

David Is Kind To Mephibosheth

2 Samuel 9:1-13

MEMORY VERSE

PSALM 119:77

“Let Your tender mercies come to me, that I may live; for Your law is my delight.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

For every two children, you will need an elastic or cloth bandage, a glass of water, a newspaper and a buttoned jacket or sweater.

Yarn and masking tape.

One copy of the template, “Deputy Sheriff of Kindness County,” for each child in your class (you may want to use yellow or gray cardstock so that it looks like a badge), scissors, and tape.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Physical Limitations

We will learn in our story today about a boy named Mephibosheth who was lame in both of his feet. Some people suffer from different ailments which may limit the use of their hands. There are many children who have different kinds of physical limitations. This game will help us to understand what it may be like to not have the use of your hands. Let’s find out what that may be like.

For every two children, you will need an elastic or cloth bandage, a glass of water, a newspaper, and a buttoned jacket or sweater. Form pairs. Have one partner from each pair wrap up the other’s hands (both) in elastic bandages, so he or she cannot use any fingers. Have the child with the wrapped hands complete the following exercises:

Drink a cup of water.

Page through a newspaper.

Put on a buttoned jacket or sweater and button all of the buttons.

Switch roles so the other partner can experience the same thing.

Ask the children what it was like to not have the use of their fingers. What do they think it would be like to not have the use of both of their feet? In today's story, we will learn how David showed kindness to a boy Mephibosheth who could not use either of his feet.

LESSON TIME!

Do you make promises? Do you keep your word? David had been exalted to be king over all Israel. He remembered his promise (covenant) with Jonathan, the son of Saul, who had died in battle along with his father. David was a man of his word, and he determined to show compassion and kindness to the house of Saul for Jonathan's sake.

As we look at this lesson, a beautiful picture of our loving God emerges. For, he desires to show kindness and compassion toward us who do not and cannot deserve his love. **God wants us to experience the richness of His grace.**

2 SAMUEL 9:1-5

Now David said, "Is there still anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake?"

And there was a servant of the house of Saul whose name was Ziba. So when they had called him to David, the king said to him, "Are you Ziba?" And he said, "At your service!"

Then the king said, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, to whom I may show the kindness of God?" And Ziba said to the king, "There is still a son of Jonathan who is lame in his feet."

So the king said to him, "Where is he?" And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he is in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo-Debar."

Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo-Debar.

It had been about 18 years since Saul and Jonathan had been killed. David was now established as king over all of Israel. God had blessed him greatly, and he was probably remembering back over his life and reflecting on how faithful God had been. He remembered a promise that he made to Jonathan. The promise was that he would show kindness towards Jonathan's family (the house of Saul). **God wants us to experience the richness of His grace.**

So David sought to find out whether there was any one left of the house of Saul to whom he could show favor for Jonathan's sake. He called Ziba, a former servant of Saul's who took care of all of Saul's property, and asked him if there was anyone left in Saul's family.

Ziba told him that there was a lame son of Jonathan, Mephibosheth, who was still alive and living at Lo-debar. Lo-debar means a pastureless or barren place. It would seem that Mephibosheth lived in a place away from people.

As the grandson of Saul, Mephibosheth had sought safety in the wilderness. He may have thought that if David ever found him, he would be killed. Normally, when a new king took over who was from a new family, they would kill all of the relatives of the former king so that no one could try to rise up and take over again.

When David heard the news of Mephibosheth, he immediately sent for him. Can you imagine what Mephibosheth must have felt when David's servants stood at his door asking him to come to the palace? He probably thought that he was going to be killed.

Mephibosheth was lame in both of his feet. He was crippled and unable to walk. Eighteen years earlier when his father Jonathan and grandfather Saul were killed, it was a pretty scary time for everyone. No one knew what might happen next.

When Mephibosheth's nurse heard the news of Saul and Jonathan's death, she thought she had better get Mephibosheth to a safe place to hide. So she picked him up and took off running. Somehow she tripped and fell. Mephibosheth landed in such a way that he probably injured his spine and was no longer able to walk.

Mephibosheth is a picture or example of our lives apart from Jesus. He was born into a family that was fallen, Saul's family. The Bible says that we are born fallen, or sinners. We are condemned already. Mephibosheth lived in a barren place. Our lives are empty and barren apart from a relationship with God. Mephibosheth was lame in both his feet. Without Jesus we can do nothing about our condition; we can never live up to what God has

created us for. God loves us greatly; just as David searched for Mephibosheth, He comes to find us. **God wants us to experience the richness of His grace.**

2 SAMUEL 9:6-8

Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, "Mephibosheth?" And he answered, "Here is your servant!"

So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually."

Then he bowed himself, and said, "What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?"

As soon as Mephibosheth saw David, he was afraid. He fell to his face to show respect for David. David spoke kindly, "Mephibosheth?" Mephibosheth answered back with respect, "Here is your servant."

David assured Mephibosheth of his good intentions, "Do not fear." David then revealed his plan to show kindness to him for Jonathan's sake—He would keep his promise to Jonathan. David told him that he would restore all of his father's possessions, and he would allow him to eat at his own royal table for the rest of his life. **God wants us to experience the richness of His grace.**

Mephibosheth expresses his thanks and gratefulness for this favor with deepest respect and states that he is unworthy of any such favor by comparing himself to a dead dog. It was truly an honor to be able to sit at the king's table everyday, to have access to the king.

Are you perhaps afraid to answer God's call to come to Him? We might think that God would never want be kind to us. We have all sinned and done wrong things. Yet, God is deeply interested in a relationship with us. In fact, He seeks us out just as David sought Mephibosheth. He desires to tell us of the kindness He will bestow upon our lives in Christ Jesus. We need only to come.

Three "Legged" Relay

Split the class up into two teams. Then within the teams have the children make pairs. Using yarn, have the children stand next to each other and tie their legs together. When each team is ready, have them line up (use masking tape to mark a starting place).

Say go and have a pair from each team go to the other side of the room and turn around and return. When the pair has returned, the next team may go. If you have odd numbers, have someone from the first team join the remaining person for the last team. Make sure that there are even pairs.

Explain to the children how important it is to work together and help one another. The pairs that worked best are those pairs that talked to one another and helped one another. That is what God wants us to do. **God wants us to experience the richness of His grace.**

2 SAMUEL 9:9-13

And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given to your master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house.

"You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in the harvest, that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do." "As for Mephibosheth," said the king, "he shall eat at my table like one of the king's sons."

Mephibosheth had a young son whose name was Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba were servants of Mephibosheth.

So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

David then summoned Ziba, the servant of Saul and told him that he and his sons would cultivate the land restored to Mephibosheth. Thus all of Ziba's house, his sons and servants, were servants of Mephibosheth. They worked for him and took care of his land; Mephibosheth, himself, ate daily at the king's table.

Again, we see some beautiful pictures in this story that can apply to us as God's children. Mephiboseth had to leave the barren land to enter into a land of peace. As he did so, he received a position of honor and access to the king. David had restored to him the lands of his grandfather Saul, along with the servants to maintain the land, while he sat continually at the king's table. His needs were now completely met, and he enjoyed the wealth and fruitfulness the king imparted to him.

When we leave the emptiness of this world to answer the call of the King of Kings, He bestows upon us the riches of fellowship with Him. We leave behind a barren land to enter into a life experiencing abundance and fruitfulness. We have access, as Mephibosheth, to our King continually. "Let us therefore, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). We receive honor and privilege, for we become His children, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, through which he has made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:5). God takes care of all those things that would concern us. Cast all our cares on Him because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7).

Just as David gave grace to Mephibosheth, God gave us salvation by grace. Grace is undeserved kindness to a helpless one. What an awesome God we have. **God wants us to experience the richness of His grace.**

Deputy Sheriff of Kindness County

David made a promise to his friend Jonathan that he would always show kindness to his family. David kept his promise by showing kindness towards Mephibosheth. In this craft/activity we will make

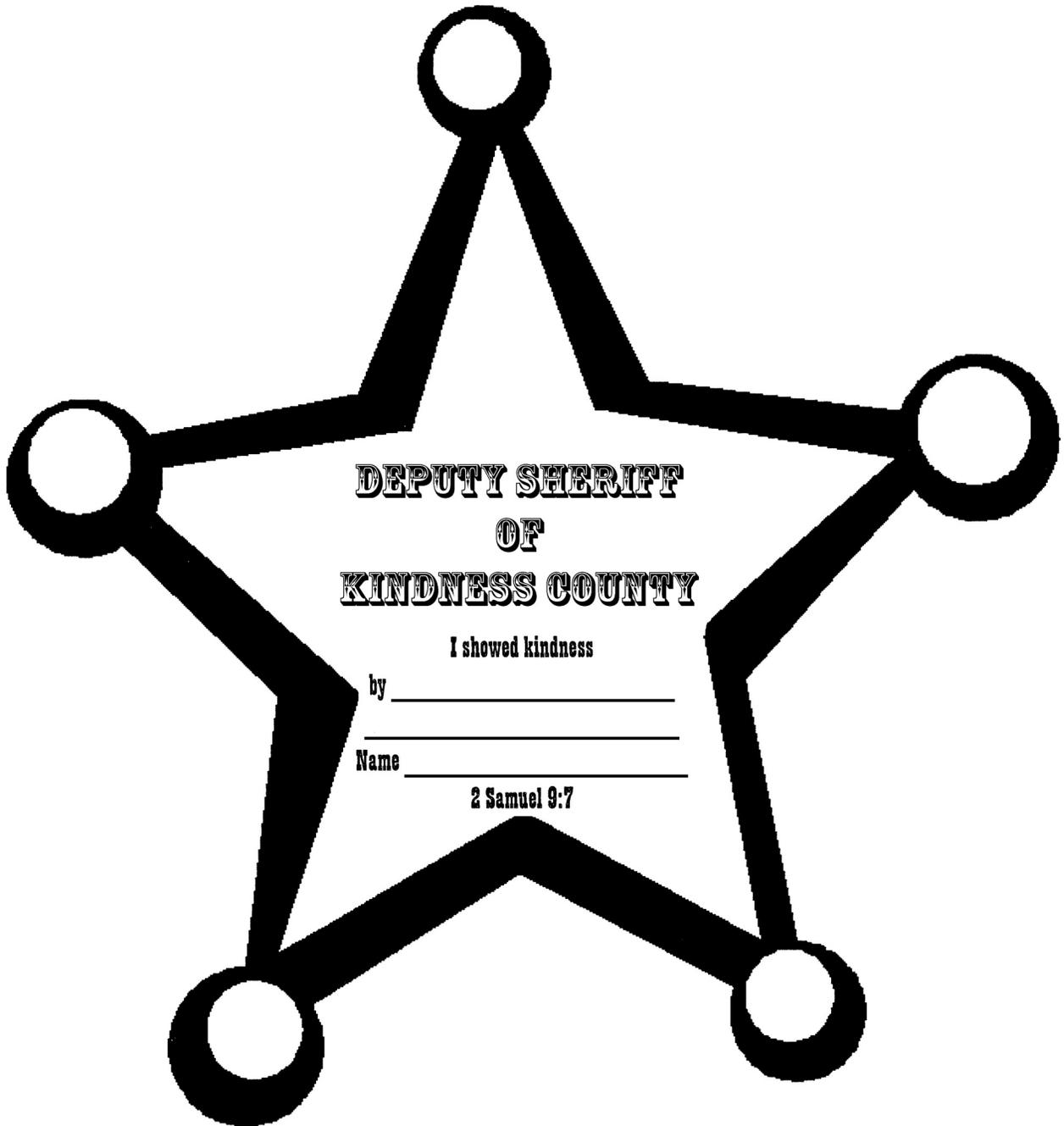
some Deputy Sheriff badges with a promise of how we will show kindness during the upcoming week. Next week we can check back to see if we kept our promise.

Refer to the template “Deputy Sheriff of Kindness County” enclosed with your curriculum. You will need one copy for each child in your class (you may want to use yellow or gray card stock paper so that it looks like a badge), scissors and tape. Give each child a copy of the template. Allow them to cut out their badges. Ask the children to think of a way they can show kindness this next week. Have them write down how they will show kindness next week on the badge (assist the children who are learning to write). Allow the children to write their names on their badges. You can either hold onto the badge until the following week and ask the children how they did, awarding the badges to those children who followed through, or you can give them the badge to take home as a reminder of their promise.

Reinforce the lesson and today’s theme as you do this activity.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to be kind towards others, even if they are their enemies. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.



**DEPUTY SHERIFF
OF
KINDNESS COUNTY**

I showed kindness

by _____

Name _____

2 Samuel 9:7