “How was it easier to follow leaders last week, knowing it’s important to God?” and “How was it challenging to follow God last week?”

Tell kids that whenever you shake the **noisemaker**, they are to stop talking, raise their hands, and focus on you. Explain that it’s important to respond to this signal quickly so the class can do as many fun activities as possible. Practice the signal two or three times.
### Attention Grabber

#### Tug of War

**SUPPLIES:** Bibles, scissors, paper, markers, transparent tape

Have kids form pairs. Have each pair cut paper into strips about 2 inches wide. Ask kids to write one of the following words in large letters on one side of each strip: *family, friends, teachers, clubs, teams, leaders, neighbors,* and *classmates.* Ask them to write, “Leviticus 19:18” on the other side of each strip. Pairs should then tape their strips together to make a paper rope 3 to 4 feet long.

Ask kids to face their partners. Each partner should hold one end of that pair’s rope. Say: *I want you to think about a time someone treated you unfairly or a time someone hurt you. Remember how you felt when that happened. As you remember that feeling, tug on this paper rope. Ready? Go!*  

As kids pull, the rope will break almost immediately. Have kids put the pieces down and form a circle.

Ask:  
• **What were some of the feelings you were having as you pulled on the rope while remembering a bad situation?** (I felt upset; I was angry; I didn’t really feel anything.)

• **At the time the bad situation happened, did any of you think about doing something to the person who hurt you?** (I wanted to yell at them; I wanted to hit them; I’m over it now.)

• **What is revenge?** (It means fighting back with someone; it means getting even with someone who is mean to you.)

• **How is ripping the rope apart kind of like what happens when we try to get revenge?** (Revenge pulls people apart; revenge destroys things.)

• **What happens when people take revenge on other people?** (The people get hurt; people don’t like each other anymore.)

Say: *When you pulled on the rope, you might have been thinking about doing something to the person who hurt you. The rope tore apart. When we seek revenge, we tear others and even ourselves apart.*

Hold up one of the papers with “Leviticus 19:18” written on it. Ask a volunteer to read the verse aloud.

Ask:  
• **How does God feel about taking revenge?** (He doesn’t like it; he says don’t do it.)

• **What are we supposed to do instead of seeking revenge?** (Love each other; trust God to work it out.)

Say: *Let’s pretend that this tape is love. Let’s see how love can help repair the damage that revenge does.*

Have pairs match the torn pieces of their rope and tape the pieces together. Then have all the pairs tape their ropes together so your class has one long rope. Arrange the paper rope so that everyone holds a part of it.

Ask:  
• **What word do you see on your part of the paper strip?** (Family; friends; teachers; clubs; teams; leaders; neighbors; classmates.)

• **How is what happened to the words similar to what can happen to those people in real life when we try to get revenge?** (Bad things can happen; people can get hurt.)
Lesson 2

Say: I guarantee that you will have problems with others in your life. We all have different ideas and opinions about how to do things. When those problems come, we can get revenge or we can react with gentleness.

Ask: • How do you feel when disagreements turn into nasty conflicts? (Scared that I'll get hurt; angry because people are being mean to me.)
• What is it like when disagreements are handled gently? (I want to still be friends; I feel safe.)
• Why is gentleness the better way? (It heals instead of hurts; it helps people stop fighting.)

Say: God doesn't want us to seek revenge. Our Bible verse for this week is Romans 12:21.

Distribute Bibles, and give kids a few minutes to find the verse. Have everyone read Romans 12:21 out loud together: “Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.”

Say: Revenge tears up families, friendships, teams, and anything else it touches. Our Bible story tells about someone who sought a peaceful solution instead of getting revenge when he was treated badly.

Bible Exploration & Application

Sparing Saul’s Life

SUPPLIES: Bibles, scissors, blankets

Ask: • In our lesson last week, what happened to the shepherd named David? (He came to the palace to play soothing music for the king; he helped Saul.)
• How did King Saul feel about David? (At first he liked David; he was glad David could help him.)
• How did David feel about King Saul? (He respected him because he was the king; he may have been nervous to be with the king.)

Say: David stayed with the king and served him very well, but later the king became jealous of David and tried to hurt David. David, David’s men, and King Saul all had different ideas about how to solve the problem. Let’s see what happened between them.

Ask kids to help you use a blanket to make a “cave” in a corner, under a table, or behind some chairs. Make sure the cave is big enough for about half of your class to fit in. Have kids form two groups. One group will be David and all the men he took with him. The other will be King Saul and his soldiers. Give one person in this group the paper crown. Place a chair with its back to the cave, and drape the fabric over the back of the chair.

Have everyone sit just outside the cave, and open your Bible to 1 Samuel 24. Show kids the passage, and keep your Bible open while exploring the story. Say: David was very successful in King Saul’s court. And he was always loyal and true to the king. He fought many battles with the king’s soldiers, his best friend was the king’s son, and his wife was the king’s daughter. The people loved him because he was brave in battle. King Saul became jealous of David and even tried to kill him several times. David and about 400 men who loved David were forced to run away and hide.
Ask the group that’s pretending to be David and his men:

• **How would you feel if you were forced to run away and hide from someone you’d been faithful to?** (That it isn’t fair; scared; really angry.)

Have David and his men hide in the cave. Say: **The king took 3,000 men to hunt for David.**

Ask the group pretending to be Saul and his men:

• **How do you think King Saul’s men felt about having to hunt down someone they had served and fought with?** (Confused; frustrated because they have to obey and do something they don’t want to do; fine, I’d just do what the king said.)

Have King Saul lead his men around the room and stop in front of the cave.

Say: **One day as they were hunting for David, Saul stopped in a cave at the side of the road.** Have the child who is pretending to be Saul sit in a chair outside the cave. **Amazingly, David and his men were hiding in the same cave!**

David and his men saw Saul all by himself.

I want everyone in David’s group to decide right now what David should do. Saul is right here, all by himself. I’ll give you about 20 seconds to decide as a group what to do, but be quiet because Saul is right there. After 20 seconds, have the group report on what they decided to do. Children will suggest things such as kill Saul or stay hidden. Some may know the story already and suggest David just get a piece of Saul’s robe.

I can understand why you think that would be a good thing for David to do. David did creep slowly, silently up behind Saul. Have the child who is David pretend to creep up on the child playing Saul. Hand David a pair of scissors. **Then, instead of hurting the king, David cut off a piece of the king’s robe.** Have David cut off a piece of the fabric on the chair. **David’s men were shocked.**

David could have taken revenge on King Saul, and the men wouldn’t have had to keep hiding and running away. When David returned to his men, he said, “God chose Saul to be king. It wouldn’t be right to harm him.”

Ask: **Do you think David’s men were surprised by his choice? Why or why not?** (Yes, he could be safe and not have to hide anymore; no, they knew David was a good guy who loved God.)

• **What would you have done in David’s situation?** (I would have gotten rid of King Saul; I would have done the same thing David did.)

Say: **David understood our Bible verse for today.** Have a volunteer read

► Romans 12:21.

Ask: **How did David do good in the story today?** (He had a chance to kill Saul and he didn’t; he didn’t follow the advice of his men.)

Say: **To remind you of today’s story, I’m going to have everyone cut a small piece from this piece of cloth and say the Bible verse as you do. We’re going to use these pieces of fabric later today, so when you have cut off a piece, put it here beside me.**

Have the children line up and snip a piece off the fabric as they read Romans 12:21. You’ll use the fabric in later lessons so make sure kids cut small pieces.

Then say: **King Saul left the cave, not knowing David had cut away some of his robe. David hurried out of the cave after Saul.** Ask for volunteers to take turns reading aloud 1 Samuel 24:8-17.

Ask: **How did Saul want to deal with his problems with David?** (By getting rid of David; by using force.)
Lesson 2

• How did David want to deal with his problems with Saul? (He never tried to hurt the king; he was faithful to the king.)

• Why do you think David didn’t kill Saul when he had the chance? (David loved God and knew that God didn’t want him to; David trusted God.)

• What was God’s role in the fight between David and Saul? (God decided who was right; God was in control.)

Say: David knew that [God doesn’t want us to seek revenge. He knew that, since only God can truly see into our hearts, he is the best and final judge of our actions and is the best one to reward and punish. Let’s see how, instead of seeking revenge, we can use good to solve problems God’s way, as this week’s Bible verse encourages us to do.


HANDS-ON BIBLE

Give each student a pencil, and have kids open their Hands-On Bibles to the “Coulda, Shoulda, Woulda” activity by 1 Samuel 28. (Kids will look at three situations and record how they could, would, and should respond to each situation.) Ask for volunteers to share their responses to each of the three situations described in their Hands-On Bibles. Ask the group to discuss how each response lines up with Scripture.

Enemies!

SUPPLIES: Bibles, paper, tape, marker, napkins, snack supplies, snack utensils, spoons, cups, powdered drink mix, pitcher of water

Before class, make a “truce flag” by writing “Matthew 5:43-45” on a sheet of paper and taping the paper to a stripe stick.

Have all the kids wash their hands. Then have them form two troops: Troop A and Troop B. Place drink supplies for Troop A on one side of the room and snack supplies for Troop B on the other side. Include cups, powdered drink mix, a pitcher of water, and a spoon for Troop A. Troop B will need snack ingredients, such as cubes of cheese and crackers or cream cheese and celery, and utensils to prepare the snack. Have napkins available for everyone. Have Troop A work together to mix and pour the beverage into cups while Troop B works together to prepare the snack. When the tasks are completed, ask the two troops to stay separated and face each other.

Say: Troops A and B, you are enemies. No one can remember who started it all. But you all do remember that a long time ago Troop A poisoned the only well Troop B had for water. Troop B surrounded the camp of Troop A and blocked all food going into the camp. It’s hot. The sun is beating on your heads. You’re stuck here with no escape unless you give up your fight. Troop A is very hungry and has no food. Troop B has food but is too thirsty to eat it. If this isn’t resolved soon, both troops will die! In your teams right now, decide what your strategy will be to get what you need and still...
defend what you have. Allow about a minute for the teams to decide, and then ask each team individually so the other team cannot hear:

• What do you think you should do? (Wipe out the other troop so we can take their stuff; try to make friends and share.)

• Right now, how do you feel about your enemies? (Confused because I don’t know what they will do; I like them because my friend is on the other side.)

Share each group’s strategy with the other team, and ask that team how it would react. Then open a Bible to Matthew 5:43-45, and place it and the truce flag you made before class between the troops. Give each troop a Bible, and have the teams read the passage written on the flag. Say: Based on what you have read in this Bible passage, discuss with your troop whether you want to change your strategy in any way. Again allow about a minute and then go to each troop to ask the following questions:

• What did Jesus say about how to treat your enemies? (Love them.)

• How would following Jesus’ words change your strategy toward the other team? (We still want to do the same things; we have decided to offer the other troop some of our stuff.)

After a few minutes, say: When people call a truce in battle, they hold up a white flag and approach the enemy. Someone has to take the first step.

If the troops have been unable to reach the choice of offering peace, ask:

• Who here will take the first step toward peace?

Wait in silence for a few seconds for someone to approach the flag. If your children have reached a peaceful conclusion or when someone walks to the flag, ask:

• What was going through your mind before someone made a peaceful offer? (I was worried; I wasn’t sure if I should do it.)

• What was it like when someone offered peace? (I was glad that someone was brave enough to do it; I was sad because I should have done it.)

• Why is it so much more difficult to love our enemies than to seek revenge? (We have to ignore our angry feelings to do right; we might be scared that they will hurt us.)

• What can we do to show love to our enemies? (Forgive them; do something nice for them.)

Say: Troop A, quietly and carefully offer drinks to your enemy. Pause for kids to offer drinks. Now, Troop B, with quiet respect, offer food to your enemy. Pause for kids to offer food. Now, let’s sit down and eat in peace.

While kids snack, ask:

• What kind of things happen to kids that might make them want to seek revenge? (Someone might steal from them at school; someone might be mean to them on the playground.)

• How could you resolve a conflict like that? (It would be hard to be nice to them; I would try to get someone to help me talk to them.)

Say: God doesn’t want us to seek revenge. We need to figure out other ways to deal with our anger. God wants that because he knows seeking revenge hurts others and it hurts us. Let’s see if we can figure out how it hurts.
Lesson 2

A Bad Mix

**SUPPLIES:** Bible, bottle of cooking oil, pitcher of water, Italian salad dressing, 2 plastic cups and 1 craft stick per child

Have students sit in a circle. Give the bottle of cooking oil to one responsible student and the pitcher of water to another responsible student. Have someone give each person two plastic cups and a craft stick.

Have the students with the oil and water fill each cup one-quarter full with each liquid. Also ask them to fill the *baby soda bottle* with an equal amount of each liquid.

Tell students to combine the liquids and use their craft sticks to carefully but firmly stir the mixture. After a few seconds, ask if anyone has managed to completely mix the two liquids together so there is no separation.

Ask:
- **Why can’t you mix the oil and water into a new, smooth liquid?** (Maybe we’re not mixing hard enough; oil and water don’t mix.)
- **Can you think of real-life examples of things that just don’t mix?** (My mom says homework and TV don’t mix; pickles and ice cream don’t mix; sometimes different people don’t mix very well.)
- **What happens when people don’t work together very well?** (They get angry; they don’t like each other; they stay away from each other.)

Say: Sometimes things shouldn’t mix; if they do, they cause problems. Pickles and ice cream just don’t taste good together. But when people don’t work together very well, they might get angry or hurt each other. Instead of letting anger get the best of us, we can find constructive ways to work together and to deal with our anger.

Oil and water will never mix, but together they can be used to make a great salad dressing!

Hold up the bottle of Italian dressing. Sometimes even when things don’t mix they can still work together to serve a purpose. Hold up the *baby soda bottle* as you shake it.

For example, I may get angry with someone, but instead of seeking revenge and trying to hurt them, I can use my angry feelings as an opportunity to do something constructive. Share an example of something constructive you do when you’re angry, like taking a walk or reading a book.

Pass the bottle to the person on your left, and ask that person to shake the bottle and share an idea about what to do when he or she is angry. Have students pass the bottle around the circle and take turns sharing.

Ask a volunteer to read aloud Ephesians 4:26-27; then ask:
- **What does this verse tell us about anger?** (It can get control of us if we’re not careful; we can control it; the devil wants to use our anger against us.)
- **How does anger give the devil a “foothold”?** (If we stay angry, we might want to do something bad; the more bad we do, the more the devil will tempt us to do bad.)

Say: It’s natural to get angry sometimes, but we have to be very careful about how we express our anger. We don’t want our anger to cause us to stay separated from others, like the oil and water stay separated. *God doesn’t want us to seek revenge.* Let’s see what the Bible says about how to act when we’re angry.
Have kids get into trios. Ask kids to tell one another about a time they were hurt and tempted to seek revenge. After a few minutes, shake the noisemaker, and wait for kids to respond. Then ask each trio to read Matthew 6:12 and Matthew 18:21-22.

Ask:
• **What do these passages say we should do when someone hurts us or makes us angry?** (Forgive them; show love to them.)
• **What kinds of things did Jesus have to forgive people for?** (He forgave people’s sins; people killed him.)
• **How could Jesus help you forgive others?** (He understands how hard it can be; he’ll listen to me when I need his help.)

Then have kids discuss in their trios times they’ve been able to forgive others. After a few minutes, shake the noisemaker, and wait for kids to respond.

Ask:
• **Why can it be so difficult to forgive others?** (Because they don’t deserve it; because I’m scared they’ll hurt me again.)
• **How can forgiving someone change your desire to seek revenge?** (Because if you forgive it means that you don’t want revenge anymore.)
• **How can knowing you forgive someone change that person’s attitude?** (The person might not feel so angry at you anymore.)

Give each trio a marker, three pieces of masking tape, and three of the pieces of fabric from the “Sparing Saul’s Life” activity. Say: In your trio, think of a forgiveness word or phrase to write on your piece of masking tape. You might think of words such as I’m sorry or forgive me. After you have written your word or phrase on your piece of tape, put the tape on a piece of fabric so you will be able to tape the fabric on like a badge. As you work, tell each person in your trio how you are going to handle a tough situation this week.

As kids work, play the instrumental “Work-It-Out Prayer,” track 3 on the CD. Allow kids to work for a couple of minutes; then stop the CD, shake the noisemaker, and wait for kids to respond.

Ask:
• **How can forgiving words be like tape in a broken relationship?** (Words put relationships back together like tape; they stop people from being mean.)
• **What are some other ways to heal a relationship that’s been broken by anger or revenge?** (Take the person a present; invite the person to play with you.)

Say: Although it can be really difficult, forgiveness can help balance the anger you sometimes feel. **God doesn’t want us to seek revenge**, but he does want us to forgive those who have made us angry. Wear your tape and fabric at home during the week to help you remember words that help relationships when there’s trouble.
Pray: Lord, when we’re angry or hurt, please help us forgive rather than seek revenge. Thank you for forgiving us when we hurt you. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Growing closer to Jesus extends beyond the classroom.

Photocopy the “Hands-On Fun at Home” handout (at the end of this lesson) for this week, and send it home with your kids. Encourage kids and parents to use the handout to spark meaningful discussion on this week’s topic.
God doesn’t want us to seek revenge.

Bible Verse: “Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good” (Romans 12:21).

Talk It Over

Have each person answer the following questions:

- Tell about a time someone hurt your feelings or made you angry. Did you want to get revenge? What happened?
- Why is it sometimes hard to forgive instead of getting revenge?
- Is there someone whom you need to forgive?

Faith Walk

At the beginning of the week, gather your family to make a list of common conflicts that arise in your home. Then have someone read Philippians 2:3-4. Talk about ways the whole family can work to avoid seeking revenge, choosing instead to solve these conflicts. At the end of the week, trace dove shapes on aluminum foil, and cut them out. Give a “Dove Award” to each member of your family who has worked at settling conflicts peacefully.

Check It Out

Read Matthew 5:43-44.
Think of someone you had a conflict with recently. Ask God to help you find a way to end the conflict.

Read Romans 12:14.
Plan ways you can do something nice for someone who treats you badly.

Can you think of five ways that your steps follow the Lord?

Notables

Caused any hurt feelings lately?
Use this note to say you’re sorry!

Sorry I stepped on your toes.
I really like doing things with you!