

# A Good Shepherd Sacred Story

## Israel's First King

Adapted by:  
Brenda J. Stobbe

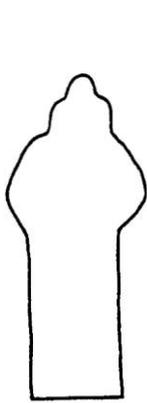
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illustrations by:  
Jennifer Schoeneberg

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## **ISRAEL'S FIRST KING .... MATERIALS**

- medium wicker basket to hold:
  - wooden Samuel figure
  - 4 wooden people of God figures
  - wooden Saul figure
  - wooden servant of Saul figure
  - 2 wooden donkeys



Samuel



Saul



Servant



People of God

## ISRAEL'S FIRST KING .... I SAMUEL 8,9,10

### ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story from its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down, placing the basket next to you.

Reverently stroke one or more of the wooden figures to center yourself and the children, during the silence.

Place the Samuel figure in the center of the storytelling area.

Place two people of God figures next to Samuel, on the left.

Touch the Samuel figure and shake your head sadly.

Fold your hands and bow your head briefly. As you speak the words of Yahweh, lift your head and hold both palms up in front of you.

Touch one of the people of God and then the other.

Hold out your right hand to the side and then your left hand.

Touch one of the people of God. Nod your head.

### WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. If you will make silence with me I will find all the words to this sacred story of God's people.

When Samuel became old he made his sons judges over the people of God.

But some of the people of God said to Samuel, "You are old and your sons do not live and judge like you did. We want you to appoint someone to be king over us, so we will be ruled like all the other nations."

Samuel didn't like hearing that the people wanted a king.

But Samuel prayed to Yahweh. Yahweh told Samuel, "Give the people a king, but first warn them about the things a king will do."

So Samuel told the people that if they had a king, the king would make their sons serve in the army and put their daughters to work in his palace.

He told them the king would take part of their crops and make them pay taxes to keep the kingdom running.

But the people of God still wanted a king.

Touch the Samuel figure as you speak.

Put the two people of God back into the basket. Place the Saul figure to the far right of the storytelling area, facing Samuel. Place the servant next to him, on the right.

Turn Saul to face away from Samuel.

First, touch the servant. Then, turn Saul to again face toward Samuel.

Move the Samuel figure to the right, about half the distance to Saul.

Move the Saul and servant figures to the left, toward Samuel. Gently rest your hand on Saul for a moment.

Move the Saul and servant figures so they stand just to the right of Samuel.

Briefly touch the Samuel figure.

Move Samuel, Saul and the servant back left, to the center of the storytelling area.

Move Samuel, Saul and the servant a short distance to the left.

So Yahweh said to Samuel, "Listen to them and give them a king. "

There was a young man, named Saul, who was sent to look for some lost animals that belonged to his father.

When Saul and his servant couldn't find the animals Saul wanted to go home.

But the servant said, "There is a man of God in the city ahead who will be able to help us find the animals. "

The next day Samuel was leaving the city after hearing God's words, "When you leave here, you will meet a man who you shall make king over Israel. "

When Samuel saw Saul on the road, God spoke to him, telling him that Saul was the man who would become king over God's people.

When Saul met Samuel, he asked directions to the house of the man of God who could help him find his lost animals.

Samuel said, "I am the man. Come and eat with me and tomorrow I will let you go. And don't worry about the animals. They have been found."

Then Samuel and Saul went together to Samuel's home and ate a meal with about thirty other people. The whole time Samuel treated Saul in a very special way.

The next day Samuel walked with Saul just outside his city.

Move the servant farther left and turn Saul to face Samuel.

Pantomime pouring oil on Saul from an imaginary bottle.

Move Saul a little to the right, away from Samuel.

Move the Saul and servant figures back to the far right of the storytelling area and shake your head slowly two or three times.

Move Samuel to the center of the right half of the storytelling area. Place the four people of God figures next to him, on the right. Place the two donkeys to the left of Saul, as if Saul is trying to hide from the people behind them.

Hold both hands out with palms up.

Move two people of God to Saul and then move them, Saul and his servant back left, by Samuel.

Rest your hand briefly on Saul.

Touch Samuel and then Saul.

Touch two or three of the people of God.

He sent the servant on ahead and told Saul, "Stop here, so I can tell you the word of Yahweh."

Then, Samuel took out a small bottle and poured the oil from it onto Saul's head. He told Saul, "God has chosen you to rule over the people of God and save them from their enemies. "

God gave Saul a new heart that day and was with him to help him understand many things.

When Saul got home he did not tell anyone what Samuel had said and done.

Later, Samuel called all the people together. He told them it was time to choose the king for the people of God.

When Samuel told them Saul had been chosen, they could not find Saul. He was hiding among the suitcases and animals.

When they found Saul, the people brought him before Samuel.

And Saul was taller than any of the other people in the place.

Then Samuel said, "Do you see the man Yahweh has chosen. There is no one like him among all the people. "

And the people of God said, "Long live the king. "

Pantomime writing with one hand on the palm of your other hand.

Move three of the four people of God left, to the center of the storytelling area.

Move Saul, his servant and one of the people of God to the right side of the storytelling area.

Touch two of the three people of God at the center of the storytelling area and then move those two away from you.

Carefully place the wooden pieces in the story basket.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to the shelf. Then return to the circle and sit down.

Be certain every child has had the opportunity to choose his or her work before dismissing them as a group.

Samuel told the people all that a king should do and wrote it down in a book.

Then Samuel sent all the people home.

Saul went home, too, along with some men who had been touched by God to stay with him.

But some people said, "How can this man Saul save us?" And they did not want him to be king.

### **WONDERING QUESTIONS:**

I wonder why the people wanted a king?

I wonder how God felt when they wanted a king?

I wonder what Saul thought when Samuel anointed him?

I wonder why Saul was hiding when Samuel told the people he would be king?

Watch carefully how I put these materials away, so you will know how to handle them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

Watch carefully where I return this story, so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

I wonder what you will make your work today? Let's go around the circle and decide.

## ISRAEL'S FIRST KING .... TEACHER HELPS

This seemingly straightforward story has many theological and political implications for the people of God in the time the story was enacted. The people of God have decided that they no longer want Yahweh to be their king. They no longer want to be a set apart nation, different from other nations. They want a king, so they will be "like other nations". Although God is not pleased about the people wanting a king, God finally gives in. However, Yahweh has Samuel warn the people of what a king will do. There is concern on the parts of both Yahweh and Samuel that the people want to be like other nations. But all the warnings, even the warning in I Samuel 8: 17 where it says that the king will make the people like slaves, fall on deaf ears. The people are convinced that they know better than Yahweh and Yahweh's prophet and judge, Samuel, what they need to survive and prosper in this land. It is not Yahweh who decides the people should have a king, but the people who decide.

Saul is not portrayed as a great warrior, a wise man or one bearing great leadership potential. He is not even presented as a deeply faithful man. He is presented only as a very tall man. At the end of the story, that is how he is presented as being chosen by God -- because he was tall, there was not another man like him in all of Israel. Saul appears to be somewhat of a reluctant candidate for king. He is puzzled by Samuel's behavior toward him and when he returns home after being anointed by Samuel, says nothing to anyone about it. In fact, when the time comes for the public announcement of Saul as king he is nowhere to be found. Finally, he is discovered hiding among the baggage. Not exactly a kingly act!!

In spite of this, the stage is set for the new monarchy that would rule Israel in a way the judges never did. The stage is also set for the predictions and warnings of Samuel to come true. Saul never stood up well to public scrutiny. He had no idea how to be king and fails miserably, in the end. With Samuel there pulling the strings, it's not surprising. Samuel was wed very closely to the old ways and Saul embodied a New Way. But that is for future stories. For now, we have achieved the purpose of giving our children the story of the first king of Israel.

The first wondering question asks why the people would want a king and the second question wonders what were God's feelings when the people wanted a king. Young children will probably think God was happy about all of this. Kings sound good to them. The older children may begin to understand that in asking for a king the people of God were rejecting God as their king and choosing someone to replace God.

We then ask the children to talk with us about Saul's feelings when he was anointed king. We also ask them to tell us why they think he may have been hiding at his own coronation. Since the Bible gives us no answers to these questions, we can only smile and nod at their responses. We wonder along with them about the first king Israel crowned.

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## **SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:**

The Bible tells us that the only outstanding thing about Saul was that he was taller than all the other people. Think about people in power today. Think about famous people. How important is their physical appearance to their success? Name some famous actors and politicians who are short. What do you think they would say about this story and about the importance of height?

The people of God wanted a king so they would be like all the other nations. Young people often want things so they will be like everyone else. How do you feel about wearing the kinds of clothes and doing the kinds of things other kids your age do? What are the good things about that? What are the possible bad things about that?

Would it have been better for the people of God if they never had a king? Why or why not?

Do you think Samuel ever accepted the idea of Israel having a king or did he never learn to like it?