

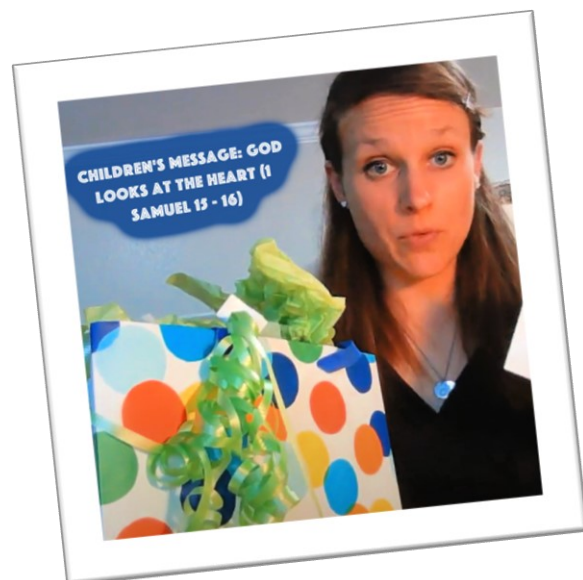
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## God Looks at the Heart

### Children's Message (1 Samuel 15:34-16:13)

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Modern culture places a lot of emphasis on outward appearance. When we look around at what is celebrated and “idolized”, it seems as though looks are most important. For kids, it’s easy to judge things based on what they look like. However, as we explore the story of David being anointed king, we recognize that God looks at our hearts, rather than what we are on the outside. It’s critical to communicate to children from early on that our looks are not nearly as special as who we are on the inside. This message provides a simple object lesson to demonstrate that superficial elements fade, but what’s inside counts more.



**Law/Gospel Theme:** God is the ultimate judge, and He knows what is in our hearts. While this might seem like a harsh or frightening concept, we remember that God is full of grace and loves us. He gave us Jesus to cover our sinful hearts and make us new and clean. King David is actually a foreshadowing of Christ in several ways: he was a shepherd (as Jesus is the Good Shepherd); he saved the people from the enemy (Jesus saves us from sin), and he was a king (Jesus is our king). However, Jesus was without sin, the ultimate king of all.

**Optional Materials:** Two gift-wrapped items: one elaborate on the outside but boring inside; another plain outwardly with something great inside.

#### More Teaching Ideas:

- Watch the video of this [children's lesson](#) and the related [Sunday School craft ideas](#)
- Compare our full [“God Looks at the Heart”](#) Sunday School Lesson
- Compare an alternate [lesson plan on 1 Samuel 16](#)

**Bible Passage:** 1 Samuel 15:34-16:13

**Note:** As with most messages, the details of how you choose to communicate this are adaptable and should cater to timing as well as to your audience and student needs. Use your judgment and ideas to best serve students.

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## Children's Sermon Lesson (1 Samuel 15-16) God Looks at the Heart

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*Greet the children, bringing with you a couple of gifts, or one gift and one envelope. One of the gifts should be beautifully and elaborately wrapped up.*

Hello, children of God! Do you like receiving gifts? I think it's always fun to get presents. Well, I just so happen to have a couple of gifts with me here today... maybe you can help me decide which one to open. Who knows, I could have something special in here for you! So here are my choices: I have this gift (*hold up fancy, large, and/or beautifully wrapped gift*), or there's this one (*hold up small boring-looking present, or a plain envelope.*) What do you think looks more exciting? If you got to choose, which one of these do you think you would want? Well, why don't we take a peek and see what we have in each of these...

*Open the two gifts. In the elaborately decorated bag, reveal the contents to be something simple and boring, like a tube of toothpaste or handful of rubber bands. The other gift should have something that is small, but significant, like a gift card, cash, or even a video game.* Wow, I guess the inside of the gift was more important than the wrapping! Now, maybe you guessed that our little presents here would work themselves out this way. Or perhaps this surprised you. But the truth is, a lot of times it can be easy to judge things based on what they look like on the outside. This present looked a lot more fun and exciting, even though inside it didn't have much. But sometimes we do that with other things in life, too. You might go to the library and pick out a book to read because it has a fun picture on the cover. Or maybe you want a treat at the grocery store with a pretty wrapper. Sometimes we even do this with people. You might look at someone and come up with ideas about who they are, how much money or power they have, how popular they are with others, or even how happy or successful they seem to be.

However, the Bible tells us that God has a different way of measuring who and how we are. God doesn't judge us on appearances, but on our hearts. In the Old Testament, we read about two kings who were both appointed by God, but were very different. One of them was named Saul. Now, Saul was tall and good-looking, and God made him the king at a time when the people of Israel were begging for an earthly king. However, Saul started doing some selfish things and not following God closely enough. So God decided to fire him as king, and select a new person! He sent a prophet named Samuel to anoint the new king. Well, Samuel went to the house of a man named Jesse, who had several sons. Jesse presented his sons one by one, and Samuel thought surely God would have chosen one of the handsome, strong sons that came before him. But God told him that his choice was not the one who

outwardly appeared strong. God told Samuel “man looks at the outward appearance, but God looks at the heart.” Finally, when all of the others had been paraded before him, Jesse brought the youngest son to Samuel. David was not as impressive as his brothers, and he was just a shepherd boy. But when he came God told Samuel that David was the one he wanted to be the next king of Israel. Samuel anointed him as the one God had favored. He would later go on to save the people by killing the giant Goliath, and then have conflict with King Saul, and eventually take over as king...but that’s another story.

The important thing for us to remember in all of this is that God picked David because of who he was on the inside. Scripture tells us that David was a man after God’s own heart. That means he loved God and wanted to serve him in everything that he did. God created us and knows us. He loves us no matter what we do or what we look like. You might think that you aren’t pretty enough or tall enough or smart enough, but God looks at your heart. It’s much more important to be beautiful inside. That means loving God and loving other people. We can rest assured that each and every one of us has a wonderful “heart beauty” because God made all of us! So try not to worry too much about how you look, and be careful not to judge other people because of how they look. It’s what is inside that matters most!

Let’s say a quick prayer to thank God for loving us, and ask Him to help us focus on what’s most important:

**Prayer:**

(Have kids repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for knowing our hearts

Help us to have hearts for you

And to remember that what’s inside matters most

Thank you for your love

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

## **Bible Verses/story to Reference:**

The Lord said to Samuel, “How long will you grieve over Saul, since I have rejected him from being king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil, and go. I will send you to Jesse the Bethlehemite, for I have provided for myself a king among his sons.” 2 And Samuel said, “How can I go? If Saul hears it, he will kill me.” And the Lord said, “Take a heifer with you and say, ‘I have come to sacrifice to the Lord.’ 3 And invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what you shall do. And you shall anoint for me him whom I declare to you.” 4 Samuel did what the Lord commanded and came to Bethlehem. The elders of the city came to meet him trembling and said, “Do you come peaceably?” 5 And he said, “Peaceably; I have come to sacrifice to the Lord. Consecrate yourselves, and come with me to the sacrifice.” And he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

6 When they came, he looked on Eliab and thought, “Surely the Lord's anointed is before him.” 7 But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” 8 Then Jesse called Abinadab and made him pass before Samuel. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” 9 Then Jesse made Shammah pass by. And he said, “Neither has the Lord chosen this one.” 10 And Jesse made seven of his sons pass before Samuel. And Samuel said to Jesse, “The Lord has not chosen these.” 11 Then Samuel said to Jesse, “Are all your sons here?” And he said, “There remains yet the youngest, but behold, he is keeping the sheep.” And Samuel said to Jesse, “Send and get him, for we will not sit down till he comes here.” 12 And he sent and brought him in. Now he was ruddy and had beautiful eyes and was handsome. And the Lord said, “Arise, anoint him, for this is he.” 13 Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David from that day forward. And Samuel rose up and went to Ramah.

-1 Samuel 16:1-13 ESV



Thank you for downloading these free materials. Our team is grateful for your trust and pray that God will bless your ministry.

This resource was prepared by [Kristin Schmidt](#) (pictured right). She serves at the Epiphany Lutheran Church in Castle Rock, CO. She has shared her teaching gifts through *Ministry-To-Children* since 2014 and now serves as our lead curriculum writer.



Kristin has a professional background in elementary and pre-school education. A graduate of Biola University, she holds a Master of Education and will receive the Master of Theology degree from Concordia University, Irvine, California, in May 2020. Kristin grew up in southern California and lived the past 10 years in Georgia. She is a long-distance runner and voracious reader.

My name is Tony Kummer (pictured below). I started Ministry-To-Children.com in 2007 as a free resource for anyone sharing Jesus with kids. It is my personal honor to share these resources with churches around the world.



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May God continue to bless your ministry!

*Tony Kummer*