

GAME PLAN

WEEK 3

BIG IDEA

Showing kindness is in God's game plan.

BIBLE

David and Mephibosheth: 2 Samuel 9:1–13; Psalm 34:9–14

ABOUT THIS WEEK

There's more to playing a game than winning—you'll need good sportsmanship, too. This week, we'll take a look at the time when David was a "good sport" by showing kindness to Saul's descendant, Mephibosheth. Even though Mephibosheth's family once caused David great pain, David's care for Mephibosheth inspires us to remember that showing kindness is in God's game plan.

Large Group Time

Welcome

Welcome back to *Game Plan!* Today, we will continue learning about how David followed God's game plan and how we can. Sports games usually have cheerleaders who hype up the crowd. **Do cheerleaders cheer for themselves or others? How would you describe someone who cheers for others?** Maybe ... *kind*? Think about the characteristics of good sportsmanship as we cheer David on and see what we can learn today.

WHAT? What are we talking about today?

ACTIVITY | Finding Kindness

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need to cut out the images from [this printable](#) to hide under chairs and in plain sight. For larger spaces, consider using actual sports balls, writing letters of the word "kindness" on masking tape to stick on each ball, and then hiding them around the room. To play, set a timer on your phone or computer for two to five minutes, depending on the size of your room, and have kids find all the images or balls. Blow the whistle when time's up.
- Look how quickly you found all these different sports balls! **Now, how fast can we unscramble them to make a word?**
- You did it! You found "kindness!" Just like the real deal, you found kindness in unexpected

places. Today's Bible story will tell us about a time when someone showed unexpected kindness, too!

ACTIVITY | Kickball Kindness

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need a cheerleading pom-pom. You will also need to make four rectangular bases out of paper or tape (first, second, third, home). To play, divide your kids into two teams. This is like regular kickball, except for two things. First, you'll play with a pom-pom, which is more difficult to kick, and second, each time someone gets on base, everyone has to yell something kind to them. (For example: "You rock," "You're awesome," "You read that Bible verse great last week," "You're so creative," and so on.) Consider a tabletop version for smaller groups and smaller spaces, where kids have to try to aim a pom-pom at a base you've marked up on the table.*
- In this game, you couldn't just focus on kicking a home run or scoring points. You had to think of kind things to say also. Maybe even more than scoring goals.
- Rarely is being kind front-and-center in our mind. But what would life be like if it was?

If we spent more time thinking about kind things to say, we wouldn't have room for some things we think about that aren't helpful to us or others. Today, we're going to look at what happened when David, one of God's all-stars, decided to put kindness first.

POLL | Five Kinds Of Choices

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this poll, you'll need to number the four corners of the room. The middle of the room will be for the answer "other." Ask the poll questions. There will be five choices for answers, and the kids will go to the corner of the corresponding answer to the question. They can go to the middle if the answer is "other," but they must explain! The questions and corner answers can be shown on a screen for clarity.*
 - **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *For kids using crutches, wheelchairs, or other mobility aids, be proactive in removing physical obstacles that may be in their way while getting to a corner.*
- **What is your favorite sport?**
 - Soccer
 - Tennis
 - Basketball
 - Football
 - Other
- **What is your favorite energy food?**
 - Fruit
 - Protein bar
 - Pasta
 - Broccoli
 - Other
- **Somebody said something mean to you a long time ago. They forgot and want to be friends. You are most likely to ...**
 - Remind them of their mean words.

- **Be their friend.**
- **Say something mean to them.**
- **Be their friend, but plan revenge.**
- **Other**
- **The cousin of someone who bullied you sits next to you in class. They ask for help with a question. You are most likely to ...**
 - **Tell them to get lost.**
 - **Help them.**
 - **Give them incorrect info with a smile.**
 - **Tell them what their cousin did.**
 - **Other**

That last question is actually kind of close to the situation David was facing. It's not easy to show kindness to people sometimes, especially if that person or someone close to them wronged you in the past. Let's check out what he did.

SO WHAT? Why does it matter to God and to us?

SCRIPTURE | 2 Samuel 9:1–13 (David and Mephibosheth)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Tell the story like an announcer at a sporting event. Invite a couple of volunteers up to the front to stand on either side of you and pretend to be cheerleaders. Give them pom-poms to shake every time you start one of the cheers below. At other times, they can be still, like a freeze frame, so they don't distract the audience. Have the other kids join you in cheering ... you know, like a cheerleader does! Ready? Okay!*
- Hey, sports fans! It's time for another exciting match. A large part of any sporting event is the cheering from the fans and the cheer squad. I hear some cheering right now!
 - *Give me a D! Give me an A! Give me a V! Give me an I! Give me another D! What's that spell?! David!*
 - Okay, that was me. I'm just so glad to watch this Bible story with you!
- Today, we are going to see what kind of "sportsmanship" David showed in the book of 2 Samuel.
- **I'm going to start by reading 2 Samuel 9:1–3.**
 - *Goooo David!* David was now the king of Israel after King Saul. King Saul had a son named Jonathan. Jonathan and David were terrific friends.
 - *What begins with "FRI" and ends with an "ENDS" FRIENDS! FRIENDS! FRIENDS!*
 - Anyway, they were always on the same team!
- However, Saul had *not* been kind to David. He kind of bullied David. *Boo!* But still, when David took over as king, he wanted to show kindness because of his great friendship with Jonathan.
 - David could have chosen another plan. Since King Saul was so mean to him, he could have been mean to anyone related to him. But he chose to be kind instead.
 - There was a servant, Ziba, who let David know that Jonathan's son Mephibosheth was still alive and not very far away!
 - *David! David! He's our guy! He was kind! We all should try to be!* That's not a very good cheer. Let's move on.
- **Let's read 2 Samuel 9: 4–7 together.**
 - What a play! He looked left, he looked right ... score!! He found Jonathan's son in a place called Lo Debar. And what did David do? He made Mephibosheth part of his team forever!

- Give me an M! Give me an E! Give me a ... P! Give me an H! Okay, there's no way we're spelling the whole thing.
- David told Mephibosheth that he would show him kindness by giving back the land that belonged to Mephibosheth's family and making sure that Mephibosheth would always have a seat at his table, the King's meal table!
- That deserves a human pyramid! But ... we're not going to! **You know what we are going to do? Read 2 Samuel 9:8–13!**
 - David didn't always make the best decisions. But in the case of Mephibosheth, he followed God's game plan exactly. He chose to extend grace to a family that had caused him some pain. He found Mephibosheth and showed kindness in both words and actions.
 - He hooked Mephibosheth up with food from the king's table for life. This was a kindness beyond what anyone could imagine.

Except for ... give me a G! Give me an O! Give me a D! That's right! God's kindness is the greatest. David knew that this kind of kindness was a part of God's game plan!

BIG IDEA | Showing kindness is in God's game plan.

ACTIVITY | Team Kindness

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need to split the kids into teams. During the activity, have them devise a game plan for kindness that all of them can try this week. Once teams have constructed their game plan, have each team share. You can scaffold this activity a little by suggesting a scenario for them to respond to.*
- These are all great game plans. Putting just one of them into practice this week is a way to practice kindness. What if you put *all* of these game plans into practice? One each day! After a while, kindness would start to become second nature to you.
- You can practice kindness just like practicing a sport. And, by doing so, you display with your actions that **showing kindness is in God's game plan!**

SCRIPTURE | Psalm 34:9–14

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read the passage together. Choose volunteers to read each verse when prompted below in their best sports announcer or broadcaster voice.*
- It's time for today's "Top Five" plays! Brought to us by Psalm 34:9–14.
 - **Number five, we've got verses 9–10!** Ohhhh! Lions, usually a strong and powerful team, may grow weak, but not people who follow God's game plan. They'll be invincible! Didn't see that coming!
 - **Number four is verse 11.** What a smart decision! No wonder it's a top play! God's children (*that's us*) listen to God!
 - **Number three, watch out, it's verses 12–13!** We watch what comes out of our mouths! It's always a smart play not to lie or talk badly about others. We practice kindness with

the stuff we say!

- **Number two, check out verse 14.** Look at that! When kindness becomes a lifestyle choice, it means we are doing good and seeking peace! God wants us to actively show kindness to others!
- **And coming in at number one, the never-failing all-star, Jesus.** He gives us the perfect example of how to do all of this and how to make kindness an everyday choice. During Jesus' time on earth, plenty of people were mean and did everything in their power to bring him down, which they did briefly when they got him arrested and sentenced to death on the cross. But you know what?

Even in his final moments, he showed kindness, even when nobody deserved it. Through the life of Jesus and through David's invitation to Mephibosheth, there's no doubt that **showing kindness is in God's game plan!**

VIDEO | Game Plan, Episode 3

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).

NOW WHAT? What does God want us to do about it?

REFLECTION | Pass It!

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need one cheerleader pom-pom for the group. The one who has the pom-pom is the one who gets to speak. Start with the pom-pom yourself, and then ask the first question and pass the pom-pom to a person who wants to answer. Keep the pom-pom moving around with all who wish to share.
- **Showing kindness is in God's game plan.** When playing sports, we are often told to win at all costs.
 - **Does this help or hinder our ability to be kind?**
 - **How does this mindset (win at all cost) sometimes sneak into our everyday lives and prevent kindness?**
- It might feel strange to associate sports with kindness because we often think sports are about competing, winning, and being aggressive ... *be-e aggressive!* But if you watch any sports movie that's made you cry, you find beautiful moments of love and compassion that go beyond the game itself and remind us we can show kindness to others just the way God shows us.
 - **When did someone go out of their way to show kindness to you, like David did for Mephibosheth? How did this make you feel?**
 - **What is one thing you can do to make someone else feel kindness the way that you did when someone showed kindness to you?**
- Following God in our Bible story looked like David seeking out and showing kindness to Mephibosheth, and inviting him to eat at David's table.

What might showing kindness look like for us in our day-to-day life?

RESPONSE | God's Plan Playbook

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need to use the [printable](#) from previous weeks (have extras available for kids who don't have one already). During the activity, have kids draw up a "play" based on a situation where they can choose to follow God. Invite them to use Xs and Os to represent different people and arrows to indicate how they'll move or what they'd do. It can end up looking something [like this](#).
- Okay, team, here's the situation: you are faced with a decision—to be kind or unkind? That is the question.
 - **Is it a sibling who keeps asking for help with a chore?**
 - **Is it someone you don't really get along with asking you for a favor?**
 - **How could you respond in kindness? What would that conversation sound like?**
- Draw up the play on your play sheet, using Xs and Os like a team coach would.

Think about all the ways we are shown kindness by the people who love us, and, sometimes, even by people who don't know us very well. Most importantly, think about the loving-kindness of God that sent Jesus to us! Doesn't it remind you that **showing kindness is in God's game plan** and always has been?

MEMORY VERSE | Psalm 33:11 (NIV)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: [memory verse coloring page](#), [sign language motions](#), or choose from [this list](#) of our favorite memorization techniques!
- **"But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations."**

Prayer

God, you are so awesome in showing kindness to us, especially through your son, Jesus. Please help us follow your game plan and look for ways to show this kindness to others. Thank you, Jesus, for being the MVP! And the greatest example we could ever have of how to treat others. Amen

Small Group Time

Discussion

- **SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS**
 - **Who was David's friend, who was like a brother to him?** *Jonathan. Jonathan was also King*

Saul's son.

- **What was something David offered Mephibosheth in his acts of kindness?** *He offered him land, a seat at the King's table for meals, and many servants.*
- **What was the name of the servant David talked to about Mephibosheth?** *Ziba. He was the one who told David that Jonathan had a living relative to whom David could show kindness.*
- **Read Psalm 34: 9–13. What does "fear of the Lord" mean in this passage? What do those who have love and respect for the Lord do?** *Fear of the Lord means we listen to God. Those who love the Lord turn from wrong things and do good.*
- **APPLICATION QUESTIONS**
 - **Who are some people you can think of right now that you can begin to show the kindness of God to?**
 - **What are some ways that we can show them kindness?**

When we see someone teasing or treating another person poorly, what are some things we can do?