

Resource: Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

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Familiarization, Internalization, Articulation (Fia)

2SA

2 Samuel 1:1–16

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 1:1–16 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:1–16 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:1–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story at the end of the book of 1 Samuel, the Philistine army killed King Saul's sons, and Saul also died on Mount Gilboa in the northern part of Israel. The Israelite army ran away from the Philistines, and many Israelites died, but the people of Jabesh Gilead buried Saul and his sons and grieved the death of Saul.

The book of 2 Samuel begins immediately after the end of 1 Samuel. After King Saul died and David had returned from defeating the Amalekites, David and his men stayed in Ziklag for two days. You will remember from a previous passage that David and his men defeated the Amalekites, or the Amalek people, in the southern part of Israel. Ziklag was the city where David and his men lived.

On the third day after David returned, a man came unexpectedly from Saul's army camp. This man was probably a young servant or soldier. The man had traveled around 80 kilometers from Mount Gilboa to Ziklag. This man had torn his clothes and put dirt on his head to show that the man was very sad. When people in Israel were very sad about something, those people would tear their clothes and put dust on their heads to show their grief.

Stop here and look at a map of Ziklag and Mount Gilboa as a group.

Discuss as a group: What kinds of things do you do when you are very sad? How do people in your culture show that they are mourning over a sad event or the death of someone they love? Pause this audio here.

When the man comes to David, the man bows all the way down to the ground. This action shows the man's deep respect and honor for David. David asks the man where the man has come from. The man tells David that he has come from Saul's army camp, where the man escaped from the Philistines.

David asks the man to tell David what happened during the battle between the Israelite and Philistine armies. The man replies that the Philistines killed many Israelite soldiers, and the rest of the Israelite army ran away from the battle. The man also tells David that Saul and Saul's son Jonathan are dead.

David then asks how the young man knows Saul and Jonathan died. The man replies that by chance, the man was on Mount Gilboa. Mount Gilboa is a hill or small mountain in northern Israel. A hill or mountain is a place where the land rises up higher than the land around it.

Stop here and look at a picture of Mount Gilboa as a group. Pause this audio here.

The man says that he saw Saul on the mountain. The man says he was shocked to see Saul leaning on Saul's spear. This means Saul was using the spear like a person might use a cane to help them stand up. Saul may have used the spear to support himself because Saul was too weak to stand without any help. A spear is a weapon with a long pole and a sharp tip that people made of iron. The man realized that the Philistine chariots and drivers would reach Saul soon. A chariot was a cart with wheels that horses pulled. Soldiers rode in the cart so they could move quickly. Soldiers could also crouch low in the cart to protect themselves from arrows or rocks. A horse is a four-legged animal that people often use to pull carts or carry heavy loads.

Stop here and look at a picture of a spear as a group. Look at a picture of a soldier driving a chariot that a horse is pulling. Pause this audio here.

The Amalekite tells David that when Saul looked around and saw the young man, Saul called out to the man. The young man told Saul that the man was willing to do whatever Saul asked. Saul asked the young man who the young man was, and the man told Saul that he was an Amalekite. Saul requested that the man kill Saul. Saul was in terrible pain because Saul was badly wounded, but Saul was still alive. So, the young man killed Saul because the man knew that Saul could not live much longer after being hurt so badly.

The man says he took Saul's crown from Saul's head and Saul's band from Saul's arm. A crown was something that Saul wore on his head that showed people that Saul was the king. We do not know exactly what Saul's crown looked like, but it may have been an object that people tied by cloth or string and that hung around the top of the head. Saul's arm band was probably a bracelet that Saul wore on his upper arm. The man brings those items to David to prove that Saul is dead and to prove that the young man really is telling the truth about what he saw. The young man calls David "my lord" to show that he respects David. The young man probably hopes that David will give him some kind of reward for bringing the news of Saul and for giving David Saul's crown and arm band.

Stop here and look at a picture of a crown like the one that Saul might have worn, and a picture of an arm band as a group. Pause this audio here.

We do not know if David believed all of what the young man said. In a previous story, you heard that Saul fell on his sword himself. But in this passage, the young man tells David that the young man killed Saul. The young man may have told a lie, hoping that David might give him a reward for killing Saul, who had tried to kill David. Or the young man may have told David that Saul had tried to kill himself, but Saul was still alive, so the young man killed him on Mount Gilboa.

We do know that David believes Saul and Jonathan are dead. When David and David's men hear the man's news, David and his men tear their own clothes. David and his men mourn and show their sadness for Saul and Jonathan by weeping and fasting. To weep means to cry tears, and to fast means the men chose not to eat anything to show how sad they were about Saul and Jonathan's deaths. David and his men also mourn for Yahweh's army and the people of Israel because so many soldiers died in battle. David and his men mourn until evening.

David asks the young Amalekite man, "Where are you from?" The man tells David that the man is the son of one of the Amalekite foreigners who lives in the land of Israel. Because the young man lived among the Israelites, the young man would have known that to kill the king of Israel was a crime that required the punishment of death. David asks the man why he dared to kill Yahweh's anointed. The phrase "Yahweh's anointed" was

another way to talk about the man Yahweh had chosen to be king. David is asking the man why the man did not hesitate to kill Saul, who is Yahweh's chosen king of Israel.

David calls one of his soldiers and tells the soldier to kill the young man from Amalek. David's soldier strikes the Amalekite with a sword so that he will die. As the man is dying, David tells the man that his blood is on his own head. David means that the man is responsible for his own death. When this young man declared that he killed Saul, Yahweh's anointed, the man admitted his guilt in the murder, and the penalty for that murder was the man's own death.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:1–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: After Saul died and David and his men returned from defeating the Amalekites, David and his men stayed in Ziklag for two days. On the third day, a man suddenly arrives from Saul's camp. The man has torn his clothes and put dust on his head. The man tells David that the Israelites fled from the Philistines, and King Saul and Jonathan died.

In the second scene: David asks the man how the man knows Saul and Jonathan died. The man tells David that he happened to be on Mount Gilboa and saw Saul standing and leaning on his spear. The man says that Saul asked the man who the man was, and the man said he was an Amalekite. Saul asked the man to kill Saul because Saul was dying, and the man did what Saul asked. The man brought Saul's crown and arm band to David.

In the third scene: David and his men tear their clothes and put dirt on their heads as a sign of their deep grief over Saul's death and the defeat of Israel. David then asks the man where he is from, and the man says he is a foreigner from Amalek. David asks how the man dared to kill Yahweh's anointed, King Saul. David then tells one of his men to kill the man from Amalek because the man killed Saul.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- David's men
- The young Amalekite man
- And King Saul

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, Saul and Jonathan have died, and David has returned from defeating the Amalekites. You will remember that in a previous story, David and his men return to Ziklag, where they remain for two days. On the third day, a man unexpectedly comes to Ziklag. To show that he is mourning, the man has torn his clothes and put dust on his head. The man has done these things to show his grief over the bad news the man has for David. This man has come from Saul's army camp. The man has probably traveled for around three days, or an 80-kilometer journey, to reach David and David's men.

When the man sees David, the man bows low to the ground. The man wants to show respect and honor to David. David asks the man, "Where have you come from?" The man replies, "I have run away from Israel's army camp." The army camp was the place where Saul and his soldiers had stayed during the battle against the Philistines. David says to the man, "Give me news of the battle, please." The man responds that many Israelite soldiers fled from the Philistines, and many others had fallen and died. The man also tells David that King Saul and his son Jonathan are dead.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about someone who is mourning a loved one's death. What kinds of words do you use to help your audience understand the sadness a person in mourning feels? Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, David wants to know if the news the man brought is true. David calls the messenger a young man. The word can mean young man or soldier. David asks the young man how he knows that Saul and Jonathan are dead. The young man says, "By chance, I found myself on Mount Gilboa. I was shocked to see Saul leaning on his spear!" The man says clearly that he believes that his meeting with Saul was a coincidence; the man was not expecting to meet Saul. Saul probably used his spear like a cane or walking stick to help Saul stand up.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you translate the idea that the young man met Saul "by chance?" Pause this audio here.

The young man continues, "I realized that soon the enemy chariots and their drivers would reach Saul. Saul looked and saw me, and he called out to me. I asked Saul how I could help him." The young man spoke to Saul in the way most servants respond to those who are in authority. Saul asked the young man who he was, and the young man told Saul that he was an Amalekite.

The young man tells David, "Saul begged me to stand beside him and kill him because he was in terrible pain and agony. Saul was almost dead, but he was still alive. So I stood over him and killed him because I knew he was too badly wounded to live much longer. Then I took Saul's crown and his armband and brought them to you, my master."

Stop here and discuss as a group: Saul felt a great amount of pain because he was about to die. How will you help people understand how much pain Saul felt? What strong words will you use to translate this idea of terrible pain and agony to the point of death? Pause this audio here.

Tell a story where someone does something that is wrong for a good reason. What words help you describe why someone might do that? Pause this audio here.

In the third scene, David and all of his men tear their clothes in grief. David and his men mourn and cry. David and his men fast, which means the men do not eat. David and his men also mourn for the people of Yahweh and for the house of Israel, which means the people of Israel, because they had fallen by the sword. To fall by the sword is special language that means the people died in battle. The Philistines may have killed them with swords, but they also may have died because an enemy soldier hit them with an arrow or a spear. David and his men mourn until the sun sets that evening.

David then asks the young man, "Where are you from?" The man replies, "I am an Amalekite, the son of a resident foreigner." A resident foreigner was someone who was not an Israelite but lived among the Israelites. Then David asks the young man, "How did you dare to lay a hand on someone that Yahweh himself chose as king, and destroy him?" To "lay a hand" on someone is special language that means to kill someone. David does not expect the young man to answer this question. David is asking why the young man did not hesitate to kill Saul, Yahweh's anointed, or the person Yahweh chose to be king of Israel. People usually showed that Yahweh was choosing a person as king by anointing that person with oil. As a resident of Israel, the young man would know that others must kill him as punishment because the young man killed the king.

David calls one of his soldiers to David and says, "Come here and strike down this young Amalekite man!" To strike down someone means to kill someone. So David's man strikes the Amalekite with a sword to kill him, and the Amalekite dies. David says to the Amalekite, "Your blood is on your own head." This is special language that means that the Amalekite's death is his own fault. David says this to show that it was right for him to kill the Amalekite because the Amalekite had killed King Saul. David continues, "With your own mouth you admitted that you killed Yahweh's anointed."

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story where someone did something they thought would bring them a reward, and instead they received severe negative consequences. How will you describe the contrast between what was expected and what actually happened? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

*Embodying the Text**Embodying the Text*

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:1–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- David's men
- The young Amalekite man
- And King Saul

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

After Saul died and David and his men returned from defeating the Amalekites, David and his men spent two days in Ziklag. On the third day, a man suddenly arrives. The man had put dirt on his head and torn his clothes to show that he was mourning. The man throws himself facedown on the ground in front of David, showing deep respect.

David asks the man, "Where did you come from?" The man replies, "I ran away from the Israelite army camp." David says, "Give me news of the battle, please." The man answers, "The Israelite soldiers ran away from the Philistine army. The Philistines also struck down and killed many Israelite soldiers. They even killed King Saul and his son Jonathan!"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- How can I trust what this man is saying? or
- I hope that this man is not telling me the truth that the Philistines have defeated Israel and that Saul and Jonathan are dead.

Continue the drama.

David asks the young man, "How do you know that Saul and Jonathan are dead?" The young man replies, "I found myself on Mount Gilboa by chance, and I was shocked to see Saul there. Saul was holding onto his spear to stand, almost falling. And the Philistine soldiers driving their chariots were coming towards Saul. When Saul turned and saw me, he called out to me, and I said, 'Yes, sir?' Saul asked me who I was, and I told him I was one of the Amalek people. Saul begged me to stand beside him and to kill him because he was near death and was

in terrible pain. So I came next to Saul and killed him because I knew he was too badly wounded to live much longer. Then I took Saul's crown off his head and took his armband. I came here to give them to you, sir."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the young man, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I hope that David believes what I am telling him; or
- Perhaps I will receive a reward for killing David's enemy, Saul; or
- By bringing Saul's crown and arm band, I am helping David become the next king!

Continue the drama.

David grabs his clothing and tears it, and his men rip their clothing too. David and his men spend the rest of the day mourning and weeping. David and his men refuse to eat anything until the sun goes down. David and his men mourn for Saul and for his son Jonathan. David and his men also mourn for Yahweh's people and for the nation of Israel because the Philistines killed so many of them in battle.

Then David asks the young man who brought David the news about the battle, "Where are you from?" The young man answers, "I am an Amalekite, the son of a foreigner living in Israel." David exclaims, "How did you dare to go against Yahweh's choice for a king and murder Saul? Were you not afraid that I would punish you for such an evil act?" David turns to one of his men and orders him to come and kill the young man. So David's man stabs the young man, and the young man dies. David declares, "You are responsible for your own death. You yourself admitted that you killed Yahweh's anointed king. That is enough evidence to condemn you."

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing David's men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We follow David and know that David will be Israel's next king. But we still respect that Saul was Yahweh's choice to be Israel's first king, so we will mourn for Saul; or
- We know this young man may not have been telling the truth about Saul's death, but he deserves to die for even claiming to kill Yahweh's anointed; or
- With Saul's death, we know David will soon be king, and we look forward to that day!

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:1–16 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

After Saul's death, **David** and his men returned to Ziklag when they finished defeating the **Amalekites**. The Amalekites were a tribe who roamed around the Negev wilderness south of Judah. The Amalekites descended from a man named Amalek. The Amalekites and the Israelites hated each other. Use the same word for David and for Amalekites as you used in previous passages in 1 Samuel. See the Master Glossary for more information about David.

David and his men stayed in Ziklag for two days. On the third day, a man suddenly arrived from Saul's army camp. The man had torn his clothes and put dust on his head because he was mourning. Although the storyteller does not say that the young man was mourning, we know that the man was mourning because of his actions. If necessary, you may say that the man tore his clothes and put dust on his head to show that he was mourning. Mourning means to feel or show deep sorrow or grief. Later in this story, we also hear that David and his men fasted and mourned for Saul and Jonathan.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use to say that the man tore his clothes and put dust on his head because he was **mourning**. If you have already translated this idea in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The man bowed to the ground at David's feet. David asked the man where he had come from, and the man said he had escaped from the Israelite army camp. "Israelite" refers to the people who descended from Jacob and lived in the territory of Israel. An army camp is a temporary place where an army stays, often in tents, as they fight their enemies.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words you have used in previous books for **Israelite**, **Israel**, and **army camp**. Use the same words for Israel, Israelite, and army camp as you used in previous books of the Bible. See the Master Glossary for more information about Israel and Israelite. Pause this audio here.

David asked the man to tell him about the battle between Israel and the Philistines. The man said that many Israelite soldiers ran away from the battle, and the Philistines killed many more Israelites. The man also told David that Saul and Jonathan were dead. When David asked how the man could be sure that Saul and Jonathan had died, the man said he happened to be on Mount Gilboa and saw Saul leaning on Saul's spear. Mount Gilboa was a hill or small mountain, which is a place where some of the land rises up above the land around it.

Stop here and look at a picture of Mount Gilboa as a group. Discuss what word or phrase you will use for **mount**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Saul was leaning on Saul's spear. A spear was a weapon with a long wooden shaft and a sharp tip made of iron.

Stop here and look at a picture of a spear as a group. Discuss what word or phrase you will use for **spear**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word you have used there. Pause this audio here.

As Saul leaned on his spear, the Philistine soldiers in their chariots came closer. A chariot was a cart with wheels that horses pulled and soldiers drove.

Stop here and look at a picture of a chariot driven by a soldier and pulled by a horse. Discuss what word or phrase you will use for **chariot**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Saul saw the young man and asked that the young man kill Saul because Saul was so badly wounded, but was still alive. The young man did as Saul asked and brought Saul's crown and armband to David. A crown was a symbol that a king wore on his head to show he was king. An armband was a bracelet that a person wore on their upper arm to show they were royalty.

Stop here and look at a picture of a crown and an armband as a group. Discuss what word or phrase you will use for **crown** and **armband**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David and his men tore their clothes and wept and fasted until the sun went down. When someone is fasting, that person is not eating or drinking anything for a certain amount of time.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **fasting**. Look up fasting in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David and his men mourned for Saul, Jonathan, the Israelite army, and the house, or people, of Israel.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **house of Israel**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same phrase that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Then David asked the young man where the man was from. The young man told David he was the son of a foreigner, an Amalekite. A person is a foreigner in a country when that person is in a country that is not where the person was born. The "house of Israel" refers to all the Israelite people together.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **foreigner**. Look up foreigner in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David asks the young man how the man dared to kill Yahweh's anointed without being afraid of punishment. "Yahweh's anointed" refers to Saul, who was the person Yahweh chose to be king over Israel at that time. It means that Yahweh directed someone to anoint Saul by pouring sweet oil on Saul's head. This gave Saul authority to reign as king. Yahweh is the name God gives himself. This name showed the personal relationship God had with Israel.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Yahweh's anointed**. Look up Yahweh and anoint in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David calls one of David's men and commands him to kill the young Amalekite who brought David the news of Saul's death. The young man dies, and David tells him, "Your blood be on your own head." This is special language that means the young man's death is his own responsibility because the young man admitted he killed Saul, the king whom Yahweh had anointed.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **your blood be on your own head**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 1:1–16

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2 Samuel 1:17–27

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 1:17–27 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:17–27 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:17–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

NOTE: This passage is a song, which is Hebrew poetry. We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Module 1" before continuing with "Step 2: Setting the Stage." Stop here, if needed, and review the translation decisions your team has made regarding the translation of poetry. Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, a young man comes to Ziklag and tells David that the Philistines defeated Israel, and that Saul and Jonathan are dead. The young man confesses that he killed Saul because Saul was badly wounded. David and his men mourn for Saul, Jonathan, and the people of Israel. Then David commands one of his men to kill the young man who brought the news because the young man dared to kill Saul.

In this story, when David hears the news that Saul and Jonathan died in battle, David writes a song about Saul and Jonathan and sings it to honor them. People call this type of song a lament. A lament is a song that people sing to mourn the death of someone. David writes this song in the same language and style that David's people used for these kinds of songs. The people spoke the language called Hebrew, and David writes this song in Hebrew poetry. Poetry is a special language that sounds beautiful to listeners. In this poem, David spoke as if he were talking to a person or object, but that person or object is not actually present.

David sings this song to mourn Saul and Jonathan. David instructs the people of Judah to learn the song of lament so they can sing it to honor Saul and Jonathan. The people of Judah were the people in the Israelite tribe of Judah, which is the tribe David belonged to. David calls this song the "Lament of the Bow." A bow was a weapon that people used to shoot arrows. In ancient Israel, people would make a bow out of a long, flexible piece of wood that they bent into a curved shape by tying a strong but thin, flexible piece of leather to each end. David may have used this name because Jonathan used a bow when he fought in battle. People also wrote down this song in the Book of Jashar. Jashar means upright or righteous. People in Israel wrote down stories of great events in this book during David's time, but we do not have a copy of this book anymore.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do people lament in your culture? What kinds of ways do people show grief for someone who has died? Pause this audio here.

In the first verse of this song, David sings, "People of Israel, the enemy has killed your leaders on the high places, and your glory is gone. See how the mighty have fallen!" Like many poets did when they composed poems, David is speaking to people who are not actually present. David speaks to Israel, even though not all the people of Israel are listening to David as he sings. David says Israel's glory is gone. Glory is the fame and admiration people give to someone who does something impressive. Here, David probably uses the word glory to talk about the leaders who represented the greatness of Israel. David means that Saul and Jonathan, Israel's leaders, represented Israel's glory. When Saul and Jonathan died, Israel's glory was gone.

David probably refers to Mount Gilboa when he talks about high places. Mount Gilboa was the place where Saul and Jonathan died in battle. The mighty who fell means the heroes or leaders who have fallen, which is another way to say that those leaders died.

Next, David says, "Do not tell the news in Gath, and do not proclaim it in Ashkelon. Because if you do, the Philistine women will be happy, and those daughters of godless men will celebrate." David tells the Israelites not to share the news about Saul and Jonathan with the Philistines in Gath and Ashkelon. The Philistines were the enemies who killed Saul and Jonathan. Gath and Ashkelon were important Philistine cities. David is not actually saying that the Israelites could not talk to the Philistines about Saul's death. David wants to show that he does not support the Philistines but laments over Saul and Jonathan. David also wants to show respect for Saul.

Stop here and look at a map that includes Gath, Ashkelon, Mount Gilboa, and Ziklag. Pause this audio here.

David does not want the women to celebrate the Philistine victory over Israel. It was a custom during this time for women to greet returning soldiers with songs of celebration and praise. David uses the phrases "Philistine women" and "daughters of godless men" to talk about the same women. When David calls the Philistines "godless men," David insults the Philistines.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do people celebrate when they have won a victory in battle in your culture? Pause this audio here.

David then says, "On the mountains of Gilboa, a mighty hero dropped his shield. No one oils Saul's shield anymore. Therefore may Yahweh curse you, you mountains of Gilboa! No more dew or rain for you, no more fields of harvest offerings." David is asking Yahweh not to allow rain or dew to fall or crops to grow on the mountain because people killed Saul and Jonathan there. Dew is the water drops that we sometimes see on the ground early in the morning before the sun comes up. On Mount Gilboa, Saul dropped his shield when Saul died. A shield was a flat or slightly curved piece of metal or leather that a soldier used to protect himself from arrows.

or other weapons during battle. If someone dropped his shield during battle, the shield would become so defiled or dirty from blood that no one would want to touch it. Someone had to regularly rub shields with oil to keep them clean and in good condition.

Stop here and look at a picture of a shield as a group. Pause this audio here.

David now begins to praise Saul and Jonathan for their bravery and strength. David says, "When Jonathan shot his arrows, when Saul fought with his sword, they never retreated, they never turned back without the blood and flesh of their mighty enemies on their weapons." These statements describe how successful Saul and Jonathan were in battle. Jonathan used a bow to shoot arrows, which are short sticks with a pointed tip that a bow would shoot through the air. A sword is a big knife that is sharp on both sides.

Stop here and look at a picture of a bow with arrows and a sword as a group. Pause this audio here.

David sings about how Saul and Jonathan were gracious, and people loved them. Saul and Jonathan lived together and died together. As warriors, Saul and Jonathan were faster than eagles and stronger than lions. David compares Saul and Jonathan to eagles and lions to show that they were powerful warriors who could run very fast. An eagle is a large bird that can fly quickly and catch things like small animals, birds, or fish to eat. A lion is a very strong and very large cat. Lions can catch animals that are even larger than they are.

Stop here and look at a picture of an eagle and a picture of a lion as a group. Pause this audio here.

David tells the Israelite women to mourn for Saul because Saul was good to the people. To show Saul's goodness, David says Saul provided the women with beautiful scarlet or red dresses. At this time, only wealthy people wore clothing that someone had dyed another color. Saul also provided the women with the ability to decorate their clothing with gold ornaments or jewelry.

Stop here and look at a picture of red or scarlet cloth as a group. Pause this audio here.

David again says, "See how the mighty have fallen in the midst of battle!" David speaks to Jonathan, even though Jonathan is no longer there. David is heartbroken, or very sad, because of what happened. David feels like Jonathan loved David even more than women love their men or children! In other words, Jonathan was loyal to David no matter what happened!

David finishes his song by saying again that the mighty have fallen, and David describes that the mighty men's weapons are useless.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:17–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has eight scenes.

In the first scene: David writes a song to mourn the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. This type of song is called a lament. David instructs the people of Judah to learn what David calls the "Song of the Bow." People also write this song in the Book of Jashar.

In the second scene: David mourns Israel's mighty leaders because the Philistines killed them on the battlefield.

In the third scene: David tells the Israelites not to share the news about Israel's defeat in the Philistine towns because David does not want the Philistine women to rejoice over their victory.

In the fourth scene: David curses the mountains of Gilboa because that is where people killed Saul and Jonathan.

In the fifth scene: David begins to remember Saul and Jonathan's bravery and strength in battle.

In the sixth scene: David sings about how the people loved Saul and Jonathan. David also praises Saul and Jonathan for being swift and powerful. Then David tells the Israelite women to mourn for Saul because Saul provided them with beautiful clothing and gold jewelry.

In the seventh scene: David mourns for his best friend, Jonathan, and remembers how much Jonathan and David loved each other.

In the eighth scene: David sings one last lament for the mighty warriors who died.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Saul
- Jonathan
- People of Judah
- Philistine women
- And Israelite women

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, David writes a song of lament for Saul and Jonathan. David also instructs the people of Judah to learn the song so that they can honor Saul and Jonathan. David calls his lament the "Song of the Bow." People also wrote David's song in the Book of Jashar. The Book of Jashar was a collection of stories of Israel's heroes that we do not have anymore.

Stop here and review as a group: We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Modules 2 & 3" before continuing with "Step 3: Defining the Scenes." If your team has completed the introduction to poetry, remind one another of the special ways that poets use language. What are the most common ways that poets use language in Hebrew poems? Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, David mourns for Israel's leaders who died on the mountain. David says, "People of Israel, the enemy has killed your leaders on the high places, and your glory is gone. See how the mighty have fallen!" Israel's glory is another way to talk about the mighty leaders of Israel, Saul and Jonathan. In some other translations, David says, "The enemy has killed a gazelle, or a type of antelope, on the high places." The Hebrew word for "gazelle" can also mean "glory." We are not sure which word David used, so you may use either word in your translation. Most likely, David is referring to Israel's glory. To say something has fallen means that someone or something has died. David mourns the death of Saul and Jonathan. These two parallel phrases talk about the same thing. "Your glory is gone" and "the mighty have fallen" both talk about Israel's leaders who died.

In the third scene, David tells the Israelites not to share the news about Saul and Jonathan with the Philistine cities of Gath and Ashkelon. These cities were important to the Philistines. David does not really mean that people should keep the news about Saul and Jonathan a secret. David knows he cannot control what the Philistines know. David does not want the Philistine women to celebrate the Philistines' victory over Israel. In this section of the song, David uses parallel phrases between "do not tell the news in Gath" and "do not proclaim it in Ashkelon." These phrases are both talking about the same thing: not telling people in Philistine cities that the Philistines defeated the Israelites. David again uses two phrases to talk about the same thing when David calls the Philistine women "daughters of the Philistines" and "daughters of the godless or uncircumcised." The Israelites often called people like the Philistines uncircumcised. They were not part of the people of Israel, so they did not follow Yahweh and were not circumcised.

Stop here and discuss as a group: As you know, Hebrew poetry uses parallel phrases in three different ways. In these parallel phrases, David is describing the same thing in two different ways. How might you translate these phrases in your language? Pause this audio here.

In the fourth scene, David curses the mountains of Gilboa because that is where Saul and Jonathan died. David says, "On the mountains of Gilboa, a mighty hero dropped his shield. No one oils Saul's shield anymore. Therefore may Yahweh curse you, you mountains of Gilboa! No more dew or rain for you, no more fields of harvest offerings." David is not really blaming the mountain for Saul and Jonathan's death. But David is asking Yahweh to keep the rain from falling and to keep the crops from growing on Mount Gilboa as a way to remind people of the terrible things that happened there. David uses the feature of Hebrew poetry where he speaks to objects as if they were people. David also uses poetic language to describe Saul's death. David says Saul "dropped his shield" and "no one oils Saul's shield anymore." If a soldier dropped his shield in battle, the shield would become defiled, or unusable, because of the blood on it. People had to put oil on shields regularly to keep the shields clean and usable. David uses these phrases to talk about Saul's death in battle. Because Saul died, no one cares for Saul's shield anymore.

In the fifth scene, David remembers that Saul and Jonathan were very successful in battle. David says, "When Jonathan shot his arrows, when Saul fought with his sword, they never retreated, they never turned back without the blood and flesh of their mighty enemies on their weapons." The flesh of an enemy refers to parts of an enemy's body. Jonathan and Saul fought with strength and bravery, and Jonathan and Saul never returned from battle with clean weapons because they killed so many enemies.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you describe victorious warriors in your culture? Pause this audio here.

In the sixth scene, David praises Saul and Jonathan and their relationship with the people and with each other. David says, "They were great men, and the people loved them. They were always together in life and in death." David also talks about how fast and strong Saul and Jonathan were. David uses special language to emphasize something special about these things. Here, David says Saul and Jonathan were "swifter than eagles and stronger than lions." David does not actually mean that they were faster than eagles or stronger than lions, but David uses these animals to say Saul and Jonathan moved very quickly and were strong in battle.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What words will you use to describe the way David uses comparison to praise Saul and Jonathan? How will you say well what David means? Pause this audio here.

David then commands the Israelite women to mourn for Saul because Saul provided the women with rich, colorful clothing and gold jewelry. David does not mean that Saul gave these things to the women. David means that Saul won battles and took valuable and fancy things from his enemies. In this way, Saul could provide these fancy things to the women.

In the seventh scene, David again says, "See how the mighty have fallen in the midst of battle!" This is the second time David uses the phrase "the mighty have fallen." David then mourns for his friend Jonathan. David calls Jonathan "my brother." David calls Jonathan his brother to describe their close friendship. David says, "My heart is broken apart because of you, Jonathan, my brother! You were very dear to me, and you loved me so much. You loved me more than women love their men or children." David uses these words to describe the deep love and friendship that David and Jonathan shared.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you describe a close friendship between two people? Pause this audio here.

In the eighth scene, David finishes his lament by saying once more, "See how the mighty have fallen!" This is the third time David uses this phrase. David began his song with this statement, and David ends this song with this statement. David describes the weapons of Saul and Jonathan as "abandoned and useless." Because these leaders died, the leaders cannot use their weapons anymore.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:17-27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has eight scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Saul
- Jonathan
- People of Judah
- Philistine women
- And Israelite women

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

After David learns that Saul and Jonathan died, David writes a song of lament to honor Saul and Jonathan. David sings this song to mourn the deaths of Saul and Jonathan. David also instructs the people of Judah to learn the song so they can sing it to honor Saul and Jonathan. David calls this lament the "Song of the Bow." People also write the song in the Book of Jashar.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the people of Judah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We join David in mourning Saul and Jonathan because they were the leaders Yahweh gave us; or
- We are surprised David wants us to mourn Saul because we know Saul tried to kill David.

Continue the drama.

David begins his song by singing, "People of Israel, the enemy has killed your leaders on the high places, and your glory is gone. See how the mighty have fallen!" David is so sad because Israel's glory, Saul and Jonathan, died on Mount Gilboa, and so many mighty Israelite warriors died also.

David then tells the Israelites not to tell the news to the people of Gath or to proclaim the Philistine victory to the men of Ashkelon. David says this because David does not want the "daughters of the Philistines" or "daughters of the godless or uncircumcised" to rejoice over the Philistine victory.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the Philistine women, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We celebrate because our warriors defeated the warriors of Israel; or
- We are confused because David mourns King Saul, and we know Saul hated David.

Continue the drama.

Then David speaks to the mountains and says, "On the mountains of Gilboa, a mighty hero dropped his shield. No one oils Saul's shield anymore. Therefore may Yahweh curse you, you mountains of Gilboa! No more dew or rain for you, no more fields of harvest offerings." David wants Yahweh to stop the rain and the growth of the crops on the mountain because that is the place where Saul died. David uses poetry to describe Saul's death by talking about how Saul dropped his shield. People reject or hate the shield, and no one oils the shield anymore.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am angry because Saul and Jonathan died; or
- I want to curse this mountain because it reminds me of my grief over Saul and Jonathan.

Continue the drama.

David stops lamenting and remembers Saul and Jonathan. David remembers how brave and mighty Saul and Jonathan were when they fought. David remembers, "When Jonathan shot his arrows, when Saul fought with his sword, they never retreated, they never turned back without the blood and flesh of their mighty enemies on their weapons." Saul and Jonathan fought fiercely and bravely against all their enemies.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing Saul and Jonathan, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We never gave up in a battle; or
- We knew Yahweh was with us, so we always pursued our enemies.

Continue the drama.

David remembers more about Saul and Jonathan. David remembers how much the people loved Saul and Jonathan. David also remembers how Saul and Jonathan loved each other. Saul and Jonathan lived and died together. David praises Saul and Jonathan for being swift and mighty by comparing them to an eagle and to a lion.

David reminds the Israelite women of how Saul cared for the women. Saul provided the women with richly colored clothing and gold jewelry. David reminds the Israelite women that they should mourn for Saul.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the Israelite women, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We remember how Saul treated us, and we mourn Saul's death; or
- We cannot forget Saul because Saul gave us what we wanted and needed.

Continue the drama.

David says again, "See how the mighty have fallen in battle!" Then David begins to sing about his special relationship with Jonathan. David says, "My heart is broken apart because of you, Jonathan, my brother! You were very dear to me, and you loved me so much. You loved me more than women love their men or children."

David ends his song of lament by saying once again, "See how the mighty have fallen!" David knows these warriors of Israel will never use the weapons again.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I miss my best friend and the leader of Israel. My grief feels overwhelming; or
- I cannot believe someone defeated the warriors of Israel; or
- I know I am supposed to be the next king, but I cannot even think about taking Saul's place while I am grieving.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 1:17–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David writes a song of lament to mourn Saul and Jonathan after they have died. A lament is a song people sing to mourn the death of someone. David calls this lament "The Lament of the Bow."

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **lament**, and how you will name this lament. If you have already translated the word or phrase for lament in another book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase that you have used there. For more information, look up lament in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

David instructed the people of Judah to learn this song and to sing it to honor Saul and Jonathan. David named the song the "Song of the Bow." People use a bow as a weapon to shoot arrows. People make bows out of flexible wood and tie strong, flexible leather at both ends. People make arrows out of iron. They make the iron sharply pointed on one end and connect the iron to a thin wooden shaft.

Stop here and look at a picture of a bow as a group. Discuss what word or phrase you will use for **bow** and **arrow**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David sings this song about Israel's leaders. **Israel** is the name of the territory where the Israelites lived. Use the same word for Israel as you used in the previous passage, and for more information, look up Israel in the Master Glossary.

David begins his song by singing that Israel's glory is gone. Glory is the fame and admiration you get from doing something important or very good. The Bible often talks about God's glory, but we can also use this word to talk about people. David probably uses glory here to talk about Israel's leaders, Saul and Jonathan. David also may have used the word gazelle, or a type of antelope, to talk about Saul and Jonathan.

Stop here and discuss as a group whether you will use the word **glory** or the word **gazelle** in this passage. If you use glory, look up glory in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. If you want to use the word gazelle instead, stop here and look at a photo of a gazelle. Pause this audio here.

David says people killed Israel's glory or gazelle on the high places. Sometimes "high places" meant places where people worshipped idols. However, in this poem, David means the place on top of the mountain of Mount Gilboa where soldiers killed Saul and Jonathan.

David then tells the Israelites not to tell the men in Gath and Ashkelon about the Philistine victory over Israel. The Philistines were Israel's enemies who killed Saul and Jonathan.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Philistine**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David does not want the Israelites to tell the Philistines about their victory because David does not want the Philistine women to rejoice over the victory. David describes the Philistine women as "daughters of the uncircumcised." The Philistines were not part of the Israelites, Yahweh's people. So the Philistines did not worship Yahweh, and they were not circumcised like the Israelites. When someone circumcised a man, they cut

off the loose skin at the end of the man's penis. Circumcision was a sign that Yahweh included the person in the covenant that Yahweh had made with Abraham.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **uncircumcised**. Look up circumcision in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here

David continues to lament Saul's death using poetic language. David talks about Saul's defiled shield that no one oils anymore. A shield was a flat or slightly curved piece of metal or leather that a soldier used to protect himself from arrows or other weapons during battle. The people believed that to defile something was to make it unclean and unholy. People could not use an object that had been defiled in service to Yahweh. Because of this, some translations say that the shield was defiled, and some say that people rejected the shield.

Stop here and look at a picture of a shield as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **shield** and **defile**. If you use the word defile, look up defile in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David remembers how strong and brave Saul and Jonathan were with their weapons in battle. Jonathan used a bow and arrows, and Saul fought with a sword. A sword was a big knife that was sharp on both sides.

Stop here and look at a picture of a **sword** as a group. Use the same word or phrase for sword as you used in other parts of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

David sings about how Saul and Jonathan loved each other and lived and died together. David says Saul and Jonathan were faster than eagles and stronger than lions. An eagle is a large bird that can fly quickly and catch large prey. A lion is a very strong and large cat.

Stop here and look at a picture of an eagle and a picture of a lion as a group. Discuss what word or phrase you will use for **eagle** and for **lion**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David continues to sing about his grief over Jonathan's death. David says his heart is broken. The word "heart" is special language for the place where a person's thoughts, feelings, and emotions happen.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **heart**. Look up heart in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David ends his lament by repeating how the mighty leaders of Israel died.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 1:17–27

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 2:1–7

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 2:1–7 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:1–7 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.

4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, David wrote a song of lament to mourn Saul and Jonathan. David used this style of Hebrew poetry to show how sad David was that Israel's enemies had killed Israel's king and the king's son. David also instructed the people of Judah to learn the song so they could honor Saul and Jonathan.

Sometime after David sang his song of lament, David asks Yahweh about where David should go next. David had been staying in the town of Ziklag. We do not know exactly how David asks Yahweh, but David probably asks the priest to use the sacred lots or asks a prophet to help David communicate with Yahweh. The sacred lots were objects called the Urim and Thummim. We do not know what these objects looked like or how many there were, but we know they were small because priests kept the objects in the pockets of their clothing. When someone wanted Yahweh to answer a question, the priest would cast or throw the objects. We do not know exactly how the priest knew what Yahweh's answer was, but we know Yahweh communicated to people through the sacred lots.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What rituals or methods do people use to communicate with gods in your culture? Pause this audio here.

David asks Yahweh whether David should go up to one of the towns of Judah. To go up may mean to walk up a hill to a town, or it may mean to take over or take charge of. Yahweh agrees that David should go. So David asks Yahweh, "Which town should I go up to?" Yahweh tells David that David should go to Hebron. Hebron was a city in the southern hill country of Judah. Hebron was about 30 kilometers southwest of Jerusalem. Hebron was an important city where Abraham, the first ancestor of the Israelites, had lived and where Abraham and Jacob were buried. Hebron was also on a hill and was higher than the other areas around it, so it would have been an easy place to defend from enemies.

Stop here and look at a map of Ziklag and Hebron as a group. Pause this audio here.

So David goes up to Hebron with his two wives. One of David's wives was Ahinoam from the city of Jezreel in the hill country of Judah. David's other wife was Abigail from the city of Carmel. You will remember that Carmel belonged to the tribe of Judah. Abigail had been married to a man named Nabal, but when Nabal died, David married Abigail.

David also takes his men with David to Hebron. These men support David and have fought with David against enemies. The men bring their wives and families, and they all begin to live in the villages around Hebron.

Then the men of Judah come to Hebron. These men are probably the elders in charge of the house of Judah. Elders were people with authority in the community. The house of Judah, or the tribe of Judah, refers to the people who were descendants of Judah, the fourth son of Jacob. The people from the house of Judah lived in the southern part of Israel. These people were probably part of Saul's kingdom until Saul died. The men anoint David to be king over the house of Judah. To anoint someone means to pour olive oil on his head to show that he would be the next king.

Stop here and look at the map that shows the territory that belongs to the tribe of Judah, the city of Hebron, and the city of Jabesh-Gilead. Pause this audio here.

Someone tells David that the men from Jabesh-Gilead buried Saul. Jabesh-Gilead was a city in the north-eastern part of Israel. The people in Jabesh-Gilead were Israelites, but they were not from the house of Judah. You will remember from a previous passage that, after Saul died, the Philistines mistreated his body and did not bury

Saul. The Israelite men from Jabesh-Gilead took Saul's body from the Philistines and buried Saul. In ancient Israel, people had to bury a dead body in order to show respect to the person who had died. The men of Jabesh-Gilead showed respect and loyalty to Saul by burying him.

^ When David hears this news, David sends messengers to the people of Jabesh-Gilead. David thanks the people of Jabesh-Gilead for showing love to Saul by taking care of Saul's body. David then asks Yahweh to bless the men for what they have done, and David promises to be good to the men of Jabesh-Gilead himself. David encourages the men from Jabesh-Gilead to continue to be brave and strong. Even though Saul died, the men of Judah anointed David as king, so the men of Jabesh-Gilead can be brave.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: David asks Yahweh if David should move back to one of the towns in Judah. When Yahweh answers yes, David asks Yahweh where David should go. Yahweh responds by telling David to move to Hebron.

In the second scene: David moves to Hebron with his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail from Carmel. David's men also move to the villages surrounding Hebron with their wives and families. Then the men from the house of Judah come to anoint David to be king over the house of Judah.

In the third scene: Someone tells David that the men from Jabesh-Gilead buried Saul. David sends the men a message asking Yahweh to bless the men for their faithful love to Saul. David asks Yahweh to show the men kindness and faithfulness, and David promises to show the men goodness. David asks the men to be brave and strong now that Saul is dead, and the men of Judah have anointed David to be king.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Yahweh
- Ahinoam and Abigail, David's wives
- David's men
- Men of the tribe of Judah
- And men from Jabesh-Gilead

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one, David inquires of Yahweh. To inquire of someone means to ask someone a specific question. We do not know exactly how David inquired of Yahweh, but David probably used sacred lots and a priest. David asks Yahweh, "Should I go up to one of the towns of Judah?" You will remember from a previous passage that David has been living in Ziklag. Ziklag is a city that is not on a hill like the towns of Judah. Cities that people built on hills were easier to defend from enemies. This is probably why David asks Yahweh if David should go up to a town in Judah. David may also be asking Yahweh if David should take control of a town. Yahweh answers David and says, "Go up." David again asks Yahweh, "Where should I go?" Yahweh tells David to go up to Hebron, a city that people had built on a hill.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a person who talks with a god in your culture. How will you describe how David communicated with Yahweh? Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, David takes his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail from Carmel, and they move to Hebron. Abigail had been married to Nabal, but now Abigail is married to David. David's men and their families move along with David. The men and their families settle in the villages around Hebron.

After David and his men move, the men of Judah come to David. These men are probably the elders who were in charge of the tribe of Judah. These men come to anoint David to be the next king of the house of Judah. The house of Judah is a way to say the tribe of Judah. The elders want to anoint David to be king over just the tribe of Judah. Right now, David will not be king over any other tribes. The men probably anointed David by pouring oil on David's head to prepare him to become king.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your culture, how do you describe things people do to prepare for a new leader? Pause this audio here.

In scene three, someone tells David that the men from the town of Jabesh-Gilead buried Saul. David sends messengers to the men of Jabesh-Gilead. David thanks the people of Jabesh-Gilead for showing steadfast love to Saul by taking care of Saul's body. To show steadfast love means the men from Jabesh-Gilead cared for Saul in all kinds of circumstances. This is also the way Yahweh loves people. You will remember that the men of Jabesh-Gilead buried Saul when they took Saul's bones, dug a hole in the ground, and put Saul's bones in the hole. People buried the bodies of people who had died to show respect and honor. David then asks Yahweh to bless the men for what they have done and promises to be good to the men himself. David encourages the men from Jabesh-Gilead to continue to be brave and strong. Even though Saul died, the men of Judah anointed David as king, so the men of Jabesh-Gilead can be brave.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story where one person shows steadfast love to another person. What words help you talk about faithful love? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do people in your culture show respect and honor to the bodies of people who have died? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Yahweh
- Ahinoam and Abigail, David's wives
- David's men
- Men of the tribe of Judah
- And men from Jabesh-Gilead

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

After singing his lament, David asks Yahweh if David should move back to a town in Judah. Yahweh tells David that David should move to Judah. David asks which town he should go to, and Yahweh tells David to go up to Hebron.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel happy to move back to a town in Judah; or
- I feel sad that Saul is dead, but I feel excited to obey Yahweh and to move back to Judah; or
- I am glad to move to Hebron because it is on a hill, and we will be able to defend ourselves better from enemies.

Continue the drama.

David and his two wives, Ahinoam from Jezreel and Abigail from Carmel, move to Hebron. David also commands his men to move to Hebron. David's men move to the villages surrounding Hebron with their wives and families.

After David and his men move, the men from the house of Judah come to Hebron. These men anoint David as king over the house or tribe of Judah.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing David's men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We feel happy to move with our leader to a better city; or
- We are ready to support David as our next king!

Ask the people playing the men from the house of Judah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We recognize that Yahweh has called David to be our next king; or
- We want to support David as quickly as possible because we know that David will reign over us.

Continue the drama.

Then, someone tells David that the men from the town of Jabesh-Gilead buried Saul's body after the battle on Mount Gilboa. David sends messengers to the men of Jabesh-Gilead. David's message tells them, "May the Lord bless you for showing this steadfast love to Saul, your master, by burying him. Now may the Lord show you steadfast love and faithfulness, and I will also show you goodness because you have done it. From now on, show yourselves to be strong and brave. Although Saul, your master, is dead, the men of Judah anointed me as king over them."

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the men from Jabesh-Gilead, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We feel grateful for David's leadership; or
- We feel great love for Saul, but we also love David and trust David.

Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I know these men showed faithful love to Saul, and I trust these men will love me too; or
- I am confident that Yahweh will help me to rule these people well.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

After David lamented over Saul and Jonathan, David asked **Yahweh** if David should go up to a town in Judah. Yahweh is a personal name for God that shows the close relationship God had with the people of Israel. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

Yahweh told David to go up to a town in Judah. Judah was the land that Yahweh gave to the tribe of Judah. This land was in the southern part of Israel. People called the people who lived in this land "the house of Judah" or "the tribe of Judah."

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **Judah** and **the house of Judah**. See the Master Glossary for more information about Judah. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David went up to the town of Hebron with David's two wives, his men, and their wives and households. Hebron was a special town to the Israelites. Abraham had lived in Hebron for a long time. A household means all the people who are living together in one house.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Hebron** and for **household**. Look up Hebron and household in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

One of the wives David went to Hebron with was Abigail. Abigail was a widow, which means she had been married before, but her previous husband died.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **widow**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase that you already used. Pause this audio here.

Then the men of the house of Judah anointed David to be king over the house of Judah. To anoint someone means to pour sweet-smelling oil on his head. This showed that Yahweh had set that person aside with special authority for a special task.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **anoint** and **king**. Look up anoint and king in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

When someone told David that the men from Jabesh-Gilead had buried Saul's body, David sent a messenger to the men. David asked Yahweh to bless the men for showing steadfast love to Saul. When someone blesses someone else, they are wishing for good things to happen to that person. To show steadfast, or faithful love, means the men from Jabesh-Gilead cared for Saul in all kinds of circumstances. This is the way Yahweh loves people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **bless** and **steadfast love**. Look up bless and steadfast love in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David asks Yahweh to now show steadfast love and faithfulness to the men of Jabesh-Gilead. When someone is faithful to another person, they are trustworthy, and they always act in the same good way in every circumstance. You can believe what a faithful person tells you.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate that David asks Yahweh to be faithful to the men of Jabesh-Gilead.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 2:1–7

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (14119081 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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2 Samuel 2:8–11

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 2:8–11 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:8–11 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:8–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, Yahweh told David and David's men and their families to move to Hebron, a town in Judah, the southern part of Israel. The men from the house of Judah anointed David to be king over Judah. Someone also told David that the men from Jabesh-Gilead had buried Saul, and David sent messengers to bless and encourage those men.

Meanwhile, Abner had brought Saul's son Ish-Bosheth to the city of Mahanaim. Abner's father was Ner, and Saul's father was Kish. So, Abner was probably Saul's cousin. Abner was also the commander of Saul's army, so Abner had a lot of experience with fighting battles. Ish-Bosheth was Saul's fourth son. Some Bible translations use the name Ish-Bosheth, which means "son of shame." Some translations use the original name Eshbaal, which means "son of Baal." People in Canaan used the name Baal to mean a god or something that people worship. Israelites sometimes put the name Baal into Israelite names. At the time of the storyteller, the Israelites had decided that it was wrong and shameful to use Baal in a name and changed Baal to Bosheth. In the original language of this book of the Bible, "Bosheth" means man of shame. When Ish-Bosheth was alive, people called him Ish-Baal.

Abner probably brought Ish-Bosheth over the Jordan River to Mahanaim, which means "camps." This town may have been located about 11 kilometers east of the Jordan River at a site close to the Jabbock River in the region of Gilead. This was far away from the area that the Philistines had just conquered when they defeated Israel on Mount Gilboa. We do not know if Abner and Ish-Bosheth fought with Saul and Jonathan on Mount Gilboa. Abner and Ish-Bosheth either avoided the battle or survived it.

Stop here and look at a map of Mahanaim, Gilead, and Mount Gilboa. Pause this audio here.

At some point in time, Abner makes Ish-Bosheth king over Israel. We do not know if anyone else was present when Abner made Ish-Bosheth king. We also do not know how Abner made Ish-Bosheth king.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about someone who becomes a ruler of a country. How do people decide who becomes the next king in your culture? What actions or ceremonies do people do when they want to make someone king or ruler? Pause this audio here.

Ish-Bosheth's kingdom included the regions of Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin. The people who lived in these regions were members of the tribes of Israel. The region of Gilead also included the town of Jabesh-Gilead. In a previous story, you learned that men from Jabesh-Gilead buried Saul's body after Saul died. David sent a messenger to bless the men from Jabesh-Gilead. We are not sure where Asher was located. Jezreel was a valley between Galilee and Samaria that also included the town of Jezreel. Ephraim and Benjamin refer to the territory of the people who belonged to these tribes of Israel. Even though Abner declared Ish-Bosheth king over all this territory, Ish-Bosheth probably only ruled the area on the east side of the Jordan River. Because the Philistines had defeated Israel and killed King Saul, the Philistines probably ruled over the hill country of Israel, which was on the west side of the Jordan River or the other side of the river from Ish-Bosheth's kingdom.

Stop here and look at a map that contains Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, Benjamin, and the hill country of Israel. Pause this audio here.

Saul's son Ish-Bosheth was 40 years old when Abner made him king over Israel. Ish-Bosheth reigned over Israel for two years. We do not know if Abner made Ish-Bosheth king over Israel right after Saul died, or if Abner waited a few years to make Ish-Bosheth king.

The people of the house or tribe of Judah, however, accepted David as their king. The tribe of Judah was part of Israel, and this tribe was David's tribe. Ish-Bosheth probably ruled over Israel at the same time that David ruled over Judah, but we are not sure if the two years Ish-Bosheth ruled were at the beginning or the end of David's reign over Judah. While David lived in Hebron, David ruled over the tribe of Judah for seven and one-half years.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How long do people typically rule over a country in your culture?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:8–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two scenes.

In the first scene: While David moved to Hebron as the king over Judah, Abner had brought Ish-Bosheth east over the Jordan River to Mahanaim. Abner makes Ish-Bosheth king over the part of Israel that was east of the Jordan River.

In the second scene: Ish-Bosheth was 40 years old when Abner made him king, and Ish-Bosheth ruled over Israel for two years. However, the tribe of Judah supported David as their king. David ruled over Judah from Hebron for seven and one-half years.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abner
- Ish-Bosheth
- People of Judah
- And David

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one, at about the same time that the tribe of Judah anoints David to be their king, Abner brings Ish-Bosheth, Saul's fourth son, over to the town of Mahanaim. Abner probably brought Ish-Bosheth over the Jordan River. Abner was a member of Saul's family and was probably one of Saul's cousins. Abner was also the commander of Saul's army, so Abner knew Saul's soldiers. Saul's soldiers probably trusted Abner to lead them well. We do not know if Abner and Ish-Bosheth fought in the battle on Mount Gilboa, where Saul died.

We do not know exactly when Abner brings Ish-Bosheth over the Jordan River and makes him king. We know this happens at about the same time that the people in Judah anoint David to be their king, but we are not sure if Abner made Ish-Bosheth king right away. Abner makes Ish-Bosheth king over all of Israel, which includes the land to the north and east of Judah. Ish-Bosheth's kingdom includes the regions of Gilead and Jezreel. Ish-Bosheth also rules over the regions that include the land belonging to the tribes of Ephraim, Asher, and Benjamin. However, because the Philistines had just defeated the Israelites, the Philistines ruled over some of the land that belonged to Ish-Bosheth's kingdom.

Stop here and discuss as a group: This passage takes place at about the same time as the previous passage. How will you help your audience understand the timing of both events? Pause this audio here.

In scene two, Ish-Bosheth was 40 years old when Abner made him king. Ish-Bosheth ruled over Israel for two years. The author wrote this part of the passage in a way that would make people recognize that Ish-Bosheth was a king. In other stories in the Bible, authors describe kings by saying how old a king was when they began to rule and then how many years that king ruled.

Stop here and discuss as a group: This was a common way to describe kings in Israel. How do people talk about or describe rulers in your culture? Pause this audio here.

However, the people of Judah recognized David as their king. David ruled over the tribe of Judah from Hebron for seven and one-half years.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:8–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abner
- Ish-Bosheth
- People of Judah
- And David

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

At around the same time that the people of Judah anoint David to be their king, Abner brings Ish-Bosheth over to Mahanaim. Abner was the commander of Saul's army, and Ish-Bosheth was Saul's fourth son. Abner made Ish-Bosheth king over all of Israel. Ish-Bosheth's kingdom included the regions of Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abner, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Since I cannot be the next king, I am confident that Saul's son should rule Israel now that Saul has died; or
- I know Saul did not want David to be the next king, so I will make sure Saul's son will rule next; or
- I want to show that I am loyal to Saul by making Saul's son the next king.

Continue the drama.

Ish-Bosheth was 40 years old when he began to rule over all Israel. Ish-Bosheth ruled over Israel for two years. The tribe of Judah, however, recognized David as their king.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ish-Bosheth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am sad that my father, Saul, and brother, Jonathan, are dead, and I want to make sure our family continues to rule over Israel; or
- I am afraid David will try to take over Israel and fight with me for control over the country.

Continue the drama.

David ruled over Judah from the city of Hebron for seven and one-half years.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am confident that Yahweh will make me king over Israel in the future; or
- I am sad that Ish-Bosheth and Abner do not want me to be king.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:8–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Abner, the commander of Saul's army, brings Saul's son Ish-Bosheth over to the city of Mahanaim. A commander is a person who is responsible for a large number of soldiers in an army. In this case, Abner is in charge of the entire army of Israel.

Stop here and discuss as a group what title you will use for Abner, the **commander** of Saul's army. Use the same word or phrase that you have used in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

In the city of Mahanaim, Abner makes Ish-Bosheth **king** over Israel. Some translations use the name Ish-Bosheth, but some use the name Eshbaal. You may decide to use either name in your translation, but make sure you are consistent and use the same name each time you talk about this person. A king is someone who rules over a city or a territory, like a region or a country. Use the same word or phrase for king as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group which name you will use, **Ish-Bosheth** or **Eshbaal**. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Abner makes Ish-Bosheth king over all **Israel**, including the regions of Gilead, Asher, Jezreel, Ephraim, and Benjamin. Israel is the name of the territory where the Israelites lived. Sometimes the word Israel refers to the entire land, or the territory, where the Israelites lived. But here the word Israel refers only to the northern part of that territory. Use the same word or phrase for Israel as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

Ish-Bosheth was 40 years old when Abner made him king over Israel, and Ish-Bosheth reigned over Israel for two years. A king reigns or rules over the people of a country. However, the **house of Judah** recognized David as their king. The house of Judah is a way to talk about the people who belonged to the tribe of Judah. Use the same word or phrase for "house of Judah" as you used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Judah. David ruled over the house of Judah from the city of Hebron for seven and one-half years.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 2:8–11

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (11427622 KB)

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2 Samuel 2:12–17

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 2:12–17 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:12–17 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:12–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, Abner, the commander of Saul's army, took Saul's son Ish-Bosheth to the city of Mahanaim and proclaimed him king over all of Israel. Ish-Bosheth ruled over Israel for two years. At about the same time, David ruled over Judah from the city of Hebron for seven and one-half years.

In this story, Abner leaves the city of Mahanaim with Ish-Bosheth's soldiers. The men travel to the city of Gibeon. Gibeon was a large and important city located about 10 kilometers northwest of Jerusalem in the land Yahweh had given to the tribe of Benjamin. People worshiped Yahweh in the city of Gibeon. Abner probably leads the soldiers to Gibeon to make sure the people there support Ish-Bosheth as king of Israel.

At about the same time, Joab leads David's soldiers to march out ready for battle. Joab's mother was Zeruiah, who was David's sister. David's soldiers probably marched out of Hebron, the city where David ruled over the tribe of Judah. The soldiers with Abner and the soldiers with Joab meet at the pool of Gibeon. The pool of Gibeon was probably a large reservoir for storing water that people cut out of stone. Abner and his soldiers sit on one side of the pool, and Joab and his soldiers sit on the other side of the pool. The two groups of soldiers are probably about 11 meters apart.

Stop here and look at a map as a group. Locate Mahanaim, Hebron, Jerusalem, and Gibeon. Pause this audio here.

Look at a picture of a water reservoir made of stone. Pause this audio here.

Abner tells Joab that they should choose a few of the best soldiers from each army to fight with swords in front of everyone else. This means that a few of the most experienced soldiers would fight against each other with swords in a competition. The other soldiers would watch. The soldiers probably used short swords or daggers in this competition. The soldiers would fight in pairs against each other until one soldier killed the other soldier. Abner may have suggested this competition to try to avoid a war between Ish-Bosheth's and David's soldiers. Joab agrees with Abner.

Stop here and look at a picture of a short sword or dagger. Pause this audio here.

So, 12 experienced soldiers stand up from each side of the pool. Other men count the soldiers to make sure both sides have the same number of fighters. The 24 soldiers line up across from one another. We do not know exactly where the men fought, but we know it was a nearby field.

The 24 soldiers begin to fight. At the same time, each soldier grabs his opponent by the hair and thrusts his sword into the opponent's side. Every single soldier in the 12 pairs dies at the same time. That is why people call this place the "Field of Blades" or "Field of Swords." No one wins this fighting competition.

Then, both entire groups of soldiers begin to fight against one another. The men fight very hard all day long. At the end, David's soldiers defeat Abner and the soldiers of Israel.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:12-17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: Abner leads Ish-Bosheth's soldiers from Mahanaim to Gibeon. Joab also leads David's soldiers to Gibeon. The two groups of soldiers meet at the pool of Gibeon. The soldiers sit on opposite sides of the pool.

In the second scene: Abner tells Joab that, instead of all the soldiers fighting in a big battle, a few soldiers from each side should fight one another hand-to-hand, using swords, in a competition. Twelve experienced soldiers from each side stand up to fight. The men face each other and prepare to fight.

In the third scene: At the same time, each of the 24 soldiers grabs his opponent by the hair and thrusts his sword into the man's side. All of the 24 soldiers die at the same time. All of the soldiers who are left begin to fight a fierce battle. David's soldiers defeat Ish-Bosheth's soldiers.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abner
- Ish-Bosheth's soldiers
- Joab
- David's soldiers
- And 24 soldiers who fight in hand-to-hand combat (12 from Ish-Bosheth and 12 from David)

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one, Abner leads soldiers who are loyal to Ish-Bosheth from the city of Mahanaim to the city of Gibeon. Abner's father was Ner, so Abner was probably Saul's cousin. Abner was also the commander of Saul's army. You remember from the previous passage that Abner had proclaimed Ish-Bosheth to be king over all Israel, but Ish-Bosheth was really only king over a small part of Israel, which included the land that belonged to the tribe of Benjamin. Gibeon was a large, important city in the territory of Benjamin. Abner probably led the soldiers to Gibeon because he wanted to make sure the people of Gibeon supported Ish-Bosheth as their king.

At about the same time, Joab leads David's soldiers out ready for battle. Joab probably leads the soldiers out of Hebron, where David ruled over the tribe of Judah. Joab's mother was Zeruiah, who was David's sister. Joab leads the soldiers to Gibeon. Abner and Joab and their soldiers meet at the pool of Gibeon. People probably carved the pool of Gibeon out of stone and used it to store water. The pool may have been around 11 meters wide. Abner and his soldiers sat on one side of the pool, and Joab and his soldiers sat on the other side of the pool.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In the previous story, you learned that Ish-Bosheth was king over Israel at the same time that David was king over Judah. This story takes place during that time. How will you make sure your audience understands the timing of this passage? Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, Abner calls to Joab across the pool, "We should have a few of our soldiers fight hand-to-hand in front of us." To fight hand-to-hand means that a pair of experienced soldiers, one from each side, would fight with short swords or daggers in a competition, and the winner would determine the outcome of the battle. These men would fight until they killed their opponent. Abner may have suggested this type of competition to avoid starting a war between the Israelites who followed Ish-Bosheth and the Israelites who followed David. Joab agrees with Abner.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about soldiers fighting hand-to-hand in a competition. Pause this audio here.

Each side counts 12 experienced soldiers, and these soldiers stand up. The 24 soldiers face each other and prepare to fight. The experienced soldiers form pairs, one soldier from Ish-Bosheth's men facing one soldier from David's men. There are 12 pairs of soldiers facing each other.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about two groups of people who both want to lead, but only one group can lead. How do people in your culture decide who will be the leader? Pause this audio here.

In scene three, the 12 pairs of soldiers begin to fight all at the same time. Each of the soldiers grabs his opponent by the hair and thrusts his sword into his opponent's side. Because this happened all at the same time, each pair of soldiers fell down together, and each pair died. All of the 24 experienced soldiers who fought died at the same time. No one was left alive to win the competition. This is why people call this place Helkath Hazzurim, which means the "Field of Blades" or "Field of Swords."

Right away, the rest of the soldiers who had watched the competition begin to fight. The soldiers fight fiercely all day long. At the end of the battle, David's soldiers defeat Ish-Bosheth's soldiers.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a battle or competition that did not go the way people expected. Pay attention to what words you use to show that the outcome of the battle was surprising. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:12–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abner
- Ish-Bosheth's soldiers
- Joab
- David's soldiers
- And 24 soldiers who fight in hand-to-hand combat (12 from Ish-Bosheth and 12 from David)

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Abner leads Ish-Bosheth's soldiers from the city of Mahanaim to the city of Gibeon. At about the same time, Joab leads David's soldiers to Gibeon. The two groups meet at the pool of Gibeon, and they sit down on opposite sides of the pool.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abner, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel confident that we can defeat David's soldiers; or
- I feel anxious and want to make sure that the people in this important city will support Ish-Bosheth instead of supporting David.

Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I know that we will defeat Ish-Bosheth's soldiers because David is the true king; or
- I feel hopeful that the people of Gibeon will choose to support David as their king.

Continue the drama.

Abner calls across the pool to Joab, "We should have some experienced soldiers fight hand-to-hand in front of us in a competition." Joab agrees with Abner. On each side of the pool, the men count 12 experienced soldiers, and the experienced soldiers stand up. The soldiers stand in pairs facing each other.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the 24 experienced soldiers who fight, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- I am confident that I can kill the man across from me; or
- I am a little afraid that I may not be a good enough fighter to kill my opponent; or
- I am honored to fight for the king I support; or
- I feel nervous to fight in front of all these other soldiers who are counting on me.

Continue the drama.

The experienced soldiers begin to fight. Each soldier grabs his opponent by the hair and thrusts his sword into the opponent's side. Every pair of soldiers falls down together, and every one of the 24 experienced soldiers dies at the same time. For this reason, people call that place the "Field of Swords." When the soldiers who are sitting at the pool realize that no one has won the competition, they begin to fight fiercely. The battle lasts all day, and when it ends, David's soldiers defeat Ish-Bosheth's soldiers.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing Ish-Bosheth's soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are afraid that Ish-Bosheth will not rule over Israel for very long; or
- We fight as hard as we can to honor our fellow soldiers and our king.

Ask the people playing David's soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We know Yahweh has already chosen David to be king, so we will fight as hard as we can; or
- We feel confident that we can continue to defeat the soldiers who follow Ish-Bosheth.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:12–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Abner leads Ish-Bosheth's soldiers from Mahanaim to Gibeon. At the same time, Joab leads David's soldiers to Gibeon. Yahweh had anointed David to be king of Israel after Saul.

Abner and Joab lead their soldiers to meet at the pool of Gibeon, and they sit on opposite sides of the pool. The pool of Gibeon was a large reservoir that people cut out of stone and used to store water.

Stop here and look at a picture of a water reservoir that people made of stone. Discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **pool of Gibeon**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Abner tells Joab that they should each choose a few experienced soldiers to fight hand-to-hand in a fighting competition. This means that a pair of soldiers, one from each side, would fight with swords, and the winner would determine the outcome of the battle. The swords these soldiers used were probably short swords or daggers.

Stop here and look at a picture of a short sword or dagger. Use the same word or phrase for **sword** or **dagger** as you used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

Joab agrees to the competition, and 12 men from each side form pairs to fight. At the same time, each soldier grabs his opponent by the hair and thrusts his sword into the opponent's side. All the men die at the same time, and no one wins the competition. People call the place where the men fought Helkath Hazzurim, or the "Field of Swords." The rest of the soldiers begin to fight fiercely, but in the end, David's soldiers defeat Abner and the **Israelites**. The word Israelites refers to all the people descended from Jacob, but in this passage, "the Israelites" means the people who follow Ish-Bosheth as their king. Use the same word or phrase for Israelites as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israelites, refer to the Master Glossary.

The storyteller sometimes calls Ish-Bosheth's and David's soldiers "servants." These men were not servants who served Ish-Bosheth and David in their households, but men who served Ish-Bosheth and David by being soldiers and fighting for them in their armies. You may use the term soldiers or servants here. If you use the word for servants, refer to the Master Glossary for more information about servants.

Stop here and discuss as a group when you will use the word **servants** and when you will use the word **soldiers** in this story.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 2:12–17

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12108348 KB)

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2 Samuel 2:18–3:1

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 2:18–3:1 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:18–3:1 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:18–3:1 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, Abner and Joab and their soldiers met at the pool of Gibeon. Each side chose 12 experienced soldiers to participate in hand-to-hand fighting, but those soldiers all killed each other. The rest of the soldiers in the two armies fought fiercely, and David's soldiers defeated Ish-Bosheth's soldiers.

This story happens during the fierce battle between the two armies. The three sons of Zeruiah, David's sister, fight as part of David's soldiers. These sons are Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Joab commanded David's soldiers in this battle. Because Asahel's name is last in the list of brothers, Asahel was probably the youngest brother and had less experience in battle. Asahel was swift of foot, which means he could run very fast. The author says that Asahel could run as fast as a wild gazelle. A gazelle is a type of antelope that is fast and graceful.

Stop here and look at a picture of a gazelle, as a group. Pause this audio here.

Asahel chases Abner. Abner had commanded Saul's soldiers and now leads Ish-Bosheth's soldiers. Asahel focuses on chasing Abner and does not turn to the right or to the left. This means that Asahel was not distracted by any other soldiers or fighting. Asahel only chases Abner.

Abner looks behind him as the two men are running and asks if the soldier chasing Abner is Asahel. Asahel confirms that he is Asahel. Abner tells Asahel to change direction and to stop chasing Abner. Abner says to go chase another soldier to take that soldier's clothing and supplies. During war, soldiers would take valuable clothing and supplies from other soldiers. Asahel refuses to stop chasing Abner.

Again, Abner tells Asahel to stop chasing Abner. Abner says to Asahel, "Stop chasing me, or I will have to kill you! Then I will never be able to look at the face of your brother, Joab, again!" Abner did not want to kill Joab's brother. Abner may have been afraid of Joab. Or, Abner may not have wanted to make the war between the two parts of Israel even worse by killing the commander's brother. But Abner believes that, if Asahel does not stop chasing him, Abner will have no choice but to kill Asahel.

Still, Asahel continues to chase Abner. Abner suddenly stops running and thrusts the end of his spear that was not very sharp into Asahel's stomach. The end of a spear that is not sharp is called the butt of the spear. A spear is a weapon with a long shaft with one pointed tip made of metal. People used a spear for throwing and thrusting. The end of the spear that was not sharp may have been slightly pointed so it could stick in the ground. Abner thrusts the spear at Asahel so strongly that the spear goes all the way through Asahel's stomach and comes out his back. Abner probably did not mean to kill Asahel because he did not run toward Asahel with the sharp end of his spear. Abner may have wanted to stun Asahel so that Asahel would stop chasing Abner. Immediately, Asahel falls down and dies. The rest of the soldiers who see Asahel's body are stunned, or very surprised, so they stop next to Asahel's body.

Stop here and look at a picture of a spear as a group. Pause this audio here.

Discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about someone who experiences an event that surprises them. How does that person react? Pause this audio here.

But Joab and Abishai, Asahel's brothers, continue to chase Abner. Joab and Abishai probably take other soldiers with them as they chase Abner. As the sun begins to set, these men come to the hill of Ammah, near Giah, on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon. The wilderness is an area that has few plants or trees and little water. We are not sure exactly where the hill of Ammah or Giah were located.

Stop here and look at a picture of a wilderness as a group. Also, look at a map that includes the city of Gibeon. The hill of Ammah and Giah were located in the wilderness outside Gibeon. Pause this audio here.

The soldiers of Israel, who are mostly from the tribe of Benjamin, stand very close together around Abner. They stand on top of a hill, ready to defend themselves. A hill is where the land naturally rises up. A hill is smaller than a mountain. Joab and Abishai also stop with their soldiers in a separate place.

Abner yells to Joab that to continue fighting forever is not wise. Abner then reminds Joab that all the fighting can only end badly. Abner asks Joab, "How long before you tell your soldiers to stop pursuing us? We are your relatives." Abner and his soldiers and Joab and his soldiers are all descendants of Jacob, so they are distant relatives. Abner says this because he hopes that Joab will stop fighting.

Joab promises something in the strongest possible way. Joab strongly promises before God that if Abner had not said anything, Joab and his men would have continued chasing Abner and his men all night until the morning. Joab means that what he says is an oath before Yahweh. If Abner had not asked Joab to stop the battle, it would have continued on into the next day.

Joab blew the horn, so Joab's soldiers stopped chasing their enemies. This horn was probably a ram's horn, and people used it to communicate the end of the battle.

Stop here and look at a picture of a horn for the battlefield. Discuss as a group: How do army commanders in your culture communicate with soldiers during a battle? Pause this audio here.

All that night, Abner leads his soldiers through the Arabah or Jordan River Valley between the Sea of Galilee and the Dead Sea. They cross the Jordan River and continue marching all morning long until they reach the city of Mahanaim.

Joab gathers all his soldiers together. Armies often gathered together after a battle to count how many soldiers died during the battle. If you do not include Asahel, 19 of David's soldiers died in the battle. But David's soldiers killed 360 of the soldiers who fought with Abner. Joab and his soldiers take Asahel's body to the tomb where people buried Asahel's father in the city of Bethlehem. A tomb could be a natural hole in a rock, or it could be a hole that people cut out of a rock to bury people. People usually buried family members all together in the same tomb in their hometown. Then Joab and his soldiers march all night to Hebron and arrive just as the sun is rising.

Stop here as a group and look at a map that includes the Arabah, the Jordan River, Mahanaim, Gibeon, Bethlehem, and Hebron. Pause this audio here.

This battle is the beginning of a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. Someone's house refers to their family and other people who approve of and encourage that person. David's house grew stronger while Saul's house grew weaker. We do not know exactly how long this war lasted, but it may have been longer than the two years Ish-Bosheth ruled over Israel.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:18–3:1 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: David's three nephews, Joab, Abishai, and Asahel, fight with David's soldiers. Asahel can run quickly, and Asahel chases Abner away from the battle. Abner warns Asahel to stop chasing him, but Asahel refuses. Abner stops suddenly and thrusts out his spear, and Asahel runs into the spear and dies. The other soldiers who see Asahel's body stop running because they are surprised.

In the second scene: Joab and Abishai continue to chase Abner along with some of their soldiers. Just as the sun goes down, Abner stops on a hill, and his Benjaminite soldiers surround him. Joab and Abishai also stop. Abner asks Joab if they should continue to kill each other forever. This is not good—they are distant relatives. Joab agrees that the battle should end and blows his horn to stop Joab's soldiers from fighting.

In the third scene: Abner and his soldiers march all night and through the morning back to the city of Mahanaim. Joab gathers his army together and sees that, besides Asahel, 19 of his men have died. However, David's soldiers, who fought with Joab, killed 360 of Ish-Bosheth's soldiers, who fought with Abner.

In the fourth scene: Joab and David's soldiers take Asahel to Bethlehem to bury him near his father. Then Joab and David's soldiers march through the night to arrive at Hebron just as the sun rises. The war between Saul's and David's houses lasts a long time. David grows stronger while Saul's house grows weaker.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- Abishai
- Asahel
- Abner
- Soldiers who stopped at Asahel's body
- Benjaminite soldiers with Abner
- And soldiers with Joab and Abishai

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, we see three of David's nephews who fight with David's soldiers. These men are Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. David's sister Zeruiah is their mother. Joab is the commander of David's soldiers in this battle. Asahel was swift of foot, which means Asahel could run faster than many men. The storyteller compares the way Asahel runs to the way a gazelle runs. A gazelle is a type of antelope with horns that can run very quickly.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you say that Asahel could run very fast? Pause this audio here.

These three men fight with David's soldiers in the battle that the storyteller described in the last story. Even though the last story ends by saying that David's soldiers defeated Ish-Bosheth's soldiers, this story begins by talking about what happened during that battle, before David's soldiers defeated Ish-Bosheth's soldiers.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story in such a way that you tell the end or summary of the story, but then go back and describe more details from the story. Pay attention to what words you use to make the timing in your story clear. Pause this audio here.

Asahel begins to chase Abner away from the battle. Asahel does not turn to the right or the left as he runs after Abner. This means that Asahel is not distracted by the battle or by other soldiers. Asahel only chases Abner. As Abner runs, Abner looks back and asks if the person chasing him is Asahel, and Asahel confirms that he is Asahel. Abner yells back to Asahel, "Leave me alone! Go chase one of the other soldiers and take his supplies!" Yet Asahel refuses to stop chasing Abner.

Again, Abner warns Asahel to stop chasing him and says, "Stop chasing me, or I will have to kill you. Then I will never be able to look at the face of your brother Joab again." Abner knows that, if Asahel catches up to him, Abner will have to defend himself and will have to kill Asahel. If Abner kills Asahel, Abner will not be able to look at the face of Joab again. This is special language that means Abner will feel guilty when he is around Joab. Still, Asahel refuses to stop chasing Abner.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Abner speaks strongly to Asahel by giving him several warnings. What kinds of words or phrases could you use to communicate these strong warnings? What words or phrases could you use to describe Abner's feelings of guilt if he has to kill Asahel? Pause this audio here.

Suddenly, Abner stops running and thrusts the butt of his spear into Asahel as Asahel runs towards Abner. Because Asahel runs so fast, the spear hits Asahel in the stomach and goes out through his back. Immediately, Asahel falls down on the ground and dies. All the other soldiers who are also chasing Abner stop when they see Asahel's body because they are surprised. The soldiers are so surprised at Asahel's death that they stop moving temporarily.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about someone who is so surprised by something that he cannot move. What words or phrases can you use to talk about how the soldiers in this story suddenly stop running or moving? Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, when Joab and Abishai see that Asahel is dead, they keep chasing Abner. Joab and Abishai probably take some soldiers with them to fight against Abner and his soldiers. As the sun begins to set, all of the men come to the hill of Ammah near Giah on the way to the wilderness of Gibeon. Abner and his soldiers stop on top of the hill. Abner's soldiers, who are mostly from the tribe of Benjamin, surround Abner to defend him. Joab and Abishai also stop with their soldiers.

Abner shouts to Joab, "Must the sword devour, or eat us, forever?" Abner uses special language to ask if he and Joab, and their soldiers, should keep on killing each other forever without ending the battle. Abner continues to speak to Joab, saying, "Do you not realize this will end badly? When will your troops stop chasing us? We are your relatives!" Abner is asking Joab questions, but Abner does not actually expect Joab to answer his questions directly. Abner wants Joab to know that Abner is ready for the battle to end. Abner reminds Joab that David's soldiers and Ish-Bosheth's soldiers are distant relatives because they are all descendants of Jacob.

Joab yells back to Abner, "As God lives, if you had not said something, the soldiers would have kept chasing you until morning." Joab says "as God lives" to show that Joab is making a strong promise that he is telling the truth, with God or Yahweh as his witness. Joab promises that, if Abner had not asked for a break in the fighting, Joab's soldiers would have kept fighting all night. Joab blows his ram's horn, so all his soldiers stop chasing the soldiers of Israel and stop fighting.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What words do people use to show that they are making a strong promise that they are telling the truth? Pause this audio here.

In the third scene, Abner and his soldiers march all night through the Arabah, or Jordan River Valley. The Jordan River valley is the lower area of land around the Jordan River. The men cross the Jordan River and march all morning long until they arrive at the city of Mahanaim. This was the city where Ish-Bosheth lived as he ruled over Israel.

After the men stop chasing Abner, Joab gathers his army together to see how many of his men are still living. Joab sees that, besides Asahel, 19 of his men died in battle. But David's soldiers killed 360 of the soldiers from the tribe of Benjamin who fought with Abner.

In the fourth scene, Joab and his soldiers take Asahel's body to Bethlehem. This was the city where people had buried Asahel's father. Then Joab and the soldiers walk together as an army all night and arrive in the city of Hebron just as the sun comes up. We are not sure if the men arrived the next morning, but we know when they arrived in Hebron, it was morning. Hebron was the city where David lived as he ruled as king over Judah.

This battle was the beginning of a long war between the house of David and the house of Saul. To talk about the "house" of someone means to talk about someone's family or other people who approve of and encourage that person. David's house, or the group of people who followed David, grew stronger, while Saul's house continued to grow weaker.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a long fight between two groups of people. What words do you use to show the conflict between the two sides? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:18-3:1 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- Abishai
- Asahel
- Abner
- Soldiers who stopped at Asahel's body
- Benjaminite soldiers with Abner
- And soldiers with Joab and Abishai

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

During the battle, three of David's nephews fight alongside David's soldiers. These men are Joab, Abishai, and Asahel. Their mother was Zeruiah. Joab is the commander of David's soldiers in this battle. Asahel is a very fast runner, and during the battle, Asahel begins to chase Abner, the commander of Ish-Bosheth's soldiers. Asahel is determined to chase Abner and does not turn to the right or the left as he chases Abner. Abner turns as he runs and asks if the person who chases him is Asahel, and Asahel says yes. Then Abner says to Asahel, "Leave me alone! Go chase one of the other soldiers and take his supplies!" Yet Asahel still pursues Abner. Again, Abner warns Asahel to stop chasing him, saying, "Stop chasing me, or I will have to kill you. Then I will never be able to look at the face of your brother Joab again." Still, Asahel continues to pursue Abner.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abner, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am afraid Joab might kill me if I kill Asahel, but I feel helpless to do anything else if Asahel will not stop chasing me; or
- I feel angry that Asahel will not turn from me and chase someone else!

Ask the person playing Asahel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am determined to kill the enemy of my master, David! or
- I feel honored that I am able to chase Abner and maybe be the one to kill him!

Continue the drama.

Suddenly, Abner stops running and thrusts the butt of his spear into Asahel's stomach as Asahel runs. Because Asahel runs so fast, the spear hits Asahel's stomach and goes through him and out of his back. Immediately, Asahel dies and falls. All the soldiers who see Asahel's body are surprised and stop running and fighting.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Asahel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am shocked that Abner killed me this way! or
- I am sad that I could not help win this battle by capturing Abner.

Ask the people playing the soldiers who saw Asahel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are horrified that Asahel died in such a violent way; or
- We are scared because Asahel is an important soldier and relative of David. Now that Asahel is dead, perhaps we will lose this battle!"

Continue the drama.

However, Joab and Abishai continue to chase Abner along with some of David's soldiers. As the sun goes down, Abner runs to the hill of Ammah, near Giah on the way to the desert of Gibeon. Abner stops on the hill, and his soldiers, who are from the tribe of Benjamin, surround Abner and prepare to defend themselves. Joab and Abishai, and their soldiers, also stop.

Abner shouts to Joab, "Should we go on killing each other forever? Do you not realize this will end badly? When will your troops stop chasing us? We are your relatives." Joab yells back to Abner, "As God lives, if you had not said something, the soldiers would have kept chasing you until morning." Joab blows his horn, and Joab's soldiers stop chasing Abner and stop fighting against Abner's soldiers.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am weary of fighting, and I am ready to stop. I know that my soldiers have won victory over Abner and his soldiers, even though we will not kill Abner today; or
- I am sad that my brother Asahel is dead.

Ask the people playing the soldiers with Joab and Abishai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are certain we can win this battle and do not want to stop pursuing Abner! or
- We are glad Abner convinced Joab to stop fighting. We do not want to fight anymore.

Continue the drama.

Abner leads his soldiers through the Arabah, or Jordan River Valley, all night long. The men cross the Jordan River and then march all morning long until they reach the city of Mahanaim.

After his soldiers stop chasing Abner, Joab gathers his troops together. If they do not include Asahel, 19 of Joab's soldiers are missing. But David's soldiers killed 360 of the soldiers who fought with Abner, who were mostly from the tribe of Benjamin.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the Benjaminite soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are afraid of David's soldiers because they killed so many of us; or
- We are tired of fighting and are ready to go back to our homes.

Continue the drama.

Joab and his soldiers take Asahel's body to Bethlehem. The men want to bury Asahel in the place where people buried Asahel's father. Then the men march through the night and reach the city of Hebron just as the sun rises.

This battle was the beginning of a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. David continued to grow stronger, but Saul's house continued to grow weaker.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 2:18–3:1 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Joab, Abishai, and Asahel were three of David's nephews. Asahel was swift of foot like a gazelle. To be swift of foot means that Asahel could run very fast. Gazelles are animals like antelopes with horns. Gazelles move very quickly.

Stop here and look at a picture of a gazelle as a group. Discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **gazelle** and **swift of foot**. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

During the battle, Asahel chases Abner without turning to the right or to the left. This expression means that Asahel could not be distracted from chasing Abner.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **turn to the right or to the left**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Abner warns Asahel two times to stop chasing him, or Abner will have to kill Asahel. Yet Asahel continues to chase Abner. Suddenly, Abner stops and thrusts the blunt end of his **spear** into Asahel's stomach. The spear goes through Asahel, and he falls down and dies. A spear is a weapon with a long shaft and a pointed tip that people would throw. The blunt end of the spear, called the butt of the spear, may have been slightly pointed so soldiers could stick it in the ground when they were not using it. Use the same word for spear that you have used in previous passages.

Stop here and look at a picture of a spear as a group. Pause this audio here.

The soldiers who see Asahel's body stop chasing Abner because they are stunned, or so surprised that they temporarily cannot move. The soldiers stopped moving and stood still.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe how the soldiers suddenly came to a complete stop. Pause this audio here.

However, Joab and Abishai continue to pursue Abner. As the sun sets, they come to the hill of Ammah near Giah in the wilderness of Gibeon. A hill is a naturally raised area of land that is not as big as a mountain. A wilderness is a place with few plants or bushes and very little water.

Stop here and look at a picture of a wilderness as a group. Discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **hill** and **wilderness**. Look up wilderness in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Abner and his soldiers stop on a hill. The soldiers surround Abner to protect him. Joab and Abishai, and their soldiers, also stop. Abner shouts to Joab to ask if they will keep fighting forever, even though they are relatives. Joab responds by saying, "As God lives, if you had not said something, my soldiers would have kept fighting against you until morning." Joab uses the expression "As God lives" to show that Joab is making a promise that he is telling the truth in the sight of God, or Yahweh.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **as God lives**. Look up God in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

So Joab blew his horn, and all his soldiers stopped running after Abner and fighting with **Israel**. In this case, Israel refers to all the soldiers that Abner had with him. Use the same word for Israel as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Israel.

The horn was a small instrument that people usually made from a ram's horn. People used this horn on the battlefield to let soldiers know the battle was over. Soldiers would blow into this horn to make a loud noise. The noise would let the other soldiers know that the battle was over.

Stop here and look at a picture of a horn as a group. Discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **horn**. Look up horn in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

All night, Abner led his troops across the Arabah, or the Jordan River Valley. This was the lowland around the Jordan River that stretches from the Sea of Galilee to the Dead Sea. The men crossed the Jordan River and marched through the morning until they reached the city of Mahanaim. The Jordan River is a long river that runs through Israel from north to south.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Jordan River** and **Jordan River Valley**. Use the same word or phrase for Jordan River as you used in previous books of the Bible. For more information on Jordan River, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Joab gathered his soldiers together and found that, not including Asahel, 19 of Joab's soldiers died. However, Joab's soldiers killed 360 of Abner's soldiers in the battle. Joab and his soldiers take Asahel's body to Bethlehem so they can bury him in the tomb where people buried Asahel's father. Bethlehem was a small village in Israel where David was born. A tomb is the name for a place where people bury a dead person. People usually buried family members all together in a tomb in their hometown.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Bethlehem** and for **tomb**. Look up Bethlehem and tomb in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Joab and his soldiers then marched all night and arrived at the city of Hebron just as the sun rose. This battle was the beginning of a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. The house of someone refers to that person's family or those who support that person.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **house of Saul** or **house of David**. For more information about House of David, refer to "House of David" in the Master Glossary. If you have already translated these phrases in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 2:18–3:1

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 3:2–5

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 3:2–5 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:2–5 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:2–5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, David's nephew Asahel chased Abner, the commander of Ish-Bosheth's soldiers, during battle. Abner killed Asahel, and then Asahel's brothers, Joab and Abishai, chased Abner. Abner suggested that they all stop fighting, and Joab agreed, so each army returned to its city. This is the first battle of a long war between the house of Saul and the house of David. And David's house grew strong while Saul's house grew weak. You will remember that the houses of David and Saul were the family members and other people who followed David and Saul as king.

In this story, the storyteller stops telling the story of the war between David and Ish-Bosheth and lists the sons that David had while David ruled over Judah from the city of Hebron. David ruled in Hebron for seven and one-half years. The storyteller uses this information to help us understand that David's family grew larger while David ruled from Hebron. This list is in the middle of stories about the battles between David's soldiers and Ish-Bosheth's soldiers.

Stop here and look at a map that includes the city of Hebron. Pause this audio here.

David had sons with several wives while David lived in Hebron. This list does not include all of the children that David had with each of his wives. This list probably lists the first son that each of David's wives had while they lived in Hebron. This list may have helped the audience understand which of David's sons might become king when David died. Three of the sons on this list, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah, will claim to be the next king after David.

David's first son was Amnon. Amnon's mother was named Ahinoam. Ahinoam was from Jezreel. Jezreel was a valley south of Galilee and north of the hill country of Ephraim. David married Ahinoam while King Saul was still alive and chasing David. As David's first son, Amnon could have been the next king of Israel after David, but Amnon's brother Absalom will send servants to murder Amnon. We will learn about this story later in the book of 2 Samuel.

David's second son was named Kileab. Kileab's mother was named Abigail. You will remember from a previous story that Abigail was married to a man named Nabal. When Nabal died, David married Abigail. Abigail was from the town of Carmel, which was a city south of the city of Hebron. The Bible does not tell us anything else about Kileab.

David's third son was named Absalom. Absalom's mother was named Maakah. Maakah was the daughter of Talmi, who was the king of Geshur. Geshur was a small kingdom in Syria located northeast of the Sea of Galilee between Bashan and Hermon. This is not the same Geshur that David and his soldiers raided in a previous story. David may have married Maakah to make the region of Geshur his ally. We do not know anything else about Maakah, but we do know that Absalom will try to become the next king after David. However, someone will kill Absalom before Absalom can take David's place as king permanently. We will learn this story later in the book of 2 Samuel.

Stop here and look at a map as a group: Locate Hebron, Jezreel, Carmel, and Geshur. Pause this audio here.

David's fourth son was named Adonijah. Adonijah's name means "Yahweh is Lord, or Master." Adonijah's mother was named Haggith. The Bible does not tell us anything else about Haggith. In another book of the Bible, we will learn the story about Adonijah's attempt to become king after David. Adonijah does not succeed.

David's fifth son was named Shephatiah. Shephatiah's mother was named Abital. The Bible only tells us that Shephatiah fights as a warrior alongside his father, David. The Bible does not tell us anything else about Abital.

David's sixth son was named Ithream. Ithream's mother was named Eglah, and she was another one of David's wives. The Bible does not tell us anything else about Ithream or Eglah.

All of these women who had sons with David were David's wives. David had these six sons with his wives while they lived in Hebron. David probably married some of his wives as a way to make good relationships with the people around David.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:2-5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has one scene.

In the first scene: David had sons with his wives while David ruled over Judah from the city of Hebron. David's first son was Amnon, and Amnon's mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel. David's second son was Kileab, and Kileab's mother was Abigail, Nabal's widow from Carmel. David's third son was Absalom, whose mother was Maakah, the daughter of King Talmai of Geshur. David's fourth son was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith. David's fifth son was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital, and David's sixth son was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, another one of David's wives. David had all these sons with his wives while they lived in Hebron.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- David's sons born in Hebron: Amnon, Kileab, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream
- And David's wives in Hebron: Ahinoam, Abigail, Maakah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the scene, the storyteller pauses his story about the fighting between David and Ish-Bosheth to give us a list of David's wives and their firstborn sons. This list gives information about who was in David's family and how David's family continued to grow stronger.

David had sons with his wives while David ruled over Judah from the city of Hebron. The storyteller gives us this list in a pattern. The storyteller lists the birth order of David's son, the son's name, the mother's name, some information about the mother, and where the mother was born.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you make lists of people in your culture? Tell an example of a list of people, and pay attention to how you make that list. Do you use a certain order or pattern? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a long battle between two people and their families. In the middle of your story, stop and give more information, and then continue your story when you have finished giving information. Pay attention to the words you use that let your audience know you are telling a longer story with a break to give information in the middle. Pause this audio here.

David's first son was named Amnon. Amnon's mother was Ahinoam, and Ahinoam was from the valley of Jezreel. David married Ahinoam before David moved to Hebron, but Ahinoam did not have her son Amnon until they lived in Hebron.

David's second son was named Kileab. Kileab's mother was Abigail. In a previous story, Abigail's husband Nabal died, and David married Abigail. Abigail was from the town of Carmel. Because we do not hear about Kileab later when the other sons are trying to become king after David, Kileab probably died at a young age. In other parts of the Bible, lists of David's sons call Kileab by the name of Daniel. Therefore, Kileab may have two names.

David's third son was named Absalom. Absalom's mother was Maakah. Maakah was the daughter of King Talmai of Geshur.

David's fourth son was named Adonijah. Adonijah's mother was Haggith.

David's fifth son was named Shephatiah. Shephatiah's mother was Abital.

David's sixth son was named Ithream. Ithream's mother was Eglah, and Eglah was another one of David's wives.

All of these women who had sons were David's wives. David and his wives had these sons while they all lived in the city of Hebron. The storyteller ends the list with a statement similar to what he said at the beginning of the list.

Stop here and discuss as a group: The storyteller begins and ends this list with a similar statement, perhaps to let his audience know when he begins the list, and when he ends the list, in order to start the story again. How is this similar or different to the way you would show that the storyteller pauses the action of the story to give us a list? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:2-5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has one scene.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- David's sons born in Hebron: Amnon, Kileab, Absalom, Adonijah, Shephatiah, Ithream
- And David's wives in Hebron: Ahinoam, Abigail, Maakah, Haggith, Abital, Eglah

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The storyteller pauses the story of the fighting between David and Ish-Bosheth to give us a list of the six firstborn sons of David's six wives in Hebron. David's first son was named Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam. Ahinoam was from the valley of Jezreel. David's second son was named Kileab, whose mother was Abigail. Before Abigail married David, Abigail was married to Nabal. David married Abigail after Nabal died. Abigail was from the town of Carmel. David's third son was named Absalom, whose mother was Maakah. Maakah was from Geshur, and her father was King Talmi of Geshur.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy that Yahweh gave me so many sons to strengthen my family; or
- I feel hopeful that my strong family will help me rule over all of Israel.

Continue the drama.

David's fourth son was named Adonijah. Adonijah's mother was named Haggith. David's fifth son was named Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital. David's sixth son was named Ithream, and Ithream's mother was Eglah, who was another one of David's wives.

All of these women who had sons with David were David's wives. David and his wives had these sons while they lived in Hebron.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing David's sons born in Hebron, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are proud to be sons of the King of Judah; or
- We are hopeful that one of us will be king after our father David.

Ask the people playing David's wives in Hebron, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We feel honored to be David's wives and to have his sons; or
- We each hope our son will have an important role to play in David's family; or
- We feel happy to be part of the true royal family of Israel.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:2-5 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David had **sons** with his wives while David ruled over Judah from the city of Hebron. David was the second king of Israel. A son is the male child of his parents. Use the same word or phrase for son as you used in previous passages. For more information on son, refer to the Master Glossary.

David's firstborn son was Amnon, whose mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel. A firstborn son was the first male child born to his parents.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **firstborn**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase that you already used. Pause this audio here.

David's second son was Kileab, whose mother was Abigail from Carmel. Abigail was a **widow**, which means she had been married before, but her previous husband died. Abigail was married to a man named Nabal, and she married David when Nabal died. Use the same word or phrase for widow as you have used in previous passages.

David's third son was Absalom, whose mother was Maakah. Maakah's father was **King** Talmai of Geshur. A king is someone who rules over a city or a territory. Look up king in the Master Glossary for more information.

David's fourth son was Adonijah, whose mother was Haggith. David's fifth son was Shephatiah, whose mother was Abital. And David's sixth son was Ithream, whose mother was Eglah, another one of David's wives.

All these women who had sons with David were David's wives. These were the sons David had while he lived in Hebron.

*Speaking the Word**Speaking the Word*

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 3:2-5**Audio Content**

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2 Samuel 3:6–21

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 3:6–21 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:6–21 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:6–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, the storyteller gave a list of David's six wives and their firstborn sons while David ruled over Judah from the city of Hebron.

In this passage, the storyteller continues to tell more about the long war between David's house and Saul's house. David's house and Saul's house refer to the people who lived in David's and Saul's residences and followed them. These people could include David's and Saul's families and others who helped to give David and Saul advice and to carry out their commands. Ish-Bosheth represents the new leader of Saul's house because Saul has died. Abner, who is the commander of Ish-Bosheth's soldiers, gains influence in Saul's house and makes himself the main leader among Saul's house. Even though Ish-Bosheth is king over Israel, Abner has a lot of power and authority over Israel.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a time when a military leader worked hard to gain more influence in a country. Pause this audio here.

Before Saul died, Saul had a concubine named Rizpah, whose father was Aiah. A concubine was a woman who was married to the king as a secondary wife. A concubine did not have much power or influence. One day, Ish-

Bosheth says to Abner, "Why did you sleep with my father's concubine?" For a man to sleep with a woman means the man had sexual relations with the woman. When the king died, a concubine would stay in the king's household. If a man who was not the king slept with the king's concubine, that man was declaring that he wanted to become king. If Abner slept with the king's concubine, that action showed that Abner wanted to take the kingship away from Ish-Bosheth.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story where someone wants to take over a ruler or leader's position. How does the new person show that he wants to become the ruler? Pause this audio here.

When Abner hears Ish-Bosheth's words, Abner is very angry. Abner responds, "Am I like a dog's head that belongs to the people of Judah? I have been loyal to Saul and his family and friends, and I have not betrayed you by giving you to David. And yet you accuse me of an offense with this woman?" In some places, people use dogs to help with tasks or for companionship. In Israel, a dog was an unclean animal that was not important. Abner is asking if Ish-Bosheth believes Abner is a lowly traitor who serves the people of Judah, where David was king. Abner declares that he is not a traitor; Abner has continued to support Saul's house even after Saul's death. Abner has kept Ish-Bosheth safe from David and David's soldiers. Abner does not say whether or not he slept with Rizpah, but Abner cannot believe that Ish-Bosheth would think Abner supports David and wants him to succeed. Abner is offended by Ish-Bosheth's question and may feel that Ish-Bosheth is not grateful for all Abner has done for him.

Stop here and look at a picture of a dog as a group. Discuss as a group: What kinds of insults do people in your culture use when they become offended? Pause this audio here.

Abner curses himself, or says a special oath that God may punish Abner if Abner does not help David become king over all Israel. Abner also reminds Ish-Bosheth of an oath, or strong promise that Yahweh made to David to establish David's rule over all Israel from Dan to Beersheba. We do not know exactly what promise Abner refers to. Abner may mean that when Samuel anointed David to be king over all Israel, Samuel showed that Yahweh promised this to David. When Abner says "from Dan to Beersheba," Abner is using the names of Dan, a northern city, and Beersheba, a southern city. Abner is saying that David will rule over the entire area of Israel, from one border to another. Because Ish-Bosheth is afraid of Abner, Ish-Bosheth does not dare to say another word.

Stop here and look at a map of Israel that includes Dan and Beersheba as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: When a leader in your culture is afraid of one of his servants, how does he usually act? How does this compare to the way that Ish-Bosheth reacts to Abner? Pause this audio here.

Then Abner sends some messengers to David to say, "Does this land not belong to you? Make a covenant, or strong promise, with me, and I will give you all my support." Abner believes he has the authority to give the land and people to David so David can rule over the entire nation. Abner probably believes that David already has the authority to rule the land because Yahweh has promised that David will be king over all Israel.

David responds to Abner, "I agree. I will make a covenant with you. But I will require you to do one thing: Bring me my wife Michal, Saul's daughter. Only then will you be able to meet with me face to face." You will remember from a previous story that King Saul allowed David to marry Michal after David killed 100 Philistines and presented their foreskins as proof of their death. A foreskin is the loose skin at the end of a man's penis that people remove during circumcision. After David had married Michal, David had to run away from Saul. Saul allowed Michal to marry another man. However, because David did not divorce Michal, David and Michal are still married according to Israelite law. David may also have wanted Michal back because he loved her and because their marriage linked the families of David and Saul. Linking the families of David and Saul strengthens David's ability to be king over Judah and Israel.

David then sends messengers to Ish-Bosheth demanding that Ish-Bosheth return Michal to David. David probably sends messengers to Ish-Bosheth because David wants him to return Michal legally. As Saul's son, Ish-Bosheth has the authority to return Michal to David. So, Ish-Bosheth sends some of his men to take Michal from her new husband, Paltiel, the son of Laish. Paltiel weeps as he follows Michal all the way to the town of Bahurim. This town is located on the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. However, Abner tells Paltiel to stop following them, so Paltiel returns home.

Abner had probably already talked with the elders of Israel. The elders were the leaders of Israel who had authority to make decisions for Israel. Abner said to the elders, "You have been wanting David to be your king. Now is the time for all of you to act! Yahweh already promised David that Yahweh will use David to save all Israel from all their enemies, especially the Philistines." Abner had also already spoken in person with the people from the tribe of Benjamin about David. Abner may have spoken to the Benjaminites because Saul had been a Benjaminite.

Stop here and look at a map as a group. Find the town of Bahurim, the area where people from the tribe of Benjamin lived, and Hebron. Pause this audio here.

Then Abner goes to Hebron to talk personally with David to tell David everything that all Israel, including the tribe of Benjamin, had decided to do. Abner travels to Hebron with 20 men who represent Israel and who affirm what Abner says to be true. When they arrive, David orders his servants to prepare a party with lots of food and drink. This feast was probably a large meal to celebrate the covenant or promise between Abner and David that Abner would help David become king of all Israel.

Then Abner says to David, "Now I would like to go and encourage all the northern tribes of Israel to make a covenant to support you, my master and my king, so you may rule over all that you desire." So David says goodbye to Abner, and Abner leaves David in peace. Abner and David still have a good relationship and are not angry with each other.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:6–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: During the war between the houses of David and Saul, Abner's influence over the house of Saul continues to grow. One day, Ish-Bosheth asks Abner why Abner has slept with Saul's former concubine, Rizpah. Abner is angry and offended, and Abner promises that he will now help David become king over all Israel. Ish-Bosheth is too afraid of Abner to reply.

In the second scene: Abner sends messengers to David and offers to help David become king over all Israel. David agrees but demands that Ish-Bosheth return David's wife Michal to David. Then David sends a message to Ish-Bosheth asking Ish-Bosheth to return Michal to David. Ish-Bosheth's men take Michal from her new husband, Paltiel, who weeps as he follows Michal. But when Abner tells Paltiel to go home, Paltiel returns home.

In the third scene: Abner has probably already talked with the elders of Israel, especially the men from the tribe of Benjamin. Abner tells the men that, because they have been wanting David to be their king, they should act because Yahweh had promised that Yahweh will save Israel from all their enemies, including the Philistines, through David. Abner goes to Hebron to tell David the news.

In the fourth scene: Abner travels with 20 men to Hebron to tell David what the elders and the tribe of Benjamin have decided to do. David prepares a feast for Abner and Abner's men, and then Abner tells David that Abner will return to gather the Israelites together to make a covenant with David. David says goodbye to Abner, and Abner goes in peace.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abner
- Ish-Bosheth
- Rizpah
- David
- Abner's messengers to David
- Michal
- Paltiel
- Elders of Israel
- People from the tribe of Benjamin
- And Abner's 20 men

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one, during the long war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner becomes a powerful leader in the house of Saul. Abner is an influential man in Israel. Abner probably has more power than Ish-Bosheth, even though Ish-Bosheth is the king of Israel.

When Saul was alive, Saul had a concubine named Rizpah, whose father was Aiah. A concubine was a secondary, or less important, wife. Although Rizpah was married to Saul, she was not as important as Saul's primary wives. One day, Ish-Bosheth accuses Abner of having sexual relations with Rizpah. Ish-Bosheth says that Abner "slept with Rizpah." In that culture, people talked about sleeping together as a way to talk about having sexual relations. And if another man slept with, or had sexual relations with, a king's concubine, that man showed that he wanted to become king himself.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How might you talk about having sexual relations in an appropriate way? Pause this audio here.

Abner becomes very angry because of Ish-Bosheth's words. Abner shouts, "Am I like a dog's head that belongs to the people of Judah? I have been loyal to Saul and his family and friends, and I have not betrayed you by giving you to David. And yet you accuse me of an offense with this woman?" A dog was an unclean and hated animal in Israel, and Abner asks if he is a worthless dog following the people of Judah. Abner does not expect an answer to his question. Abner is asking if he is unimportant and useless to Ish-Bosheth. Abner has supported the house of Saul and has protected Ish-Bosheth from David's soldiers. Abner is offended by Ish-Bosheth's accusation and cannot believe Ish-Bosheth would think Abner was a traitor.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you translate Abner's reaction to Ish-Bosheth when Ish-Bosheth accuses Abner of having sexual relations with Rizpah? Pause this audio here.

Abner continues and says, "May God punish me if I do not do everything I can to give David what Yahweh promised him. I will take Saul's kingdom and give it to David so he can reign over the whole kingdom of Israel from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south." Abner makes a strong oath. When people make a strong oath, or promise, they curse themselves by saying that if they do not do what they promise, Yahweh can punish them. Abner also uses the expression, "from Dan to Beersheba." Dan is in the northern part of Israel, and Beersheba is in the southern part of Israel, so Abner uses these cities to talk about the entire country of Israel from north to south. Ish-Bosheth is so afraid of Abner that he does not say anything in reply.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story in which someone makes an oath or a strong promise. What words or phrases does that person use to communicate the strength of his or her oath? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you describe an entire country or region in your culture? Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, Abner sends some messengers to David in Hebron and says, "Does not this land belong to you? Make a covenant with me, and I will give you all of my support." Because Abner has become so powerful, Abner believes he can turn all the land and the role of king over to David. David responds, "I agree. I will make a covenant with you. But I will require you to do one thing: Bring me my wife Michal, Saul's daughter. Only then will you be able to meet with me face to face." Even though David had married Michal in a previous story, Saul had given Michal to another man as a wife. David did not divorce Michal, so they are still legally married.

David sends a message to Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son. David says, "Give me back my wife Michal. I killed 100 Philistine soldiers and showed their foreskins to Saul so I could marry her." So Ish-Bosheth sends some men who take Michal from her current husband, Paltiel, the son of Laish. However, Paltiel weeps and follows Michal all the way to the town of Bahurim. But when Abner tells Paltiel to return home, Paltiel leaves.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about two people who agree to work together, but one of them says the other person must do certain things before they will begin. How do you make the order in which events happen very clear? Pause this audio here.

In the third scene, Abner had probably already spoken with the elders of Israel before he sends messengers to David. Abner told the Israelite elders, "You have been wanting David to be your king. Now is the time for all of you to act! Yahweh already promised David that Yahweh will use David to save all Israel from all their enemies, especially the Philistines." The elders are the leaders of Israel. Abner had probably also already spoken with the men from the tribe of Benjamin. Abner probably spoke to these men because the house of Saul came from the tribe of Benjamin, and Abner wanted their support for David. Abner goes to tell David that all the elders of Israel, including the tribe of Benjamin, had decided to follow David.

In the fourth scene, Abner travels to Hebron from Israel. Abner brings 20 men with him as he comes to see David at Hebron. David has his servants prepare a big meal for Abner and all of Abner's men. Then Abner tells David, "Now I would like to go and encourage all the northern tribes of Israel to make a covenant, or strong promise, to support you, my master and my king, so you may rule over all that you desire." David agrees, and Abner leaves David in peace.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story where two groups of people make a decision to promise to work together for a common goal. What words do you use to describe the people making the promise to work together and support one another? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:6–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Abner
- Ish-Bosheth
- Rizpah
- David
- Abner's messengers to David
- Michal
- Paltiel
- Elders of Israel
- People from the tribe of Benjamin
- And Abner's 20 men

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

During the war between the house of Saul and the house of David, Abner continues to become a powerful and influential leader in the house of Saul. One day, Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, accuses Abner of sleeping with Saul's concubine Rizpah, whose father was Aiah. Abner is very angry when he hears Ish-Bosheth's words and shouts, "Am I like a dog's head that belongs to the people of Judah? I have been loyal to Saul and his family and friends, and I have not betrayed you by giving you to David. And yet you accuse me of an offense with this woman? May God punish me if I do not do everything I can to give David what Yahweh promised him. I will take Saul's kingdom and give it to David so he can reign over the whole kingdom of Israel from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south." Ish-Bosheth is so afraid of Abner that Ish-Bosheth remains silent.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abner, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am surprised that Ish-Bosheth would dare to insult me by implying I want to be king; or
- I am angry that Ish-Bosheth accused me of such an offense. Ish-Bosheth shows no gratitude for my protection!

Ask the person playing Ish-Bosheth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am terrified that Abner will be successful to take the kingdom from me and to give it to David; or
- I am hurt that Abner wants to take the kingdom away from me and to support my enemy, David.

Continue the drama.

Abner sends messengers to David, who say, "Does not this land belong to you? Make a covenant with me, and I will give you all of my support." David responds, "I agree. I will make a covenant with you. But I will require you to do one thing: Bring me my wife Michal, Saul's daughter. Only then will you be able to meet with me face to face." David then sends messengers to Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, and says, "Give me back my wife Michal. I killed 100 Philistine soldiers and showed their foreskins to Saul so I could marry her." Ish-Bosheth sends men to take Michal from her current husband, Paltiel, son of Laish. Paltiel weeps as he follows Michal all the way to Bahurim. But when Abner tells Paltiel to return home, Paltiel leaves.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel happy that Abner has decided to support me and to help me rule over all Israel; or
- I feel satisfied because, even though Saul acted out of meanness to take Michal away, I will finally have Michal back as my wife; or
- I know my marriage to Michal will help me take the kingdom of Israel from Ish-Bosheth.

Ask the person playing Michal, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy to return to my husband David, because I love David; or
- I am sad to leave my current husband, Paltiel, and I feel very hurt because people are treating me as a possession instead of a person.

Continue the drama.

Before he sent messengers to David, Abner had already spoken with the elders of Israel and the people of the tribe of Benjamin face-to-face. Abner told these men, "You have been wanting David to be your king. Now is the time for all of you to act! Yahweh already promised David that Yahweh will use David to save all Israel from all their enemies, especially the Philistines." Abner then goes to Hebron to tell David what the people of Israel, especially the tribe of Benjamin, have decided to do.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the elders of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We rejoice that we will finally have one strong king over all of Israel; or
- We are happy that David will protect us from our enemies.

Continue the drama.

Abner brings 20 men with him as he comes to see David at Hebron. David has his servants prepare a big meal for Abner and all his men. Then Abner tells David, "Now I would like to go and encourage all the northern tribes of Israel to make a covenant to support you, my master and my king, so you may rule over all that you desire." David agrees, and Abner leaves David in peace.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abner, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy that I have the support of the elders in Israel and that I can help David be king;
or
- I feel proud that I might get to be part of David's supporters.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:6–21 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

This story takes place during the long war between the **house of Saul** and the **house of David**. Someone's house could include family members, friends, and other supporters who helped give advice or served in the household. Use the same word or phrase for "house of Saul" or "house of David" as you used in previous passages. Refer to "house of David" in the Master Glossary for more information.

During the war, Abner has been increasing in influence and power in the house of Saul. When Saul was alive, Saul had a concubine named Rizpah, whose father was Aiah. A concubine was a woman who was married to a man, but she had an inferior status and was not a primary wife. Concubines remained in a king's household after that king died.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **concubine**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

One day, Ish-Bosheth, Saul's son, asks Abner why Abner had slept with Saul's concubine Rizpah. When Abner hears Ish-Bosheth's accusation, Abner is very angry. Abner asks Ish-Bosheth if Abner is a dog's head who is taking the side of **Judah**. Use the same word for Judah as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Judah.

A dog is an animal with a long snout, claws, and an excellent sense of smell. People may use dogs as companions in some cultures, but in Israel, people considered dogs to be unclean. To call someone a dog's head would have been an insult. Abner believes Ish-Bosheth is insulting Abner and accusing him of being a traitor, someone as worthless as a dog's head.

Stop here and look at a picture of a dog. Discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **dog's head**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Abner makes an **oath**, or solemn promise, and tells God to punish Abner if Abner does not help take the **kingdom** away from Ish-Bosheth and help David establish the **throne**, or become king over all Israel from Dan in the north to Beersheba in the south. When someone takes the throne, they become the king of a kingdom.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate what Abner says when he makes the oath to take the kingdom away from Ish-Bosheth. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about kingdom, and use the same words or phrases you have used in previous books of the Bible for throne and for kingdom. If you use the word for oath in your translation, refer to the Master Glossary for more information about oath also. Pause this audio here.

God refers to the most powerful spiritual being who created everything. A **king** is someone who rules over a city or territory. **Israel** is the name of the territory where the Israelites lived. Use the same words for God, king, and Israel as you used in previous passages. For more information on God, king, or Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

Ish-Bosheth is so afraid of Abner that he does not say anything else. Abner asks David to make a covenant with Abner. When people make a covenant together, they make a solemn promise that they cannot break.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **covenant**. Use the same word for covenant that you used in previous books of the Bible. For more information on covenant, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

David agrees to make a covenant with Abner, but David demands that Abner return David's wife Michal, Saul's daughter, to David before they can meet face-to-face. David then sends messengers to Ish-Bosheth, saying, "Give me back my wife Michal. I killed 100 Philistine soldiers and showed their foreskins to Saul so I could marry her." A foreskin is the loose skin of a man's penis that people remove when they circumcise men. David had cut off the foreskins of the Philistines he killed in order to show Saul that David had killed the soldiers.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **foreskin**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Abner had probably already spoken with the elders of Israel. The elders had authority to make decisions for Israel.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **elders**. Use the same word for elders that you used in previous books of the Bible. For more information on elders, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Abner had also spoken with the tribe of Benjamin to make sure he had their support. Abner told the men that they should take action to make David the king over Israel since the elders and the Benjaminites had been wanting David to be their king. Abner reminds the men that Yahweh had promised to use David to rescue Israel from the hand, or power, of their enemies. Use the same phrase to talk about rescuing Israel from the hand or power of their enemies as you have used previously.

The name **Yahweh** is a personal name for God that shows God's close relationship with the people of Israel. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

Abner travels to Hebron to tell David what all of Israel, including the tribe of Benjamin, had decided to do. Abner travels with 20 men. When the men arrive at Hebron, David tells servants to prepare a feast for the men. People celebrate things with a large meal called a feast.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **feast**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Then Abner tells David to let Abner return to Israel to get the support of all the northern tribes to make a covenant with David so that David can rule over everything David's heart wants to rule over. In the Bible, the heart is the part of the body where people think that their feelings and decisions come from.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for everything that David's **heart** wants. Look up heart in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David agrees, and Abner leaves David in **peace**. When people live in peace, they live in good relationship with God and with each other.

Stop here and look up peace in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 3:6–21

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 3:22–30

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 3:22–30 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:22–30 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:22–30 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This story immediately follows David and Abner's meeting in the city of Hebron. You will remember that Abner told David that Abner would gather the leaders and people of Israel and that David would be king of all Israel. David let Abner go away in peace, or in a good relationship with David.

This story begins with Joab and some of David's men returning to Hebron. Joab and David's soldiers, with Joab, come back from a raid on people who lived in a different country from Israel. When people raid others, they quickly and unexpectedly attack people and take their possessions. Joab and his men bring back to Hebron the plunder or spoil, the items that the attackers stole from the people on the raid. Plunder was useful and provided money for David and his people.

Stop here and discuss this as a group: Tell a story about when some people in your community or land attacked and stole items from a different community or when attackers raided your own community. Pause this audio here.

Joab and his men come back to Hebron just after Abner has left Hebron. People in Hebron tell Joab that Abner, son of Ner, was with David, and that David then let Abner go away from Hebron safely. Joab goes to David, Joab's king, to ask David about Abner's visit. Joab asks David what David said and did to Abner. Joab asks David why David let Abner go away safely from Hebron. Joab is angry with Abner and does not trust him. You will remember that Abner killed Asahel, Joab's brother, during a battle after Abner warned Asahel to go away. Joab gives David a possible different reason for Abner visiting. Joab warns David that Abner lied to David about making David king of Israel. Joab suggests to David that Abner came to spy on David and find out what David and his army are doing in and around the city of Hebron. We do not know what David says to Joab, but David does not agree with Joab.

Stop here and discuss this as a group: Talk about a time someone was angry at another person or jealous of them and tried to persuade their leaders to believe lies about the person. Pause this audio here.

Joab leaves David. Joab talks to people he trusts and sends messengers after Abner. Joab is not doing what David wants, and David does not know what Joab is doing. Abner is not far from Hebron. Joab's messengers find Abner at a place called the cistern of Sirah, probably about two miles or one hour's walk north of Hebron.

Stop here and look at a map that shows Hebron, the land of Judah, and the cistern of Sirah. Pause this audio here.

A cistern was a large underground container that people dug out from the natural rock and made waterproof. A cistern held water from the rainy season so that people had water in the dry season.

Stop here and look at a picture of a cistern in the ground as a group. Pause this audio here.

Some people think that the cistern of Sirah was a well or a place of natural water where people could collect water.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Where and how do you get water in your community? What do you store water in to make sure you have water in dry times when there is no or little rain? Pause this audio here.

Abner goes back to Hebron. We do not know what the messengers do. When Abner arrives at Hebron, Joab meets Abner at the gate of the city. It was common at the time of the story for cities to have thick and high walls made of stone or bricks. People went in and out of the city through big gates in the city walls. The gates were

buildings built into the wall with big doors for people to go through in the middle of them. The gate buildings often had several rooms in them.

Stop here and look at a picture of a gate building in a stone wall of a city. Pause this audio here.

Joab and Abner go into a room in the gate building to talk, where other people cannot see them. Joab stabs or injures Abner in the stomach with a sharp object, and Abner dies. We do not know what Joab stabs Abner with. You will remember that Abner struck Asahel in Asahel's stomach with the blunt end of a spear and killed Asahel. Joab kills Abner in a similar way.

Some time later, people tell David that Joab killed Abner. We do not know how much time has passed between Joab killing Abner and David knowing Joab killed Abner. When David knows that Joab has killed Abner, David says to the people that David and all the people that David leads were not involved in killing Abner. David says that David and his people will always be innocent of killing Abner. David calls on Yahweh as a witness to say that David is innocent. David talks about the blood of Abner to mean the death of Abner. David wants everyone to know that David is not responsible in any way for Abner's death.

David then speaks words to bring punishment and judgment on Joab. David speaks a curse, or wishes for bad things to happen to Joab and the family of Joab. David wishes Joab to be punished for killing Abner. David calls for blood to be on Joab's head. The blood represents death, but it is not clear whose blood David is talking about. David might be saying that David wants Joab to be responsible for Abner's death and have Abner's blood on his head. Or perhaps David is saying that Joab should die as a just punishment for killing a man unlawfully. Joab would be responsible for causing his own death and would have his own blood on his head.

David wishes that Joab and his family will always have something wrong with them. David wishes that perhaps a member of Joab's family will be ill with fluid running from their body, or have a skin disease, which people often called leprosy. You will remember that these problems make a person ceremonially unclean and unacceptable to Yahweh. David also wishes that perhaps Joab or a member of Joab's family may hold a spindle or, in some translations, lean on a crutch. A spindle is a thin piece of wood that a person uses to help make yarn. In David's time and culture, women, not men, used spindles and made yarn.

Stop here and look at a picture of a person using a spindle to make yarn. Pause this audio here.

A person uses a crutch to lean on to help the person walk.

Stop here and look at a picture of a person using a crutch to help them walk. Pause this audio here.

In David's time and culture, a man with a crutch or a man making yarn does not do traditional men's work. We do not know what the correct translation of the original language is, but both options refer to a man who cannot work properly. Finally, David wishes that perhaps Joab or his family would die in battle or would not have enough food. David does not want all these bad things to happen to each person, but David wants each person to be unclean and unacceptable to Yahweh, or unable to work properly, or killed violently, or not have enough food.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do people in your community do or say when they want something bad to happen to a person? Pause this audio here.

The storyteller reminds us why Joab killed Abner. The storyteller tells us that Joab's brother, Abishai, helped Joab, but we do not know how Abishai helped Joab. The storyteller reminds us that Joab murdered, or illegally killed, Abner. The storyteller reminds us that Abner killed Asahel legally in battle at Gibeon. Joab was not right to kill Abner because Abner did not murder Asahel illegally.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:22–30 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has six scenes.

In the first scene: Joab and David's soldiers, with Joab, arrive back at Hebron from a raid. People in Hebron tell Joab that Abner visited David and David allowed Abner to leave safely.

In the second scene: Joab goes to David and asks David why David let Abner go. Joab warns David that Abner was a spy.

In the third scene: Joab sends messengers to get Abner to come back to Hebron.

In the fourth scene: Abner returns to Hebron and meets with Joab in the gate in the wall of Hebron. Joab stabs Abner in the stomach and kills Abner.

In the fifth scene: People tell David that Joab killed Abner. David tells everyone that David did not kill Abner. David curses Joab.

In the sixth scene: The storyteller reminds us that Joab, helped by Abishai, murdered Abner because Abner killed their brother Asahel.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- David's soldiers
- People in Hebron
- David
- Abner, son of Ner
- Messengers
- And Abishai

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This story happens very soon after Abner leaves Hebron, after Abner's meeting with David. Joab and David's men return to Hebron from a raid on people who were not Israelites. Joab returns on the same day and probably within hours of Abner leaving. Joab and David's soldiers bring back to Hebron plunder or spoils from the attack.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you call items that people have stolen from another community? Do you have different words for items that people took in a raid compared to items that people stole at other times? Pause this audio here.

As soon as Joab arrives in Hebron, people tell Joab that Abner, son of Ner, visited David, their king. People in Hebron also tell Joab that David let Abner leave Hebron peacefully. Sometimes, the storyteller uses the name Abner, son of Ner, in the story and other times the storyteller uses the name Abner. Usually, the storyteller uses Abner, son of Ner, at the beginning of a section of the story with Abner in it, and when somebody starts to talk about Abner. At other times, the storyteller just uses Abner.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What names will you use for Abner in this story, and when will you use them throughout the story? Talk about when you use the name of someone's father to help identify a person. Pause this audio here.

Immediately after hearing about Abner's visit, Joab goes to see David. Joab asks David what David did. Joab is not asking David to explain what David was doing. Joab uses the question to say that Joab thinks David made a big mistake.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you say to someone when you discover that they have made a big mistake and you want that person to know it? Pause this audio here.

Joab asks David why David let Abner go away from Hebron. Joab talks about a possible other reason for Abner coming to Hebron, because Joab does not trust Abner. Joab thinks that Abner wanted to see the soldiers coming

in and going out of the city. Joab thinks Abner wants to understand how David's soldiers work so that Abner and his troops can come back and conquer Hebron.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for comings and goings. You may want to refer to other times you have translated this phrase in the Bible. Pause this audio here.

We do not know what David says to Abner after Abner questions what David did. Joab leaves David and quickly sends messengers to go after Abner. The messengers find Abner at a place called the cistern of Sirah, a place where there is water available for the community to use. David does not know that Joab sends messengers to Abner.

Abner comes back to Hebron, possibly on the same day as Abner left Hebron. When Abner arrives at Hebron, Joab meets Abner at the gate building. Joab takes Abner into the gate building so that people cannot see the two men together. Joab stabs Abner in the stomach, and Abner dies. A person stabs another person with a sharp object, usually a knife or the sharp end of a spear. The motion is quick and forward rather than sideways.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Discuss different ways of using a sharp object to hurt another person. Pay attention to the different words you use to describe the different actions. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller reminds us that Joab kills Abner as revenge, a punishment in return for the blood of, or the death of, Asahel.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What words or phrases do you use to talk about the death of someone instead of saying death? Pause this audio here.

Sometime later, David hears from people that Joab has killed Abner. We do not know how much time has passed between the murder and David's hearing about the murder. David tells the people that David and the people that David rules over as king are, and will always be, innocent of killing Abner. David declares his innocence before Yahweh as a way of saying that Yahweh is a witness to David's innocence. David says "the blood of Abner" to mean the death of Abner.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What phrases do people use in your community to help show that they are telling the truth or have not done something wrong? Pause this audio here.

David curses Joab and Joab's family. David wishes the curse on Joab's house, Joab's family and descendants. David wishes that Joab and every person in Joab's family would always have something wrong with them.

The storyteller summarises this story and reminds us that Joab, with the help of his brother Abishai, murdered Abner as revenge for Abner killing Asahel. The storyteller highlights that Abner killed Asahel lawfully in battle, but Joab killed Abner unlawfully.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What different words do you use for killing people both lawfully and unlawfully? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:22–30 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has six scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- David's soldiers
- People in Hebron
- David
- Abner, son of Ner
- Messengers
- And Abishai

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Joab and David's soldiers, with Joab, arrive back at Hebron from a raid. People in Hebron tell Joab that Abner visited David and that David allowed Abner to leave safely.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are back! Look what we took from our enemies; or
- It is good to be safely home in Hebron; or
- What happened while we were away? Why was Abner here? I hate Abner. Abner killed my brother.

Ask the person playing David's soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- What success we have had! or
- David will be pleased to see everything that we have brought back for David.

Ask the person playing the people in Hebron, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Abner, son of Ner, and our king are going to work together; or
- I am confused because I thought Abner was our enemy;
- Abner only just left Hebron. Our King let Abner go back to his people.

Continue the drama.

Joab goes to David and asks David why David had let Abner go. Joab warns David that Abner was a spy.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am angry at David. I cannot believe that Abner was here and David did not kill him; or
- I want to punish Abner; or
- We cannot trust Abner. I think Abner came to see what our soldiers are doing.

Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Calm down, my friend; or
- Abner is going to help me now. I need his support to become king over all Israel; or
- I am worried that Joab will risk my new friendship with Abner.

Continue the drama.

Joab sends messengers to get Abner to come back to Hebron.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am disappointed with David; or
- I do not care what David said. I am going to avenge my brother's death; or
- If Abner helps David, David may give Abner power over David's army. I want to remain in control of David's army!

Ask the person playing the messengers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We will find Abner; or
- Let us go north towards the lands of Benjamin.

Continue the drama.

Abner returns to Hebron and meets with Joab in the gate in the wall of Hebron. Joab stabs Abner in the stomach and kills Abner.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abner, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Why did you need me to come back to Hebron? or
- Why do you want to speak to me on my own? or
- I am worried. Joab hates me. I am not safe.

Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- They found Abner! Now I will punish Abner for killing Asahel; or
- I do not want anybody to see. We can go into this room in the gate; or
- It is done! I am relieved and happy to kill Abner. Abner is no longer a threat to me and my position in David's government.

Continue the drama.

People tell David that Joab killed Abner. David tells everyone that he did not kill Joab. David curses Joab.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This is terrible! I am worried that people will think I asked Joab to kill Abner; or
- I promise I did not kill Abner, and nobody who follows me killed Abner either; or
- I am really angry with Joab. I wish a terrible punishment from Yahweh on Joab and all his family.

Continue the drama.

The storyteller reminds us that Joab, helped by Abishai, murdered Abner because Abner killed their brother Asahel.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abishai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I support my brother and will do whatever he asks of me; or
- Joab did what David would not do.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:22–30 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Joab returned to Hebron from a raid with some of David's men. A raid is a quick attack on a group of people to cause damage and steal valuable items.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **raid**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The men brought back lots of plunder, valuable items the men had stolen from people on the raid.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **plunder**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Abner had left Hebron because David let Abner go away in **peace**. Use the same word or phrase for peace as you used in previous passages. For more information on peace, refer to the Master Glossary.

People in Hebron told Joab that David, the **king**, met with Abner in Hebron and sent Abner away in peace. Joab went to David to ask David why David let Abner visit Hebron and leave safely. Joab thought Abner came to Hebron to see the comings and goings, the movements of the soldiers in and out of Hebron. Use the same word for king as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about king.

Joab sent messengers from Hebron to find Abner. The messengers found Abner at the cistern of Sirah. The cistern was a still body of water, possibly underground. The cistern held and provided water to people for drinking.

Stop here and look at a picture of a cistern in the ground as a group, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **cistern**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Abner returned to Hebron, and Joab took Abner into an inner chamber, a room inside the gate building.

Stop here and look at a picture of a gate building in a stone wall of a city, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "**room inside the gate**." Pause this audio here.

Joab stabbed, or struck with a sharp object, Abner in the stomach and killed Abner. Joab killed Abner because Abner had shed blood, or was responsible for killing Asahel. In this story, blood refers to being responsible for the death of someone.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **the blood**. Look up "blood" in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Later, people told David about Joab killing Abner. David said that he and his **kingdom**, the people that David led, were innocent of killing Abner. Use the same word or phrase for kingdom as you used in previous passages. For more information on kingdom, refer to the Master Glossary.

David said that he was innocent before Yahweh. David calls on Yahweh as a witness to David's innocence. **Yahweh** is the personal name for God. In this passage, God is called Yahweh. Be sure to translate Yahweh in the same way as you have in previous passages, and remember that Yahweh is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **innocent before Yahweh**. Pause this audio here.

David wishes for bad things to happen to Joab and Joab's family. David is cursing Joab and his family, or wishing bad things for Joab, but the word for curse is not in the story.

If you use the word for "curse" in your translation, stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **curse**. Look up curse in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

David wishes the curse on the **house** of Joab or Joab's family and descendants. Use the same word or phrase for "house of Joab" as you used in previous passages.

David calls for the blood, the guilt for killing Abner, to be on Joab. David wants Joab and his family to suffer from a discharge, which is an unusual fluid running from the body.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **discharge**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David wants Joab and his family to suffer from leprosy, a skin disease.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **leprosy**. Look up leprosy in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David wants Joab and his family to "hold a spindle" or "lean on a crutch." A spindle is a thin piece of wood that a person uses to help make yarn. We do not know if the storyteller meant spindle or crutch. Both options mean a man who cannot do a man's work.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **hold a spindle or lean on a crutch**. You may also translate the phrase to mean a man who cannot do a man's work. Pause this audio here.

David also wants Joab and Joab's family to die by people killing them with a sword or from not having enough food.

Joab, with the help of his brother Abishai, murdered Abner.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **murdered** or kill someone unlawfully. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 3:22–30

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 3:31–39

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 3:31–39 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:31–39 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:31–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This story happens immediately after the previous story, when Joab killed Abner and David cursed Joab. David and his men are in the city of Hebron in Judah. Joab and his men were not sad that Abner was dead, but David orders Joab and Joab's men to mourn, or to show sadness for the death of Abner. When people died in Israel, it was the custom for Israelites to tear their clothes and put on sackcloth. Sackcloth was a coarse cloth that people used for making sacks. A sack is a large bag that people use for carrying vegetables, grain, or fuel for fires.

Stop here and look at a picture of sackcloth as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do people in your community show that they are mourning a person who has died? Pause this audio here.

David organises a funeral for Abner in Hebron. David shows respect to Abner by giving Abner a funeral in Hebron, even though Abner was from the tribe of Benjamin. When an Israelite person died, it was the Israelite custom to bury that person in the person's hometown, if possible. In the funeral, people carry Abner's body through Hebron to the tomb where they bury Abner's body. Mourners walk in front of and behind the people who carry Abner's body. David orders Joab and Joab's men to show they are mourning as Joab and Joab's men walk in front of Abner's body. David, the king, walks behind the bier, or the special bed like a stretcher, on which people carry Abner's body.

Stop here and look at a picture of a bier as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: After a person dies, what rituals or ceremonies do you do, and who joins in doing those things? Pause this audio here.

David's people put Abner in a grave or tomb, a place where people bury a dead body, in Hebron. We are not sure what the grave was like, but it was probably a cave or hole that people had cut into the rock.

Stop here and look at a picture of graves or tombs from the time of David in Israel. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you do with a person's body after the person has died? Is there somewhere the family and friends of the dead person can visit later? Pause this audio here.

David weeps aloud at Abner's grave. It was the Israelites' custom to cry loudly when they mourned someone. All the people, and all Joab's men, weep at Abner's grave as well.

David sings a lament, a song to show that David is sad, for Abner. David's lament for Abner follows a typical structure in Israelite poetry. David uses each line of the song to say a thought. David pairs the first and last lines of the song, and David pairs the middle two lines of the song. David uses the first line to ask a question of the people who are mourning Abner. David asks if it was right for Abner to die like someone who was a fool, someone who lived away from Yahweh's law. David does not think that Abner was silly or unwise. Yahweh did not protect people who did not obey Yahweh's law. Wicked and dishonest people might kill people who were away from Yahweh's protection. The next two thoughts in the song express the idea that Abner was a free man. Abner did not have his hands or feet bound or held together like a criminal. Abner was not guilty of any crime. David ends the lament by saying that Abner fell or died like a person that violent and wicked people killed.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What songs or poems, if any, do you sing or say when someone dies? Are they traditional songs or poems, or do you create special new songs or poems for each person? Pause this audio here.

All the people with David, including Joab's men, weep over Abner's grave after David sings his song of lament. After the people bury Abner, the people try to get David to eat something before sunset. Over time, the Israelites changed their customs about eating when a person died. We know that, in Israel's early history, people fasted instead of eating to show that they were mourning a dead person. Later in the Bible, we know that mourners ate special food at a meal after they buried someone. We do not know what the custom was during David's time, although you will remember that David fasted when Saul and Jonathan died. In this story, people might be inviting David to eat at the funeral meal, or people might be concerned for David and want David to eat something to help David feel better. However, Joab's men might be tempting David to break his fast early because the men want to test how truly sad David is. David replies to the people with an oath, a formal promise, not to break the fast. David says God could punish David in any way if David eats anything before the sun sets that day.

All the people hear and see David's mourning, fasting, and his oath, and the people like what David does. The people like everything that David does. David is king of Joab's men, and Joab's men agree with David. Everyone in Judah, including Joab's men and people throughout the rest of the nation of Israel, believe that David is not responsible for murdering Abner. It is possible that people in Judah and the rest of Israel thought that David was involved in murdering Abner, particularly because Joab was David's friend and David trusted Joab to lead his soldiers. The storyteller tells us that the story of David mourning Abner helped to persuade the Israelites that David was innocent.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when you thought someone had done something wrong, but information from other people changed your mind to think that the person was innocent. Pause this audio here.

David speaks to his trusted men, men who serve David. David asks his men if they know that a great man, a commander of people, has fallen to the earth or died on that day. David wants his men to know that David respected Abner's skill and power in Israel. David knows that David is the anointed, rightful king of Israel. But David feels like he does not have enough power to punish Joab and Abishai. Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruiah, are powerful. At this time, early in David's reign, David does not have enough power to control and punish Joab and Abishai. Some people think that David is trying to show that David will be a more gentle king, a king who will not take revenge on people who do not obey him. Instead, David calls on Yahweh to bring judgment and punishment on Joab and Abishai.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:31–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: David tells Joab and Joab's men to mourn Abner and go with Abner's body to the burial site. David weeps and sings a lament for Abner. Joab's men and all the people with them mourn Abner's death.

In the second scene: Joab's men try to persuade David to eat something, but David makes an oath not to eat anything until the sun sets on the day of Abner's burial. The people like that David mourns Abner.

In the third scene: The people near David, and in the rest of Israel, believe that David was not involved in murdering Abner.

In the fourth scene: David reminds his trusted servants that Abner was a great man and a commander of people. David does not have the power to punish Joab and Abishai, but David calls on Yahweh to bring justice and punishment.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Joab
- Abishai
- Joab's men
- People in Hebron
- People of Israel
- And David's servants

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This story happens right after the previous story. We do not know if this story happens on the same day or the next day, but we do know that the Israelites mourned and buried the bodies of dead people quickly after they died.

The mourners move in a line through Hebron. We do not know who carries Abner's body on the bier or special bed. Joab and Joab's men walk in front of the people carrying Abner's body on the bier. David follows the people carrying Abner's body on the bier. All the people walk to the place where David chose to bury Abner's body. Burial places were usually outside of, but close to, cities.

After the people place Abner's body in a grave or a tomb, David and Joab's men weep loudly at the grave. Then David sings a lament for Abner. David's lament for Abner reminds the people that Abner died in a way that Abner did not deserve. Abner was not a criminal or someone who did not follow Yahweh. People killed Abner like someone who wicked men kill. Then, when David finishes his lament, Joab's men weep at Abner's grave again.

Later that same day, Joab's men try to persuade David to eat something. David mourns Abner and fasts. David makes an oath, or a strong promise, not to eat bread or any kind of food on the day David buried Abner.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What words or phrases do you use to make a strong promise or oath that you will not do something? Pause this audio here.

The people notice David mourning and fasting for Abner. Everything that David does to mourn Abner pleases Joab's men and all the people there.

When the people in Hebron, Judah, and all of Israel hear about David mourning Abner on the day when David buries Abner, the people know that King David did not help to murder Abner. It was not possible for everybody

in Israel to hear in one day about David mourning Abner. But, from that day on, when people heard how David mourned Abner, the people knew David was innocent.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Talk about a time when you received some news that made you change your mind about someone or something, and tell how you felt afterwards. Pay attention to how you refer to the day that you heard the news. Pause this audio here.

Later that same day, David talks to his trusted servants or men. David asks his men if they know that Abner, a commander or a prince who leads men, has fallen or died.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Some people do not like to use words like kill, or die, when they talk about people. Here, David says that Abner "fell." Talk about what other words you use to describe someone dying or someone killing a person when you do not want to use the words "died" or "killed." Pause this audio here.

David asks his men a question that David does not expect the men to answer. David knows that his men know that Abner was powerful and an important commander. David is worried about his own power and who might challenge David now that Abner is dead. David talks about being gentle, weak, or powerless, even though David is the king. David is probably saying that he is more sensitive and gentle towards people. David compares himself to Joab and Abishai, the sons of Zeruiah, who were more violent and showed people their power through violence. David wants to show people that David does not want to take revenge on wicked people himself. David calls on Yahweh to bring the correct justice and punishment on people who are wicked.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about a situation where someone has done something wrong, but no one has caught or punished that person. What sayings or phrases do you have to say that you hope justice happens and that someone punishes the person for what they did wrong? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:31–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Joab
- Abishai
- Joab's men
- People in Hebron
- People of Israel
- And David's servants

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David tells Joab and Joab's men to mourn Abner and go with Abner's body to the burial site.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want everyone to mourn Abner, who was a great man; or
- I want to show respect to Abner. Abner is worthy of a proper burial; or
- I feel sad and angry that Abner is dead.

Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy Abner is dead; or
- I do not want to mourn Abner; or
- I thought David would be happy that I killed Abner, but David is very sad. Maybe I was not right to kill Abner.

Continue the drama.

David weeps and sings a lament for Abner. Joab's men and everyone there mourn Abner's death.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Joab should not have murdered Abner; or
- I feel horrified about the way that Joab killed Abner; or
- Everyone will see how upset I am.

Ask the person playing Joab's men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are sad to see a mighty man dead; or
- We will mourn with our king; or
- Look at how much David cries and laments for Abner. David is truly sad that Abner is dead.

Continue the drama.

Joab's men try to persuade David to eat something, but David makes an oath not to eat anything until the sun sets on the day of Abner's burial.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab's men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Is David really so upset? or
- Maybe David will feel better if David eats something now; or
- I am amazed at how deeply David mourns Abner.

Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel terrible that my man killed Abner; or
- Everyone will see how sad I am; or
- May Yahweh punish me if I do not fast until after sunset today.

Continue the drama.

Joab's men like that David mourns Abner.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab's men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- David showed proper respect for Abner; or
- David truly mourns Abner; or
- I trust that David did not kill Abner.

Continue the drama.

The people near David and in the rest of Israel believe that David was not involved in Abner's murder.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the people in Hebron, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We trust David did not want someone to kill Abner; or
- David shows respect to Abner and mourns Abner properly.

Ask the person playing the people in Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We do not think that David wanted to kill Abner; or
- David honoured Abner when people killed Abner.

Continue the drama.

David reminds his trusted servants that Abner was a great man and a commander of people. David does not have the power to punish Joab and Abishai, but David calls on Yahweh to bring justice and punishment.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I hope that my people know how important Abner was; or
- I do not have enough power to challenge Joab and Abishai; or
- I am worried that Joab and Abishai do not respect me as king; or
- I hope people see that I want to be a different kind of king. I want to show that I love people; or
- I trust Yahweh will punish Joab and Abishai for murdering Abner.

Ask the people playing David's servants, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are relieved that David is not a revengeful person; or
- David is a good king, and David is wise to trust Yahweh.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 3:31–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David told Joab and Joab's men to tear their clothes and put on sackcloth.

Stop here and look at a picture of sackcloth as a group, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **sackcloth**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David told Joab and Joab's men to **mourn** and walk in front of Abner's body. Use the same word or phrase for mourn as you used in previous passages.

David followed Abner's body on the bier, the special bed for a dead body.

Stop here and look at a picture of a bier as a group, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **bier**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The people buried Abner at Hebron, and King David wept at Abner's grave or tomb. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary. A grave is a general term for a "place where they bury people."

Stop here and look at a picture of graves or tombs from the time of David in Israel, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **grave**. Look up grave in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David sang a **lament**, a sad song, for Abner. Use the same word for lament as you used in previous passages. For more information on lament, refer to the Master Glossary.

David asked the people, "Should Abner have died as a fool dies?" David is talking about a lawless person, someone who lives outside of Israel's laws and customs.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **fool**. Look up fool and lawlessness in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

In the lament, David says that Abner's feet were not fettered, which means that no one bound or tied his feet with chains or any other metal object.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **fettered**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David sings that wicked men, or unjust men, killed Abner. Wicked means unjust or evil.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **wicked**. Look up wickedness in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Joab's people tried to get David to eat something, but David took an **oath**, or made a strong promise. Use the same word or phrase for oath as you used in previous passages, and look up oath in the Master Glossary for more information.

David swore by **God** in David's oath. Use the same word or phrase for God as you used in previous passages. For more information on God, refer to the Master Glossary.

Joab's men and everyone in Hebron and **Israel** were pleased by David mourning Abner and knew that David did not help to **murder** Abner. Use the same words or phrases for Israel and murder as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

David talked to his men, people who served David, and asked them if they knew that a **commander**, a prince, had fallen, or died, on that day. Use the same word or phrase for commander as you used in previous passages.

David is the **anointed king**. Use the same phrase for anointed king as you have used in previous passages. For more information on king and anoint, refer to the Master Glossary.

David asks **Yahweh** to repay the evildoer according to his evil deeds. Yahweh is the personal name for God. In this passage, God is called Yahweh. Be sure to translate Yahweh in the same way as you have in previous passages, and remember that Yahweh is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **evil**. Evil is the opposite of good. An evil person willingly hurts someone else. For more information on evil, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 3:31–39

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 6:1–15

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 6:1–15 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:1–15 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:1–15 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This true story happens a short time after King David led the Israelite army to defeat their enemies, the Philistines. We do not know exactly where David was prior to this story. But we do know that, in those days, David lived in Jerusalem. In this story, David is peacefully getting the ark of God to bring it back to keep the ark

safe in Jerusalem. In the past, enemies of the Israelite people had taken the ark. Although the Israelites now had the ark back, David did not want enemies to take it again.

This story starts when David tells the 30,000 best Israelite soldiers to go with David to the town of Baalah to get the ark of God. People also called this town "Kiriath Jearim." David and the soldiers took about half a day to walk to Baalah.

Stop here and look at a map of Baalah and Jerusalem as a group. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller says that people call the ark of God by "the name, the name of Yahweh of hosts." This title shows that Yahweh has the power to rule everything on earth and in heaven. The storyteller also says that Yahweh sits above the cherubim, or the angels carved on the top of the ark.

Stop here and look at an image of the ark of God as a group. Discuss this question as a group: Tell of something or someone in your community that is a sign of God's presence or, perhaps, the presence of a local deity or god. How do you think this is the same or different from the ark of God? Pause this audio here.

David had the Israelites put the ark of God on a new cart to move the ark. We know from previous stories that Yahweh had told the Israelites that the only way to transport the ark is for Israelite priests to carry the ark using poles.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe a sacred object in your culture. What rules do you have for how people can interact with that object? What would happen if someone did not follow these rules? Pause this audio here.

A man named Abinadab lived on a hill in Baalah. From previous stories, we know that Abinadab's family had taken care of the ark of God at Abinadab's house for a long time, around 70 years. We do not know if Abinadab is still alive in this story, but we do know that Abinadab's family still lives at Abinadab's house. Abinadab's sons, Uzzah and Ahio, help to move the cart that carries the ark of God. Uzzah and Ahio guide the direction of the ark of God by walking beside and steering the oxen who are pulling the cart. Ahio walks in front of the ark. The storyteller does not mention exactly where Uzzah walks, but we know that Uzzah walks close enough to the ark to be able to touch it, probably on the side next to the ark or behind the ark.

Stop here and look at a picture of oxen pulling a cart as a group. Pause this audio here.

At the same time, David and the Israelites with David are celebrating in Yahweh's presence. The people are playing five kinds of musical instruments as they continue to move along with the ark. The Israelites are likely at least walking, and probably dancing, while they play these instruments. The first type of instruments the storyteller talks about are lyres. Lyres are stringed instruments similar to a very small harp.

Stop here and look at a picture of a lyre as a group. Pause this audio here.

The second type of instruments the storyteller talks about are harps. Harps are stringed instruments, similar to lyres but larger and with more strings.

Stop here and look at a picture of what this kind of harp may have looked like as a group. Pause this audio here.

The third type of instruments the storyteller talks about are timbrels. Timbrels are a small, handheld drum similar to a tambourine but without rattles.

Stop here and look at a picture of what a timbrel may have looked like as a group. Pause this audio here.

The fourth type of instruments the storyteller talks about are sistras. A musician shakes the sistras to make the parts of the instrument hit together for a rattling sound.

Stop here and look at a picture of what a sistras may have looked like as a group. Pause this audio here.

The fifth type of instruments the storyteller talks about are cymbals. Musicians hold two cymbals and strike them together to make a high-pitched sound.

Stop here and look at a picture of cymbals as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what kinds of instruments people in your culture might use to worship God or local gods. Pause this audio here.

David and the Israelites continue moving the ark and celebrating. The group arrives at a threshing floor, a type of flat farm area where farmers prepared grain so that people could later use it to make food or animal bedding. People called this specific threshing floor "the threshing floor of Nacon."

Stop here as a group and look at an image of someone threshing grain. Pause this audio here.

At this threshing floor, the oxen pulling the cart that carried the ark almost caused the ark to fall off the cart. In other words, the oxen probably slipped or stumbled, making the cart tip so that the ark started to fall to the ground. Uzzah reached out to touch the ark and keep it from falling off the cart. We know from previous stories that Yahweh had told the Israelites not to touch the ark of God. So, in this story, Yahweh felt angry at Uzzah for touching the ark of God, and Yahweh killed Uzzah right there by the ark of God.

David felt angry because Yahweh had killed Uzzah. David may have been angry at Yahweh, or David may have been angry at Uzzah for touching the ark. So, David named the place where Uzzah died, "Perez Uzzah," meaning that Yahweh had punished Uzzah in this place. Later, the Israelites who heard about this story in the book of Samuel continued to call this place Perez Uzzah.

In this story, David is afraid of Yahweh now, and David also feels afraid that David is not worthy to take care of the ark of God. Instead, David takes the ark to the house of Obed-Edom, a Gittite man. Obed-Edom keeps the ark in his house for three months, and Yahweh blesses Obed-Edom and all the people in Obed-Edom's household.

Then someone comes to tell King David that Yahweh is blessing Obed-Edom because Obed-Edom is keeping the ark of God at Obed-Edom's house. So, David goes to Obed-Edom's house to get the ark of God and joyfully brings the ark to David's city. "The City of David" is what people called the part of Jerusalem where David lived at that time. Note that this is different than Bethlehem, which people also called David's city since David was born in Bethlehem. David gets the ark with the help of others who carry the ark of God.

The storyteller does not mention this directly, but priests also come to make sacrifices as David brings the ark to David's city. David tells the priests to sacrifice an ox and a young, fat cow as a gift to God. David tells the people who carry the ark of Yahweh to make this sacrifice after walking six steps. David does this to show respect to Yahweh.

Stop here and look at a picture of a young cow and an ox as a group. Pause this audio here.

Then David and everyone with David continue to take the ark to David's city. As the people arrive at David's city, David is dancing with all his strength. David is wearing a special soft cloth called a linen ephod. Priests usually wore this when doing important jobs related to worship. Although David is not specifically a priest, the king of Israel acted in the same role as a priest at times. So, David and all the Israelites bring the ark of Yahweh up to David's city, while they shout for joy and play trumpets they had made from the horns of rams, which are adult male sheep.

Stop here and look at an image of a linen ephod as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and look at a picture of a person playing a ram's horn trumpet. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group. Tell a story about a time when a bunch of people were really happy and celebrating something special together with lots of energy and excitement. What kinds of things did people do to celebrate?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:1–15 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: David and others start to bring the ark of God to Jerusalem.

In the second scene: Yahweh kills Uzzah because Uzzah touched the ark of God. So, David decides to stop taking the ark to Jerusalem. David takes the ark to the house of Obed-Edom.

In the third scene: David learns that Yahweh has blessed Obed-Edom's household because they kept the ark of God there. So, David goes to Obed-Edom's house and brings the ark of God to Jerusalem.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- The 30,000 Israelite men whom David chose as special soldiers
- Yahweh of hosts
- Abinadab's family: Uzzah and Ahio
- The oxen pulling the cart that carries the ark of God
- All the Israelites
- Obed-Edom and Obed-Edom's household
- And the priests who sacrifice the ox and the young cow

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one, David and 30,000 of the best soldiers of Israel go to the town of Baalah to get the ark of God. The people called the "ark of God" by the name "Name, the name of Yahweh of hosts." The storyteller uses the word "name" two times. Probably, the person who copied and wrote the story accidentally repeated the word "name." The storyteller describes the name as "the name of Yahweh of hosts." "Hosts" could refer to the armies of Israel or armies of angels in heaven or heavenly bodies, such as stars. Either way, this title for Yahweh emphasizes Yahweh's power over everything on earth and heaven. The storyteller also says that Yahweh sits above the cherubim, or the angels carved on the top of the ark. This refers to the fact that the Israelites believed that Yahweh lived in the space directly above the ark. So, people called the ark by Yahweh's name because the ark symbolized Yahweh's presence.

Then David had the Israelites put the ark of God on a new cart to transport it from the house of a man named Abinadab, who lived on a hill in Baalah. Abinadab's sons, or, possibly, grandsons, Uzzah and Ahio, help to guide the cart that carries the ark of God. The storyteller does not mention this yet, but we know that some oxen pulled the cart. So, Ahio and Uzzah are helping to direct the oxen. Ahio walks in front of the cart, and Uzzah walks close to the ark, possibly next to the ark or behind the ark.

Then the storyteller describes that, while Ahio and Uzzah help move the ark, David and the soldiers are celebrating, probably dancing for joy. They do this "before Yahweh," meaning near the ark, since the ark represents God's presence. The storyteller continues to describe the Israelites celebrating "with all their might" or, possibly, "with various kinds of wood instruments." The second meaning, about wood, might refer to instruments that people made from wood of a kind of tree that has green leaves throughout the year. Either way, we know that the Israelites are celebrating and playing instruments: lyres, harps, timbrels, sistras, and cymbals.

In scene two, the storyteller uses a word to show that something else is happening at this same time as David and the other Israelites are celebrating. The group arrives on a threshing floor. In those days, threshing floors were usually a high, hard, and flat area. Farmers used this area to hit and separate the part of the grain plant that people can eat from the part of the grain plant that people use for animal beds. In this story, people call this specific threshing floor, "Nacon's threshing floor." We are not sure what Nacon means or the exact location of Nacon's threshing floor.

Stop here as a group and look at an image of someone threshing grain at a threshing floor, if needed. Discuss any similar areas of land you might have in your culture. Then discuss how you will describe a threshing floor in this story. Pause this audio here.

As the oxen come to the threshing floor area, they stumble, and the ark may have been about to fall off the cart. So, Uzzah reaches out his hand to keep the ark from falling. Uzzah touches the ark.

The storyteller says that Yahweh's anger burned. In other words, Yahweh feels very angry that Uzzah touched the ark. So, Yahweh instantly kills Uzzah right there next to the ark of God. The passage does not describe how Yahweh kills Uzzah. The Israelites do not see Yahweh, but the Israelites do see Uzzah's dead body next to the ark of God.

Stop here as a group and talk about a time when someone was very angry about what someone else did. How did you describe that person's anger? How will you describe Yahweh's anger here? Pause this audio here.

Stop here as a group and talk about a time when someone died suddenly because of their own bad choice. Discuss how you will describe how Uzzah died. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller then says that David feels angry because Yahweh killed Uzzah. David named the place where Uzzah died, "Perez Uzzah" or "the breach of Uzzah." A breach is a break in a city wall. Perhaps Yahweh's anger burst out at Uzzah like people break through a city wall in a battle. This means Yahweh had punished Uzzah in this place. The Israelites continue to call the place Perez Uzzah even at the time when the storyteller writes this story.

Stop here and discuss as a group what you will call Perez Uzzah, or "the breach of Uzzah." How do you talk about how David felt angry because Yahweh punished Uzzah? Pause this audio here.

David felt afraid of Yahweh "that day" when Uzzah died. David said, "How can the ark of Yahweh come to me?" David did not expect anyone to answer this question. David was saying that David could not take the ark to David's city after what had happened. So, instead, David takes the ark to the house of a man named Obed-Edom. The storyteller tells us that Obed-Edom is a Gittite man. A Gittite is someone from a city that people called "Gath." We do not know for sure what people group Obed-Edom comes from. Obed-Edom keeps the ark of Yahweh in his house for three months, and Yahweh blesses Obed-Edom and all the people in Obed-Edom's household.

In scene three, David learns that Yahweh has blessed Obed-Edom's household because of the ark of God. So, David goes to Obed-Edom's house to get the ark of Yahweh. David celebrates joyfully as he and the other Israelites bring the ark of God to David's city in Jerusalem. David tells the people who carry the ark of Yahweh to sacrifice an ox and a young, fat cow after walking six steps. We do not know for sure if David tells people to make sacrifices after every six steps or just after the first six steps.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss how you will translate how often David tells people to make the sacrifices. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller tells us that David is wearing a linen ephod, a special type of clothing that priests usually wear for important events. Linen is a soft, lightweight fabric. An ephod is what priests usually wore over other clothes. A priest usually wore the ephod on top of other clothes by tying the straps of the ephod over his shoulders and around his waist. Ephods did not cover the whole body. David is also dancing with all of his strength. All the house of Israel, meaning all the Israelites who are there at that time, bring the ark of Yahweh into the city, while people play trumpets and shout for joy.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what someone in your culture dancing with all their strength might look like. How do you think this was the same or different than how David is dancing in this story? How can you describe David's action naturally in your language? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what it sounds like for people to shout with joy, or to make joyful noises. How will you describe this in this story? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:1–15 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- The 30,000 Israelite men whom David chose as special soldiers
- Yahweh of hosts
- Abinadab's family: Uzzah and Ahio
- The oxen pulling the cart that carries the ark of God
- All the Israelites
- Obed-Edom and Obed-Edom's household
- And the priests who sacrifice the ox and the young cow

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David and 30,000 of Israel's best soldiers go to Baalah to get the ark of God. The ark represents all-powerful Yahweh. The Israelites then put the ark of God on a cart in order to transport it from the hill where a man named Abinadab had kept the ark at his house. Abinadab's sons or grandsons guided the cart. Ahio walked in front, and Uzzah also walked near the ark.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I clearly told the Israelites that only Israelite priests could carry the ark on poles. David and the other Israelites are disobeying me by putting the ark on a cart; or
- The Israelites are dishonoring me. I am all-powerful, but the Israelites are not listening to me.

Continue the drama.

David and all the Israelites with David are celebrating in Yahweh's presence. The Israelites play lyres, harps, timbrels, sistras, and cymbals as part of their celebration.

Pause the drama. Ask the person or people playing David and the Israelites, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I, David, am starting my time as king. I can do a great thing by getting the ark back for the Israelites; or
- We are so excited and happy that we have the ark of God after we lost access to it for three generations; or
- We want to celebrate because we are finally in Yahweh's presence again; or
- We want to praise Yahweh for the return of the ark of God to the Israelites.

Continue the drama.

Then David and the other Israelites arrived with the ark of God at the threshing floor of Nacon. The oxen pulling the cart stumbled, and Uzzah reached out to stop the ark from falling to the ground.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Uzzah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The ark of God is special and should not touch the ground; or
- I know that I am not supposed to touch the ark, but I do not want the ark to fall; or
- I want to touch the ark! Surely Yahweh will not be angry with me because I am saving the ark from falling!

Continue the drama.

Yahweh felt very angry at Uzzah for Uzzah's error of touching the ark. So, Yahweh took Uzzah's life right away. Uzzah died right next to the ark.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The Israelites already disobeyed me by putting the ark on a cart instead of having Israelite priests carry the ark. Now Uzzah has done a terrible thing by touching the ark; or
- No person is supposed to directly touch the ark because they are not completely good like I am; or
- Uzzah's consequence for his own bad choice is death.

Continue the drama.

David felt angry because Yahweh killed Uzzah. Because of this, David thought that David could not continue to take the ark of Yahweh to David's city. Instead, David took the ark of Yahweh to Obed-Edom's house.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am not good like Yahweh. I do not deserve to bring the ark to my city; or
- I am terrified of Yahweh because of Yahweh's power; or
- I feel guilty because I took part in the disobedience to Yahweh that led to Uzzah's death; or
- I do not want to die or be responsible for anyone else dying because of the ark of Yahweh.

Continue the drama.

Yahweh blessed everyone in Obed-Edom's house the whole three months that Obed-Edom kept the ark there.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Obed-Edom is taking good care of my ark. I want to bless Obed-Edom; or
- When people spend time in my presence, I will bless them.

Continue the drama.

Someone came to tell David about how Yahweh had blessed everyone and everything in Obed-Edom's house because the ark of God was at Obed-Edom's house.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Obed-Edom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It is a joy to stay near Yahweh's presence; or
- Praise Yahweh for blessing us!

Continue the drama.

So David joyfully goes to bring the ark of God from Obed-Edom's house to David's city. After carrying the ark of Yahweh for six steps, the Israelites sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf. David is wearing a linen ephod and dancing with David's strength before Yahweh. David and the Israelites bring the ark of Yahweh into David's city while people play ram's horn trumpets and shout for joy.

Pause the drama. Ask the person or people playing David and the Israelites, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Wow! Yahweh is amazing! or
- We must praise and celebrate that we have the ark of Yahweh again!

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- David and the Israelites obeyed me this time and followed my instructions for how to carry the ark; or
- I am pleased with David and the Israelites for taking better care of the ark this time.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:1–15 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David gathered 30,000 chosen men of **Israel**. Here, Israel refers to the Israelites or people who are descendants of Abraham. The Israelites call their land "Israel." This means that, in this story, David selected the best soldiers to represent the people of Israel. Use the same word or phrase for Israel or Israelites as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israelites, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you used for Israel in previous passages.

This story tells us about King David and the Israelite army moving the ark of God from **Judah** to **Jerusalem**. Use the same words for Judah and Jerusalem as you used previously, and see the Master Glossary for more information about Judah. The ark was a special rectangular box that people had covered in gold. Yahweh had told Moses to put sacred objects in the ark. This included the tablets that Yahweh had written Yahweh's law on. The Israelites believed that Yahweh literally lived in the space directly above the ark, so the ark represented Yahweh's presence. Yahweh used the ark to remind the Israelites that Yahweh had promised to be with the Israelites.

Stop here and, if needed, look at a drawing of the ark of God as a group again. Discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the general term for God, and for the **ark of God**. Look up God and the ark of the covenant

in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words or phrases in another book of the Bible, use the same words or phrases that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

People called the ark of God by the name of "Yahweh of hosts, who lives above the cherubim." "Yahweh of hosts, who lives above the cherubim" is a full title for Yahweh, and so you should translate this phrase together. Yahweh is God's personal name. The Israelites said the ark belonged to Yahweh, and they also worshipped or prayed to Yahweh at the ark. The word hosts could refer to the armies of Israel or armies of spiritual beings in heaven or heavenly bodies, such as stars. This title emphasizes that Yahweh is the ruler who has all power. Yahweh is not only the ruler over a certain region, but of everything on earth and in heaven. A cherub was an intelligent, powerful angelic being. Cherubim is the word that means more than one cherub. Cherubim are guardians of sacred places. Cherubim are often symbols of Yahweh's presence. Cherubim have a body like a lion, wings like a bird, and a face like a human. The ark of God had two cherubim on the top of it. Yahweh's presence was on top of the ark, like how a king sits on a throne. Since the cherubim were on the top of the ark, Yahweh lived above the cherubim.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **cherubim**. Look up cherubim in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for the title "**Yahweh of hosts who lives above the cherubim**." If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Use the same words and phrases for Yahweh and "Yahweh of hosts" as you have in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

As the Israelites moved the ark of God, the Israelites played several instruments: lyres, harps, timbrels, sistra, and cymbals. Here is a little more detail about these instruments.

Lyres are smaller stringed instruments, similar to a very small harp. People in those days often played lyres and sang at the same time. People played the lyre strings with one or both hands by plucking or strumming. In those days, people made lyres with 3 to 10 strings. Musicians would pluck and strum these instruments. The Israelites likely made the strings for lyres out of the dried large intestines of sheep. People in those days likely made lyres by carving wood into curved shapes and then stretching strings across the wooden frame from bottom to top. Lyres have a larger base at the bottom of the instrument and a smaller bar at the top of the instrument. The lyre usually has two arms, or bars, on the sides so the musician can hold the instrument. Lyre strings usually have different thicknesses and lengths. The person playing the lyre plucks or strums the strings so the strings vibrate and make a sound.

Stop here and look at a picture of a lyre. Then discuss as a group what word you will use for **lyre**. Pause this audio here.

Harps are similar to lyres but bigger and with more strings. In those days, the kind of harps that people played looked and sounded different from harps today. The harps in those days had a wider and thicker bottom end of the instrument to help make the sound louder. People thought the shape of this harp looked similar to a wineskin container that has a larger bottom. So, people called this kind of harp by the same name as a wineskin container. This type of harp probably had around 12 strings.

Stop here and look at a picture of a harp. Then discuss as a group what word you will use for **harp**. Pause this audio here.

Timbrels are small, handheld drums. Musicians held a timbrel in one hand and hit the drum using their other hand. These instruments would have had a round, shallow frame with a thin piece of dried animal skin that people had stretched across the frame. The shallow frame meant that the drum did not make a very loud sound. The frame might also have had many tiny pieces of thin metal on it that would rattle when the musician hit or shook the instrument. People call this kind of drum a "tambourine" when it also has metal rattles on it.

Stop here and look at a picture of a timbrel. Then discuss as a group what word you will use for **timbrel**. Pause this audio here.

Sistra are instruments that people shake. People usually made sistra frames with wood or metal. Sistra had a tall frame with a rounded bottom and two straight sides that go upwards, curving slightly outward at the top

of the frame. People put rods going horizontally through the frame. Sometimes each rod had small rings or loops of thin metal on it. A musician held a sistra in their hand and shook the instrument to make the rods or metal rings rattle against the frame.

Stop here and look at a picture of sistra. Then discuss as a group what word you will use for **sistra**. Pause this audio here.

Cymbals are like thin, round metal plates. A set of cymbals has two identical pieces that musicians hit together to make a high-pitched, crashing or ringing sound. Musicians either hold one cymbal in each hand or tie two cymbals with some kind of string to different fingers on the same hand to hit together. Smaller cymbals make quieter sounds and larger cymbals make louder sounds.

Stop here and look at a picture of cymbals. Then discuss as a group what word you will use for **cymbals**. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh blessed all of Obed-Edom's **house** because Obed-Edom kept the ark of Yahweh. Here, house refers to all the people who lived with Obed-Edom. Later in the story, "all the house of Israel" played trumpets while the priests carried the ark of Yahweh into Jerusalem. Here, house refers to all the Israelites. For more information on house or **household**, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word that you used for house or household in previous passages.

When David decided to move the ark of Yahweh from Obed-Edom's house to **David's city**, David had the priests **sacrifice** an ox and a young, fat cow. A sacrifice is a gift to God. [People would give this kind of gift to God for different reasons. People often did this to worship God and to thank God. Another reason people gave this kind of gift to God was when people did something wrong and they wanted to ask God for forgiveness. For more information on sacrifice, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same words or phrases for City of David and sacrifice as you used in previous passages.]{.mark}

The priests sacrificed an ox and a young, fat cow or fattened calf. In those days, people gave extra food to a young cow or calf so that it would grow fat. Often, people would then kill and eat this "fattened calf" for special, happy occasions. Here, we know that the priests sacrificed the calf as a gift to God. For some sacrifices, a priest would kill an animal and then burn it. Yahweh also allowed the priests to eat some kinds of sacrifices. We do not know for sure how the priests did the sacrifice in this story.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **fattened calf**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller tells us that David is wearing a linen ephod, a special type of clothing that priests usually wear for important events. Linen is a soft, lightweight fabric. An ephod is what priests usually wore over other clothes. A priest usually wore the ephod on top of other clothes by tying the straps of the ephod over his shoulders and waist. Ephods did not cover the whole body. For more information about ephods, see the Master Glossary.

If necessary, look at a picture of a linen ephod. As a group, discuss what word or phrase you will use for **linen ephod**.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 6:1–15

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 6:16–23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 6:16–23 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:16–23 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:16–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This true story happens after David brought the ark of Yahweh to Jerusalem. We know from previous stories that David had married King Saul's daughter, Michal. Saul's daughter, Michal, is David's first wife. David married Michal when Saul was still the king of Israel.

Stop here and look at a map that shows Jerusalem as a group. Pause this audio here.

In this story, David and the Israelites bring the ark of Yahweh into Jerusalem. At the same time, Saul's daughter, Michal, looks down from a window and sees David. Michal sees that David jumps and freely spins around as David dances before Yahweh. In other words, David dances with all his strength in front of the ark of Yahweh because the ark represents Yahweh's presence. David celebrates that the Israelites have the ark of Yahweh in Jerusalem.

Stop here and look at an image of the ark of Yahweh as a group. Pause this audio here.

Michal feels such strong disgust for David's actions that Michal strongly dislikes David.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about someone who disliked or hated another person because of the other person's actions. Pause this audio here.

When the Israelites arrive in Jerusalem, they carry the ark to a special tent. David had set up the tent sometime earlier. This is a special place just for the ark of Yahweh.

David gives two kinds of gifts or offerings to Yahweh: a burnt offering and a peace offering. This means that David tells the priests to give specific gifts to Yahweh in front of the ark of Yahweh. In those days, Israelite priests made a burnt offering by burning all of an animal that the priests sacrificed. The Israelites make this kind of offering to show Yahweh that they are completely devoted to Yahweh. Also in those days, Israelite priests made peace offerings by burning certain parts of the animal that the priests sacrificed. Then the people worshipping Yahweh would prepare and eat the other parts of the animal. The Israelites make this kind of offering to show Yahweh that they want to restore the Israelites' relationship with Yahweh again.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what do people do to please the god or gods they worship? Pause this audio here.

After offering the burnt offerings and peace offerings, David blesses the Israelite people in the name of Yahweh of hosts. "Yahweh of hosts" means that Yahweh is the all-powerful ruler of everything. By using this name, David is asking Yahweh to bless, or do good to, the people of Israel. In other words, David is asking Yahweh to use Yahweh's power to bless the Israelite people.

Then, David gives out a few kinds of food to the many Israelites there, including all the males and females. David, likely through David's servants, gives each person a piece of bread. In those days, people ate bread as

their main food each day. In this story, David also gives another kind of food to the people. We do not know the exact meaning of the second thing that David gives to each of the Israelite people to eat or drink. Some possible meanings could be "a piece of roasted meat," "some wine," or "a cake of dates." David also gives each of the Israelite people a cake of raisins, meaning someone pressed a lot of raisins together into a clump. Then, the Israelite people go back to their homes.

Stop here and look at pictures of bread and a cake of raisins as a group. Pause this audio here.

Then David returns to his home to "bless" or greet his household after David has been gone. As David returns home, Michal, Saul's daughter, comes out to meet David. Michal tells David, "The king of Israel honored himself today!" Here, Michal is saying the opposite of what she really means. Michal means that she thinks King David dishonored himself. Michal continues to tell David, "David uncovered himself in front of David's female servants just like a foolish person uncovers himself." Michal is saying that, while David was dancing in front of the ark, the servant women could see David's private body parts. We do not know whether or not David accidentally showed his private parts. Michal is acting pridefully as Saul's daughter and not as David's wife. Michal is telling David that Michal thinks that David had behaved like a foolish or worthless person by acting like this.

David responds to Michal by saying that David was dancing for Yahweh. David continues to say that Yahweh chose David above Michal's father, Saul, and all of Saul's descendants. Yahweh appointed David as the leader over Yahweh's people, the Israelites. David is reminding Michal that Yahweh had decided that David, rather than Saul and anyone in Saul's family, would be king over Yahweh's people. Then, David says that David will celebrate before Yahweh.

David says that David will make himself even lower and humbler. David is saying that he will go on celebrating and praising Yahweh even though Michal may consider David's actions disgraceful. Then, David says that the female servants Michal spoke about will honor David.

Stop here and discuss as a group how leaders in your community show that they are humble, or that they follow their gods well. Pause this audio here.

Michal, Saul's daughter, had no children during her whole life. We do not know if God cursed Michal or if David no longer had sexual relations with Michal, or both.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:16–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: David and the Israelites bring the ark of Yahweh into Jerusalem city. Saul's daughter, Michal, looks out of a window and sees David wildly dancing. Michal dislikes David because of David's actions.

In the second scene: David and the Israelites put the ark of Yahweh in the tent they had prepared. David offers burnt offerings and peace offerings.

In the third scene: David blesses the Israelites using Yahweh's name and gives food to the Israelites. Then the Israelites go back to their homes.

In the fourth scene: David returns to his home to bless his family. Michal comes out to meet David. Michal talks about what she disliked that David had done. David tells Michal that David will continue to celebrate before Yahweh.

In the fifth scene: The storyteller tells us that Michal has no children in her whole life.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- The Israelites who bring the ark of Yahweh to David's city
- Michal
- Yahweh
- The male and female Israelites who welcome the arrival of the ark
- And David's female servants, meaning the young women who act as domestic servants for the men who are officials under David

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one, the storyteller begins the story with words that show that two things happen at the same time. David and the Israelites bring the ark of Yahweh into the city of David. At the same time, Saul's daughter, Michal, who is in a building, looks down out of the window and sees King David leaping and dancing before the ark of Yahweh. Michal sees that David is leaping and spinning around in a wild dance in front of the ark of Yahweh. We know from the previous story that David is wearing a linen ephod, which is a short, fine linen cloth with shoulder straps. We do not know if David is wearing anything else as well. We also know from a previous story that David is married to Michal. But the storyteller calls Michal the "daughter of Saul." This might emphasize that Michal is showing more support for Saul than for David. The storyteller mentions Michal looking out of the window first. However, we know that David is already dancing before Michal sees David from the window. Michal strongly dislikes David because David is dancing in this way.

Stop here and, as a group, act out the order of David dancing and Michal seeing David. Then discuss how you will tell this in your language. Pause this audio here.

In scene two, David and the Israelites put the ark of Yahweh in a special tent. David had earlier prepared this special tent for the ark of Yahweh. Most likely, this means that David told other people to set up the tent before David went to get the ark of Yahweh to bring the ark back to Jerusalem.

Stop here and discuss as a group the order of how you will talk about David preparing the special tent for Yahweh and then the Israelites putting the ark in the tent. Pause this audio here.

Then David offers burnt offerings and peace offerings to Yahweh on the altar that is right by the entrance of the tent that has the ark of Yahweh. Most likely, this means that David tells the priests to make these offerings since David is not a priest and so cannot do the offerings himself.

In scene three, David asks Yahweh's blessings on the very large group of Israelites, both males and females. David does this by using the name of "Yahweh of hosts."

Stop here and discuss as a group: First, tell a story about the most powerful person you know. Then discuss: Yahweh is more powerful than this powerful person and all the other powerful people in the world. How would you describe Yahweh's power? Pause this audio here.

Then, David gives three kinds of food to the large group of Israelites before the Israelites go back to their homes. Most likely, David tells his servants to give out the food since there are many people there. David gives each Israelite a piece of bread. David also gives another kind of food or drink. This second kind of food is either a piece of meat, some wine, or a cake of dates. Dates were a type of fruit that people could dry and press into a cake.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Remember that we do not know the exact meaning of the second kind of food. How will you describe the second kind of food? If you choose to say a cake of dates, look at the picture of dates. Pause this audio here.

The third kind of food David gives each Israelite is a cake of raisins, or clumps of dried grapes.

Then, after receiving the food from David, the Israelites go back to their homes.

In scene four, David returns to his home to bless his household. During David's time, people often gave a blessing as a way to greet another person. So, in this situation, the most likely meaning is that David is going home to greet the members of his family after his absence.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you describe David blessing, or greeting, his family here? Pause this audio here.

Saul's daughter, Michal, comes out to meet David. Michal speaks to David in an unkind way. Michal says about David, "The king of Israel honored himself today." Michal is talking to David, but instead of saying "you," Michal says, "the king of Israel," as if Michal is talking about David to someone else. Another way to say this could be, "David, you are the king of Israel. You honored yourself today."

When Michal says about David, "The king of Israel honored himself today," Michal is saying the opposite of what Michal really means. Instead, Michal is making fun of David in an angry, mean way.

Stop here and take turns as a group acting out what Michal says to David. Then discuss how you will say this in your language. How will you translate what Michal says to David when Michal is using words that mean the opposite of what Michal really means? Pause this audio here.

Michal continues to speak about David to David. Michal says, "He exposed himself today in front of his female servants, just like a foolish person shamelessly exposes himself!" Or, another way to say this could be, "David, you exposed yourself in front of your female servants just like a foolish person shamelessly exposes himself." In other words, Michal is saying that David's dancing had caused the linen cloth David was wearing to move in a way that the female servants could see David's private body parts.

David responds to Michal by telling Michal that David's dancing "was before Yahweh." In other words, David is saying that David was dancing for Yahweh. David continues to tell Michal that Yahweh, "chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as ruler, or prince, over Israel, the people of Yahweh." In other words, David is reminding Michal that Yahweh had chosen David instead of Saul and Saul's descendants to lead Yahweh's people. David then tells Michal, "And I will celebrate before Yahweh."

David says that David will make himself even lower and humbler. David is saying that David will even humble himself more to praise Yahweh. David says "in your eyes" or "in my eyes." Here, "eyes" means the way someone thinks about someone else. In other words, David is willing to make other people think of David as lower and more humble. We do not know for sure if David says, "your eyes," meaning Michal's perspective, or "my eyes," meaning David's perspective. Either way, the general meaning is the same. David is saying that David will go on celebrating and praising Yahweh, no matter what other people think about David. David finally says to Michal that the female servants Michal spoke about earlier will honor David.

In scene five, the storyteller tells us that Michal never had a child in her whole life, even "to the day of her death." The storyteller has written down this story from David's life sometime after Michal died. So, the storyteller knows and is telling the listener that Michal lived for quite a while after this story happened and that Michal did not ever give birth to a child.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:16–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- The Israelites who bring the ark of Yahweh to David's city
- Michal
- Yahweh
- The male and female Israelites who welcome the arrival of the ark
- And David's female servants, meaning the young women who act as domestic servants for the men who are officials under David

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David and all the Israelites bring the ark of Yahweh into Jerusalem. Saul's daughter, Michal, looks out from a window to see King David wildly dancing in front of the ark of Yahweh. Michal dislikes David for dancing like this.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Wow, Yahweh is so amazing! or
- I am so excited and happy that we have the ark of Yahweh again. I want to praise Yahweh with all my energy! or
- Yahweh is blessing us with Yahweh's presence!

Ask the person playing Michal, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am disgusted and embarrassed by David's foolish dancing; or
- David is the king but is wearing short, thin clothing like priests wear. When David is dancing, I can see some of David's private body parts. Other women can see this, too; or
- I am so offended by the way David is dancing that I do not want to even identify as David's wife; or
- I am the daughter of the former King Saul. My father never would have danced around wildly like David is doing. Now I understand why my father hated David; or
- David is the king, but David is not acting properly in the way that I think a king should act; or
- When my father was king, we did not care about the ark of Yahweh.

Continue the drama.

The Israelites then put the ark of Yahweh in the place inside the tent David had prepared before they brought the ark to Jerusalem. Then David tells the priests to give burnt offerings and peace offerings to Yahweh.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are so grateful to Yahweh for Yahweh's presence; or
- When the priests burn all of the animal in the burnt offering, we Israelites are saying to Yahweh that we are completely devoted to Yahweh; or
- The priests are making a peace offering by burning part of the animal, and then we Israelite worshippers will eat the other parts of the animal. This is like we are eating a meal together with Yahweh. We are doing this to say that we want to dedicate ourselves to Yahweh again. We want to restore our relationship with Yahweh; or
- In the time of Moses, the Israelites had a special tent for the ark of Yahweh. Giving Yahweh these gifts in the special tent for the ark of Yahweh is a way we can show Yahweh that we want to greatly honor Yahweh.

Continue the drama.

David then asks Yahweh of hosts to bless the Israelites.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am the king, but Yahweh has more power than I do; or
- I know that Yahweh loves me and the Israelites very much; or
- Yahweh blessed other people before because those people had the ark of Yahweh. I want to ask Yahweh to do the same for us.

Continue the drama.

David gives food to the many, many male and female Israelite people who are there, and then all those people return home.

Pause the drama. Ask the person or group playing the Israelites, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so grateful for Yahweh's presence in Jerusalem; or
- We have a wonderful king because King David wants to honor Yahweh, and King David is also taking good care of us.

Continue the drama.

David returns home ready to greet his family. But Michal, Saul's daughter, comes out and criticizes David. Michal says mean words and accuses David of exposing David's body in a way that the Israelite women saw David's private body parts. David responds that David was dancing for Yahweh. David also reminds Michal that Yahweh chose David as the leader of Yahweh's people, the Israelites. In fact, Yahweh chose David instead of Michal's father and Saul's other family members. David says that he will continue to praise Yahweh. David even says that David is willing to act in even more humble ways in order to praise Yahweh. David says that the women whom Michal said had seen David dancing will give honor to David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I never intended to expose my body. I was focusing only on praising Yahweh; or
- I was so grateful to Yahweh that I had to dance with all my energy. When people see me praising Yahweh like this, people will say good things about me and not bad things; or
- Michal does not care about Yahweh. Michal only cares about what people think about her. Michal does not understand what is really important. Michal does not understand the great joy of Yahweh's presence; or
- Michal does not care about our marriage. Michal is only thinking about what her life was like when Michal's father was king; or
- I will do whatever Yahweh wants because I love Yahweh. I do not care about what people think about me.

Continue the drama.

We learn that Michal never had children.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I chose David as king because of David's love for me. I rejected Saul and Saul's family because of Saul's disobedience to me; or
- I will not let Michal, Saul's daughter, have children. I do not [want Michal to have children because then the descendants of Saul would be mixed in with the descendants of David.] I will let David have children through a different wife.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 6:16–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David and other Israelites bring the **ark of Yahweh** into the City of David, or David's city. Here, David's city refers to Jerusalem. Use the same name for David's city as you have used in previous passages. Yahweh is God's personal name. The ark was a special rectangular box that people covered in gold. Yahweh had told Moses to put sacred objects in the ark. This included the tablets that Yahweh had written Yahweh's law on. The Israelites believed that Yahweh literally lived in the space directly above the ark, so the ark represented Yahweh's presence. Yahweh used the ark to remind the Israelites that Yahweh had promised to be with the Israelites. If needed, look up Yahweh and the ark of the covenant in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same words for "Yahweh" and "ark of Yahweh" that you have used in previous passages.

Michal looks out from a window and sees David dancing before Yahweh. Michal "despises David in her **heart**" or strongly dislikes David for doing this. The heart refers to the person's thoughts, feelings and will. Use the same word for heart as you used in previous passages. For more information on heart, refer to the Master Glossary.

David makes a burnt offering and a peace offering to Yahweh. A burnt offering is a kind of sacrifice that people bring to God. When a person brings God a burnt offering, the person kills an animal and burns this animal completely on an altar, which is a special place meant for bringing gifts to God. A peace offering, also called a fellowship offering, is an offering that people brought to God to restore peace with someone else.

Stop here and discuss as a group what you will call the **burnt offering** and the **peace offering** in this passage. For more information on offerings, fellowship or peace, and burnt offering, refer to the Master Glossary. Use

the same word or phrase for peace or fellowship offering, and burnt offering, as you used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh of hosts is a full title for Yahweh, so you should translate these words together as one phrase. Yahweh is God's personal name. The Israelites said the ark belonged to Yahweh, and they also worshipped or prayed to Yahweh at the ark. The word hosts could refer to the armies of Israel or armies of spiritual beings in heaven or heavenly bodies, such as stars. This title emphasizes that Yahweh is the ruler who has all power. Yahweh is not only the ruler over a certain region or country, but of everything on earth and in heaven. Use the same words or phrase for "Yahweh of hosts" that you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Yahweh of hosts.

David **blesse**s the Israelites. David is asking Yahweh to do good to the Israelites. [Use the same word for bless that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a full definition of bless.]{.mark}

In those days, the Israelites usually shared **cakes of bread** with each other at each meal. The Israelites ground up and roasted grain to make flour. Then the Israelites made bread by combining flour with oil to make a dough. The Israelites would bake this dough, meaning to slowly heat food at a high temperature to make it ready to eat. The Israelites made some kinds of bread with yeast, which made the bread grow bigger while baking. Israelites would make this kind of bread as loaves, or bigger chunks of bread to cut or tear apart for smaller pieces later. The process to make bread dough with yeast took a few days.

If necessary, stop here and look at a picture of bread as a group. Discuss what word or phrase you will use for a **cake of bread**. Pause this audio here.

Your translation may say that David gave the people a piece of meat, or a cake of dates. Dates were a fruit that people dried and pressed together to eat.

If you decide to say that David gave the people a cake of dates, stop here and look at a picture of dates as a group. Discuss what word or phrase you will use for a **cake of dates**. Pause this audio here.

People in those days would take grapes, a fruit that makes wine, dry the grapes in the sun, and then squeeze the grapes together to form a clump. We call dried grapes "raisins." The Israelites called the clump of raisins a "cake of raisins." The Israelites often used cakes of raisins for travel or for soldiers to eat during battle, since these cakes last for a while without the need to cook them. Sometimes, the people would soak the raisins in water and mix the raisins with grain to eat.

If necessary, stop here and look at a picture of raisins as a group. Discuss what word or phrase you will use for a **cake of raisins**. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller uses the word house or **household** to describe when David goes home to see his family and to talk about Saul's house, meaning Saul's descendants. [Look up household in the Master Glossary for more information, and use the same word that you have used in previous passages.]{.mark}

Michal talks about David's female **servants**, meaning the young women who acted as domestic servants for the men who were officials under David. A servant is a man or woman who works for another person, the master. Servants have low status in the community and must obey the master. Look up servant in the Master Glossary for more information, and use the same word for servants as you have used in previous passages.

Here, **Israel** refers to the Israelites or people who are descendants of Abraham. The Israelites lived in the country that people called Israel. Use the same word or phrase for Israel or Israelites as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israelites, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 6:16–23

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 7:1–17

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 7:1–17 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:1–17 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:1–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This story happens in Jerusalem sometime after the Israelites brought the ark of Yahweh into Jerusalem and put the ark in a tent. In those days, tents were temporary buildings.

Stop here and look at an image of a tent as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and look at a map of Jerusalem as a group. Pause this audio here.

In this story, King David lives in a special house that kings live in, which people call a palace. Yahweh has given David rest, or peace and safety from the surrounding enemy nations. So, David is spending more time than before in David's palace in Jerusalem.

One day, King David is talking with Nathan, the prophet. Nathan was probably a well-known prophet during David's time who gave messages from God to the people. This is the first time we hear about Nathan.

David says to Nathan that David lives in a house of cedar, but the ark of God lives in a tent. In those days, people liked cedar trees a lot because of these trees' beautiful green color and nice smell. Insects do not attack cedar trees, so cedar trees do not have bumps in the wood. The wood from cedar trees is expensive, and people use the wood from these trees to make strong buildings.

Stop here and look at a picture of a cedar tree as a group. Pause this audio here.

In response, Nathan tells David to go ahead with all the plans David wants to do. Nathan's response seems to show that Nathan agrees with David's idea.

But that same night, Yahweh speaks to Nathan. Yahweh tells Nathan to go and talk to Yahweh's servant, David. Yahweh tells Nathan to ask David, "Are you going to give me a house to live in?" Yahweh does not expect David to answer this question. Yahweh says this as a way to tell David that David will not build a house for Yahweh.

Then, Yahweh says that Yahweh has not lived in a house from the day Yahweh brought up the people of Israel from Egypt until now. You will remember that Yahweh brought the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt many years

before. Yahweh has been moving with the Israelites from place to place since that time, using a tent as a temporary place to live.

Then, Yahweh asks David another question. Yahweh does not expect David to answer this question either. Yahweh says to David, "All the time that I travelled with the sons of Israel, did I ever say to one of the leaders of Israel whom I told to shepherd my people Israel, 'Why have you not built me a house of cedar?'" In other words, Yahweh is reminding David that Yahweh had traveled for a long time with the Israelites. During that time, Yahweh had appointed leaders to shepherd or take care of the Israelites like a shepherd takes care of sheep. Yahweh never asked any of these leaders to build Yahweh a house from cedar wood.

Yahweh continues to tell Nathan what to say to Yahweh's servant, David. Yahweh calls himself "Yahweh of hosts," or all-powerful ruler. Yahweh says that Yahweh of hosts took David from the field where David took care of the sheep so that David would become the leader over Yahweh's people, Israel. Yahweh is emphasizing that Yahweh alone made David king over the Israelites. Yahweh says that Yahweh has been with David wherever David has gone. Yahweh also "cut off" all of David's enemies. In other words, Yahweh even destroyed all of David's enemies.

We do not know for sure the meaning or timing of what Yahweh says next. Yahweh either says that Yahweh has made or will make "a great name" for David, like the names of other great men on the earth. By "a great name," Yahweh means that many people will honor and respect David for a long time, just like people respect other famous people in the world.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe some famous people whom others respect. What do people say about those people? Pause this audio here.

Then Yahweh tells David that Yahweh set up a place to establish Yahweh's people, Israel. In this place, the Israelites will not shake in fear again, and the "sons of unrighteousness," meaning the Israelites' enemies, will no longer bother the Israelites. By "place," Yahweh may mean the land Yahweh gave to the Israelites or perhaps a specific place for worship. In other words, in this place, bad people will not hurt the Israelites anymore.

Yahweh then says that Yahweh took care of the Israelites, "from the time I appointed judges over my people, Israel." Yahweh had given the Israelites judges to protect and care for them since the time the Israelites started to live in the land Yahweh had promised to the Israelites. Yahweh continues to say that Yahweh gives David and the Israelites rest from all their enemies. In other words, Yahweh gives the Israelites peace and safety.

Then, Yahweh tells David that Yahweh will make a house for David. Yahweh is not referring to a building but to David's family. Yahweh is saying that David's family will continue for generations. Yahweh also means that David's family will continue to rule.

Then, Yahweh talks about the time when David will come to the end of David's life and die, or when David "lies down with David's fathers." In those days, most people buried family members in a place that was physically close to the dead person's parents, grandparents, and other earlier generations. So, Yahweh tells David that, at the time when David dies, Yahweh will make David's descendants lead after David is gone. Yahweh mentions a specific male descendant who will come from David's body, meaning that the descendant will come from David's family. Then Yahweh will set up that person's leadership. When Yahweh says that Yahweh will establish the kingdom of David's descendant forever, Yahweh is saying that Yahweh will make David's descendants strong as leaders forever. Yahweh says that David's descendant will build a house for Yahweh's name, or, for Yahweh. Also, Yahweh says, "I will set up the throne of David's descendants' kingdom forever." A throne is a special chair where leaders at that time sat to lead their people. This means that Yahweh will always keep the kingdom of David's descendant secure so that no one will overthrow David's descendant's power. Then, Yahweh says that Yahweh will be a father to David's descendant and David's descendant will be a son to Yahweh.

Stop here and look at a picture of a throne as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop and discuss: What do fathers do in your culture to treat someone like they are the father's son? And, what does someone do in your culture to treat someone like they are their father? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh continues to say that when David's descendant does wrong, Yahweh will correct David's descendant. Yahweh says Yahweh will correct David's descendant with "the rod of men" and "the stripes of the sons of men."

"With the rod of men" probably means that Yahweh will discipline David's descendant using the means of correction that people usually used in those days: hitting someone with a long stick. "With the stripes of the sons of men" refers to people painfully beating someone else with a rod. This is special language. Yahweh does not literally hit people with sticks. Instead, Yahweh will harshly punish David's descendant if that descendant does wrong things.

Stop here and look at a picture of a rod as a group. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh then talks about Yahweh's steadfast love for David's descendant. Yahweh says that Yahweh no longer chose Saul and so Yahweh removed Saul from being Israel's king. Yahweh is saying to David that Yahweh will never stop showing steadfast love to David's descendant, even though Yahweh did stop showing that steadfast love to Saul.

Yahweh emphasizes again that Yahweh will always keep David's kingdom strong.

Then, Nathan goes back to tell David everything Yahweh has said in the vision that Yahweh gave Nathan.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:1–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: The storyteller says that David lives in his palace. Yahweh has given David rest from all his surrounding enemies. David tells Nathan, the prophet, that David is thinking about building a house for the ark of God. Nathan responds to what David says.

In the second scene: That same night, Yahweh talks to Nathan in a vision. Yahweh tells Nathan what to say to David.

In the third scene: Nathan goes to David and tells David all the things Yahweh has said.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Nathan the prophet
- And Yahweh

Scene one starts with an introduction that shows that King David has been living in David's house, because Yahweh has given David rest from all his enemies. David says to Nathan, the prophet, that David lives in a cedar house while the ark of God lives in a tent. Nathan responds by telling David to go ahead and do all that David has in David's heart because Yahweh is with David. The storyteller is using the word "heart" to refer to David's thoughts and desires.

In scene two, the storyteller shows that something important is about to happen. On that same night, the word of Yahweh comes to Nathan. In other words, Yahweh speaks to Nathan. This happens after David and Nathan had talked earlier that day. Nathan has left David's palace and is probably at home. Yahweh tells Nathan to go and tell Yahweh's servant, David, the following message.

Stop and discuss: Yahweh told Nathan to give King David the message from Yahweh. How will you make it clear that this story is what Yahweh says to Nathan? Later, Nathan will go say these things to David. Pause the audio here.

Yahweh asks David if David will build a house for Yahweh to live in. By asking this question, Yahweh is telling David that David is not the one to build a house for Yahweh.

Yahweh says that Yahweh has not lived in a house since the day Yahweh brought up the people of Israel from Egypt. To this day, Yahweh has been moving from place to place in a tent. Then, Yahweh asks David a question. Yahweh reminds David that Yahweh moved many places with all the people of Israel. So, Yahweh asks David, "Did I tell any of the judges of Israel who I told to shepherd Yahweh's people Israel, 'Why did you not build me a house of cedar?'" In other words, Yahweh is saying that Yahweh never told the former leaders of Israel to build a house from cedar wood for Yahweh. A shepherd is a person who protects and takes care of sheep and goats. Because shepherds were so common in Israel, Yahweh often compared the way a shepherd protects his sheep to the way a leader protects his people.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you say that Yahweh wants leaders to "shepherd," or take care of, his people? Pause this audio here.

So, Yahweh tells Nathan to tell Yahweh's servant, David, this message from "Yahweh of hosts." Yahweh took David from the fields where David took care of the sheep so that David would become a leader over Yahweh's people. The title, "Yahweh of hosts," describes Yahweh as an all-powerful ruler.

Yahweh says that Yahweh has been with David wherever David goes and has cut off all David's enemies before David. In other words, Yahweh has destroyed all David's enemies. Yahweh is telling David all the ways that Yahweh has already helped David in order to show David how Yahweh will continue to honor David.

We do not know for sure the exact meaning of what Yahweh says next. Yahweh either says that some things have already happened or, perhaps, will happen sometime in the future. First, Yahweh says that Yahweh either has made or will make David a great name like the names of the great ones of the earth. Yahweh may be saying that he has already given Yahweh's people, Israel, a place. Or, Yahweh may be saying that he will continue to make for David a great name.

Next, Yahweh says that the "sons of wrongdoing," meaning the Israelites' enemies, will no longer harm the Israelites. Yahweh either has given or will give the Israelites rest from all their enemies. This could mean that Yahweh stopped the Israelites' enemies from attacking the Israelites from the time Yahweh appointed judges over Yahweh's people, the Israelites. Or, possibly, this means that Yahweh will do this sometime in the future.

Stop and discuss: Take turns acting out this part of the story. Then, discuss and decide how you will say what Yahweh said. Pause the recording here.

Then Yahweh says to David that Yahweh will make David a house. By this, Yahweh is not saying that Yahweh will build a building for David. Yahweh is using the word "house" to refer to David's family. Yahweh is saying that David's family will continue to rule over Israel.

Stop and discuss: In your culture, how do you talk about a family line of people, especially a king's or leader's family line? Pause this audio here.

Then, Yahweh tells David that when David's days are "fulfilled" or finished, David will "lie down with David's fathers." This means that one day, David will die and people will bury David next to his ancestors. When David dies, Yahweh will raise up David's descendant, or put David's descendant into power after David. Note that Yahweh is talking about one of David's specific descendants. This descendant will come from David's body, meaning that he will be David's son from David's own family. Yahweh will set up that person's kingdom forever. When Yahweh says that Yahweh will set up the kingdom of David's descendant forever, Yahweh is saying that Yahweh will make David's descendant's royal throne last forever. Here, the royal throne, or the king's special chair, symbolizes David's reign.

Stop and discuss: How will you describe David's reign here? In this case, the throne represents David's reign because the throne is a symbol of power. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh says that David's descendant will build a house for Yahweh. This means David's descendant will build a permanent house for Yahweh. Yahweh says again that Yahweh will set up the rule of David's descendant's kingdom forever. Yahweh said this earlier. Yahweh is repeating this to emphasize that Yahweh really will do this.

Then, Yahweh says that Yahweh will be like a father to David's descendant and David's descendant will be like a son to Yahweh.

Yahweh says that when David's descendant does wrong, Yahweh will correct David's descendant with the "rod of men" and "the stripes of the sons of men." When one person hits another person with a long stick or rod, the wounds on the person's body look like "stripes" on an animal or long, thin lines like the shape of the rod. In those days, this was a common way that people would correct someone for doing something wrong. So, Yahweh is saying that Yahweh will correct David's descendant. The phrase, "the sons of men," is another way of talking about people or "human beings." However, Yahweh says that Yahweh will not take Yahweh's loyal, or steadfast love, away from David's descendant. Yahweh did take Yahweh's loving kindness away from Saul. Yahweh removed Saul from leadership before Yahweh made David the king. When God shows this kind of love, he is showing loyal and kind love to his people.

Then, Yahweh continues to tell David that Yahweh will establish David's house, or family, and David's kingdom forever.

We do not know for sure what Yahweh says next. Yahweh might mean that Yahweh promises David that David's leadership will stay secure during David's lifetime. Or, Yahweh might mean that Yahweh will make sure that someone from David's descendants will continue to lead even after David dies. Then, Yahweh says that he will establish David's throne forever. Yahweh is saying again that Yahweh will always keep David's kingdom strong. Yahweh is repeating this several times in this story to emphasize to David that Yahweh will definitely do what Yahweh is promising David.

In scene three, Nathan goes to David and tells David all the words Yahweh has spoken to Nathan in his vision. A vision is a supernatural experience in which God reveals a message to a person when that person is awake.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:1–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Nathan the prophet
- And Yahweh

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

King David is living in his own palace. Yahweh has given David peace from neighboring enemies. So, David tells Nathan the prophet of David's desire to build a house for the ark of Yahweh. Nathan tells David to follow through with this plan because Yahweh is with David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I do not deserve to live in a permanent, strong home for a king while Yahweh lives in a temporary tent; or
- Yahweh is God and deserves so much more than I do as a sinful man; or
- I love Yahweh so much and want to show Yahweh my love and thankfulness by building a house for Yahweh.

Continue the drama.

Nathan tells David to follow through with this plan because Yahweh is with David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Nathan, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I know Yahweh loves and is blessing King David; or
- I think Yahweh will be happy that David wants to do a good thing by building a house for Yahweh.

Continue the drama.

But that night, Yahweh comes to Nathan in a vision. Yahweh tells Nathan to tell Yahweh's message to David, Yahweh's servant. Yahweh says that David is not the one to build a house for Yahweh. Yahweh traveled around with the Israelites in a tent. Yahweh never asked previous Israelite leaders to build a house for Yahweh. Yahweh reminds David that Yahweh brought David from the job of shepherd over sheep to lead Yahweh's people, the Israelites. Yahweh also says that Yahweh has gone everywhere with David. Yahweh stops Israel's enemies from attacking Israel and makes many people respect and know David. Yahweh also says that Yahweh will make a place for Yahweh's people so that their enemies will not harm the Israelites anymore, and the Israelites will have peace. Yahweh then tells David that Yahweh will make a house for David. Yahweh tells David that when David dies, Yahweh will bring one of David's descendants into power. Yahweh will have a relationship like father and son with David's descendant. Yahweh will discipline David's descendant. Yahweh will set up the line of David's descendants as rulers forever.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I do not need people to build a house for me. I am all-powerful. But, I will honor David's desire through David's descendant; or
- David is my servant, just like Moses, Abraham, and Jacob were my servants; or
- I love David and my people, the Israelites. I will continue to bless the Israelites by giving them a leader through David's descendant.

Continue the drama.

So, Nathan went to say to David all that Yahweh said in Nathan's vision.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Nathan, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I thought Yahweh would be happy that David wants to build a house for Yahweh. I was wrong. I will obey Yahweh and tell this message to King David; or
- Wow! Yahweh is doing something much more amazing for the Israelites than David had planned to do for Yahweh!

Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel disappointed that I will not build a house for Yahweh, but I know that Yahweh's plan is always better than my plan. I also feel excited that my descendant will build a house for Yahweh; or
- I feel both humbled and grateful to Yahweh for the blessing that Yahweh will make my descendant a leader forever.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:1–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In this story, David is the **king**. Use the same word for king that you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about king.

This story uses the word "house" in different ways. First, the storyteller talks about David's house, or the palace where King David lives. Next, David and Yahweh talk about the house that David wants to build for Yahweh using wood from cedar trees. In both cases, "house" refers to a physical building.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **house** when house refers to a physical building. Use the same word for a king's house, or palace, that you have used in previous passages. Pause this audio here.

Later in the story, Yahweh talks about building a house for David. This time, Yahweh is referring to setting up David's household, meaning David's descendants, as leaders for the Israelites forever. Here, use the same word or phrase for **house of David** as you used in previous passages. If needed, look up "house of David" in the Master Glossary for more information.

Yahweh is God's personal name. Use the same word for Yahweh that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for a full definition of Yahweh.

David wants to build a house for the **ark of God**. Sometimes the storyteller calls the ark the "ark of the covenant" or the "ark of Yahweh," but these are different titles for the same thing. Use the same word or phrase for ark of God as you have used in previous passages, and refer to ark of the covenant in the Master Glossary for more information.

Cedar trees are a kind of tree that has thin, green leaves throughout the year. People call the leaves of cedar trees "needles," similar to the shape of a needle people use to sew clothes. Instead of flat and wide leaves like the leaves on most trees, cedar tree needles are long and thin, and they grow in bunches. This helps the tree leaves stay green all year, even in cold weather. Many people think cedar trees are beautiful because of the green color. Cedar trees have light-brown colored wood with a pretty pattern. The natural oil in cedar wood keeps insects away, prevents rot, and makes the wood smell very nice. People like to use cedar wood to build buildings or furniture since it often tends to last longer than many other kinds of wood.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use to describe **cedar trees** and **cedar wood**. Pause this audio here.

David tells Nathan about David's plan to build a house for the ark of Yahweh. The prophet Nathan tells David to do what David "has in David's heart to do." A prophet is someone who speaks God's message to other people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **prophet** here. Look up prophet in the Master Glossary for more information. Look at how you have already translated the word prophet. Pause this audio here.

The **heart** refers to the person's thoughts, feelings and will. Use the same word for heart as you used in previous passages. For more information on heart, refer to the Master Glossary.

That night, the word of Yahweh came to Nathan. This means that God spoke directly to Nathan and revealed what he wanted from David, Yahweh's **servant**. Use the same word or phrase for servant as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about servant.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate **Word of Yahweh**. If you have translated this phrase in a previous book of the Bible, use the same phrase here. For more information, see "Word" in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh refers to himself as "**Yahweh of hosts**." This is a full title for Yahweh, so you should translate these words together as one phrase. Yahweh is God's personal name. The Israelites said the ark belonged to Yahweh, and the Israelites worshipped or prayed to Yahweh at the ark. The word "hosts" could refer to the armies of Israel or armies of spiritual beings in heaven or heavenly bodies, such as stars. This title emphasizes that Yahweh is the ruler who has all power. Yahweh is not only the ruler over a certain region, but of everything on earth and in heaven. Use the same word or phrase for "Yahweh of hosts" that you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information.

Yahweh talks about how Yahweh took David from the job of **shepherd** to the job of leading Yahweh's people, **Israel**. Also, Yahweh talks about the **judges** or **rulers** who shepherded Yahweh's people. A shepherd takes care of, guides, and protects his sheep. Israel refers to the Israelites. Judges were the leaders that Yahweh chose to care for, guide, and protect the Israelites before the Israelites had kings. Yahweh is saying that the people leading the Israelites are like shepherds. Use the same words for shepherd, Israel, and judges or rulers that you have used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for the full definitions of shepherd, Israel, and judges.

Yahweh calls the Israelites' enemies "sons of unrighteousness or wickedness." When someone is righteous, they have a good relationship with God and with other people. Yahweh sees people as right in his sight when those people have a good relationship with Yahweh. So, righteous people are right with Yahweh. Remember that people can never be righteous on their own, or because they do enough good things. Only Yahweh makes someone righteous. So, your term or phrase for righteousness should not focus on doing good works. Unrighteous is the opposite of righteous people. Unrighteous people are wicked—they are not right with Yahweh. So, "the sons of unrighteousness" refers to the people who do not have a relationship with Yahweh. In this story, this phrase refers to the people, or enemies, who intentionally hurt the Israelites.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the "**sons of unrighteousness**." Refer to righteousness and wickedness in the Master Glossary for more information, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh says that he will establish or make strong the **throne** of the **kingdom** of David's descendant. Use the same word or phrase for throne and kingdom that you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about kingdom.

Yahweh talks about disciplining or correcting David's descendant with a rod. In those days, people used a rod, or staff, as a tool. For example, shepherds used a long stick made from a young tree to fight off predators that tried to kill the sheep. People also used this kind of rod to hit someone when they corrected that person.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **rod**. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh talked about his steadfast love, or loyal love, toward David's descendants. When Yahweh steadfastly loves someone, Yahweh shows kindness and mercy even if the person does not show kindness and mercy. Yahweh loves the person so much that even if they become unfaithful in their relationship with Yahweh, Yahweh will keep Yahweh's promise to that person. Yahweh's steadfast love, or loving kindness, is an important idea throughout the Old Testament. Yahweh always shows this love to his people. Yahweh also expects this kind of love from his people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **steadfast love**. Look up "steadfast love" in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated steadfast love in another book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 7:1–17

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 7:18–29

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 7:18–29 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:18–29 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:18–29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In the previous story, David said he wanted to build a house for the ark of God. Yahweh gave a message to David through Nathan, the prophet. Yahweh told David that Yahweh would make people from David's family leaders forever.

This true story happens after Nathan has shared Yahweh's message with David. This story happens in the tent where the Israelites kept the ark of God. David is talking to Yahweh after David hears Yahweh's message from Nathan, the prophet.

The story starts when King David goes in and sits before Yahweh. This means that David goes into the tent where the ark of God is. The ark of God symbolized Yahweh's presence. Then, David says to Yahweh, "I and my family are not important enough that you have done such great things for me, even until now." David again calls his family his house, and David says that Yahweh has brought David far, or Yahweh has made David to be in a high position. David calls Yahweh, "Lord, or master, Yahweh." So, when David asks, "Who am I?" and "What is my house?" David is not asking a question. David is saying that David does not feel that he and his family deserve the good things Yahweh has done for David's family.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when someone gave another person something that person did not deserve. Pause this audio here.

David continues to pray to Yahweh. David says that what Yahweh did for David and David's family is a "small thing" to Yahweh. In other words, David knows Yahweh is very powerful and can do even more amazing things than bless David's family.

David says that Yahweh has also talked about "the house of Yahweh's servant in the distant future." Here, David humbly calls himself Yahweh's servant to show respect to Yahweh. So, David is talking about what Yahweh said will happen with David's family for a long time in the future.

Then, David says to Lord Yahweh that "this is the law," or the customs of people. We do not know exactly what David means here. David might be showing humility that Yahweh has done this great thing, or David might be saying that Yahweh's decisions change people's future.

Then David says, "And what more can David say to you? For you know your servant, Lord Yahweh!" Instead of saying "I" to refer to himself, David is calling himself "David" and "Yahweh's servant" as a sign of respect for God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do people in your culture talk to someone in authority to show that they have great honor and respect for that leader? Pause this audio here.

David does not expect Yahweh to answer when David asks, "And what more can David say to you?" Also, David does not mean that David cannot talk to God anymore. David is likely saying that David cannot ask Yahweh for anything better than what Yahweh has already done for David. Yahweh said these things will happen, Yahweh wanted to do these great things, and Yahweh is letting David know what will happen before it happens.

Then David tells Yahweh, "You are great, Lord Yahweh. No one else is like you. You are the only true God. I know this because everything that we have heard about you proves this."

David says that no other nation on earth is like "your people Israel, whom Yahweh has rescued." David is talking about the time in history when Yahweh freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. David continues to talk about how people respected Yahweh because Yahweh did something great when he rescued the Israelites. David explains how many people know the great thing Yahweh did when Yahweh rescued the Israelites. Because of this, people respect Yahweh himself, the land that Yahweh has given to the Israelites, and the Israelite people.

David says to Yahweh that Yahweh made the Israelites, "Your people forever. You, Yahweh, became their God." This refers to how Yahweh made a relationship with the people of Israel, who then committed to Yahweh as their God.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a great leader who did many good things for his or her people. What kinds of things do you talk about when you want to talk about the good things that the leader did? Pause this audio here.

David then asks that Yahweh will make sure that Yahweh's promise to David and David's family will come true, and that no one will change this.

Then, David talks about how people will praise Yahweh forever by saying, "Yahweh of hosts is the God who guides Israel."

David asks that Yahweh will keep David's family's rule safe so that David's family can continue as leaders.

David says, "Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, you have revealed something to me, your servant, by saying that you will build a house for me. This is why I have found the courage to say this prayer to you." In other words, David has the courage to pray boldly to Yahweh because Yahweh already made this great promise to David about making David's descendants leaders.

Then, David says, "Lord Yahweh, you are God. You always do everything you promise. And you have promised a good thing to your servant." David again refers to himself as Yahweh's "servant." David is saying that David knows Yahweh will keep Yahweh's promise that David and his descendants will rule over a peaceful Israel.

David says to Yahweh, "Please bless my house so that it continues forever in your presence." David wants Yahweh to bless David's descendants as they rule over the Israelites in the future.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:18–29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: David goes into the tent where the ark of God is and starts a long prayer to Yahweh. David begins the prayer by thanking Yahweh for Yahweh's blessing on David's family.

In the second scene: David praises Lord Yahweh as the one faithful, true God who has guided the Israelites.

In the third scene: David asks Yahweh to continue to show this faithfulness by keeping Yahweh's promise to bless David's family.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- And Yahweh

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

T[his story begins with a change of scene]{.mark}. King David goes into the tent where the ark of God is to pray in the presence of Yahweh. David "sits before Yahweh." In other words, David is preparing to spend a long time talking with Yahweh.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: David is about to say a very long prayer to Yahweh. David is speaking to Yahweh with a lot of respect and humility. Take turns acting out how you think David might be sitting before the ark of Yahweh. Then discuss what word or phrase you will use to describe this. Pause this audio here.

David asks Yahweh a question that David does not expect Yahweh to answer. David says to Yahweh, "Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my house, that you have brought me this far?" David's question is a way to say that David does not feel he and his family deserve the good things Yahweh has done for them.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: David asks many questions during this prayer to Yahweh. David does not expect Yahweh to answer these questions. Instead, by using this kind of question, David is showing that what David is saying is something that David deeply believes and thinks is important. Take turns in the group telling stories about something very important to you. Pay attention to the different ways each person shows something is important. Pause this audio here.

David calls Yahweh, "Lord Yahweh." Lord means "master." A lord has authority over other people and deserves for people to give him respect. David also calls Yahweh by the personal name for God, "Yahweh." David is saying Yahweh has authority over David.

Stop and discuss this question as a group. David uses "Lord Yahweh" here and many other times in this prayer to speak politely to Yahweh. In your culture, how do people show respect to God, or to local deities or gods? Pause this audio here.

David says, "What is my house?" David means he does not feel that David and David's descendants deserve Yahweh's blessing. David says that Yahweh has brought David this far. David is saying Yahweh has done many things for David. Not only did Yahweh make David the king, but Yahweh also promised that Yahweh would make David's descendants rulers over Israel forever.

Stop and discuss as a group some possible ways you can describe what Yahweh did for David. Pause this audio here.

David says, "This was a small thing in your eyes, Lord Yahweh." David believes that Yahweh sees all the things Yahweh has done for David. By "a small thing," David feels that Yahweh has greatly blessed David and David's

family, but David also knows Yahweh is very powerful and can easily do many more amazing things than even all the things he did for David.

Then David says that Yahweh also talked about "the house of Yahweh's servant in the distant future." Usually, a servant is a man or woman who works for another person, the master. Servants have low status in the community and must obey the master. Here, David humbly calls himself Yahweh's servant to show respect to Yahweh. So, David is talking about what Yahweh said will happen with David's family for a long time in the future.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: David refers to himself as "your servant" here and many other times in this prayer. David means that David is Yahweh's servant. In other words, David is talking about himself when David says, "your servant." Think about how you will talk about David so that people who hear the story will know that David is talking about himself and not someone else. Pause this audio here.

Then, David says to Lord Yahweh, "This is the law for people." We do not know exactly what David means here. David might be showing that David is surprised that Yahweh would do these kind things for people. David does not think he deserves for Yahweh to have done this great thing.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will say what David says here. Pause this audio here.

David asks Yahweh, "What more can David say to you?" David does not expect Yahweh to answer. David uses this question to say that David could not ask Yahweh for anything better than what Yahweh has already promised. Then David says the reason why David believes this: "For you know your servant, Lord Yahweh!"

David continues to explain the reasons that David believes Yahweh. Because of Yahweh's word, and Yahweh's heart, Yahweh is doing all these great things and letting David know. "Because of Yahweh's word" means that David knows Yahweh will do what Yahweh said Yahweh will do. The heart here represents Yahweh's will or emotions. This means that Yahweh is doing this because Yahweh wants to do it. We do not know for sure what David means when he says, "all these great things."

Now, David shows that what David is going to say next is important. David says, "You are great, Lord Yahweh. No one compares to you, the only true God. Everything we have heard proves this."

David then wants to show Yahweh's greatness. David asks Yahweh a long question. David does not expect Yahweh to answer this question. The first part of what David says is, "What other nation on earth is like your people Israel?" David is saying that no other nation of people on earth is like Yahweh's people, the Israelites. David continues his question by saying that Yahweh rescued the Israelites so they could be Yahweh's people. David also says that Yahweh "made a name for himself," meaning that Yahweh became famous because Yahweh did something great. David says that Yahweh is famous because, "You did a great thing for yourself, your land, and your people who you rescued for yourself from the country of Egypt and the gods in Egypt." In other words, many people know the great thing Yahweh did when Yahweh freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Because of this, people respect Yahweh himself, the land that Yahweh has given to the Israelites, and the Israelite people.

David says, "And you prepared for yourself your people Israel to be your people forever; and you, Yahweh, became their God." This refers to how Yahweh made a relationship with the people of Israel, who then served Yahweh as their God.

David says, "And now, Lord Yahweh, confirm forever the word which you have spoken concerning your servant and concerning his house, and do as you have spoken." Once again, David refers to himself as "your servant" to show respect to Yahweh. David is referring to the promise that Yahweh will give peace to his people and make David and his descendants rulers over Israel. So, David is asking Yahweh to keep this promise forever. David is not doubting that Yahweh will keep Yahweh's promise.

David says that people will praise Yahweh's name forever. When someone praises someone's name, they recognize that all of that person is very important, or great. David is saying that many, many people will know and respect Yahweh as "God over Israel," or the "God who rules and guides the people of Israel."

When David says, "You, Yahweh, did become their God," David does not mean that God became God at this point in time. David is talking about how Yahweh established a special relationship with Israel, and Israel recognized and followed Yahweh as their God.

David continues to ask that Yahweh establish David's house. Once again, David humbly calls himself Yahweh's servant. David is asking Yahweh to keep David's family's rule safe so that they continue as future leaders.

David says, "For you, Yahweh of hosts, the God of Israel, have uncovered the ears of your servant." David uses the term "your servant" to refer to himself as Yahweh's servant. Yahweh did not take anything off of David's ears. David uses the word "ears" to represent that Yahweh caused David to hear or learn about something new for the first time. This means that Yahweh revealed to David what would happen. David continues to quote what Yahweh had said, "I will build a house for you." Yahweh meant he would make David's descendants rulers. So, David is saying that Yahweh has caused David to know that Yahweh will make David's descendants rulers forever. David is not saying that Yahweh will build a physical building for David.

Stop and discuss: Think about ways to talk about Yahweh building David a house. How will you make sure that the listeners will understand that David is talking about David's descendants and not a physical building? Pause this audio here.

David says that he has found the heart, or that David felt brave enough to pray this prayer to Yahweh.

David says, "And now, Lord Yahweh, you are God, and your words are true, and you have promised this good thing to your servant." David is saying that Yahweh's words are trustworthy and that Yahweh promised David a good thing by promising that David's descendants will be rulers. Note that Yahweh was already God. Yahweh did not become God because of David's prayer.

David finishes his prayer by very politely asking Yahweh for something. Note that David calls himself Yahweh's "servant" again here. David asks Yahweh, "Please bless my descendants to continue in Yahweh's presence forever. You, Lord Yahweh, have made this promise and blessing, and what you say always happens. So, please bless my descendants forever."

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:18–29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- And Yahweh

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In scene one, King David goes into the tent where the ark of God is and starts praying a long prayer in Yahweh's presence. David says, "Who am I, Lord Yahweh, and what is my house, that you have brought me this far? This was a small thing to you, Lord Yahweh, because you have told me what you will do for my descendants in the

future. This is your law, Lord Yahweh." David says that David could not ask Yahweh for anything better than what Yahweh has already promised. David knows Yahweh will do what Yahweh said he will do because Yahweh wants to do it. David says that Yahweh let David know the great things that Yahweh will do.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Yahweh is the true God and my master. I do not deserve anything from Yahweh, but Yahweh has chosen to bless me and my family to be rulers for many generations; or
- I know Yahweh always keeps his promises and that Yahweh is powerful. If Yahweh says he will do something, I know Yahweh will do it; or
- Wow! I feel so humble and grateful to Yahweh!

Continue the drama.

In scene two, David continues his prayer to Yahweh. David praises Yahweh and says, "You are great, Lord Yahweh. No one compares to you, the only true God. Everything we have heard proves this." Then David gives an example of Yahweh's greatness. David says that no other nation of people on earth is like Yahweh's people, the Israelites, because Yahweh saved the Israelites so they could be Yahweh's people. David says that Yahweh gained a great reputation because many people know that Yahweh freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Because of this, people respect Yahweh himself, the land that Yahweh has given to the Israelites, and the Israelite people. David describes how Yahweh made a relationship with the people of Israel, who then acknowledged Yahweh as their God.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so happy to hear David thank me for how I have taken care of the Israelites; or
- Yes, I am the only true God and I will always keep my promises; or
- I love the Israelites and am so happy that the Israelites also love me.

Continue the drama.

In scene three, David continues his prayer to Yahweh. In this part of the prayer, David is asking Yahweh to make sure that what Yahweh has promised David's descendants will happen. Because of this, David says that people will respect Yahweh as the all-powerful ruler of the people of Israel. David asks Yahweh to keep David's family's rule secure so that they continue as leaders. David says that Yahweh has caused David to know that Yahweh will make David's descendants rulers forever. David says that Yahweh's promise made David feel brave enough to pray this prayer to Yahweh. David says that Yahweh's words are trustworthy and that Yahweh promised David a good thing by promising that David's descendants will be rulers. Finally, David says, "Please bless my descendants to continue in Yahweh's presence forever. You, Lord Yahweh, have made this promise and blessing. So, please bless my descendants forever."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I trust Yahweh's promise to give peace to the Israelites and make my descendants rulers over Israel. I want to ask Yahweh to keep this promise forever; or
- I know that my family cannot follow Yahweh if they follow their own ways. I know that we need Yahweh's help so that we lead in Yahweh's ways.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 7:18–29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

At the start of the story, David goes into the tent where the ark of God is. David "sits before **Yahweh**," or sits in front of the ark. Yahweh is God's proper name, the Israelites' personal name for God. Use the same word for Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

David calls Yahweh, "Lord Yahweh." A lord is a master over other people, who has full authority, and someone to whom people have to show respect. When you call someone "lord," you are saying that this person has authority over you.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **lord** or master. Use the same word for lord here that you have used previously. The word lord is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

David talks about his house often in this story. Look up **House of David** in the Master Glossary for more information, and use the same word or phrase for House of David that you have used in previous passages.

David often refers to himself as "Yahweh's **servant**" in this story. Usually, a servant is a man or woman who works for another person, the master. Servants have low status in the community and must obey the master. David humbly calls himself Yahweh's servant to show respect to Yahweh. Look up servant in the Master Glossary for more information, and use the same word for servant as you have used in previous passages.

David said that Yahweh has made this law for a human, David. David is surprised that Yahweh would do such a wonderful thing for David!

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about the **law** or instruction that Yahweh gave about David's house. If you use the word law in this story, see the Master Glossary for more information about law and translate law in the same way you have in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

David says that there is no **God** like Yahweh. Use the same general word for God that you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about the general word for God.

David said that no other nation of people on earth is like Yahweh's people, Israel. Here, "nation" refers to a group of people who belong together, live in the same area, and follow the same ruler.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **nation**. Look up nation in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Israel here refers to the Israelites or people who are descendants of Abraham. The Israelites lived in the country called Israel. Use the same word or phrase for Israel or Israelites as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israelites, refer to the Master Glossary.

David talks about how Yahweh rescued the Israelites from slavery in **Egypt**. Here, Egypt refers to the country and the Egyptian people who lived there.

David also mentions the gods in Egypt. This refers to the gods that the Egyptians worshipped. These gods are not the same as the one true God, Yahweh. We know from previous stories that Yahweh told the people of Israel not to worship or follow any other god but Yahweh.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **gods**. Look up gods in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David asks Yahweh to keep his promise, or his word, to David's family. In other words, David asks Yahweh to do what Yahweh says he will do.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate that David asks Yahweh to keep his **promise**, or his word, to David and David's family. Pause this audio here.

David says that people will praise Yahweh forever by saying that, "**Yahweh of hosts** is the God who rules Israel." "Yahweh of hosts" is a full title for Yahweh, so you should translate these words together as one phrase. Yahweh is God's personal name. The word hosts could refer to the armies of Israel or armies of spiritual beings in heaven or heavenly bodies, such as stars. This title emphasizes that Yahweh is the ruler who has all power.

Yahweh is not only the ruler over a certain region, but of everything on earth and in heaven. Use the same phrase for "Yahweh of hosts" as you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information.

David uses the word "heart" twice in the story. The first time, David is talking about Yahweh's plan or desire to make David's descendants rulers forever. In this example, the heart refers to Yahweh's thoughts, feelings, and will. Use the same word for heart here as you used in previous passages. The second way David uses the word "heart" is when David says that he has found the heart, or courage, to pray this prayer to Yahweh.

Stop here and discuss as a group: You may want to use the same word for **heart** here as you used in previous passages, or you may want to use a more specific word to describe the exact feeling of courage David had. Take turns acting out how David felt. Then discuss how you will describe the emotion that David is talking about here. Pause this audio here.

David asks Yahweh to **bless** David's house, or family. When someone blesses someone else, they do good to the other person. Use the same word or phrase for bless as you used in previous passages, and see bless in the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 7:18–29

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 8:1–14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 8:1–14 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:1–14 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, David responded to Yahweh's message from Nathan the prophet by praying to Yahweh in the tent in front of the ark of God. David lives in Jerusalem at this time.

Stop here as a group and find Jerusalem on the map. Pause this audio here.

This true story happens sometime after David has prayed to Yahweh in the tent. In this story, the storyteller talks about David winning against the Israelites' nearby enemies. Now we see the fulfillment of Yahweh's promises to David that David would defeat all his enemies.

In this story, the storyteller tells us that David attacks and takes control of the Philistines who live on the west side of the nation of Israel. You may remember from previous stories that the Philistines do not follow Yahweh and are enemies of Israel.

Stop here and look at a map of the Philistine area to the west of Israel as a group. Pause this audio here.

David takes control of Metheg Ammah from the Philistines. We do not know the meaning of the name "Metheg Ammah" for sure. It may be the name of a place that belongs to the Philistines. Metheg Ammah may simply mean the power of the Philistines. In that case, the storyteller is telling us that David has taken away the power of the Philistines.

Then David attacks the Moabites. Moabites are the people who live in the country that people call Moab. The Moabites lived on a very high, flat hill to the east of the Dead Sea.

Stop here and look at a map of the kingdom of Moab as a group. Pause this audio here.

David measures the Moabite soldiers by making each soldier lie down on the ground in three different lines. David orders David's soldiers to kill the first two lines of the Moabite soldiers. David orders David's soldiers to allow the third line of Moabite soldiers to live. This means that David's soldiers kill two-thirds of the Moabite soldiers. The remaining Moabite soldiers become servants to David and start bringing gifts to David. Here, "servants" means that the Moabites now follow David as their ruler. We do not know for sure what kind of gifts the Moabites bring to David, but we do know that these Moabites are giving these gifts regularly, not just one time.

David also attacks Hadadezer. Hadadezer's father is Rehob. Hadadezer is the king of Zobah. The storyteller says that David and David's men attack while "he" is on the way to gain power again among the people who live near the Euphrates River. In this case, we do not know for sure who the storyteller is saying seeks to regain power with the people near the Euphrates River. The storyteller is either talking about David or, perhaps more likely, Hadadezer. Hadadezer is the leader of a powerful political group in Aram. Today, the people call the area of Aram, "Syria." Zobah is on the northern side of Israel and is located in the Beqa Valley in Syria. Zobah is an important city with its own king in the region of Aram.

Stop here as a group and look at a map of Zobah and Aram during David's time. Pause this audio here.

David captures 1,700 of Hadadezer's horsemen. Horsemen are soldiers who fight while riding horses. This could mean one soldier rode on one horse. David also takes 20,000 of Hadadezer's foot soldiers. Foot soldiers are soldiers who walk in order to fight. Also, David hurts the chariot horses so that Hadadezer's soldiers cannot use the horses in battle anymore. David leaves only enough horses for David to use for 100 chariots. Note that some Bibles may say that David takes 1,000 chariots and 7,000 soldiers on horses from Hadadezer. However, David most likely took 1,700 soldiers on horses and 20,000 foot soldiers.

Stop here and look at a drawing of a horse pulling a chariot as a group. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller says that Arameans from the region of Damascus come to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah, to fight against David's army. These Arameans probably come because Zobah is one of the Aramean regions, and the Arameans want to help each other. David's army kills 22,000 Aramean soldiers.

Stop here as a group and look at a map of the region of Damascus during David's time. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group how people groups in your culture come to help each other during times of attack. Pause this audio here.

Then David sets up "pillars" in the Aramean kingdom of Damascus. A pillar is a very strong, tall post that people made out of stone or wood. These pillars are probably like the ones people use to build a military building, or "garrison," for soldiers. This means that David set up military posts and a way to control the Arameans there. The Arameans become David's servants and start bringing gifts to David. We do not know for sure what kind

of gifts the Arameans bring to David, but we do know that these Arameans give these gifts regularly, not just one time.

David takes the gold shields from the servants of Hadadezer and brings these shields to Jerusalem. Gold is a shiny, yellow-colored metal. Gold is expensive because it is hard to find and because it does not rust or turn brown when it gets old. David himself probably did not carry the shields. David most likely told his soldiers to do the work.

Stop here and look at a photo of a piece of gold metal as a group. Pause this audio here.

David takes a lot of different kinds of bronze items from the cities of Tebah and Berothai. Bronze is a strong, red-brown metal that people made from combining copper and tin.

Stop here and look at a photo of a piece of bronze metal as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and look at a map of Tebah and Berothai as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what people might find valuable to take from an enemy after defeating that enemy. Pause this audio here.

Then someone tells Tou, king of Hamath, that David has defeated Hadadezer's whole army. So, Tou sends his son, Joram, to greet King David. Joram blesses David for fighting against and defeating Hadadezer. Most likely, Tou takes this opportunity to show David that he is friendly. Tou and Hadadezer had been at war with each other, and now Tou sees his chance to become friends with David so that David will not attack him.

Stop here and look at a map of Hamath as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what kind of person your leader would send as an ambassador to another leader in another country. In this story, King Tou sends his son Joram. Who would you send? Pause this audio here.

Joram brings silver, gold, and bronze items to David. King David dedicates these objects to Yahweh along with all the other man-made silver items and gold items that David took from all the other nations that David had taken control of. These include the things David took when he defeated Hadadezer.

Stop here and look at a photo of a piece of silver metal as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop and discuss this question as a group. In your culture, what are the things people usually dedicate to God, or to local deities or gods? This can be something people dedicate at any time, not just wartime. What do people use these items for after they dedicate the items to God? Pause this audio here.

David defeats the enemies that surround the nation of Israel. These enemies include the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and the Amalekites.

Stop here and look at a map of the areas where the Edomites, Ammonites, Philistines, and Amalekites lived during David's time. Pause this audio here.

When David conquered the 18,000 Edomites, David made a name for himself, which means that many more people and countries around Israel knew who David was. People called the valley where the Edomites lived the "Valley of Salt." We do not know the exact location of the Valley of Salt. However, we do know that this refers to a valley with a lot of salt in the dirt, probably south or southwest of the Dead Sea. A valley is usually a large, lower area of land between two hills.

David puts pillars, or military posts, in Edom. A pillar is a very strong, tall post, probably like the ones people use to build a military building, or "garrison," for soldiers. This means that David sets up a way to control the Edomites there. All the Edomites become David's servants. We can see from David's victories that Yahweh gives David victory wherever David goes!

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: David and David's men defeat and take control over the Philistines.

In the second scene: David and his men defeat the Moabites and kill two-thirds of the Moabite soldiers. The Moabites that David allows to live become David's servants and start to bring tribute to David.

In the third scene: David and his men defeat Hadadezer, king of Zobah. Other Arameans from the region of Damascus come to help their fellow Aramean, King Hadadezer. David and David's men kill thousands of these Arameans. Then David starts to control Damascus. These Arameans become David's servants and start to bring tribute. The storyteller says that Yahweh gives victory to David wherever David goes. David and David's men take all the gold and bronze items they won from Hadadezer to Jerusalem.

In the fourth scene: King Tou of Hamath sends his son Joram to thank and give gifts to King David for defeating Tou's enemy, Hadadezer. David dedicates these articles to Yahweh, together with the silver and gold that he dedicates from all the nations David took control of.

In the fifth scene: David becomes famous. David kills thousands of Edomites in the Valley of Salt. David sets up control throughout all of Edom, and all the Edomites become David's servants. Yahweh gives victory to David wherever David goes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David and David's men
- Philistines
- Moabites
- Hadadezer and Hadadezer's men
- Arameans from the region of Damascus
- Yahweh
- Tou, king of Hamath
- Joram, Tou's son
- Ammonites
- Amalekites
- And Edomites

In scene one, the storyteller shows us that this story happens sometime after David prayed to Yahweh in the tent. The storyteller uses a special word to introduce something new that David is about to do. David "strikes" or "attacks" the Philistines in battle. David is successful when he attacks the Philistines, and so David takes control of the Philistines in this area. When the storyteller says that David did this, the storyteller means that David and the soldiers in David's army did this together. David and David's men also take control of Metheg Ammah from the Philistines. We do not know the meaning of the name "Metheg Ammah" for sure. It is most likely the name of a place that belongs to the Philistines, but we do not know where it is. Metheg Ammah may simply mean the power of the Philistines. In that case, the storyteller is telling us that David has taken away the power of the Philistines. When the storyteller says that David took control of Metheg Ammah, the storyteller actually says that David took this from the "hand," or control, of the Philistines. Here, "hand" refers to someone controlling something.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use to describe Metheg Ammah. Pause this audio here.

In scene two, David and David's men "strike" or "attack" Moabite soldiers in battle. David and David's men make the Moabite soldiers lie down on the ground. Then David and David's men measure the Moabite soldiers. David

measures two lines of the soldiers whom his men will put to death and one full line of Moabite soldiers whom David's men will keep alive. David's men use a rope to make the measurements. We do not know how long the rope is or how David's men make the measurements.

Stop here and look at a photo of a rope as a group. Pause this audio here.

In scene three, David and his men "strike" or attack Hadadezer, king of Zobah. David and David's men attack when "he" went to regain power at "the River." We do not know for sure if the storyteller is saying that David or Hadadezer went to regain power. In those days, the people knew the Euphrates River so well that they simply called it "the River." So, "the River" means the Euphrates River.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will say "he went to regain power at the Euphrates River." Pause this audio here.

David takes 1,700 of Hadadezer's horsemen soldiers and 20,000 of Hadadezer's foot soldiers. This means that David captures these soldiers. And David injures all the chariot horses so that the horses cannot run in battle anymore. However, before doing this, David keeps enough horses that can still run for David to use with a hundred chariots.

Then, other Arameans in the region of Damascus come to fight against David and his men in order to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah. Zobah is a city-state. A city-state is like an important city that also acts like its own country with its own rules and leaders. Zobah is part of a bigger group, or federation, of Arameans who all help each other. That is why the other Arameans come to help King Hadadezer.

David and David's men strike 22,000 Aramean soldiers. Here, "strike" means "kill." Then David puts garrisons in the Aramean territory of Damascus. The word "garrison" can mean a strong post, but really refers to a military base from which David can control the area. The remaining Arameans become David's servants and start to bring regular gifts to David. The storyteller says that Yahweh "saves" or "delivers" David wherever he goes. Here, "saves" or "delivers" means "gives victory." In other words, Yahweh causes David to have victory over David's enemies everywhere that David goes.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe what Yahweh did for David. Pause this audio here.

David and David's men take away the gold shields from Hadadezer's servants who carry the shields. David and David's men then bring these shields to Jerusalem. David also takes a lot of bronze items from Hadadezer's cities, Tebah and Berothai. Though the storyteller does not say this directly, we can guess that David also brings the bronze items to Jerusalem. Yahweh enables David to defeat and control other armies wherever David goes.

In scene four, Tou, king of Hamath, learns that David has "struck down" or "defeated" the whole army of Hadadezer. So, Tou sends his son Joram to "ask peace" from and "bless" King David. Joram also gives gifts from King Tou to King David because David has defeated Tou's enemy, Hadadezer. Tou and Joram do this because David has fought against Hadadezer and "struck down" or defeated Hadadezer. In those days, people often said "peace" as a greeting. Joram blesses or praises David because David defeated Tou's enemy. In other words, Joram is greeting and thanking David. The storyteller adds the information that Hadadezer had often fought battles against Tou. This means that Hadadezer and Hadadezer's army often attacked Tou and Tou's people.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe what Joram did when Joram greeted, praised, and gave gifts to David. Pause this audio here.

King Tou's son, Joram, brings "vessels," meaning man-made items of silver, gold, and bronze, as a gift to King David. King David dedicates these items to Yahweh. Here, "dedicates" means that David is giving the items to Yahweh to show that Yahweh is important. David also dedicates to Yahweh all the silver and gold from all the different people groups David took control of. These nations include the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and the Amalekites. David also brings items that David "plundered" or "took away in battle" from Hadadezer, the son of Rehob, king of Zobah. Note that David defeats these people groups in a different order than the storyteller mentions the groups here. The focus here is that David dedicated the items David took from these groups to Yahweh.

In scene five, David "made a name for himself" or became famous because David killed 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt. Throughout all Edom, David puts garrisons. Then, the storyteller emphasizes what David did by adding more detail that David put pillars, or military bases, up throughout all the Edomite area. In other words,

all the Edomites become David's servants. Once again, the storyteller says that Yahweh "saves" or "delivers" David wherever David goes. Here, "saves" or "rescues" means that Yahweh "gives victory." In other words, Yahweh causes David to have victory over David's enemies everywhere that David goes.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David and David's men
- Philistines
- Moabites
- Hadadezer and Hadadezer's men
- Arameans from the region of Damascus
- Yahweh
- Tou, king of Hamath
- Joram, Tou's son
- Ammonites
- Amalekites
- And Edomites

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David attacks and takes control of the Philistines. Also, David takes control of "Metheg Ammah" from the Philistines.

Then David attacks Moab. Moabites are the people who live in the country of Moab. The Moabites lived on a very high, flat hill to the east of the Dead Sea.

David measures the Moabite soldiers by making the soldiers lie down on the ground in three different lines. David's soldiers kill the first two lines of Moabite soldiers. David allows the third line of Moabite soldiers to live. These remaining Moabite soldiers become servants to David and start bringing gifts to David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the remaining Moabites, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We feel very afraid of David. We also feel grateful that David kept us alive; or
- We have to keep David happy by doing what David says and giving gifts to David; or
- Why did David let me live when others had to die? We all fought against the Israelites, so I did not deserve mercy any more than the rest!

Continue the drama.

David also attacks King Hadadezer, Rehob's son. David and David's men attack while "he" is on the way to gain power again among the people who live near the Euphrates River. David captures 1,700 of Hadadezer's horsemen and 20,000 of Hadadezer's foot soldiers. David keeps enough horses to pull 100 chariots for David. David hurts all the other chariot horses so that Hadadezer's soldiers cannot use the horses in battle anymore.

Then Arameans from the region of Damascus come to help Hadadezer, king of Zobah, to fight against David's army. David's army kills 22,000 Aramean soldiers. Then David sets up garrisons to control the Arameans there. The Arameans become David's servants and start bringing gifts to David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the Arameans from Damascus, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We must help King Hadadezer, since we are all Aramean; or
- David killed many of our people and has control of our area with many soldiers. We have to do what David says and give gifts to David.

Continue the drama.

Yahweh enables David to defeat and control other armies wherever David goes.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I told David before that I would give peace to Israel by stopping enemies from harming Israel. I am keeping my promise; or
- I love David and will help David.

Continue the drama.

David and David's men take the gold shields that the servants of Hadadezer are carrying, and they bring these shields to Jerusalem. David also takes a lot of bronze from the cities of Tebah and Berothai.

Tou, king of Hamath, learns that David has defeated Hadadezer's whole army. So, Tou sends his son, Joram, to greet King David. Joram blesses David for fighting against and defeating Hadadezer. Then the storyteller tells us that Hadadezer had been at war with Tou. Joram brings silver, gold, and bronze items to David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Tou, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so grateful that David killed my enemies; or
- I am also afraid of David because David's army is very powerful. I want to make sure David does not treat me like David's enemy; or
- I want to thank David for what David has done.

Continue the drama.

King David dedicates the silver, gold, and bronze items from Tou to Yahweh. David also dedicates all the silver and gold items that David took from all the other nations that David has taken control of. These people groups

that David took control of are the Edomites, the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, and the Amalekites. David also dedicates to Yahweh the items that David took from King Hadadezer, Rehob's son.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Yahweh has done so much for me and the other Israelites. I am so grateful to Yahweh. I want to give these things as a way to thank and praise Yahweh; or
- I know that Yahweh caused me to win all these battles. Yahweh deserves all these things.

Continue the drama.

Then the storyteller tells us that many people knew about David when David returned from killing 18,000 Edomites in the Valley of Salt.

David puts garrisons throughout the Edomite area. All the Edomites became David's servants. Yahweh gave victory to David wherever David went.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In the story, the Moabites and other people groups became David's **servants**. Usually, a servant is a man or woman who works for another person, the master. Servants have low status in the community and must obey the master. Later in the story, David takes the gold shields that Hadadezer's servants are carrying. Here, Hadadezer's servants may refer to Hadadezer's military officers or guards. Look up servant in the Master Glossary for more information, and use the same word for servant as you have used in previous passages.

The Moabites and other people groups now had to do what David told them to do and had to give regular gifts to David.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the **regular gifts**, or **tribute**, that the Moabites had to give to David. Pause this audio here.

Hadadezer is the **king** of Zobah. Use the same word or phrase for king as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about king.

David ordered his men to hamstring Hadadezer's **chariot** horses. Hamstringing is when people would cut the thigh muscles in the back legs of an enemy's horse so the horse could no longer run or pull a chariot in battle. Use the same word for chariot as you have used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **hamstring** horses. Pause this audio here.

David dedicated to Yahweh the **plunder**, or the valuable items that David's army took from Hadadezer's people. Use the same word or phrase for plunder as you have used previously.

Two times in the story, the storyteller tells us that **Yahweh** "saves" or "rescues," meaning that Yahweh gives victory to David everywhere that David goes. Yahweh is God's proper name, the Israelites' personal name for God. Use the same word for Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **rescues** or **gives victory**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase that you have used there.

*Speaking the Word**Speaking the Word*

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 8:1–14**Audio Content**

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2 Samuel 8:15–18

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 8:15–18 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:15–18 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:15–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, the storyteller talked about David's victory against the Philistines, the Moabites, King Hadadezer, the Syrians, the Ammonites, and the Amalekites. Yahweh gives victory to David wherever David goes.

In this story, we hear how David governs all Israel and learn about the men who help David. This is a story about how David rules and about David's officials.

David reigns over, or controls, the nation of Israel and its territories. David does what is just and right for all David's people. In other words, David treats his people fairly and does right or good things for the people. The storyteller uses the words for justice and righteousness to show that David's actions are fair and good.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe what a leader in your culture does if he acts justly and rightly. What do you think about that leader? Pause this audio here.

Joab, the son of Zeruiah, leads the army. Zeruiah is the woman who is Joab's mother. Zeruiah is David's sister or step-sister. We do not know who Zeruiah's husband is. This means that Joab is David's nephew. Joab commands the army, which is a powerful position.

Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, is recorder. Seraiah is secretary. We do not know exactly what the roles of the recorder or secretary were. However, the "recorder" probably did not just keep official records for the king. The recorder was also probably a spokesman for the king and told the people about the king's decisions. The secretary may have worked as an assistant in charge of writing for the king.

Priests were people who worked in the tabernacle, which was a portable temple, or a tent. The tabernacle was the place where the Israelite people worshiped Yahweh. Priests were responsible for offering sacrifices to Yahweh on behalf of the people. Priests took care of the temple and taught the people how to worship Yahweh. The names of the two priests are Zadok and Ahimelek. However, when the storyteller talks about David's officials again later, the names of the two priests are Zadok and Abiathar. Therefore, you may want to use the same names that the Bibles you are listening to use.

Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, leads the Kerethites and the Pelethites. We know from later stories that Benaiah is a mighty warrior. Benaiah is an Israelite, but the Kerethites and the Pelethites most likely are non-Israelites. The Kerethites and the Pelethites are the bodyguards, or special royal guards, responsible for protecting King David.

Stop and discuss: In your country, what kinds of people are necessary in the government? Pause this audio here.

David's sons are priests. This is surprising since David's sons are not members of the tribe of Levites. Perhaps people did not yet see the priesthood as a role that only the Levites could do. David's sons' positions might be more like royal advisor positions.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:15–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two scenes.

In the first scene: The storyteller talks about how David governs.

In the second scene: The storyteller talks about David's officials and their responsibilities.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Joab, the son of Zeruiah
- David's army
- Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud
- Zadok, the son of Ahitub
- Ahimelek, the son of Abiathar
- Seraiah
- Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada
- Kerethites
- Pelethites
- And David's sons

If you have translated 1 Chronicles 18:14–17 already, you may want to listen to that passage to hear how you translated the names of the people and their job titles.

Pause this audio here.

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

For scene one, the storyteller uses a word at the beginning of the first sentence to introduce this story and show that the storyteller is starting a new topic. The storyteller is explaining how David governs the nation of Israel and introducing the officials who help David.

Stop and discuss: Think about how you change from one topic to another when you are telling a true history. How do you want to introduce this story in your language? Pause this audio here.

In scene one, David reigns over the nation of Israel, and David does what is just and right for all David's people.

Stop and discuss: Think about the story you told in the previous step about a leader who does what is just and right. What words will you use to describe this leader in your language? Pause the audio here.

In scene two, Joab, son of Zeruiah, is the leader of the army. Jehoshaphat, son of Ahilud, is recorder. Zadok, son of Ahitub, and Ahimelek, son of Abiathar, are priests. Bible scholars are not sure if Ahimelek or Abiathar is the son, but most likely, Ahimelek had a son named Abiathar, and Abiathar then had a son that he named Ahimelek. In that case, it is possible that although here Ahimelek is the priest, in later stories, his son Abiathar is the priest. You should follow whichever interpretation your other local Bible translations follow.

Stop here and discuss as a group if you will say that Ahimelek is the priest, or that Abiathar is the priest. Pause this audio here.

Seraiah is secretary. Benaiah, son of Jehoiada, is over, or is the leader of, the Kerethites and Pelethites. David's sons are priests. The storyteller introduces each person by saying who that person's mother or father was. Seraiah is the only person whom the storyteller does not introduce in that way.

Stop and discuss: In your language, how do you list people in important positions? What information would you give about that important person? How would you describe that person, and what would you call them? Pause this audio here.

The recorder and the secretary have similar roles, even though they do not appear together in the passage. This story probably does not list the roles in any certain order. It may be interesting to note that the storyteller lists three pairs of officials: two military commanders, Joab and Benaiah; two officials who write things, Jehoshaphat and Seraiah; and two priests, Zadok and Ahimelek. You may re-order the list if a different order makes more sense in your language.

Stop and discuss: Think about the descriptions of the recorder and the secretary from step two. Think about similar positions you have in your government. What titles will you give these two roles in this story? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss: In what order would you normally list important government positions? Practice telling this list in different orders to decide what sounds the most natural in your language. Pause this audio here.

Remember that although the storyteller calls David's sons "priests," these sons were probably more like chief officials, and so they were separate from the other officials.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:15–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Joab, the son of Zeruiah
- David's army
- Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud
- Zadok, the son of Ahitub

Ahimelek, the son of Abiathar, Seraiah, Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, the Kerethites, the Pelethites, and David's sons. As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language. First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage. Pause this audio here and act out the passage. The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama. Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time. The following is an example of the drama and possible responses. In scene one, David reigns over all Israel, and David does what is just and right for all David's people. Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like: I feel like I do not deserve the blessing God has given to me; or I feel like a very important person in Israel's history; or I feel like I need to be a good model for the people so that they can see how a good leader values and promotes justice. Continue the drama. In scene two, Joab, the son of Zeruiah, leads David's army. Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like: I feel like I am very strong, and people respect me a lot as I am the leader of the army; or I feel like I need to speak and act very tough as the leader of the army; or I am very proud to be the leader of the army. Continue the drama. Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, is recorder. Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Jehoshaphat, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like: I feel like a very important person as I am the spokesman for King David; or I feel like I need to be very accurate when I speak for the king so that I do not add anything to what King David says, or miss any part of what King David says; or I am very proud to be one of King David's team. Continue the drama. Zadok, the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelek, the son of Abiathar, are priests. Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Zadok or Ahimelek, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like: I feel like I need to live my life very carefully so that I am a good example for others; or I am very proud to connect the people with God; or I am afraid that I might die when I have to carry the ark of Yahweh. Continue the

drama. Seraiah is secretary. Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Seraiah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like: I must be very accurate and fast at writing; or I need to have a good system to store and retrieve the written records; or I like writing because I do not need to speak a lot. Continue the drama. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, leads the Kerethites and the Pelethites, who are David's bodyguards. Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Benaiah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like: I am stressed in a good way because I have a great responsibility to protect King David; or I must be very healthy, very strong, and very good at martial arts; or I have to watch every person who comes close to King David carefully to protect the king. Continue the drama. And David's sons are priests. Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David's sons, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like: I wonder why I need to work as a priest because I am not from the tribe of Levi and I am not related to Aaron; or I will enjoy it when people call me a priest; or When people call me a priest, I am in awe.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 8:15–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

"All **Israel**" refers to the nation of Israel and probably includes many or most of the territories David and his men conquered. For more information on Israel, refer to the Master Glossary. Translate Israel in the same way you have previously.

The terms justice and righteousness do not refer to two completely different things. Here, the storyteller is very likely using the two words, justice and righteousness, to refer to "true justice."

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **justice**. Look up justice in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **righteousness**. Look up righteousness in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, is "recorder." We do not know exactly what the recorder did. The recorder probably did not just keep official records for the king. The term "recorder" probably refers to the spokesman for the king, the person in charge of direct communication with the king, or the person who reports to the king and makes known the king's decision to the people.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **recorder**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Zadok, the son of Ahitub, and Ahimelek, the son of Abiathar, are priests. Priests were people who worked at the place where the ark of Yahweh was. Priests were responsible for offering sacrifices to God on behalf of the people. Priests took care of the place where the ark of Yahweh was, and the priests taught the people how to worship God. The priests were between God and the people, making it possible for people to come before God. Because people are sinful, they are unclean. In the Bible, to be unclean means to be unfit to come before God. People have to become clean first. The work of the priests was to make people clean—to purify them. The priests did this by offering sacrifices on behalf of the people, and by teaching people how to live.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **priest**. Look up priest in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Seraiah is "secretary." We do not know exactly what the secretary did. "Secretary" may refer to the person who works as an assistant in charge of writing matters for the king. Or the term secretary may refer to the educated person who writes down things for the king.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **secretary**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 8:15–18

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 9:1–13

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 9:1–13 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 9:1–13 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 9:1–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous passage, we learned about the officials who served in David's kingdom. Now, David's government is stable, and David wants to show kindness to someone in Saul's family in order to honor and respect his friend Jonathan. This story is about what David does to show kindness to Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth. David is at his palace in Jerusalem at that time.

In the past, Saul tried to murder David again and again. However, Saul's son, Jonathan, loved David. Jonathan and David were close friends. Later, Saul and his three sons, including Jonathan, died in a battle with the Philistines. Some time after Saul's death, David became the king of all the Israelites.

One day, David asks his servants if anyone is still left from the house of Saul whom David might show kindness to for Jonathan's sake. David says so because he wants to honor his friend, Jonathan. When David says, "the house of Saul," David is referring to Saul's descendants. It was unusual that David wanted to be kind to Saul's descendants. During David's time, rulers would usually kill the relatives of the rulers whom they had conquered.

King Saul had a servant whose name is Ziba. David's people who know Ziba tell Ziba to appear before David. Then, David asks Ziba, "Are you Ziba?" Ziba answers that he is David's servant. Ziba answers in this way to show Ziba's great respect for David and a desire to obey David.

Then, David asks Ziba, "Is there not still someone of the house of Saul, that I may show the kindness of God to him?" David had promised in front of God that David would be kind to Saul's descendants. David is probably thinking of David's promise when David says that he wants to show God's kindness to Saul's family.

Ziba answers that a son of Jonathan is still alive and that this son cannot walk well. Although we do not hear about any other sons of Jonathan, Ziba answers David in a way that sounds like Jonathan had other sons who died. It is certainly clear that, however many children Jonathan may have had, Mephibosheth is the only one still living at that time. You will remember that when Mephibosheth was a child, Mephibosheth fell and his feet can no longer walk well.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, when people talk to a king, how do they address the king? How do the people refer to themselves? In what ways do people talk to a king? Pause this audio here.

Then, David asks Ziba where Mephibosheth is. Ziba says that Mephibosheth is in a city that people call Lo Debar, in the house of Makir, who is the son of Ammiel. Lo Debar is a non-Israelite city located north of the Yarmuk River on the east of the Jordan River.

Stop here and look at a map of Lo Debar and the Yarmuk River as a group. Pause this audio here.

Makir is probably a person who was loyal to King Saul. We do not know why Mephibosheth lives with Makir. Mephibosheth may be afraid of David, or maybe Mephibosheth has no other place to go. David sends someone to bring Mephibosheth before David. Mephibosheth comes to David and bows down to the ground to show respect. David says, "Mephibosheth!" and Mephibosheth answers by saying that Mephibosheth is David's servant. Mephibosheth's answer is similar to Ziba's answer.

Mephibosheth's grandfather, Saul, did not treat David well. So, Mephibosheth has every reason to be afraid of David. However, the friendship between David and Jonathan, Mephibosheth's father, was more important to David than the conflict between David and Saul. David tells Mephibosheth not to be afraid.

Then, David tells Mephibosheth that David will be kind to Mephibosheth and will give all the land of Saul to Mephibosheth. David also invites Mephibosheth to eat bread at David's table always. Bread is the main food for people at this time, just as people in Asia eat rice or noodles as their main food. This is a way of saying that Mephibosheth will take his meals with David, and that David will treat Mephibosheth like a family member. David is the king of all the Israelites at this time. By inviting Mephibosheth to be a guest at meals with David, the king, David is giving Mephibosheth a special privilege. David is telling Mephibosheth that David will do these good things for Mephibosheth to honor Jonathan, Mephibosheth's father. Sharing meals also shows that two people have a good relationship.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people feel about each other when they share meals with each other? Pause this audio here.

Mephibosheth bows down to David again and calls himself a dead dog. In ancient Israel, people did not see dogs favorably as in certain cultures today. To refer to someone else as a dog was a very serious insult. Mephibosheth calls himself a dead dog to show his humility. Mephibosheth wants to show David that Mephibosheth thinks David is better than Mephibosheth.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What animals do people not like in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Then, David calls Ziba, Saul's servant, and says that David is giving everything that belongs to Saul and Saul's family to Ziba's master's grandson, Mephibosheth. David also tells Ziba that Ziba, Ziba's sons, and Ziba's servants are to farm the land for Mephibosheth and to bring in the crops from the land so that Mephibosheth will have bread to eat. Ziba's master's grandson, Mephibosheth, will always eat at David's table.

The storyteller comments that Ziba has 15 sons and 20 servants. Ziba has enough workers in his family to do what David has ordered Ziba to do.

Ziba shows David respect by calling himself David's servant and calling David his lord, or master. Ziba agrees to do everything that King David has commanded Ziba to do.

So, Mephibosheth eats at David's table like one of the king's sons. This means that Mephibosheth accepts King David's invitation and enjoys the special privilege.

Mephibosheth has a young son whose name is Mika.

All the members of Ziba's family and, in all likelihood, Ziba's 20 servants became Mephibosheth's servants.

Mephibosheth lives in Jerusalem because Mephibosheth always eats at King David's table. Mephibosheth no longer stays in a non-Israelite city.

Stop here and look at a map with a direction from Lo Debar to Jerusalem as a group. Pause this audio here.

You may remember that earlier, David had said that he would not accept any lame people in his palace. At that time, David was comparing his enemies to lame people. In this story, David wants to show kindness to the family of Saul because of David's friendship with Saul's son Jonathan. David's friendship with Jonathan is so important to David that David will allow a lame person to eat in David's palace for Jonathan's sake.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 9:1–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has seven scenes.

In the first scene: In Jerusalem, where David lives, David asks someone if there is anyone left of Saul's family because David wants to show kindness to that person to honor David's friend, Jonathan.

In the second scene: David's people who know Saul's servant, Ziba, go to Ziba and tell him to come and see David.

In the third scene: Ziba comes to David. David asks Ziba if there is anyone left of Saul's family. Ziba tells David about Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth. David sends someone to bring Mephibosheth to meet David.

In the fourth scene: The person David sends comes to the city that people call Lo Debar, where Mephibosheth lives, and tells Mephibosheth to come and see David.

In the fifth scene: Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, comes to David. David tells Mephibosheth what he will do for Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth responds in a very humble way.

In the sixth scene: David calls Ziba to come. Then, David tells Ziba what David will do for Mephibosheth and what Ziba, Ziba's sons, and Ziba's servants will have to do for Mephibosheth. The storyteller interrupts the story by mentioning that Ziba has 15 sons and 20 servants. Ziba tells David that he will do everything David orders.

In the seventh scene: In Jerusalem, where David lives, Mephibosheth eats at David's table like one of King David's sons.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- The person David asks if there is anyone left from Saul's family
- David's people who go to Ziba and bring Ziba before David
- Ziba and his household
- Mephibosheth
- David's servant, who goes to Makir's house to meet Mephibosheth and bring Mephibosheth to David
- David's sons
- And Mephibosheth's son, Mika

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In scene one, in Jerusalem, David asks someone if there is anyone left of Saul's house, or family, because David wants to show kindness to that person to honor his friend Jonathan.

Even though Saul attempted to kill David many times, David wants to show kindness to Saul's descendant because David wants to honor Saul's son, Jonathan, who is David's close friend.

In scene two, some people who know where Saul's servant, Ziba, lives go to Ziba and tell him to come and see David. We do not know who these people are, but they must be David's servants or someone who knows what David wants to do.

In scene three, in Jerusalem, Ziba comes to David. David asks Ziba if he is Ziba. Ziba answers by saying he is David's servant. Ziba's answer shows Ziba's great respect for David. Then, David asks Ziba if there is anyone still left of Saul's family so that David may show the kindness of God to that person. Ziba tells David that Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, is still alive and is living in Makir's house in a non-Israelite city that people call Lo Debar. Makir's father is Ammiel. Ziba also says that Mephibosheth is lame in his feet. Mephibosheth cannot walk well.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your culture, how do you describe a person who is lame in both feet? Pause the audio here.

In some cultures, when you talk about Makir, it will be more natural to talk about the name of the town first. For example, "Mephibosheth is in the town of Lo Debar, in the house of Makir, who is the son of Ammiel." Talk about Michir in a way that is natural in your language.

David sends someone to Lo Debar to bring Mephibosheth to David.

Stop here and look at the map that shows the direction from Lo Debar to Jerusalem. Pause the audio here.

In scene four, the person David sends goes to Makir's house in the city people call Lo Debar, meets Mephibosheth, and tells Mephibosheth to come and see David in Jerusalem.

In this story, David sends people to go and bring people or give messages.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your language, how do you talk about the way a leader sends someone else to go and bring someone to the leader? Pause the audio here.

In scene five, in Jerusalem, Mephibosheth comes to David and bows down to the ground to show respect. David says, "Mephibosheth!" and Mephibosheth answers by saying that he is David's servant. David tells Mephibosheth not to fear David. David says that David will show Mephibosheth kindness to honor Mephibosheth's father, Jonathan. David says that David will give Mephibosheth all the land of Saul, Mephibosheth's father. David describes Saul as Mephibosheth's father. However, the word "father" means "ancestor" in this context. David also invites Mephibosheth to eat bread at David's table all the time. Bread was the main food for the people at that time, just as people in Asia eat rice or noodles as their main food. In this context, bread means food or meals. If people do not eat bread as the main food in your culture, you can use a

general word for food here. This was a way of saying that Mephibosheth would take his meals with David, and that David would treat Mephibosheth like a family member. David is giving Mephibosheth a special privilege to eat with the king of all the Israelites at that time.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your culture, if people do not eat bread as their main food, how will you translate the phrase "eat bread at David's table always"? Pause the audio here.

Mephibosheth bows down to David and says, "What is your servant, that you should look upon a dead dog such as I?" To refer to someone else as a dog was a very serious insult at that time. Mephibosheth calls himself a dead dog to show his humility. Mephibosheth wants to show David that Mephibosheth thinks David is better than Mephibosheth.

Stop here and discuss as a group: What do people usually do to humble themselves before someone who has a higher status in your community? What do people usually say to humble themselves before someone who has a higher status in your community? How will you translate the phrase "a dead dog" into your language? Pause the audio here.

In scene six, David calls Ziba to come. Ziba comes to David. Then, David tells Ziba that David has given all that belongs to Saul and Saul's family to Mephibosheth. David tells Ziba that Ziba, Ziba's sons, and Ziba's servants are to farm the land for Mephibosheth and bring the crops to Mephibosheth. David also lets Ziba know that Mephibosheth will always eat at King David's table. Then, the storyteller mentions that Ziba has 15 sons and 20 servants. The storyteller probably adds the information about the number of Ziba's sons and servants to show that Ziba has the necessary workers to do what David had ordered Ziba to do. Ziba tells David that Ziba will do everything David orders Ziba to do.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your culture, how would you usually talk about people's children? Why would you share how many children and servants someone has? Pause the audio here.

In scene seven, in Jerusalem, Mephibosheth eats at David's table like one of the king's sons. This means that Mephibosheth accepts King David's invitation and enjoys the special privilege. Mephibosheth no longer lives in the non-Israelite city that people call Lo Debar.

In the original language, the storyteller uses a transition word before talking about Mephibosheth's son. This transition word shows that the storyteller is summarizing the results of the events. Use a transition word that is natural in your language to show the transition.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In your language, how would you make this kind of transition? What word, phrase, or sentence will you use to describe this transition? Pause this audio here.

Then, the storyteller makes the summary: Mephibosheth has a young son whose name is Mika. All people from Ziba's house become Mephibosheth's servants. Mephibosheth lives in Jerusalem because Mephibosheth always eats at King David's table. Mephibosheth is lame in both feet. The storyteller mentions Mephibosheth's lameness twice in this story. Here, the storyteller probably mentions Mephibosheth's lameness again to emphasize that Mephibosheth's lameness affects both his feet.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 9:1–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has seven scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- The person David asks if there is anyone left from Saul's family
- David's people who go to Ziba and bring Ziba before David
- Ziba and his household
- Mephibosheth
- David's servant, who goes to Makir's house to meet Mephibosheth and bring Mephibosheth to David
- David's sons
- And Mephibosheth's son, Mika

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In scene one, in Jerusalem, David asks someone if there is anyone left of Saul's family because David wants to show kindness to that person to honor his friend, Jonathan.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I miss my friend, Jonathan, and I want to do something good for his descendants; or
- I wonder what happened to the children of the former king, Saul; or
- My friend Jonathan was very good to me. I want to do something good for Jonathan.

Continue the drama.

In scene two, David's people who know where Saul's servant, Ziba, lives, go to Ziba and tell Ziba to come and see David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ziba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I wonder why the king wants to see me. I am worried that I might be in trouble; or
- My master, Saul, repeatedly attempted to murder the current king of the Israelites in the past. I wonder why King David wants to see me. My life might be in danger; or
- I am worried for my life and my family.

Continue the drama.

In scene three, in Jerusalem, Ziba comes to David. David asks Ziba if he is Ziba. Ziba answers by saying he is David's servant. Then, David asks Ziba if there is anyone still left of Saul's family so that David may show the kindness of God to that person. Ziba tells David that Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, is still alive and is living in

Makir's house, whose father is Ammiel, at a non-Israelite city called Lo Debar. David sends someone to Lo Debar to bring Mephibosheth to David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am extremely happy that my friend Jonathan's son is still alive; or
- I am very happy now because I can do something good for my friend Jonathan's son. Jonathan treated me very well; or
- Saul treated me very badly, but Saul's son, Jonathan, was my friend, and Jonathan treated me very well. I want to show my kindness to Jonathan's son. I cannot wait to see Mephibosheth.

Continue the drama.

In scene four, the person David sends goes to Makir's house in the city that people call Lo Debar, meets Mephibosheth, and tells Mephibosheth to come and see David in Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Mephibosheth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Why does King David want me to come to him? Is David planning to kill me just as my grandfather attempted to kill David many times? or
- I do not know if I should go and see King David. Now, I am safe in a non-Israelite city. I am worried for my life and my son's life; or
- I know that my father, Jonathan, and David are good friends, but why does King David want to see me now? What kind of fate is waiting for me in Jerusalem? I will not be able to sleep tonight.

Continue the drama.

In scene five, in Jerusalem, Mephibosheth comes to David and bows down to the ground to show respect. David says, "Mephibosheth!" and Mephibosheth answers by saying that Mephibosheth is David's servant. David tells Mephibosheth not to fear David. David says that David will show Mephibosheth kindness to honor Mephibosheth's father, Jonathan. David says that David will give Mephibosheth all the land of Saul, Mephibosheth's grandfather. David also invites Mephibosheth to eat bread at David's table always.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Mephibosheth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I cannot believe my ears; or
- I am very grateful to King David because I did not do anything to deserve his kindness; or
- I am very thankful to God that King David wants to show kindness to me, even though my grandfather, Saul, attempted to murder David many times in the past.

Continue the drama.

Mephibosheth bows down to David and says, "What is your servant, that you should look upon a dead dog such as I?"

In scene six, David calls Ziba to come. Ziba comes to David. Then, David tells Ziba that David has given all that belongs to Saul and Saul's family to Mephibosheth. David tells Ziba that Ziba, Ziba's sons, and Ziba's servants are to farm the land for Mephibosheth and bring the crops to Mephibosheth. David also lets Ziba know that Mephibosheth will always eat at King David's table. Then, the storyteller mentions that Ziba has 15 sons and 20 servants. Ziba tells David that Ziba will do everything David orders Ziba to do.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ziba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very happy to serve my master Saul's family member; or
- I am very upset because now, my sons, my servants, and I will have to serve Mephibosheth because of King David. I cannot say "No" to the king; or
- I cannot believe my ears. Instead of killing Mephibosheth, King David is showing kindness to Mephibosheth. No other ruler would be so kind!

Continue the drama.

In scene seven, in Jerusalem, Mephibosheth eats at David's table like one of the king's sons.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Mephibosheth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- What did I do to deserve the honor of getting to sit with the king and his sons to have meals? Thank you, Yahweh; or
- Yummy. The food is so delicious; or
- I am very grateful to Yahweh and King David.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 9:1–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David asks someone if there is anyone left of the house of Saul because David wants to show kindness, or **steadfast love**, to that person to honor Jonathan. Translate steadfast love in the same way you have in previous passages. For more information on steadfast love, refer to the Master Glossary. Translate "house," or family, of Saul, in the same way you have in previous passages.

David's people bring Saul's steward, Ziba, to King David. A steward is a special kind of servant that was responsible for a person's entire household. Ziba had been responsible for everything King Saul owned. Translate **king** in the same way you have in previous passages. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **steward**. If you have translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. See the Master Glossary for more information about steward. Pause this audio here.

David asks Ziba if there is anyone left of Saul's family because David wants to show **God's** kindness, or steadfast love, to that person. Use the same word or phrase for God as you used in previous passages. For more information on God, refer to the Master Glossary.

Ziba tells David about Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, who is lame in his feet.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use to describe someone whose feet are **lame**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Mephibosheth **bows down** to David to show respect. Use the same words or phrases for bows down as you have previously, and see the Master Glossary for more information about bow.

David invites Mephibosheth to eat bread with him at David's table regularly. Even though the word bread is used here, David is inviting Mephibosheth to eat meals with David regularly. Bread was the main food for the people at that time, just as people in Asia eat rice or noodles as their main food. If people do not eat bread as the main food in your culture, you can use a general word for food here.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **bread** as it refers to food or meals in this context. Pause the audio here.

Ziba says that Ziba will do whatever David, his **lord** and king, commands his servant to do. Ziba says that David is his lord, or master. Use the same word for lord that you have used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about lord.

Everyone in Ziba's **household** works for Mephibosheth. Use the same word or phrase for household as you have used previously, and refer to household in the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 9:1–13

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 10:1–19

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 10:1–19 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 10:1–19 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 10:1–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, David showed kindness to Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, to honor David's friend, Jonathan.

The events in this story happen some time after David has shown kindness to Mephibosheth.

The events in this story take place in the Ammonites' capital city, Rabbah, and in the region on the east side of the Jordan River. The conflict in this story takes place because King Hanun, who rules the Ammonites, humiliates King David's officers very badly. In this story, David's army fights against the Ammonites and the Arameans, also called the Syrians.

The king of the Ammonite tribal group dies, and the king's son, Hanun, becomes the new king. Later, we hear that the name of the king of the Ammonites who died was Nahash.

David hears that Nahash died. David says that he will show steadfast love, or loyalty and kindness, to Hanun, son of Nahash. David will do this because Hanun's father, Nahash, showed steadfast love or loyalty to David.

We do not know for sure what Nahash did for David. Nahash may have helped David when David was running away from Saul.

So, David sends his servants with a message to Hanun to show David's sorrow for Hanun's father's death. These servants are really David's representatives.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what do leaders usually do to show sympathy to the family members of other leaders when a person dies? Pause this audio here.

David's servants arrive at Rabbah. However, the leaders of the Ammonites do not trust David. The leaders tell Hanun that they think that David sent his servants to spy on the city of Rabbah so that David's people can come and conquer the city.

Stop here and look at the map of Rabbah as a group. Pause this audio here.

So Hanun takes David's servants, shaves off half the beard of each man, and cuts off their garments in the middle, at their hips, and sends them away. During David's time, all men wore beards, unless they were in mourning. Perhaps Hanun shaved only half of these men's faces to show that he thought David's messengers were not honest in mourning for the death of the former king. Whatever the reason, at that time, people certainly considered the shaving of their beards as an insult.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what do people usually do to show that they are mourning for someone or something? Pause this audio here.

Hanun humiliates David's messengers even more by cutting their garments in the middle. This means that people could see their private body parts. After humiliating David's messengers, Hanun sends the men away forcefully.

When people tell David about what King Hanun did to the messengers David sent, David cares for his messengers. David sends messengers to meet the men because the men are too ashamed to come back to Jerusalem. King David tells the men to remain at Jericho until their beards have grown, and then return.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people usually feel and respond when other people humiliate them? Pause this audio here.

The city of Jericho was on the return route from the city of Rabbah to the city of Jerusalem. By the time David's messengers who met Hanun had reached the city of Jericho, they had already made most of the return trip home.

Stop here and look at the map of the route from Rabbah to Jericho and Jerusalem as a group. Pause this audio here.

The Ammonites know that David will be very offended, much like someone is very offended by a very bad smell. So, the Ammonites hire 20,000 Aramean or Syrian foot soldiers from the cities of Beth Rehob and Zobah. The Ammonites also hire the king of Maakah with 1,000 men, and 12,000 men from the city of Tob. During David's time, very often small states or kingdoms would ally together against a common enemy. In this case, the Ammonites, who feel the need to strengthen their position against David, sent messengers to hire the Syrians.

Stop here and look at the map that includes Beth Rehob, Zobah, Maakah, and Tob as a group. Pause this audio here.

David hears about this, and David sends Joab and all his Israelite army to fight them. The Israelite army includes well-trained, professional soldiers who are very strong. The Ammonites come out and arrange themselves at the entrance of the city of Rabbah. The Syrian armies that come to help King Hanun are by themselves in the open country.

When Joab realizes that he has to fight both in front of his army at the city, and in the rear of his army in the fields, Joab chooses the best warriors and arranges them against the Syrians in the fields.

Joab puts Abishai, Joab's brother, in charge of the rest of his men, and Joab arranges the men against the Ammonites in front of the city.

Joab tells Abishai to help Joab if the Syrians are too strong. Joab also tells Abishai that Joab will help Abishai if the Ammonites are too strong.

Joab tells Abishai to be strong and brave for the sake of the Israelites and the cities of Yahweh. Perhaps Joab is trying to encourage the army or his brother. Joab also shows his willingness to accept whatever turns out to be Yahweh's will.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when a leader in your culture encouraged people and showed that the leader was willing to accept whatever their gods wanted to do. Pause this audio here.

So, Joab and his soldiers approach to fight against the Syrians, and the Syrians run away from Joab and his soldiers.

And when the Ammonites, who are in front of their city, see that the Syrians run away from Joab and Joab's soldiers, the Ammonites also run away from Abishai and Abishai's soldiers. The Ammonites go back inside the wall of their city for protection. Since Joab does not continue to try to conquer the city, this is the end of the battle.

Then, Joab returns from fighting against the Ammonites and comes back to Jerusalem.

But when the Syrians realize that the Israelite army has defeated them, they bring all the Syrian military forces together in one place. Hadadezer sends messengers and brings out the Syrians who are on the east side of the Euphrates River. They come to Helam with Shobak as the commander of Hadadezer's army. Helam is most likely the name of a city. However, we do not know for sure whether Helam refers to a city or a region.

Stop here and look at a map that includes the Euphrates River as a group. Pause this audio here.

When David hears about Hadadezer and the Syrian army, David gathers all the fighting forces of Israel, crosses the Jordan River with his army, and comes to Helam. The Syrians arrange themselves in battle position and start a battle with David's army.

The Syrians run away from David's army. David and his army kill 700 Syrian chariot drivers and 40,000 horsemen. David and his army also kill or wound Shobak, the commander of the Syrians' army. Shobak dies there in the battlefield.

A chariot is an ancient two-wheeled vehicle that horses usually pull. People used chariots in warfare, hunting, races, parades, and travel. We do not know exactly what the word chariot in this story refers to. The word may refer to the "chariot team," which is two to four people who are in the chariot, or it may simply refer to the chariot driver.

Some translations say 700 chariot drivers, and some say 7,000 chariot drivers, but it is most likely 700 drivers. Some translations say 40,000 horsemen, and some say 40,000 foot soldiers, but it is most likely 40,000 horsemen.

When all the kings who serve Hadadezer see that the Israelite army has defeated Hadadezer's army, all these kings make peace with the nation of Israel. This means that all the kings accept the terms for peace that Israel gives to the kings.

The Syrians see what happened, and the Syrians are afraid to help the Ammonites anymore.

*Defining the Scenes**Defining the Scenes*

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 10:1–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has ten scenes.

In the first scene: In the city of Rabbah, King Nahash of the Ammonites dies, and Nahash's son, Hanun, becomes the king of the Ammonites.

In the second scene: In the city of Jerusalem, King David hears the news about King Nahash's death and decides to show loyalty to King Hanun. David sends messengers to the city of Rabbah, where King Hanun is, to show sympathy for Hanun's father's death.

In the third scene: David's messengers arrive at the city of Rabbah. The leaders of the Ammonites do not trust David. The leaders think that David actually wants to conquer Hanun's kingdom. Hanun humiliates David's messengers and sends them back.

In the fourth scene: David learns about how Hanun humiliated David's messengers. Then, David tells his men to stay in the city of Jericho until their beards have grown, and then to come back to Jerusalem.

In the fifth scene: The Ammonites realize that they have offended David, so the Ammonites send messengers and hire the Arameans, or Syrians, from Beth Rehob, Zobah, Maakah, and Tob to fight against the Israelites.

In the sixth scene: David hears about the Ammonite army and the Syrian army and sends Joab and the army of Israel to the city of Rabbah.

In the seventh scene: The Ammonites come out of their city and prepare for the battle. The Syrians are in the open country. Joab realizes that he will have to fight the battle on two sides. Joab chooses the best warriors to fight against the Syrians, and puts his brother, Abishai, in charge of the rest of the army to fight against the Ammonites. The Syrians run away from Joab and the Israelite army. The Ammonites run away from Abishai and the Israelite army and go back into their city. Joab and the Israelite army come back to Jerusalem.

In the eighth scene: King Hadadezer sends messengers who bring all the Syrian military forces together in one place, at Helam. Shobak is the commander of Hadadezer's army.

In the ninth scene: David hears about Hadadezer and Hadadezer's army. David gathers all the fighting forces of Israel, crosses the Jordan River, and comes to Helam. Hadadezer and his army fight against David and David's army. The Syrians run away from David and David's army. David and David's army kill many Syrian soldiers and their commander, Shobak.

In the tenth scene: When all the kings who serve King Hadadezer realize that Israel has defeated them, they make peace with Israel and serve King David. The Syrians are afraid to help the Ammonites again.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- King Nahash of the Ammonites
- King Hanun, son of King Nahash
- David's messengers who go to Hanun to express David's sympathy
- The leaders of the Ammonites
- King Hanun's servants who cut the beards and garments of David's messengers
- David's messengers who give David's message to the men whom Hanun humiliates
- The Syrians from the city of Beth Rehob
- The Syrians from the city of Zobah
- The Syrians from the city of Maakah
- The Syrians from the city of Tob
- Joab and the best Israelite warriors
- Abishai and the rest of the Israelite army
- The Ammonite army
- King Hadadezer
- Shobak, the commander of Hadadezer's army
- The Syrian army of Hadadezer
- David's army
- And the kings who serve Hadadezer

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The storyteller begins the story with a statement that means "some time later" or "later" to introduce a very different event. We do not know how long this was from the previous event.

In scene one, in the city of Rabbah, the capital city of the Ammonites, King Nahash of the Ammonites dies, and his son, Hanun, rules the Ammonites in Nahash's place.

In scene two, in the city of Jerusalem, King David hears the news about King Nahash's death, and David says that he will show steadfast love or loyalty to Hanun, son of Nahash. David will do this just as Hanun's father, Nahash, showed loyalty to David. This means that Nahash was faithful to David as Nahash's friend, so David wants to show that David will be a faithful friend to Nahash's son, Hanun. Because David is sad, David sends his servants with a message to show his sadness for Hanun's father's death.

The storyteller does not say whether David says these words to himself or to another person. However, even if David said these words only to himself first, David must have eventually spoken these words to others.

In this context, the word "servants" does not refer to lowly household servants. These men are representatives that David sends to give a message.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What word would you use to refer to the representatives David sent to Hanun? Pause this audio here.

In scene three, David's messengers come to the land of the Ammonites, but the leaders of the Ammonites say to their lord, Hanun, "Do you think that David is honoring your father because David has sent servants to express his sympathy? Hasn't David sent his servants to you to get information about the city and spy on it so

they can overthrow it?" The leaders of the Ammonites address their King Hanun as lord, or someone who has authority over the [leaders]{.mark}. The leaders want to show Hanun respect and try to make Hanun believe them. Hanun believes his leaders, so Hanun forcefully takes David's messengers and shaves off half the beard of each man. Hanun also cuts off the men's garments in the middle, at their hips, and sends them away.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how will you say that Hanun forcefully takes the messengers? Pause this audio here.

The Ammonite leaders' purpose in asking Hanun the two questions is to cause hostility and destroy confidence between David and Hanun. The Ammonite leaders are proposing to Hanun that David is deceitful and that David actually wants to conquer Hanun's kingdom.

When King Hanun's servants shave off half the beard of David's messengers, the servants probably shave one side of each man's face rather than shaving half the length of the beard.

In scene four, in the city of Jerusalem, when people tell David about what Hanun did to the men, David sends messengers to meet them, because the men are greatly ashamed. King David tells the humiliated messengers to remain in the city of Jericho until their beards have grown, and then return to Jerusalem. Jericho is not too far from Jerusalem, but staying there allows the men to not feel ashamed in front of King David in Jerusalem.

In scene five, in the city of Rabbah, the Ammonites realize that David will be very offended much like someone is very offended by a very bad smell. Here, the storyteller is using special language to say that the Ammonites have offended David a lot.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how will you say that the Ammonites have offended David? Pause this audio here.

The Ammonites send messengers and hire the Syrians. The Ammonites hire 20,000 foot soldiers from the cities of Beth Rehob and Zobah. The Ammonites also hire the king of the city of Maakah with 1,000 men, and 12,000 men from the city of Tob.

In scene six, in the city of Jerusalem, when David hears about the Ammonite army and the Syrian army, David sends Joab and the whole army of Israel with its special forces to the city of Rabbah.

In scene seven, the Ammonites come out of their city and arrange themselves in their battle positions in front of the entrance of the city gate. All the Syrians are by themselves in the open country. The open country around the city would be open fields with very few trees.

When Joab sees that the soldiers are both in front and in the rear of the Israelite army, Joab chooses some of the best warriors of Israel and arranges them in the battle positions against the Syrians in the fields. Joab puts Abishai, Joab's brother, in charge of the rest of his men, and Joab arranges the men in battle positions against the Ammonites in front of the city entrance. Joab says to Abishai that if the Syrians are too strong for Joab, then Abishai shall help Joab, but if the Ammonites are too strong for Abishai, then Joab will come and help Abishai. The storyteller seems to say that Joab goes with the first group, who are fighting the Syrians in open fields. This is why Joab needs to choose someone else to be in command of the troops that will stay to fight the Ammonites.

Joab says to Abishai, "Be strong! Be brave for the sake of our people and the cities of our God! May Yahweh do what seems good to him!" So Joab and the people who are with Joab approach to begin the fight against the Syrians, and the Syrians run away from Joab. Joab alone does not cause the Syrians to run away. The Syrians ran away from Joab and the whole Israelite army. And when the Ammonites see that the Syrians run away, the Ammonites also run away before Abishai, and go back into their city. Then, Joab and Abishai return with their men from fighting against the Ammonites and come back to Jerusalem.

We do not know for sure whether Abishai is Joab's younger brother or older brother. Joab is probably the older brother since Joab is the commander of David's troop. The storyteller usually mentions Joab first whenever he mentions Joab and Abishai together in lists.

Stop here and make a drawing or model of where the different armies are located as they get ready for the battle. Pause the audio here.

Now the storyteller changes the focus of the story. In scene eight, the Syrians see that Israel has defeated them, and the Syrians bring all the Syrian military forces together in one place. King Hadadezer sends messengers

and brings out the Syrians who are beyond the Euphrates River. They come to Helam with Shobak, the commander of Hadadezer's army, as their leader.

In scene nine, when David hears about Hadadezer and the Syrian army, David gathers all the fighting forces of Israel, crosses the Jordan River, and comes to Helam. The Syrians arrange themselves in battle positions against David and David's army and fight with them. The Syrians run away from Israel. David and David's army kill 700 Syrian chariots and 40,000 horsemen. David and David's army strike down Shobak, the commander of the Syrian army, so that Shobak dies there.

In scene ten, when all the kings who served King Hadadezer realize that Israel has defeated them, they make peace with Israel, and their country becomes like a servant to the country of Israel. The storyteller ends with a summary of the Syrians' relationship to the nation of Israel. Because of what has happened, the Syrians are afraid to help the Ammonites again. The Syrians realise that Israel is too strong for them.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 10:1–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has ten scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- King Nahash of the Ammonites
- King Hanun, son of King Nahash
- David's messengers who go to Hanun to express David's sympathy
- The leaders of the Ammonites
- King Hanun's servants who cut the beards and garments of David's messengers
- David's messengers who give David's message to the men whom Hanun humiliates
- The Syrians from the city of Beth Rehob
- The Syrians from the city of Zobah
- The Syrians from the city of Maakah
- The Syrians from the city of Tob
- Joab and the best Israelite warriors
- Abishai and the rest of the Israelite army
- The Ammonite army
- King Hadadezer
- Shobak, the commander of Hadadezer's army
- The Syrian army of Hadadezer
- David's army
- And the kings who serve Hadadezer

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In scene one, in the city of Rabbah, the capital city of the Ammonites, King Nahash of the Ammonites dies, and his son, Hanun, rules the Ammonites in his place.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hanun, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very sad because my father just died; or
- I am sad because of my father's death, but happy because I am now the king of the Ammonites; or
- I am stressed because of all the responsibilities of being a king.

Continue the drama.

In scene two, in the city of Jerusalem, King David hears the news about King Nahash's death. David says that he will show steadfast love, or loyalty and kindness, to Hanun, son of Nahash. David says that David will do this, just as Hanun's father, Nahash, showed steadfast love or loyalty and kindness to David. So, David sends his servants with a message to show David's sorrow for Hanun's father's death.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am sad because King Nahash, who is loyal to me, just died; or
- I feel sorry for King Nahash's family members who are left behind; or
- I hope to have a good relationship with King Hanun, like I had with Hanun's father.

Continue the drama.

In scene three, David's messengers come to the land of the Ammonites, but the leaders of the Ammonites say to their lord, Hanun, "Do you think that David is honoring your father because David has sent servants to express his sympathy? Hasn't David sent his servants to you to get information about the city and spy on it so they can overthrow it?"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hanun, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Maybe the leaders are right; or
- I believe what my leaders just told me is right. So, I am very angry with King David now; or
- King David should not take advantage of my father's death.

Continue the drama.

So, Hanun takes David's servants and shaves off half of each man's beard. Hanun also cuts off the men's garments in the middle, at their hips, and sends the men away.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David's messengers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very angry because the Ammonites humiliated me; or
- I am very ashamed, and I will never come to the land of the Ammonites again; or
- I am very angry that King Hanun and his leaders accused us falsely.

Continue the drama.

In scene four, in the city of Jerusalem, when people tell David about what Hanun did to the men, David sends messengers to meet them, because the men are very ashamed. And King David tells the men to remain in the city of Jericho until their beards have grown, and then return to Jerusalem.

In scene five, in the city of Rabbah, when the Ammonites realize that they have offended David, the Ammonites send messengers and hire 20,000 Syrian foot soldiers from the cities of Beth Rehob and Zobah. The Ammonites also hire the king of Maakah with 1,000 men, and 12,000 men from the city of Tob.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing one of the Syrian soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I cannot wait to start fighting. Look at our numbers. I believe we will defeat Israel; or
- I miss my family I have left behind; or
- After winning this battle, I will get a lot of money. I cannot wait to spend the money.

Continue the drama.

In scene six, in the city of Jerusalem, when David hears about the Ammonite army and the Syrian army, David sends Joab and the whole army of Israel, with its best soldiers, to the city of Rabbah.

In scene seven, the Ammonites come out of their city and arrange themselves in their battle positions at the entrance of the gate of the city. And the Syrians from the city of Zobah and the city of Rehob, and the men from the city of Tob and the city of Maakah, are by themselves in the open country. When Joab sees that the battle is set against him both in front and in the rear, Joab chooses some of the best warriors of Israel and arranges them in the battle positions against the Syrians. Joab puts Abishai, Joab's brother, in charge of the rest of his men, and Joab arranges the men in battle positions against the Ammonites. And Joab says to Abishai that if the Syrians are too strong for Joab, then Abishai shall help Joab. But if the Ammonites are too strong for Abishai, then Joab will come and help Abishai. Joab says to Abishai, "Be strong! Be brave for the sake of our people and the cities of our God! May Yahweh do what seems good to him!"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I will fight to the death to teach a lesson to the Ammonites who humiliated my king; or
- We are in a very bad situation because we have to fight on both sides at the same time; or
- If I lose, the Israelites will not be able to defend themselves. The Ammonites and the Syrians will take advantage of that situation. I cannot let that happen. I have to win this battle.

Continue the drama.

So Joab and the people who are with Joab approach to begin the fight against the Syrians, and the Syrians run away from Joab. And when the Ammonites see that the Syrians run away, the Ammonites also run away from Abishai, and go back into their city. Then, Joab returns from fighting against the Ammonites and comes back to Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abishai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very happy that we won; or
- I am happy for the victory but sad for the fallen soldiers; or
- I cannot wait to see my family who want to see me again alive.

Continue the drama.

In scene eight, when the Syrians see that Israel has defeated them, the Syrians bring all the Syrian military forces together in one place. King Hadadezer sends messengers to bring out the Syrians who are beyond the Euphrates River, and they come to Helam, with Shobak, the commander of Hadadezer's army, as their leader.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hadadezer, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want to be the most powerful king of my time; or
- I will become the pride of Syrians; or
- I believe my army and I are strong enough to defeat the Israelite army.

Continue the drama.

In scene nine, when David hears about Hadadezer and the Syrian army, David gathers all the fighting forces of Israel, crosses the Jordan, and comes to Helam. The Syrians arrange themselves in battle positions against David and David's army, and fight with them. And the Syrians run away from Israel. David and David's army kill 700 Syrian chariots and 40,000 horsemen and strike down Shobak, the commander of their army, so that Shobak dies there.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I thank Yahweh for the victory; or
- We can get peace only through strength and victory in this region; or
- I have to do everything I can for the families of fallen soldiers.

Continue the drama.

In scene ten, when all the kings who served King Hadadezer realize that Israel has defeated them, they make peace with Israel and become subject to Israel. So, the Syrians fear to help the Ammonites again.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing one of the kings who served King Hadadezer, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I have to serve King David now. I cannot fight against King David and his army; or
- I will need to learn how to serve King David; or
- My family and my people will now be protected by the strongest army in this region.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 10:1–19 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The **king** of the Ammonites died. Use the same word or phrase for king as you used in previous passages. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary.

David wanted to show kindness, or **steadfast love**, to Hanun because Hanun's father showed kindness to David. Use the same word or phrase for steadfast love as you used in previous passages. For more information on steadfast love, refer to the Master Glossary.

David sent **servants** to Hanun to show sympathy. In this context, the word servant does not refer to David's "low household servant." Servants, in this context, refer to David's official representatives or messengers. If you choose to use the word servant, see the Master Glossary for more information on servant, and use the same word you used previously.

David's servants come to the land of the Ammonites. However, the leaders of the Ammonites ask their **lord**, or master Hanun, if he thinks that David is honoring Hanun's father. Use the same word or phrase for lord as you used in previous passages. For more information on lord, refer to the Master Glossary.

The leaders of the Ammonites do not think that David is sincere. In the original language, depending on the context, leaders may refer to leaders or officials in government, military, and religious roles. These leaders may be important men or military commanders. These leaders believe that David's servants are there to spy or to gather information so that David's army can come back to conquer them.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **leader** and **spy** in this passage. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David sends his army commander, Joab, Joab's soldiers, and the mighty men of the army. Usually, the phrase "the mighty men" refers to a special group of well-trained men or professional soldiers. The expression "all the army, the mighty men" means "the whole army of Israel, with its brave warriors."

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the **mighty men** or brave warriors. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Joab continues by saying, "Be strong! Be brave for the sake of our people and the cities of our **God**! May **Yahweh** do what seems good to him!" Use the same words or phrases for God and Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on God and Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

And the Syrians run away from Israel. David kills 700 Syrian chariot drivers and 40,000 horsemen. David also strikes down Shobak, the commander of their army, so that Shobak dies there.

A chariot is an ancient two-wheeled vehicle that two horses usually pull. People used chariots in warfare, hunting, races, processions, and travel. We do not know exactly if chariot drivers refer to the entire "chariot team," which is two to four people who ride on the chariot, or if it refers to an individual chariot driver.

Stop here and look at a picture of a chariot as a group, if needed. Translate **chariot** in the same way as you have previously. Pause this audio here.

All the kings who served Hadadezer made **peace** with the **Israelites** and became subjects to the Israelites, or did whatever the Israelites told them to do. In this context, "made peace with Israel" means that all the kings accepted the terms for peace that the victorious Israelite army gave them. Use the same words or phrases for peace and Israelites as you used in previous passages. For more information on peace and Israelites, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 10:1–19

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 11:1–13

Hear and Heart

Before you have any group discussions for this passage, stop and decide as a group how you want to talk about it. In this passage, you must talk about two potentially awkward topics: sex outside of marriage and a woman's monthly flow of blood. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections? Pause this audio here.

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 11:1–13 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:1–13 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.

4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Remember that discussing this story will require you to talk about two possibly awkward subjects: sex and a woman's monthly period. Discuss how the group wants to handle talking about these subjects. Do you need to break into separate groups of men and women for these discussions? Pause this audio here.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:1–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, Israel's army went to war against Israel's neighbors, the Arameans, or Syrians, and the Ammonites. King David led the Israelite army to attack the Aramean army, and the Israelites won. In this story, King David sends his top military commander, Joab, to lead the Israelite army against the Ammonite army. David stays in Jerusalem while Joab and the Israelite army march to Rabbah, the capital city of the Ammonites, and defeat the Ammonite army.

Stop here and look at a map of Israel and Ammon as a group. Pay close attention to the location of Jerusalem and Rabbah. Pause this audio here.

When the Israelite army defeated the Ammonite army, the survivors ran inside of Rabbah and closed the gates. The city had big, strong walls, and the Israelite army could not get inside. The victory was not complete until the Israelite army went inside the city and captured the king of Ammon. So the Israelite army surrounded Rabbah and did not allow the people inside to come out and get food. Then the Israelite army waited for the people inside Rabbah to begin to starve. The Israelite army hoped that the Ammonites would give up. This battle strategy, called a siege, could take a long time to succeed. If the people inside the city had enough food and water, a siege could last for years.

Stop here and talk about what it might be like to be one of the soldiers on the outside of the city. Then talk about what it might be like to be one of the people on the inside. Pause the audio here.

For this battle, King David did not go with the Israelite army. David sent Joab to lead the battle and the siege of Rabbah instead. The city of Rabbah is only about 65 kilometers from Jerusalem, and David had sent Joab there on his own before. David stayed in Jerusalem in his palace. The palace was a very large building, and it might have been taller than the other buildings around the palace. It is also possible that the palace stood on top of a hill, which would make it easier to defend in case an enemy attacked. Like most buildings in that part of the world, the palace had a flat roof, and people went out on the roof to do many different tasks of daily living. People considered the roof of a building as much a part of the house as a bedroom, kitchen, or patio.

Stop here and talk about a time when you were in a place that was higher than everything around you. Describe what you could see. Pause this audio here.

From the roof of the palace, David was able to see into the courtyards of the houses nearby. That is how David was able to see a beautiful woman taking a bath. David sent a servant to find out who this woman was. The servant told David that the woman's name was Bathsheba, daughter of Eliam, and that Bathsheba was married to Uriah, a soldier in the army. In Hebrew culture, it was common for people to identify a woman through one of her male relatives. The servant also mentions that Uriah is a Hittite and not an Israelite.

David sent the servant to bring Bathsheba back to the palace, and David had sex with Bathsheba. In ancient Israel, it was possible for a man to have more than one wife at a time. In fact, at this point in his life, King David had several wives. However, although David was allowed to have many wives at the same time, Yahweh would not allow David to marry a woman who had a living husband. Women were not allowed to have more than one husband at a time. God's law states that neither men nor women could have sex with someone whom they were not married to.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: In your culture, what do people think if a man has more than one wife at a time? What about if a woman has more than one husband at a time? What do you think about the fact that King David had several wives? Pause this audio here.

Because Bathsheba was already married, David was not allowed to marry her or have sex with her. But David broke the rules and had sex with Bathsheba anyway. Israelite law said that if a man had sex with a woman who was the wife of another man, that was a sin, and the punishment was death. The people were supposed to kill the woman.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do people in your culture think when someone has sex outside of marriage? What happens to people who are married and have sex with someone other than their spouse? Pause this audio here.

This story mentions that Bathsheba had just finished her monthly period and was cleaning herself afterward. According to Israelite religious law, women were supposed to stay away from other people and places of worship for seven days a month while they were bleeding. This is because people considered a woman ritually unclean during that woman's monthly period. At the end of seven days, a woman had to wash herself in a specific way, and then that woman could go about life normally.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, when a woman has her period, what kinds of activities is that woman not allowed to do? What kinds of special ritual cleaning does a woman have to do after her period is finished? Pause this audio here.

After their sexual relations, David sent Bathsheba home. Soon after, Bathsheba realized she was pregnant and sent a message to David. Because Bathsheba's husband was away fighting in the war, this pregnancy would have been proof that Bathsheba had sex with someone else. The punishment for this action was death. Furthermore, if Bathsheba named David as the father of her baby, Yahweh's law said David had to die also.

After David found out Bathsheba was pregnant, David sent a message to Joab to send Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, to Jerusalem. When Uriah came before David, David asked many questions about the war and the army, then told Uriah to go relax at home.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Why do you think David sent Uriah home right after Bathsheba revealed her pregnancy to David? Pause this audio here.

However, Uriah did not go home. The Israelites had a custom that soldiers on duty were not allowed to have sex. Soldiers on duty had to devote all of their energy and attention to doing their job. Uriah may have thought that if he went home and saw his wife, he would not be able to resist having sex with her. Instead, Uriah slept at the door of the palace with some of David's servants. There was probably a room near the door of the palace for servants or guards to stay in. Sleeping there would show that Uriah still considered himself to be working for the king, even though Uriah was not on the battlefield.

The next day, David asked Uriah why he did not go home. Uriah said that he would not go enjoy the comforts of home, including having sex with his wife, while the army was sleeping in the open fields and the ark of the covenant was near the battle at Rabbah. Although Uriah was away from the battlefield, Uriah apparently believed that he should still behave as if Uriah were on duty as a soldier. Uriah vowed to David that Uriah would not go home. That same night, David invited Uriah to dinner and got him drunk, but Uriah still did not go home.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about someone who did something wrong and tried to cover it up, but failed. Why did that person try to hide their wrongdoing? Why did the cover-up fail? What happened to the person in the end?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:1–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: King David stays in Jerusalem while Joab leads the Israelite army away to fight the Ammonites. In Jerusalem, King David sees a beautiful woman named Bathsheba. Although Bathsheba is married to a soldier in David's army, David has sex with Bathsheba.

In the second scene: Soon after, Bathsheba realizes she is pregnant with David's child. Bathsheba sends a message to David to tell him about the pregnancy. Then David sends a messenger to the battlefield near Rabbah and commands Uriah to come back to Jerusalem.

In the third scene: David speaks with Uriah about the war, then tells Uriah to go home and rest. But Uriah does not go home. Instead, Uriah sleeps in a room in the palace for the king's servants.

In the fourth scene: David questions Uriah about why Uriah did not go home. Uriah says that he cannot enjoy the comforts of food, drink, and the company of his wife while Joab and the army are sleeping in tents on the battlefield. That night, David invites Uriah to dinner and gets him drunk. But even when he is drunk, Uriah still does not go home to see his wife.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Joab
- The Israelite army
- The Ammonites
- David's servants
- A messenger
- Bathsheba
- The palace guard
- And Uriah

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, David sends Joab to fight against the Ammonites. This happens in "the spring of the year," which refers to March or April according to the modern calendar. This time of year is also around the new year or the first month of the year, according to the Hebrew calendar.

Stop here and discuss how your team will translate this phrase for this time of year. Pause the audio here.

The storyteller says that "the spring of the year" is the time that kings normally go off to war. In the Middle East, most of the rain falls from November to February. The land becomes muddy, and it is difficult to travel. This was not a good time for the army to go out and fight, so a king or military leader usually waited until after the rains ended to send the army into battle.

When the Israelite army besieged Rabbah, this means that after the Israelite army defeated the Ammonite army, the survivors of the Ammonite army went inside Rabbah and closed all the entrances to prevent the Israelite army from getting into the city. Then the Israelite army surrounded Rabbah and waited for the people inside to begin to starve. The Israelite army hoped that the Ammonites would give up. Winning a siege of a city could take a long time. So the Israelite army had to stay near Rabbah for an unknown, but long, period of time.

Stop here and discuss how you will describe the siege of Rabbah. Pause the audio here.

In societies with a king, it was common for the king and his family to live in a house that was much larger and more beautiful than other houses. Remember that a king often had many wives and even more children, so the king's family needed a lot of space. The king's house usually had extra rooms for the king and his advisors to meet in, halls where the king could host meals for large numbers of people, rooms for servants and guards, storage rooms, and rooms for other purposes. The people believed that the size and beauty of this special house

showed the power, wealth, and prestige of the entire kingdom. Some languages have a special word for this kind of house, while other languages may simply refer to it as "the king's house."

Stop here and discuss what word you will use for the large building where the king and his family lived. Pause the audio here.

In this scene, David goes onto the roof in the evening. Most scholars think that the time was around sunset, while there was still enough light for David to be able to see the buildings around the palace. It was probably not completely dark yet. This may seem like a strange time for David to be getting out of bed. But in hot climates like Israel, it was common for people to rest indoors during the afternoon, when the temperatures were the hottest. People would get up toward evening, when the sun was getting lower in the sky and the temperatures were cooler. It is possible that this is what David did that day.

In ancient Israel, the roof of a building was flat, and people could walk, sit, or lie down on the roof. Families used the roof as a place to work, a place to store things, or as a place to just go out and relax in the fresh air. In a hot climate like Israel, the roof of the house might be the best place to feel a cool breeze.

Many houses also had a courtyard in the middle of the house. People could not see the courtyard from the outside because the walls surrounded the courtyard. The courtyard was another place to work, but it was also a place where members of the family could bathe. The family could be sure that other people would not see them because they were surrounded by walls. Most scholars believe that Bathsheba was bathing in the courtyard of her home when David saw her. Bathsheba almost certainly did not realize that anyone could see her from the roof of the palace.

In this scene, David "sends and inquires" about Bathsheba. This probably means that David sent one of his servants to find out about Bathsheba while David stayed in his palace. David almost certainly did not go to Bathsheba's house himself.

When David's servant comes back to tell David about Bathsheba, the servant says, "Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?" The servant does not expect anyone to answer this question. This question is a way to say, "Her name is Bathsheba, and she is the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite."

This scene introduces three Hebrew names that you have not heard before: Bathsheba, Eliam, and Uriah. The name of Bathsheba's father, Eliam, means "God of the people." The name of Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, means "Yahweh is light." We are not sure what Bathsheba's name means. It could mean "seventh daughter," or it could mean "daughter of an oath."

Stop here and discuss what names you will use in your language for Bathsheba, Eliam, and Uriah. If possible, try to find a name in your language that has a similar meaning to the original Hebrew name. If this is not possible, you may use a name that sounds similar to the Hebrew name. Pause the audio here.

After David found out who Bathsheba was, David "sent messengers and took her." This probably means that David sends a servant as a messenger to Bathsheba's house, and that messenger brings Bathsheba back to the palace to see David. David does not go to Bathsheba's house himself. After Bathsheba comes to the palace, David has sex with Bathsheba.

Stop here and discuss: How do people in your culture talk about sex in a group that may include men, women, and children? Discuss how you will translate this part of the story in a way that everyone can understand. Pause this audio here.

After King David has sex with Bathsheba, Bathsheba returns home. At this point in the story, most Bibles say that Bathsheba had completed her cleansing after her monthly period.

Stop here and discuss: How do people in your culture talk about a woman's monthly period in a group that may include men, women, and children? Discuss how you will translate this part of the story in a way that everyone can understand. Pause this audio here.

Many Bible scholars believe that this detail about Bathsheba's monthly period is out of order in the story. This is because Israelite religious law did not allow couples to have sex during a woman's monthly period. The actual order of events almost certainly was that Bathsheba completed her cleansing first, and then David brought her

to the palace and had sex with her. Furthermore, by including this bit of extra information, the author makes sure we know that Bathsheba's baby could not have been anyone's child except for David's.

Stop here and discuss at what point in this scene you will mention that Bathsheba had just finished her cleansing after her monthly period. Pause the audio here.

In the second scene, Bathsheba sends a message to David to tell David that she is pregnant. Because Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, has not been home for some time, David knows the child is David's.

Stop here and discuss: In your culture, what do people think if a married woman gets pregnant by a man other than her husband? What might happen to a woman in Bathsheba's situation? Pause this audio here.

Next, David sends a message to Joab, who is managing the siege at Rabbah, and tells him to send Uriah back to Jerusalem. It is possible that a messenger could have traveled the 65 kilometers from Jerusalem to Rabbah in around two days. Uriah probably could have made it back in about the same amount of time.

In the third scene, when David speaks to Uriah, David and Uriah are most likely in the palace. David questions Uriah about how the battle is going. Then David tells Uriah, "Go down to your house and wash your feet." In ancient Israel, people usually wore sandals and walked on dirt roads. This made their feet dirty. A person would most likely not wash his feet until his day's work was over and he was ready to rest. So King David was telling Uriah to rest and relax. There is a possibility that the phrase "wash your feet" may also refer to sex. King David, who was the highest authority in the land, gives Uriah permission to behave as if Uriah were off duty from his job as a soldier. David also sends Uriah a gift.

Stop here and discuss this question: Think about a time when someone had worked hard all day, and you encouraged that person to go home and rest. How did you encourage them to do that? What words or phrases did you use to talk about resting at home? Pause the audio here.

Although King David has given Uriah permission to go home and see Uriah's wife, Uriah decides not to do it. Instead, Uriah sleeps at the entrance to the palace, possibly in a guard room, along with some servants or palace guards. Because Uriah decides not to behave as if he were off duty, David's first plan to cover up his sin with Bathsheba fails.

In the fourth scene, when morning arrives, David finds out that Uriah did not go home. When David questions Uriah about it, first, David says, "Have you not come from a journey?" David knows that Uriah has just come from a long journey, but David asks this question to emphasize David's point. David then asks the question he really wants to know the answer to: "Why did you not go down to your house?"

Uriah explains to David that everyone else in the army, as well as the ark of the covenant, is camped on the battlefield. Uriah responds to David with a question that Uriah does not expect anyone to answer. Uriah says, "Shall I then go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife?" Uriah is telling David, "I cannot possibly go to my house to eat and drink and lie with my wife."

Uriah believes it would be dishonorable for Uriah to go to his house to eat, drink, and spend the night with his wife while Uriah is in Jerusalem. Uriah tells David, "By your life and the life of your soul, I will not do this thing." This is an oath, or strong promise, to explain to David how serious Uriah is that he will not go home and see his wife.

Stop here and discuss what people in your culture say when they want someone else to know they are making a serious promise. If you have used one of these phrases before, discuss whether you want to use the same phrase here or a different one. Pause the audio here.

David tells Uriah to stay in Jerusalem one more night. That night, David invites Uriah to dinner and persuades him to drink alcohol, so that Uriah becomes drunk. But even though Uriah is drunk, Uriah once again sleeps at the entrance to the palace with David's servants. Uriah does not go home to sleep with Bathsheba.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Remember that discussing and acting out this story will require you to talk about two possibly awkward subjects: sex and a woman's monthly period. Discuss how the group wants to handle talking about these

subjects. Do you need to break into separate groups of men and women for these discussions? Pause this audio here.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:1–13 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Joab
- The Israelite army
- The Ammonites
- David's servants
- A messenger
- Bathsheba
- Uriah
- And the palace guard

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In scene one, Joab and the Israelite army go to Rabbah to fight the Ammonites. King David stays in Jerusalem. One afternoon, David is on the roof of the palace, and David sees a beautiful woman taking a bath. David sends a servant to find out who the woman is. David finds out that the woman is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, and that Bathsheba is married to a Hittite man named Uriah. In spite of the fact that Bathsheba is married, David sends a messenger to bring Bathsheba to the palace.

Pause the drama here. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am the king and I can do whatever I want; or
- I know I should not be doing this, but I cannot help it; or
- I hope my servants do not tell anyone about this.

Ask the person playing Bathsheba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might say things like:

- I do not want to do this, but I cannot say no to the king; or
- I am afraid of what will happen when my husband finds out about this; or
- I cannot believe my king is doing this to me and my husband; or
- This is wrong! This is not fair!

Continue the drama.

After Bathsheba comes to the palace, David has sex with her. This happens right after Bathsheba has finished purifying herself at the end of her monthly period. Then David sends Bathsheba home.

Pause the drama here. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer:

- I cannot believe I just did that. It was not right; or
- That was fun. Maybe I will send for Bathsheba again sometime; or
- I feel very nervous that someone might find out what I did; or
- I really hope Bathsheba does not get pregnant.

Ask the person playing Bathsheba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer:

- I feel so sad for Uriah. Uriah is a good man and he does not deserve this; or
- I am angry at David for making me do this; or
- I feel terrible about myself for going along with this; or
- I cannot tell anyone what just happened to me. I am all alone in this.

Continue the drama.

In scene two, Bathsheba realizes she is pregnant and sends David a message to tell him so.

Pause the drama here. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling and thinking?" The person might say:

- Oh no! I regret doing what I did; or
- I am terrified because Bathsheba and I could both be executed; or
- I feel guilty. This is all my fault, and now we are in serious trouble; or
- I am desperate for a way out of this mess.

Ask the person playing Bathsheba, "What are you feeling and thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am terrified because this could get me killed; or
- I am heartbroken to think of how Uriah will feel when he finds out; or
- I am angry at David for putting me in this position; or
- This is not fair!

Continue the drama.

After David found out that Bathsheba was pregnant, David sent a message to Joab to send Uriah back to Jerusalem.

In scene three, Uriah arrives to see King David. David questions Uriah about the war, Joab, and the Israelite army. Then David tells Uriah to go home and rest.

Pause the drama here. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I really hope Uriah goes home so Uriah will think the baby is his; or
- I am nervous that someone will figure out what I am doing; or
- I feel terrible for doing this to Uriah.

Ask the person playing Uriah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel honored that the king wants to speak with me; or
- I feel confused about why the king brought me back to Jerusalem; or
- I feel guilty for leaving my fellow soldiers behind on the battlefield; or
- I do not want to damage my reputation by going home to be with my wife.

Continue the drama.

In spite of David encouraging Uriah to go home, Uriah decides to spend the night at the door of the palace. Uriah sleeps in a room with some servants or palace guards.

In scene four, David finds out that Uriah did not go home the night before. David brings Uriah to the palace again and questions Uriah about why he did not go home. Uriah explains that he will not go home to eat, drink, and have sex with his wife when the entire Israelite military, along with the ark of the covenant, is living in tents on the battlefield.

Pause the drama here. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might say things like:

- I am panicking; or
- I feel frustrated that Uriah did not go home; or
- I am afraid that my plan is going to fail; or
- I am desperate for a way out of this.

Ask the person playing Uriah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer:

- I do not understand why the king cares so much about what I am doing; or
- I am nervous because the king asked to see me again; or
- I want the king to know that I am a good, trustworthy soldier, and that I take my job seriously. I am loyal to King David.

Continue the drama.

David tells Uriah that he may stay in Jerusalem that day and the next, and then go back to the battlefield. That night, David invites Uriah to a banquet where David serves Uriah a lot of wine and makes Uriah drunk. Once again, Uriah does not go home to Bathsheba, but again he sleeps at the door to the palace with David's servants and guards.

Pause the drama here. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer:

- I am really frustrated; or
- I feel awful because Uriah is a good man and I am treating him terribly; or
- I am terrified; or
- My plan is failing. What am I going to do?

Ask the person playing Uriah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might say things like:

- I am relieved that I can go back to the battlefield tomorrow; or
- I am pleased that I was strong enough to stay away from my house.

2 Samuel 11:1–13

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (18301215 KB)

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)

2 Samuel 11:14–27

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 11:14–27 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:14–27 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.

6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:14–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, King David had sexual relations with Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah the Hittite. When Bathsheba became pregnant, David tried to cover up the affair by bringing Uriah back to Jerusalem to be with Bathsheba. But although Uriah was in the same city as his wife, Uriah did not go home to see Bathsheba. In this story, King David orders Joab to put Uriah in a dangerous battle and allow Uriah to die. After Uriah dies, David marries Bathsheba, and Bathsheba gives birth to a son. But Yahweh knows what David did and considers David's actions evil.

David writes a letter to Joab with instructions to make sure that Uriah dies in battle. David probably writes the letter on parchment or papyrus, both of which are similar to paper, and seals it with wax. If anyone broke the seal and opened the letter to read it, Joab would see that the seal was broken. Joab would blame Uriah if the seal was broken, and he would harshly punish Uriah, since it was Uriah's job to deliver the letter safely to Joab. Therefore, we know that Uriah does not know what the letter says, but Uriah takes the letter with him from Jerusalem to Rabbah and gives it to Joab.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you send secret information to another person? What steps do you take to make sure that no one else finds out this information? Pause this audio here.

In Rabbah, the Israelites are still trying to gain victory over the Ammonites. The Israelite army still surrounds the city, but they have not gotten inside. From inside Rabbah and from the top of the city walls, the Ammonite army can shoot arrows or throw objects at the Israelite army to keep the Israelites away. But the longer the siege goes on, the less food the Ammonites have. In order to survive, the Ammonites have to drive the Israelite army away. So the two armies are still fighting.

Joab knows where the Ammonite forces are strongest, so Joab sends Uriah to that place. Soon, some men come out from behind the walls of Rabbah and attack the Israelite army. During the battle, some Israelite soldiers fall. This means that these soldiers die in battle. Uriah also dies. We do not know for certain whether Uriah dies because someone shoots Uriah with arrows or if Uriah dies because someone stabs Uriah with a sword. The important detail is that Uriah dies.

After the battle is over, Joab sends a messenger to David. Joab needs to tell David that Uriah is dead, but Joab needs to do it in a way that sounds innocent. Joab might also be worried that David will be angry about the number of other officers who died in battle, and Joab wants the messenger to be prepared with an explanation.

Therefore, Joab recalls a story from Israel's history. This story is in the book of Judges. It is the story of Abimelek, son of Jerub-Besheth. Jerub-Besheth is another name for Gideon. Gideon was a military leader in Israel about 150 years before David. In this story, Abimelek led a group of soldiers to a city called Thebez and attacked the city. The people of Thebez ran inside a tower for protection. When Abimelek's army got close to the tower, a woman threw a large millstone down from the top of the wall. A millstone was a large, round stone that people used to grind grain. The stone landed on Abimelek and killed him.

Stop here and look at a picture of a millstone. Notice how large the millstone is compared to a person. Pause this audio here.

After Joab reminds the messenger of the story, Joab tells the messenger to tell David, "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead." This is actually the most important information that Joab wants David to know.

Joab's messenger leaves the battlefield at Rabbah and travels to Jerusalem to report to David. The messenger tells David that some men came out of Rabbah and attacked the Israelite army. The army drove the men of Rabbah back close to the city wall, where archers on top of the wall began shooting arrows at them. An archer

is a person who shoots a bow and arrow. After the messenger tells David about the battle, the messenger adds, "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

Stop here and look at a picture of a person holding a bow and arrow. Pause this audio here.

David is not angry at this news. David tells the messenger, "Say to Joab, 'Do not let this thing displease you, for the sword devours one as well as the other.'" Some scholars believe that the phrase "the sword devours one as well as another" may have been an ancient proverb or wise saying. The phrase means that anyone could die in a battle, even a very strong fighter. The word "devour" in this saying does not mean "to eat," but rather, "to kill." It means that people die when someone stabs them with a sword.

Stop here and share some sayings in your language that are about death or war. Pause this audio here.

When Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, hears that her husband is dead, Bathsheba follows the Israelite customs for what to do when a family member dies. We do not know for sure how long Bathsheba mourns for Uriah. The Israelite customs probably required Bathsheba to mourn for at least seven days, but not longer than four weeks. During this time of mourning, Bathsheba probably gathers with Uriah's family. We do not know if anyone brings Uriah's body back to Jerusalem to bury it, or if people bury Uriah on the battlefield.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe what someone in your culture usually does when a husband or wife dies. How long does that person have to wait before he or she can get married again? Pause this audio here.

After Bathsheba finishes mourning, David marries Bathsheba and takes her to live at the palace. Bathsheba gives birth to a son. David may think he has escaped the consequences of his actions, but what David has done is evil in the eyes of Yahweh.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:14–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: King David writes a letter to Joab and gives it to Uriah. Uriah does not know that the letter tells Joab to put Uriah in a dangerous battle and then abandon him so that Uriah dies. Near Rabbah, Joab reads David's letter and obeys David's instructions. Uriah dies in battle.

In the second scene: Joab tells a messenger to give King David a report about the battle and also tell him, "Your servant Uriah the Hittite is dead."

In the third scene: The messenger travels from Rabbah to Jerusalem and tells David the report. David instructs the messenger to encourage Joab and tell him to attack Rabbah again.

In the fourth scene: Bathsheba mourns the death of her husband Uriah. Then David marries Bathsheba, and Bathsheba gives birth to a son. Yahweh is displeased with what David has done.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Uriah
- Joab
- Men from Rabbah
- The Israelite soldiers
- The messenger that Joab sent to David
- The servant that David sent to get Bathsheba
- And Bathsheba

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, it is the morning after David got Uriah drunk at a banquet. David writes a letter to Joab and gives it to Uriah. "By the hand of Uriah" means that Uriah carries the letter when he travels from Jerusalem back to Rabbah, but Uriah does not read the letter. In the letter, David tells Joab to put Uriah in the place of the strongest battle and then call the other soldiers back so that Uriah will die. This is the part of the battle where the fighting is very intense and dangerous. This is David's plan to cause Uriah's death in such a way that no one but Joab will know that David has caused Uriah to die.

Since Uriah is a military officer, it would be easy for Joab to put Uriah in charge of leading soldiers against the strongest part of the Ammonite army. Uriah may even feel honored that Joab entrusts Uriah with this task. Uriah does not know that David has told Joab to put Uriah in the most dangerous spot on the battlefield and then leave Uriah there alone, outnumbered and exposed to the enemy, so that Uriah will die in battle.

Joab follows David's instructions. Joab knows where the Ammonite forces are strongest, so Joab sends Uriah to that place. The Ammonite men come out from behind the walls of Rabbah and attack Joab. When the storyteller says that the Ammonite men attack Joab, this does not mean that they attack Joab personally. It means the Ammonites attack the army that Joab commands. Uriah dies, and in the battle, some other soldiers die as well.

In the second scene, Joab sends a messenger back to Jerusalem to give David a report about the battle. Joab gives the messenger very specific instructions about what to say to David. Joab tells the messenger exactly what to say in case David becomes angry about the results of the battle.

Joab tells the messenger what to say "if the king's anger flares up, or rises up." Joab is worried that King David will become very angry, like a flame of fire begins to burn.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you say that the king might become very angry? Pause this audio here.

We do not know if Joab is truly worried that David will be angry about the battle report, or if Joab's speech to the messenger is meant to hide Joab's real reason for telling David that Uriah is dead. Whatever the reason, Joab's instructions to the messenger include five questions in a row that do not expect an answer. Using five questions like this in a row is unusual. The storyteller probably does this to emphasize that the speaker has strong emotions. The speaker might be very angry or might think that the actions he is describing are very foolish. Joab might be showing his own anger at the situation, or Joab may be expecting that David will be angry.

Stop here and discuss this question: In your language, how do you show strong feelings? What special words do you use if you are very angry? What special words do you use if you are very sad, or very frustrated, or very afraid? Are there other ways you might change the way you speak when you want to show strong feelings? Pause this audio here.

The questions that Joab says David might ask show Joab's own opinions. The first question, "Why did you go so near to the city to fight?" means, "You should not have gone so close to the city to fight."

The second question, "Didn't you know that they would shoot from the wall?" means, "You should have known that they would shoot from the wall."

The third question, "Who killed Abimelek, son of Jerub-Besheth?" means, "You know how Abimelek, son of Jerub-Besheth, died."

The fourth question, "Didn't a woman throw an upper millstone on him from the wall, so that he died at Thebez?" means, "You know that a woman threw a stone on him from the wall so that he died at Thebez."

The fifth question, "Why did you come so close to the wall?" means, "You should not have come so close to the wall."

Two of these questions refer to the story of Abimelek, son of Jerub-Besheth. The story of Abimelek probably took place around 100 to 150 years before the events of this story. We do not know exactly why Joab brought up this event from Israel's history, except that the situation on the battlefield was similar to the events of that story. This story may be a way for Joab to secretly communicate to David, "This is what I had to do in order to be sure that Uriah died."

In this scene, there are three names that you may not have heard before: Abimelek, Jerub-Besheth, and Thebez. If you have already translated the book of Judges, then you have seen these names before, and you should translate them the same way that you did in the book of Judges. If you have not yet translated Judges, you should decide how to translate these three names. Additionally, Jerub-Besheth is a different name for Gideon, and it may be clearer to use the name you chose for Gideon.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the names Abimelek, Jerub-Besheth, and Thebez. Pause this audio here.

At the end of this speech, Joab tells the messenger to tell David that Uriah the Hittite died in this battle. This is the first time in this story that Uriah is called "Uriah the Hittite." The storyteller will refer to Uriah this way two more times in this story. Most scholars believe that the storyteller wants to emphasize that Uriah, who was not a native-born Israelite, was acting more righteous than David, the king of Israel. It may be acceptable in your language to repeat the phrase "Uriah the Hittite," or it may sound unnatural. If you feel that it is too unnatural in your language to repeat the entire phrase so often, please choose carefully where you will use this phrase so that it has the most impact in your language.

Stop here and discuss how you will handle repeatedly translating the phrase "Uriah the Hittite." Pause this audio here.

In scene three, the messenger leaves and tells David everything. For clarity, it may be necessary to say that the messenger left Rabbah and went to Jerusalem to talk to David. In this scene, the messenger adds information that Joab did not mention. The messenger mentions that at first, the men of Rabbah were winning against the Israelites. But then the Israelite army was winning the battle, and the Israelites chased them back to the city gate. Then archers inside the city of Rabbah began to shoot at the Israelite soldiers with arrows.

Instead of waiting for David to ask, the messenger volunteers the information that Uriah is dead. David tells the messenger to tell Joab not to be upset, and David quotes a proverb, or wise saying, about war. The proverb says, "The sword devours, or eats, one as well as another." This means that in a battle, anyone can die, and you can never tell who might die and who might survive.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you recognize a well-known, wise saying? Do you have any wise sayings about war like this one? And how would you talk about the fact that we never know who will die in a battle? In other words, how will you talk about the sword eating whoever it wants to? Pause this audio here.

At the end of scene three, David tells the messenger to tell Joab to attack Rabbah again and conquer it.

In scene four, Bathsheba mourns for her dead husband Uriah. At the beginning of this scene, the storyteller calls Bathsheba "the wife of Uriah." This is to emphasize that David did all these terrible things in order to get the wife of another man.

After the mourning period is over, David marries Bathsheba. David had to marry Bathsheba quickly in order to hide the fact that Bathsheba was already pregnant when they got married. Bathsheba goes to live with David at the palace and gives birth to a son.

David might have thought that no one else knew about what David had done, but the storyteller tells us that David's behavior was evil in Yahweh's eyes. This means that Yahweh knew everything that David did, and Yahweh considered David's actions to be evil. David could hide his sins from other people, but David could not hide his sins from Yahweh.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the phrase "evil in Yahweh's eyes?" Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:14–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Uriah
- Joab
- Men from Rabbah
- The Israelite soldiers
- The messenger that Joab sent to David
- The servant that David sent to get Bathsheba
- And Bathsheba

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first scene, David gives Uriah a letter for Joab. The letter instructs Joab to put Uriah in a spot on the battlefield where the fighting will be very intense and leave Uriah there to die.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel desperate. There is no other way out; or
- I feel terrible for doing this to Uriah. Uriah does not deserve this.

Continue the drama.

Joab receives the letter and does what David asks Joab to do. Joab puts Uriah in a place where the enemy soldiers are strong. Soon, those enemy soldiers come out of the city and attack the Israelite troops. Uriah dies, and some other Israelite military officers also die.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I wonder what Uriah did to make the king want him dead; or
- Uriah is a good man, and I do not want to do this to Uriah, but I cannot disobey the king; or
- I am upset that many other soldiers died in addition to Uriah.

Continue the drama.

In the second scene, Joab gives the messenger instructions about what to say to King David. Joab warns the messenger that King David might become angry. Joab also tells the messenger to tell David that Uriah is dead.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am afraid that David will be angry; or
- I am disgusted with David for putting me in this position; or
- I am discouraged because so many people died needlessly.

Ask the person playing the messenger, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am afraid that the king will be angry; or
- I am sad that so many good soldiers died in this battle; or
- I am confused about why Joab made such a mistake.

Continue the drama.

In scene three, the messenger gives David the report about the battle. David tells the messenger to tell Joab not to be upset about the outcome of the battle because "the sword devours one as well as the other." Then David tells Joab to attack Rabbah again.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel relieved. Uriah is dead, so now I can marry Bathsheba and no one will find out what I did; or
- I feel horrible. Uriah was one of my mighty men, and I just made sure Uriah died; or
- I wonder if God will punish me for this.

Ask the person playing the messenger, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am relieved that the king was not angry; or
- I am surprised that the king was not angry. This seems very strange; or
- I am upset that the king does not seem to care that good men died unnecessarily.

Continue the drama.

In scene four, Bathsheba finds out that Uriah is dead and mourns for Uriah. Then David brings Bathsheba to the palace, where Bathsheba becomes David's wife and gives birth to a son. But Yahweh is unhappy about David's evil actions.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Bathsheba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so sad that Uriah is dead. Uriah did not deserve all this; or
- I am relieved because now I will not get in trouble for being pregnant with another man's baby; or
- I am furious at David. David made me into an adulteress and got my husband killed.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:14–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In the first scene, David, the King of Israel, wrote a letter to Joab, the army leader, and gave it to Uriah. In the letter, David told Joab to put Uriah in a place on the battlefield where the fighting was the worst and then abandon Uriah so that Uriah would die. Rabbah was still under **siege**, surrounded by Israelite troops with no way for the people inside the city to get out.

Use the same word for siege that you have used in previous passages. See siege in the Master Glossary for more information.

Joab needed to continue to attack the city and overthrow it. Joab followed David's instructions and put Uriah in a spot where Uriah would face the best soldiers from the Ammonite army. Soon, some men came out from inside Rabbah and fought against the Israelites. Uriah died, along with other **servants** of David, which means officers in the Israelite army. Be sure to use the same word for servants or army officers as you have used in previous passages. See the Master Glossary for more information on servant.

In the second scene, Joab gives a **messenger** instructions for how to tell King David about the battle. Be sure to use the same word for messenger as you have used in previous passages.

While giving the instructions, Joab mentions that the **king** may become angry when he hears the report of the battle. Use the same word or phrase for king as you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about king.

Joab recalls the story of Abimelek, son of Jerub-Besheth, or Gideon, who died in a city called Thebez. Abimelek died in a similar manner to the officers who fought against the Ammonites. Someone standing on top of a wall threw something at him and killed him. The enemy probably shot Joab's officers with arrows, but Abimelek died when a woman threw a millstone that landed on Abimelek. A millstone is a large stone that people used to grind or crush grain. This stone was heavy enough to kill a person if the stone landed on that person's head, yet light enough that a woman was able to lift it.

Stop here and look at a picture of a **millstone**. Discuss as a team how you will translate the word millstone. Use the same word for millstone that you have used in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

In the third scene, the messenger leaves Rabbah and goes to Jerusalem. The messenger reports on the battle and tells David that the Israelite army got close to the wall and archers shot arrows at them. An archer is a person who shoots a bow and arrow.

Stop here and look again at the picture of an archer holding a bow and arrow. Discuss what word you will use for **archer**. Use the same word for archer that you have used in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

David tells the messenger that the **sword** eats one person as well as another. Use the same word or phrase for sword as you have used in previous passages.

In the fourth scene, Bathsheba finds out Uriah is dead and **mourns** for Uriah. "Mourn" means that Bathsheba follows the Israelite customs for showing that she is sad after the death of her husband. After the minimum amount of time for mourning has passed, David marries Bathsheba, and Bathsheba goes to live with David in the palace. Bathsheba gives birth to a son. The story ends by saying that the thing that David had done was "**evil** in the eyes of **Yahweh**." This means that Yahweh knew what David did, and Yahweh knew that what David did was wrong. Evil means the opposite of good. Make sure that you use the same words for evil and Yahweh as you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about evil and Yahweh.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 11:14–27 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 11:14–27

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 12:1–15a

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 12:1–15a and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:1–15a three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:1–15a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, King David sent a message to Joab. In that message, David told Joab to put Uriah in a dangerous place on the battlefield and then leave Uriah there to die. After Uriah died, David married Bathsheba, Uriah's widow, and brought her to live in the palace. Bathsheba gave birth to a son. In this story, the prophet

Nathan comes to King David and uses a story to confront David about his sin with Bathsheba. After David admits that he has sinned against Yahweh, Nathan tells David that although David himself will not die, David's child with Bathsheba will die.

Although the storyteller never calls Nathan a prophet in this passage, we know that Nathan is a prophet because the storyteller called Nathan a prophet in an earlier story. Nathan is the prophet who told David that David's family line would last forever. A prophet is a person who speaks on behalf of Yahweh. Prophets had a lot of authority in ancient Israel, and everyone treated prophets with great respect.

Stop here and describe a time when you heard someone speak on behalf of another person in authority. How did you know that the first person was speaking on behalf of someone else? How did you respond to the person who was speaking? Pause this audio here.

When Nathan speaks to King David, Nathan uses a common Israelite way to teach moral truth: Nathan tells a story. This story about the rich man and the poor man is probably not a true story. Rather, Nathan makes this story up to show how evil David's actions were. In ancient Israel, a man was rich if he owned many animals. The rich man in this story owns a very large number of animals, while the poor man owns only one animal.

Stop here and discuss this question: In your culture, how do you know if someone is rich? How do you know if someone is poor? What sort of things do rich people do, or have, that poor people do not do or have? Pause this audio here.

The poor man's animal is a ewe lamb or a female baby sheep. Sheep were common animals in Israel. Sheep were an important source of food, and lambs were part of Israelite worship rituals.

Stop here and look at a picture of a lamb and a sheep next to a person. Pause this audio here.

The poor man took good care of his lamb and treated it like a member of his own family. The poor man's lamb seemed more like a pet than a livestock animal. Most likely, the poor man did not literally eat the same bread and drink out of the same cup as the lamb. This phrase probably means that the man took food from his own small food supply in order to feed the lamb. It is possible that the lamb may have slept in the house with the poor man's family so that the family could protect the lamb from wild animals or thieves.

Stop here and describe someone you know who owns an animal and loves it very much. How does that person treat that animal? Pause this audio here.

When a traveler came to visit the rich man, the rich man was obligated to provide a meal for the traveler. Normally, the rich man would have killed an animal from his own flock or herd and used it to prepare a meal for his guest. But this rich man was not willing to use one of his own animals, so the rich man took the poor man's lamb, killed it, and made a meal out of it.

When David hears this story, David becomes very angry and says that the man who did this deserves to die. David might say this to show just how angry David is about the rich man's actions. The law that Yahweh gave to Israel did not require a person to die for theft. Rather, God's law said that if a person stole something from another person, the thief had to give back four times as much as they stole. So King David follows the law and says that the rich man should pay back the poor man four lambs.

Stop here and tell a story about a time someone did something very selfish, like this rich man did. How did that person's selfishness hurt other people? Did that person suffer for his or her actions? Pause this audio here.

Nathan tells David that David is the rich man in the story. When Nathan says this, Nathan is not accusing David of stealing a lamb from the poor man. Nathan means that David's actions toward Uriah and Bathsheba are like the actions of the rich man toward the poor man and his lamb. Like the rich man has many animals, David is rich and has many wives. Like the poor man who had only one lamb, Uriah had only one wife, Bathsheba. And like the rich man who stole the lamb from the poor man, David stole Bathsheba from Uriah.

Nathan wants David to know that Yahweh had spoken to Nathan about the things that David did. So Nathan begins his speech by saying, "This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says." This means that Nathan is repeating the exact words that Yahweh gave to Nathan. Therefore, Nathan's words have the same authority as Yahweh's words.

Nathan lists the many things that Yahweh had given to David: Yahweh made David king over Israel and stopped Saul from killing David. Yahweh gave David authority over Saul's family, Saul's possessions, and all of Israel and Judah. And Yahweh was willing to give David more than that if David wanted it. But David acted in an evil way because David hated the word, or law, of Yahweh. David showed that he hated Yahweh himself. Nathan tells David what David's punishment will be. David's descendants will always experience war and violence. Someone from David's own family will turn against David and attack him. Another man will take David's wives and have sex with them. Not only that, but all this will be public knowledge. David will not be able to hide his shame.

At the end of Nathan's speech, David has no choice but to admit that he sinned against Yahweh. When David admits this sin, it normally would mean that Yahweh would punish David by saying David had to die. However, Nathan tells David that Yahweh has taken away David's sin and that David will not die because of it. But then Nathan tells David that David's child with Bathsheba is going to die.

After Nathan says all these things, Nathan goes home.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when someone did something wrong and was supposed to receive a harsh punishment, but actually received a less severe punishment. How do you feel about this situation? How do you feel about the people involved in the situation?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:1–15a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two scenes.

In the first scene: Nathan comes to King David and tells David a story. In this story, there is a rich man and a poor man. Both of these men live in the same town. The rich man has many animals, but the poor man has one little lamb that he cares for very tenderly. The poor man not only feeds his lamb from his own food supply, but he also lets his children play with the lamb and allows it to sleep in his house. The lamb is like another child to the poor man. When a visitor comes to stay with the rich man, instead of taking one of his own animals to make a meal, the rich man steals the lamb from the poor man and kills it to make a meal.

In the second scene: David becomes angry after hearing Nathan's story. David says that the rich man deserves to die. Then Nathan says that David is that man and that Nathan has a message from Yahweh for David. Nathan reminds David that Yahweh is the one who made David king, saved David from Saul, and gave David everything he has. Then Nathan says that David is guilty of killing Uriah and taking Uriah's wife, Bathsheba, for his own. Because of David's behavior with Bathsheba and Uriah, not only will Yahweh punish David, but David's family will also suffer. Someone from David's own family will turn against David. Another man will take David's wives and sleep with them. Also, everyone in Israel will know about it, making David even more ashamed. David admits that he has sinned against Yahweh. Nathan tells David that Yahweh has taken away David's sin and that David will not die, but that David's child with Bathsheba will die.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- Nathan
- David
- The rich man
- The poor man
- And a visitor

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Yahweh starts the action in this scene by sending Nathan to talk to David. This scene takes place shortly after David and Bathsheba's son is born, and it probably takes place inside David's palace. Nathan comes and tells David a story that is probably not a true story, but rather a story that Nathan wants to tell to teach a moral truth.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you tell a story that is probably not a true story, but rather is a story to teach moral truth? Pause this audio here.

Nathan tells David the story of a rich man and a poor man. The rich man has "a great many flocks and herds." This means that the rich man owns many animals like sheep and cows, which he can use for food, sell for money, or trade for other goods. This is what makes the man rich. The poor man owns only one animal, a female lamb. "It was like a daughter to him" probably means that the poor man cared deeply for the lamb, in a similar way to how a man would care about his own daughter. The language describes the lamb as more of a pet to the poor man than a livestock animal.

When a traveler comes to the rich man's house, the rich man has more than enough animals of his own to slaughter one to provide a meal for his guest. But the rich man is very selfish. The rich man takes the poor man's lamb, kills it, and uses the lamb to make a meal for his guest.

In the second scene, David has a strong reaction to the story. When David heard this story, David's anger "burned greatly" at the rich man and his actions. This just means that David becomes very angry about what the rich man in the story did.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about a person being very angry like a big fire that is burning? Pause this audio here.

Before he says anything else, David says, "As Yahweh lives." The Israelites sometimes used this phrase to show that they were making a very serious statement or promise. Then David says that the man who did this deserves to die. David says that the rich man must pay back four times more than what he stole. Since the rich man stole one lamb, the rich man needs to pay back four lambs to the poor man.

Stop here and talk about how you start serious statements or promises in your language. How will you start David's serious statement? Pause this audio here.

David says that the rich man in the story had no compassion. To have compassion means to care about how another person feels and to take action to make sure no one harms another person. To have compassion means to think about how a certain action would make you feel if someone else did it to you, and to avoid doing things that would hurt other people.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when someone did something that hurt others and did not seem to care. What words can you use to describe that person? Pause this audio here.

After David tells Nathan what David thinks about the rich man in the story, Nathan says to David, "You are the man!" Nathan means that David has behaved in a similar way to the rich man in the story. Then Nathan gives a speech to David. Nathan's speech has three parts. In the first part, Nathan lists all the good things Yahweh did for David. In the second part, Nathan describes the evil things David did. In the third part, Nathan tells David how Yahweh will punish David for his sin.

Nathan begins the first part of his speech to David by saying, "This is what Yahweh, the God of Israel, says." This lets David know that Nathan's words are coming directly from Yahweh himself. Then Nathan, speaking as if he were Yahweh, says to David, "It is I who anointed you as king over Israel, and it is I who rescued you from the hand, or power, of Saul." The phrase "It is I" emphasizes that Yahweh did the action. David did not become king by being strong, smart, or popular. Rather, Yahweh made David king. Saul tried to kill David many times, but David survived, not because of David's own strength or cleverness, but because Yahweh saved David. Yahweh's point is to emphasize that everything David had came from Yahweh. David succeeded because Yahweh made David succeed.

Stop here and discuss how you will emphasize that Yahweh is the one who did all these things for David. Pause this audio here.

When Yahweh says, "I gave you your lord's, or master's, house and your master's wives," the phrase "your master" refers to Saul, who was the King of Israel when David was young. Yahweh reminds David that David was not always the king. David was once a servant, and Saul was David's master. The phrase "your master's house and your master's wives" refers to basically everything that belonged to Saul. David took over not only the kingship of Israel and Judah, but also Saul's material possessions. Furthermore, David had authority over all of Saul's family. We do not know for sure if David married any of Saul's wives. In those times, kings sometimes married the daughters of other kings in order to make a treaty between the two countries. Therefore, David might have been obligated to marry Saul's wives in order to maintain good relationships with their fathers. It is also possible that David might have married Saul's wives in order to protect the wives and provide a safe place for them to live.

"I gave you the house, or the people, of Israel and Judah" means that Yahweh made David king of Israel and Judah.

Nathan begins the second part of his speech by asking David a question that Nathan does not expect anyone to answer: "Why have you hated the word of Yahweh by doing evil in his sight?" This question means, "The evil things you did show that you hate the word of Yahweh." "Hate" is a very strong word that means "to really dislike something." David showed that he hated Yahweh's laws by doing these evil things.

Stop here and discuss how you will describe that David hated the word, or the laws, of Yahweh. Pause this audio here.

Nathan, speaking on behalf of Yahweh, says to David, "You have struck down Uriah the Hittite with the sword." David was not the one who physically killed Uriah. David was not even there when Uriah died. But Yahweh holds David responsible for Uriah's death because of the letter David sent to Joab. Yahweh considers David just as guilty of Uriah's murder as if David had stabbed Uriah with David's own sword. In case there was any doubt, Nathan repeats this accusation and says, "You have killed him with the sword of the sons of Ammon." This statement shows that although it was Ammonite soldiers who literally killed Uriah in battle, David abused his authority as king to send Uriah into a situation where survival was impossible. Yahweh knows that David made it so that the Ammonites killed Uriah in war, and Yahweh sees David as guilty of murder.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe a time when someone caused something bad to happen without actually doing the bad thing themselves. How did the person make the bad event happen? Is that person responsible for what happened? Pause this audio here.

Nathan finishes describing David's sins. In the third part of Nathan's speech, Nathan describes David's punishment. Nathan makes it clear that all the punishments he is about to describe are because of the things David did that were evil in Yahweh's sight. Nathan tells David, "The sword shall never depart from your house." "The sword" represents violence, war, and death. "Your house" refers to David's descendants. Yahweh is saying that in every generation of David's family, there will be violence and violent death. People will kill some of David's children, and David's descendants will constantly experience war and violence.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate the phrase, "The sword shall never depart from your house." Pause this audio here.

Now, Nathan makes it clear that Nathan is about to say something very important. Nathan wants David to pay close attention. "I will raise up evil against you out of your own house" means that a member of David's own family will do something bad to David. "I will take your wives from before your eyes" simply means that Yahweh

will take David's wives away from David. Yahweh will give the wives to another man—someone David knows, a friend or coworker of David. This man will have sex with David's wives. It is unclear whether this means that another man will have sex with all of David's wives, or just some of the wives.

There is an important contrast at the end of Nathan's speech. David tried to keep his sin hidden, but Yahweh will punish David publicly. David sinned with Bathsheba in secret, and the only person who knew about David's scheme to murder Uriah was Joab. David tried to keep his wrongdoing secret, but Yahweh refused to allow that secret to continue. When Yahweh says, "In broad daylight," Yahweh means that these things will happen in a way so that everyone knows about it. Yahweh says that although David committed all these sins secretly, Yahweh will punish David "before all Israel and under the sun," which means that everyone in Israel will know what happens to David. The public humiliation is part of David's punishment.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe that David's punishment will happen in such a way that everyone knows about it. Pause this audio here.

David completely agrees with what Nathan says to David. David does not deny his guilt or try to excuse himself in any way. David's actions show that in Israel, the king is not greater than Yahweh. The king has to follow Yahweh's laws just like everyone else. David is probably very afraid at this point because David was supposed to die as punishment for these sins. Then Nathan tells David something that is the opposite of what people would expect. Nathan says, "Yahweh has put away your sin—you will not die."

When Nathan tells David, "You will not die," it means that Yahweh will not tell the Israelites to kill David for these sins. David will still die many years later. It is also important to translate this statement in a way to make it clear that Yahweh will spare David from dying as punishment for these sins, but the other punishments will still happen.

Bible scholars do not agree on exactly how to translate the last part of what Nathan says to David in this story. However, it is certain that David blasphemed Yahweh. In other words, David showed great hatred or disrespect for Yahweh. It is also certain that David and Bathsheba's child would die because of David's great disrespect for Yahweh. David's actions could make it look to others like Yahweh was not a good God.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:1–15a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- Nathan
- David
- The rich man
- The poor man
- And a visitor

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first scene, Yahweh sends Nathan to see King David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Nathan, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am nervous because the king might become angry and kill me; or
- I am angry that my king behaved in such an evil way; or
- I am sad because I have to give some bad news to David.

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am angry because David hated my word, or law; or
- I am sad because people are going to suffer a lot; or
- I am angry because David killed an innocent man; or
- I am glad that I will give Uriah justice.

Continue the drama.

Nathan tells David a story about a rich man and a poor man. The rich man had many animals, but the poor man had one little ewe lamb. The poor man took good care of the lamb. The lamb grew up with the man's children, and it was like a daughter to the man. But when a traveler came to the rich man, instead of using one of his own animals to make a meal for the traveler, the rich man stole the poor man's lamb and used it to make a meal.

Stop here and ask the person playing the rich man, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy because I did not have to use any of my own animals to feed this traveler; or
- I am having a great time having a free party with my visitor.

Ask the person playing the poor man, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like:

- I am heartbroken because the rich man stole and killed my lamb; or
- I am afraid because that lamb was all I had to provide for my own family; or
- I am angry because the rich man killed my lamb; or
- I am frustrated because this is not right, and I cannot do anything about it.

Continue the drama.

In the second scene, King David became very angry when he heard this story. David said that the rich man deserved to die. Then David said that the rich man should pay back four lambs to the poor man, because the rich man had no compassion. But then Nathan tells King David, "You are the man!" Nathan describes how Yahweh has blessed David with good things. Yahweh saved David from Saul, made David King of Israel, and

gave David all of Saul's possessions. And if that were not enough for David, Yahweh would have given David more. But David's evil actions showed that David hated the word of Yahweh.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am terrified because I know I am guilty; or
- This is the end. People are going to execute me; or
- I wish I had not done all these things!

Continue the drama.

Next, Nathan describes David's punishment. Nathan says that David's descendants will continually have violence and murder. A member of David's family will turn against David, and someone else will take David's wives and sleep with them. Everyone in Israel will know about these things. These things will not be a secret, like David's sin with Bathsheba was a secret at first. Then David says to Nathan, "I have sinned against Yahweh."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel guilty and regret what I did; or
- There is no way out; or
- Why was I so stupid to think I could get away with this? Yahweh knows everything.

Ask the person playing Nathan, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad to see Yahweh punishing David! or
- I am sad that so many people are going to suffer because of this; or
- At least the king has admitted that what he did was wrong.

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am pleased that I will do justice; or
- I am angry at David for causing so much suffering; or
- I am pleased with David for admitting the truth. I can see that David truly wants to turn away from his bad actions.

Continue the drama.

Nathan tells David that Yahweh has taken away David's sin and that Yahweh will not make the Israelites execute David for his actions. However, because David showed so much hatred or disrespect for Yahweh, the child born to David and Bathsheba will die. After Nathan says this, Nathan goes home.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am terrified at the thought that my child will die; or
- Bathsheba is going to be so sad and angry about this; or
- I am relieved that I am not going to be executed, but this is still pretty bad.

Ask the person playing Nathan, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am relieved that the king received that well and did not kill me; or
- What about poor Bathsheba? She does not deserve any of this; or
- Maybe David got off too easy.

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- None of this makes me happy, but it is what must be done to pay for David's sins; or
- I am grieved because David and Bathsheba will both be very sad.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:1–15a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In this passage, **Yahweh** sent **Nathan**, a **prophet**, to see King David. Be sure to use the same word for Yahweh as you have used previously, and see the Master Glossary for more information on Yahweh. Earlier in 2 Samuel you translated a story that included Nathan, so make sure that you use the same name for Nathan that you used in that story. Nathan told David a story about a rich man and a poor man. Although this story does not say that Nathan was a prophet, we know from previous stories that he was. If you choose to describe Nathan as a prophet in your translation, use the same word for prophet as you have used in previous passages, and remember that prophet is in the Master Glossary.

When David heard this story, he became very angry. When David spoke, he started by saying, "**As Yahweh lives.**" The ancient Israelites sometimes said this to show they were making a serious statement or promise. Be sure to translate "As Yahweh lives" in the same way that you have translated it before.

David told Nathan that the rich man deserved to die. David said that the rich man should give the poor man four lambs, because the rich man had no compassion. To have compassion means to care about how other people feel, and to make sure your actions do not hurt others.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **compassion**. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about compassion, and translate this idea in the same way you have in previous books of the Bible. Pause this audio here.

Then Nathan said that David himself was the rich man in the story. Nathan revealed to David that Yahweh told Nathan all about what David did with Bathsheba and what David did to Uriah. Nathan told David that this is what Yahweh, the **God** of Israel, said. Speaking through Nathan, Yahweh reminded David that Yahweh **anointed** David **king** over **Israel** and protected David from Saul's attempts to kill David. Be sure to use the same words for God, anointed, king, and Israel that you used earlier in 2 Samuel. Look up God, anointed, king, and Israel in the Master Glossary for more information.

Yahweh rescued David from the **hand**, or power, of Saul. Use the same phrase as you have used previously for the idea of someone's hand representing their power.

Yahweh gave David everything that once belonged to Saul, including David's **lord's** house and wives. David's lord, or master, in this case was Saul, the first king of Israel. Yahweh also gave David the position of king of Israel and **Judah**. And if David wanted more, Yahweh would have given him more. But David hated the **word, or law, of Yahweh** by doing things that Yahweh considers **evil**. Be sure to use the same words and phrases for lord, Judah, word of Yahweh, and evil that you used earlier in 2 Samuel. Look up lord, Judah, word, and evil in the Master Glossary for more information.

Yahweh considered David as guilty of killing Uriah as if David had personally used his own **sword** to do it. Use the same word or phrase for sword as you have used in previous passages.

Yahweh would also cause David's own family members to turn on David and do wrong to him. Another man from David's **household** would take David's wives and have sex with them and everyone in Israel will would about it. Be sure to use the same word for household that you have used before. Look up household in the Master Glossary for more information.

After Nathan finished speaking, David admitted that he sinned against Yahweh. Sin is an act of rebellion or disobedience against God. Anytime a person breaks one of God's laws, that person sins.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **sin**. Look up sin in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Nathan told David that Yahweh had removed David's sin, and that David would not be killed because of what he had done. Rather, the child that David had with Bathsheba would die. Nathan said that this is because David's actions showed that he hated Yahweh. In other words, David blasphemed against God. To blaspheme someone means to speak evil about someone or to insult someone. In regards to Yahweh, to blaspheme means to say bad things about Yahweh that are not true. Yahweh is all good, so to say anything bad about Yahweh is blasphemy.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for the idea of hating Yahweh, or **blaspheming** against Yahweh. Look up blasphemy in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 12:1–15a

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 12:15b–25

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:15b-25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, Nathan the prophet went to King David and confronted him about his sin with Bathsheba and Uriah. Nathan told David all the ways that David and his family would be punished for David's sins. In this story, David and Bathsheba's newborn son gets sick. Although David fasts and prays for seven days, the child dies anyway. David comforts Bathsheba, and Bathsheba gets pregnant again and gives birth to a son whom they name Solomon.

When David and Bathsheba's newborn son becomes sick, David begs Yahweh for his son to get well. David fasts, which means David does not eat any food. Fasting was a common spiritual practice in ancient Israel. Yahweh required the Israelites to fast on certain holy days. People sometimes fasted when they wanted to make a special request of God. David might also fast to show Yahweh that David is very sad and regrets his sin.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: On what kinds of occasions do people in your culture intentionally go without food? For how long? Do people fast from both food and water? How do people decide when to start eating again? Pause this audio here.

Some older men or officials from David's household come and try to make David get up, but David refuses. Each night, David lies on the ground and prays for his son to live. This might seem like a useless thing for David to do, because Nathan already told David that the child would die. But David continues to fast, pray, and weep for David's child.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe a time when you knew that something bad was going to happen, but you still hoped and prayed that things would turn out good. How did your hope change the way you behaved? How did your hope change what you thought and how you felt? Pause this audio here.

In spite of David's prayers, after seven days, the child dies.

Stop here and discuss this question: Have you ever eaten no food for seven days in a row? Have you ever had very poor sleep for many nights in a row? How did you feel at the end? How do you think you would feel if you did these things? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how might the funeral of a baby be different from the funeral of an adult? How might people think about the death of a baby differently from the death of an old person? Pause this audio here.

David's servants are very nervous about telling David that the child has died. The servants have seen David's behavior while the child was sick, and the servants worry that David might be overwhelmed with sadness.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think of someone you know who has had a very sick child or who has experienced the death of a child. What did that person say about how they felt? What did that person say about their thoughts during that time? How do you think you might feel if you were in the same situation? Pause this audio here.

When David finds out that the child is dead, David's behavior surprises his servants. In ancient Israel, when a person died, that person's family members were not supposed to eat food or bathe for a certain amount of time. The family members were supposed to wear special clothes to show that they were in mourning. The family members were supposed to cry and grieve. But David does the opposite of these things. David washes himself, puts on clean clothes, and goes to Yahweh's house to worship Yahweh. After David comes back to David's house, David eats food.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, when a family member dies, how do you show that you are in mourning? What things do your traditions require you to do? What things are you not allowed to do? Pause this audio here.

David's servants are confused and probably think David's behavior is backwards. David behaved like an Israelite person in mourning while the child was still alive. But now that the child has died, David stops doing the things that a person in mourning would do.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do most people in your culture believe happens to a person after he or she dies? What are the reasons why people believe this? Pause this audio here.

So the servants ask David why he behaves the way he does. David answers that while the child was still alive, David fasted and cried because David hoped that Yahweh might change his mind and allow the child to live. But now that the child has died, there is no longer any reason for David to fast and pray. Nothing can bring the child back to life again. David says that one day, David too will die and join his child in death, but nothing will bring the child back to life.

Stop here and tell a story about someone who faced negative consequences for something he or she did. How did that person behave? Did that person accept the negative consequences? Did that person do anything to make the situation worse? Pause this audio here.

After the child has died, David comforts his wife Bathsheba. David and Bathsheba have sexual relations, and soon Bathsheba becomes pregnant again. David and Bathsheba's second child is a son, and they name the child Solomon. Yahweh tells Nathan, the prophet, to give Solomon a special name, Jedidiah, which means "Yahweh loves him."

In ancient Israel, it was very important for the parents of a child to be married to each other. First, if the parents were not married, then the union was sinful and the punishment was supposed to be death. However, if the mother escaped the death penalty and gave birth to the child, they could still have a very difficult life. A mother and child without a husband and father to protect them and provide for them would probably be very poor and vulnerable. It was even more important to make sure that any child born to the king's wife was definitely the son of the king. Any male child of a king could potentially become the next king. No king wanted another man's son growing up in his house and possibly taking over his kingdom. So the ending of this story is important because it proves that Solomon was a legitimate son of David—that is, David and Bathsheba conceived Solomon while David was married to Bathsheba.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what do most people think about children who are born to parents who are not married? What kind of problems do these children have because of their situation?

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:15b-25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: David and Bathsheba's son becomes sick. David prays and fasts for the child and asks God to spare the child's life.

In the second scene: After seven days, David and Bathsheba's son dies. David's servants are afraid to tell David, but David realizes that the child is dead. David's servants are surprised when David washes, gets dressed, worships in Yahweh's house, and eats food. David explains that the child cannot come back to life, so David will not fast and pray anymore.

In the third scene: David comforts Bathsheba, and David and Bathsheba have another son named Solomon. Nathan the prophet tells them to call this son Jedidiah because Yahweh loves him.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- David and Bathsheba's son
- The elders of David's household
- David's servants
- Bathsheba
- Solomon
- Nathan
- And Yahweh

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The first scene probably takes place in the palace. We do not know exactly how old David's son was when he became sick, but it was probably not very long after his birth. The author still calls Bathsheba "Uriah's widow," possibly to remind the audience that Bathsheba became pregnant with David's child while she was still married to Uriah.

The text says that Yahweh "struck the child so that he was very sick." This does not mean that Yahweh physically hit David's son. This is a way to say that Yahweh caused the child to become sick. It should be clear in your translation that Yahweh was the one who caused the child to get sick.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you talk about God causing things to happen? Pause this audio here.

After the child got sick, David begged Yahweh to heal the child. David's prayers might have sounded like begging or pleading because David desperately did not want his child to die. David did not eat any food during this time.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about David begging God to heal the baby. Pause this audio here.

In this scene, the storyteller tells us that David "went in," but the storyteller does not say where David went in to. It is possible that David went into the room where the child was, but he may have gone into his own room or even into the tent where the ark of the covenant was. David lay all night on the ground. David was probably pretty uncomfortable, and he might not have slept much. In David's culture, lying on the ground like this showed humility, sadness, and repentance. David probably lay on the ground, fasted, and prayed to show Yahweh how very sorry he was for what he had done. Even when some older men from David's household came to David and tried to make him get up, David refused to get up or eat any food. These men probably tried to get David up by talking to him. The men probably did not try to physically force David to get up. These men were probably older officials or servants who helped David govern Israel.

The second scene probably takes place in the palace and in the tent where the ark of the covenant was. Seven days have passed. It is a bit unclear whether this means it has been seven days since Nathan visited David, seven days since the child was born, or seven days since the child became sick. Most Bible scholars think it means that the child was sick for seven days, and then the child died. The words the storyteller uses in this story show that David repeatedly prayed and pleaded with God to save the child during the entire seven-day period, and that David fasted for the entire seven-day period. But David was apparently not in the room at the moment the child died, because David's servants had to go find David and tell him that the child was dead.

The servants are afraid to tell David that the child is dead. These are probably the same servants or elders who have been with David during this entire time that the child is sick. The servants know this is a very bad situation. When the servants speak to each other, they use a special word to show that they are very concerned about the situation. When the servants say, "he did not listen to our voice," it does not mean that David could not hear the servants when they spoke to David before. It means that David did not do what the servants wanted David to do.

The servants use a question that they do not expect anyone to answer to show that they are afraid. The servants say, "How then can we tell him that the child is dead?" This question means something like, "David will be heartbroken when we tell him that the child is dead," or "It will be so awful when we tell him that the child is dead." Then the servants say, "He may do something desperate." The servants were afraid that David would be so overwhelmed with sadness that David might harm himself or someone else.

Stop here and discuss this question: Tell a story about someone who harmed themselves or others after the death of a person they loved. What did that person say about how they felt or what they were thinking? Pause this audio here.

David realized that his servants were behaving differently. David probably saw the servants standing at a distance from David and realized that they were intentionally speaking in a low voice so that David could not hear the servants. David correctly guessed that this change in behavior meant that the child was dead. But when the servants told David that the child was dead, David acted in a way that was the opposite of what the servants expected David to do. David got up from the ground, bathed himself, rubbed oil or lotion on himself, changed clothes, and went to the house of Yahweh to bow down before Yahweh.

When David bowed down before Yahweh, David was showing respect for Yahweh. The action showed that David knew that Yahweh was greater than David, and that what Yahweh did was right. It also showed that David accepted what Yahweh had done and that Yahweh was still David's God. Bowing down before Yahweh was an act of worship for the Israelites.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: In your culture, what does bowing down mean? When you worship God, what kinds of physical motions do you make? How will you translate or describe what David does here? Pause this audio here.

When David came back to the palace, David asked for food and then ate it.

The servants were confused by David's behavior. The servants used a question that does not expect an answer to show their confusion. The servants asked David, "What is this thing that you have done?" This question means, "We do not understand your behavior," or "You are not acting the way you should." Then, the servants summarized the things that David had just done.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Try to describe David's actions of fasting and weeping, lying on the ground, and crying out to Yahweh, using the same words you used in the rest of the story. Pause this audio here.

David told the servants that David behaved the way he did because he hoped Yahweh might change Yahweh's mind. David thought that Yahweh might show mercy and allow the child to live. When David said, "For I said, 'Who knows? Yahweh may be merciful to me and allow the child to live,'" David was stating what he was thinking. David might have said these words out loud, but what David means here is that he thought these things. "Who knows?" is another question that does not expect an answer. It is a way of saying, "Nobody knows if Yahweh will be gracious and let the child live," or "Maybe it is possible that Yahweh will be gracious and let the child live." David means that he thought it was still possible that Yahweh might change Yahweh's mind and save his son's life.

David continues to explain himself using two more questions that do not expect an answer. The first question, "Why should I fast when he is dead?" means that David thinks there is no longer any reason to fast. "Can I bring him back again?" means that there is nothing that David can do to bring the child back to life. "I will go to him" means that one day, David too will die. "He will not return to me" is a statement that shows David knows that the child is dead and cannot come back to life.

These statements that David makes also make it clear that David knows his actions now will not have any effect on his child's experience in the afterlife. Although the Israelites had funeral customs and mourning customs, these customs were not supposed to benefit the dead person in their life after death. These customs were only for the benefit of the people who were still alive. For this reason, David knew that he could stop fasting and praying for his child, and David did not have to worry that the child might experience something bad in his life after death. The Israelites believed that life after death was mostly a place of rest. Nothing David did, or failed to do, could make David's child's rest any better or any worse.

Stop here and discuss these questions as a group: In your culture, what kinds of things do people do at funerals or during the mourning period that are supposed to benefit the deceased person in the afterlife? What do people believe will happen if people do not do these things? Do these beliefs apply to the death of a baby in the same way as they do to an old person? David did not think that anything he did would affect the baby in his life after death. How will you translate this part of the story to show that? Pause this audio here.

Scene three probably takes place mostly in David's palace. After their son died, David comforted his wife Bathsheba. In other words, David and Bathsheba had sexual relations, and Bathsheba became pregnant again. This scene is the first time the storyteller calls Bathsheba David's wife.

Stop here and discuss this question: This is the first time in the story that the storyteller tells us that David and Bathsheba had sexual relations as husband and wife. Do you need to use different words to describe David and Bathsheba's sexual relations as husband and wife than you did to describe the sexual relations David and Bathsheba had when they were not married? Pause this audio here.

Bathsheba gave birth to a son, and they named him Solomon.

Then something unusual happened. Yahweh told Nathan to come and give Solomon a special name, Jedidiah, to show that Yahweh loves the child. In this story, you hear two Hebrew names you have not heard before: Solomon and Jedidiah. The name Solomon means "person of peace." Solomon will become the king of Israel after Solomon's father, David, dies. Jedidiah means "Yahweh loves him." You could choose to use a name in your language that has a similar meaning to the biblical name, or you could use a name that sounds like the biblical name.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the names Solomon and Jedidiah. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:15b-25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- David and Bathsheba's son
- The elders of David's household
- David's servants
- Bathsheba
- Solomon
- Nathan
- And Yahweh

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first scene, Yahweh caused David and Bathsheba's son to become sick. David prayed to Yahweh for the child, and David also fasted and lay on the ground all night long. Even when elders in David's household came to see him, David refused to get up or eat.

Pause the drama here. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This is what is necessary for justice to be done; or
- I am sad that this baby has to suffer and die.

Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- My son is suffering, and it is all my fault; or
- I wish I could die instead of the child; or
- I wish these other people would leave me alone; or
- Poor Bathsheba. I have made Bathsheba's life miserable.

Ask the person playing Bathsheba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This is all David's fault. David is a terrible person; or
- I wish I could do something to make my son get better; or
- First, I lost Uriah. Now my son is going to die. My life is horrible.

Continue the drama.

In the second scene, after seven days, David and Bathsheba's son died. David's servants were afraid to tell David that the child was dead, but David realized it before they told him. Then David got up, washed himself, put on clean clothes, and went to worship Yahweh. When David came back home, David ate food. David's servants

were confused and asked David why he acted this way. David replied that while the child was still alive, David hoped that Yahweh might change his mind and let the child live. But now that the child was dead, nothing could be done.

Pause the drama here. Ask the people playing the servants, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- David's behavior makes no sense. Maybe David has gone crazy; or
- How can David be so calm when his son just died? or
- Maybe David did not really care that much about the child.

Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am relieved that this is finally over; or
- I accept what happened. Yahweh told me this is what would happen; or
- This is what I deserve as punishment for my sins.

Ask the person playing Bathsheba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very sad because my baby died; or
- I am very angry at David for causing me so much pain; or
- My life is terrible. I wish all these things had not happened to me.

Continue the drama.

In the third scene, David comforted Bathsheba and got her pregnant again. Bathsheba gave birth to a son, and they named the baby Solomon. Nathan the prophet came and gave the baby a special name, Jedidiah, which means "Yahweh loves him."

Pause the drama here. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy now that Bathsheba and I have a son; or
- I hope that this child will make Bathsheba feel better; or
- I am afraid of the rest of the punishments that will happen.

Ask the person playing Bathsheba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel better now that I have a baby to care for, and he is a prince of Israel; or
- I am happy because now I have a son; or
- I cannot wait to get revenge on David; or
- Now that we have a son, I hope that David leaves me alone.

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am going to comfort David and Bathsheba in their pain; or
- I have good plans for Bathsheba and her baby; or
- I really love Solomon.

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:15b-25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

After Nathan visited David, **Yahweh** caused David and Bathsheba's child to become very sick. David begged **God** to heal the child. Use the same words for Yahweh and for God as you used in previous passages. Both Yahweh and God are in the Master Glossary.

To beg God is another way of saying that David prayed to God, but this was a specific type of prayer. This is not the same word that you heard earlier in 2 Samuel when David inquired of Yahweh whether he should attack the Philistines. In this case, David was making a special request of God. David asked God to make the child get well and allow the child to live.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use to describe David's **prayers** here. Pause this audio here.

David also fasted. To fast is to intentionally eat no food for a certain period of time. Sometimes it also means that the person does not drink any water.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **fast**. Look up fasting in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David lay all night on the ground. This represented David's humility and how desperate he felt for the child to get well. Some versions of the story also say that David wore **sackcloth**. Sackcloth is a rough material that is ugly to look at and uncomfortable to wear. In ancient Israel, people wore sackcloth as a sign of sadness, grief, repentance, or humility. If you use the translation that means sackcloth, be sure to translate sackcloth in the same way that you have in previous stories.

The **elders** of David's **household** tried to make David get up, but David would not listen to them. These elders are probably older men who served as important officials in David's government. David's household refers to anyone who lived in David's palace, both family and servants. These people worked alongside David to rule Israel. Use the same words for elder and household as you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about elders and household.

The storyteller calls the elders David's **servants** or officials for the rest of the story. These kinds of servants were not slaves. These people usually served a leader and helped him make decisions as he ruled. If you use the word servants for these instances, use the same word for servant that you have used previously, and refer to servant in the Master Glossary for more information.

After seven days, the child died. David was not in the room when the child died, and David's servants were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. But when David finally realized the child was dead, David got up, washed himself, and anointed himself. Here, when it says that David anointed himself, it is not the same word that the storyteller used when Samuel anointed David as king. This word means that David rubbed oil or lotions on himself, probably to clean himself or make himself smell better.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate that David **anointed** himself here. Pause this audio here.

David changed his clothes, went into the house of Yahweh, and bowed down before Yahweh. In this story, "house of Yahweh" refers to the tent David made in Jerusalem that had the ark of the covenant. We know it is not the temple because people had not built the temple yet when David was alive. You may choose to translate this place as "house of Yahweh," or you may say that David went to the tent where the ark of the covenant was.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "**house of Yahweh**" in this story. Pause this audio here.

David returned to his house and ate a meal. David's servants did not understand his actions and asked him what he was doing. David told the servants that while the child was still alive, David thought, "Who knows? Yahweh might be gracious to me and let the child live." In this context, to be gracious means to have mercy or show compassion by doing something kind, such as allowing David's child to live. David hoped that he might be able to avoid the punishment he was supposed to get because of David's sins.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **gracious**. This word is related to the word grace, so you could also look up grace in the Master Glossary for more information. Pause this audio here.

After their firstborn son died, David and Bathsheba had another child, a boy named Solomon. Yahweh loved Solomon and sent Nathan the **prophet** to give him a special name, Jedidiah. Jedidiah means "loved by Yahweh." Use the same word or phrase for prophet as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about prophet.

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 12:15b–25

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 12:26–31

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 12:26–31 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:26–31 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:26–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, the firstborn son of King David and Bathsheba died. Then David and Bathsheba had another baby, and they named him Solomon. In this story, we hear what has been happening in Ammon while David has been in Jerusalem. Joab continues to fight to conquer the city of Rabbah. Joab is close to succeeding, so Joab tells King David to come to Rabbah and conquer it himself. David travels 65 kilometers to Rabbah and conquers the city. David takes the Ammonite crown, and David makes the Ammonite people become slaves. Then David takes his army and goes back to Jerusalem.

Stop here and look at a map that shows the territory of Israel and Ammon at this time. Note how close Rabbah is to Jerusalem. Pause this audio here.

In this story, we find out some important information about the city of Rabbah. Rabbah had a water supply that enabled the people inside the city to get water without having to go outside the city walls. Rabbah was close to the source of a river people called the Jabbok River, and this is probably the water supply the storyteller mentions here. The water supply was probably one reason why the people inside Rabbah were able to survive for some time while the Israelite army surrounded the city. Rabbah also had a royal fortress on top of a hill inside the city walls, where the king and his family lived. This fortress was probably the strongest part of the

city and the part that people protected the most. It is likely that the royal family, the king's personal guards, and high-ranking government officials were inside the royal fortress.

Joab, the commander of the Israelite army, captured the royal fortress of Rabbah and the water supply. Joab knew that this meant the war was almost over. There was only one step left to make the Israelite victory complete—to go into the royal fortress and capture the king of Ammon. At this time, Joab did something that showed respect for David. Joab sent a message to David and told David to come and finish the conquest of Rabbah himself. This was because Joab wanted David to get the credit for conquering Rabbah. Joab told David to do three things. Joab told David to gather the rest of the army, to camp against or besiege the city, and to capture the city.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, tell a story about a war or a military battle. Pause this audio here.

David did what Joab told David to do. David went to Rabbah with the rest of the army that had remained with David, and attacked the city and captured it. David took the Ammonite crown and wore it himself. In most societies with a king, the king wears special clothes and special jewelry to show that he is the king. A crown is a special piece of jewelry. The king wore a crown on top of his head, like a hat. Only the king can wear the crown. People used expensive materials like gold and precious stones to make crowns. The size and value of the crown showed that the person who wore the crown was a wealthy and powerful person. A crown is also a symbol of royal authority. King Saul had a crown, and a messenger brought this crown to David after Saul died.

Stop here and look at a picture of a crown. Pause this audio here.

When David wore the Ammonite crown, it showed that David was now the ruler of the Ammonites. The Ammonite crown weighed 34 kilograms, so David probably did not wear the crown for too long. In fact, because this crown was so heavy, some Bible scholars think that this statement does not mean that David put the entire crown on his head. It might actually mean that David took a precious stone out of the Ammonite crown and put it in David's own crown. This action would also symbolize that David was now the ruler of the Ammonites. David defeated the Ammonites so much that David even took apart their royal crown.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people in authority show that they have authority? How do the leaders show that they are leaders? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and find an object that weighs around 34 kilograms. If you can, try to lift this object and put it on top of someone's head. Be careful that you do not hurt that person! After trying this activity, do you think David put the Ammonite crown on his head? Pause this audio here.

David does more things to show that he is now the ruler of the Ammonites. David takes plunder, or valuable items, out of the city. This was a very common practice after an army defeated a city. The plunder probably included food, live animals, drink, weapons, household goods, personal items like clothes and jewelry, and possibly raw materials like cloth or wood. The conquering army took these things in order to make themselves rich and also to further reduce the local people's ability to fight back.

David took the Ammonite people and made them work as slaves. In this area of the world in those days, it was common practice to take conquered people and make them do the hardest, worst jobs. David made the Ammonite people work cutting wood, cutting stones, digging in the ground, and making bricks. When David finished defeating the Ammonites, David took his army and went back to Jerusalem.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:26–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two scenes.

In the first scene: Joab fought against the city of Rabbah and captured the royal fortress and the water supply. Joab sent a message to King David that told David to come to Rabbah and fight the final battle so that David could claim the city himself.

In the second scene: David brought soldiers to Rabbah and defeated the city. David took the Ammonite crown and put it on himself. David took plunder from the city and made all the Ammonites into slaves. Then David and the army returned to Jerusalem.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- The Ammonites
- David
- The Israelite soldiers with Joab
- The Israelite soldiers who came with David
- And the king of Ammon

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, we find out what has been happening in Rabbah while David was in Jerusalem. The storyteller uses words at the beginning of this story to show that the events of this story happened at the same time as the events between David, Bathsheba, and Nathan.

Stop here and discuss how you will make it clear that what Joab was doing in Rabbah was happening at the same time as the previous two stories were happening. Pause this audio here.

Joab had captured the royal fortress. "The royal fortress" might refer to a special building or group of buildings inside Rabbah where the royal family lived and the king carried out his daily work. The fortress was probably strong, and the Ammonites probably defended it well. The fortress might have been on top of a hill, which made it easier to defend against an attacking army. Even if Joab got inside the walls of Rabbah, the victory was not complete until Joab captured the King of Ammon. So Joab had to get inside the royal fortress in order to win the war. But Joab had not done that yet.

Joab sent David a message and said, "I have fought against Rabbah, and I have captured the city's water supply." Joab gave David two important pieces of information, but Joab emphasized that he had captured the city's water supply. This seemed to be more important information.

Stop here and discuss how your language shows which piece of information out of two things is more important. Pause this audio here.

Joab seemed to assume that David would understand that Joab would soon defeat Rabbah. Joab told David to gather some people, come to Rabbah, and capture the city. When Joab told David to do this, Joab also explained his reason why. Joab did not want to get the credit for conquering the city. Joab wanted David to get the credit for conquering the city. Joab was worried that if he conquered the city without David there, the city would be named after Joab. Even though Joab had done most of the work, Joab was David's servant, and all Joab's work was done on behalf of the king. So Joab did not want to be the person who took the final step and made the victory over Rabbah complete.

Stop here and discuss how you will make it clear that Joab did not want to get credit for conquering Rabbah. Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, David gathered some soldiers together. When the storyteller says that David gathered "all the people," this does not mean that David gathered every single Israelite to go to Rabbah. David did not take women, children, and old people with David to Rabbah. David probably took his personal guards and enough soldiers to keep David safe on the journey. When David arrived at Rabbah, there were probably more Israelite soldiers waiting for David outside the city. David took these men, led the final battle, and conquered Rabbah.

Next, David took a crown from the Ammonites. Bible scholars disagree as to whether this crown belonged to the king of Ammon, or if it was a decoration on the head of a statue that represented the Ammonite god whose name was Molech or Milcom. The names of Molech and the name for the kings sounded very similar! Although the king is usually the one who wears the crown, this crown weighed 34 kilograms and was probably too heavy for a human being to wear on his head. It would make more sense if that crown were on the head of a statue. Regardless of who the crown originally belonged to, the symbolism was the same. When David put the crown on David's head, it symbolized that David had won a victory over the Ammonites.

Stop here and discuss whether you will translate this phrase to mean that David took the crown from the king of Ammon or that David took the crown from their god Molech. Pause the audio here.

It is also not clear whether David put the entire Ammonite crown on his head, or if David took a jewel out of the crown and put the jewel in David's own crown. Since the entire crown weighed 34 kilograms, it would have been difficult, maybe even dangerous, for David to put that crown on his head. Many Bible scholars think it is more logical that David took the jewel out of the Ammonite crown and put it in David's own crown.

Stop here and discuss whether you will translate this sentence to mean that David put the entire Ammonite crown on his head, or that David took a jewel out of the Ammonite crown and put it in David's own crown. Pause this audio here.

David took plunder out of Rabbah. This means that after David conquered the city, David took many valuable items with him. This was a common thing to do after a military leader conquered a city or settlement. David also made the people of Ammon do hard physical labor. David not only enslaved the people of Rabbah, but also the people living in all the other Ammonite towns.

Finally, David went back to Jerusalem. When it says that "all the people" went with him, this does not mean that every single Israelite and every single Ammonite went with David. David probably took most of his army, but left a few soldiers behind to oversee the slaves working in Ammon. It is possible that David might have taken some Ammonite people with him back to Israel, but David was also counting on those Ammonite slaves to do physical labor and produce goods for him. So when the text says that "all the people" went with David, this is just a quick way of saying that the war was over and the army left Ammon.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:26–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- The Ammonites
- David
- The Israelite soldiers with Joab
- The Israelite soldiers who came with David
- And the king of Ammon

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

While David was in Jerusalem, Joab was near Rabbah leading the army in the battle. After Joab had captured the city's water supply and surrounded the royal fortress, Joab sent a message to David to come to Rabbah and complete the conquest of the city.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad that I have finally succeeded in this task; or
- I cannot wait to see David march in and overthrow the Ammonite king; or
- I hope David rewards me well!

Ask the people playing the Ammonites, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am terrified that the enemy soldiers will kill me and my family; or
- I am starving and thirsty. I cannot take this much longer; or
- I am desperate to find a way to survive.

Ask the person playing the king of Ammon, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I wish I had not mistreated David's messengers and plotted against David; or
- I am afraid that David will kill me; or
- I feel guilty that I brought all this death and suffering on my people; or
- I feel hopeless. I know that my family is going to die.

Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so proud of my army. My army has done a great job and made me very happy! or
- I am relieved that Yahweh has given me success on the battlefield in spite of my personal sin; or
- At least the war is going well, unlike my personal life; or
- I am so grateful for a good commander like Joab. Joab has done a very good job.

Continue the drama.

David did what Joab told him to do. David came to Rabbah and captured the city. David took the Ammonite crown and wore it himself. David took plunder from the city. David made all the Ammonites into slaves and put them to work doing hard physical labor. Then David went back to Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel satisfied. It will be so good for our nation to have control over this territory; or
- I am glad that I can show that Yahweh is greater than Molech; or
- I feel relieved because I defeated the king of Ammon after he treated my messengers so badly.

Ask the people playing the Ammonites, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am sad because so many of our people died, and now our territory is controlled by Israelites; or
- This work is exhausting and miserable; or
- I feel angry that this happened because our new king disrespected David's messengers; or
- I would rather die than live like this.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 12:26–31 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Joab captured the water supply of Rabbah and surrounded the royal fortress inside Rabbah. The word royal means that this area was set aside for the use of the king's family and for people who helped the king rule his kingdom. This fortress was a building, or a group of buildings, that was larger and stronger than the surrounding buildings and was easy to defend against an attacker.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate the phrase **royal fortress**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Joab knew he was very close to winning the war. But Joab did not want to be the one to conquer Rabbah, and Joab did not want the people to name the city after Joab. So Joab sent a message to David and told David to come and finish conquering the city. Use the same word or phrase for **messengers** as you have used in previous passages.

David came and **besieged** the city, or camped outside the city to keep its people from leaving, as the Israelites had been doing for a long time. Use the same word or phrase for siege as you have used in previous passages. Refer to siege in the Master Glossary for more information.

David gathered some men, went to Rabbah, and captured the city. David symbolized his victory over the Ammonites by taking their **crown** and wearing it himself. A crown is a valuable piece of jewelry that the king wears on his head. Use the same word or phrase for crown as you used in a previous passage.

The crown weighed a talent of gold. A talent is about 34 kilograms.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **talent**. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about talent. Pause this audio here.

David took **plunder** from the **city** of Rabbah, which means David took material goods out of the city and kept them for himself and his people. Be sure to translate city and plunder the same way you have in previous passages.

David made the people of Ammon work as slaves. David made the people work with three different kinds of tools: saws, iron picks, and iron axes. A saw is a tool that people use to cut wood. People made saws out of metal. A saw had sharp points on it to help cut through the wood. One person could operate a smaller saw, but a larger saw might require two people to use it. The tool mentioned here was also sometimes used to cut stone.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the word **saw**. Pause this audio here.

An "iron pick" means an iron tool that was sharp and could cut other things. We do not know if this was a large tool or a small tool. It is possible that it might mean a tool that people used for working with stone. An "iron axe" refers to an iron tool that could cut wood or other things. Bible scholars are not sure what the difference is between an "iron pick" and an "iron axe." The most important details are that the tools are made of iron, they are sharp, and people use these tools to cut other things.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate **iron picks** and **iron axes**. Pause this audio here.

Finally, David made the Ammonite slaves go to the brick kiln. A brick kiln is a place where people make bricks. People used bricks to build structures such as buildings, walls, and waterways. Bricks were a common building material in biblical times. People used mud or clay to make bricks and then dried the bricks over a fire in the kiln. The brick kiln was probably very hot and the work was difficult and dangerous.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate **brick kiln**.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 12:26–31

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 13:1–9

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 13:1–9 and put it in your hearts.

This two-part story has many details about sexual violence, which may be difficult to hear about if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape.

Before you have any group discussions about this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections? Pause this audio here.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:1–9 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

The first half of the book of 2 Samuel is all about King David. In previous stories, the prophet Nathan told David that terrible things would happen to David and his family because of David's sin against Bathsheba and Uriah. Now, in this new section, we see how David's sin affects his family. In this passage, we begin to hear stories about some of David's children: Absalom, Amnon, and Tamar. David's son Amnon rapes Absalom's sister Tamar, which is similar to how David sinned by having sexual relations with Bathsheba, another man's wife. This story is the first part of a two-part story about Amnon's rape of his half-sister Tamar.

This two-part story has many details about sexual violence, which may be difficult to hear about if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape.

Before you have any group discussions about this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections of this book? Pause this audio here.

Overall, this two-part story shows the results of King David's sin. David did not set a good example for his sons, and David did not discipline his sons when they did wrong things. This story also shows the competition between David's sons Amnon and Absalom. Amnon was David's oldest son and was next to become king after David. Absalom was the most handsome son and was next in line to become king after Amnon. It is possible that in this story, Amnon not only wants to have sex with his half-sister Tamar but also wants to humiliate or embarrass his half-brother Absalom.

Amnon is David's first and oldest son, and Amnon's mother was Ahinoam from Jezreel. David also had a son named Absalom and a beautiful daughter named Tamar from a different wife named Maakah. Tamar means "palm tree." Amnon and Tamar are half-siblings, which means they share one parent but not the other parent. In this case, Amnon and Tamar both have David as their father, but they have different mothers. This passage happens after David has been the king for at least 20 years. We know this because David married Maakah, the mother of Absalom and Tamar, soon after David became the king of Israel at Hebron. This story also happens sometime after David and his army return to Jerusalem after they took the plunder from Rabbah and the Ammonite towns around Rabbah.

As this story begins, Amnon falls in love with Tamar, his beautiful half-sister.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe a relationship between brothers and sisters in your culture. How is this relationship different between half-sisters or half-brothers? Pause this audio here.

Amnon feels sexual desire for Tamar. Amnon wants to have sex so badly with his half-sister Tamar that he feels very sad or in distress and becomes physically sick.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when you were so upset about something that you became physically sick. Pause this audio here.

Amnon probably is not able to do anything with Tamar because people in the royal palace of David protected Tamar from other men. The words "it was impossible to do anything to her" are a more polite way to say, "to have sex with her." Tamar was a virgin, meaning she had not had sex with a man. During Tamar's time, it was very important for families to protect their virgin daughters and to make sure that no man had sexual relations with a virgin before the virgin got married.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do you take care of virgins, or young women who are not married and have not had sexual relations yet? Pause this audio here.

Jonadab, Amnon's friend, tries to help Amnon with his problem. Jonadab is also Amnon's cousin because he is the son of Shimeah, David's brother. Shimeah is another way to say Shammah, who was the third son of Jesse, David's father. It is possible that Jonadab is a special advisor in the royal family of David.

Jonadab asks Amnon why Amnon is so thin and depressed morning after morning, or day after day. Many times, sick people look the sickest in the morning. Amnon tells Jonadab that Amnon is in love with his half-sister Tamar. Jonadab says Amnon should trick people into thinking he is sick, and then when King David comes to visit Amnon, Amnon should ask David to send Amnon's half-sister Tamar to visit and make Amnon some bread. Bread was a common way to talk about food in general. Amnon will watch Tamar make the food, and then Amnon will eat the food from Tamar's hand. This probably means Amnon will be alone with Tamar, and Tamar will give Amnon the food. While Amnon is alone with Tamar, Amnon will be able to have sexual relations with her.

It is possible that Jonadab might also have some personal reasons for wanting Amnon to trick Tamar. Jonadab might want to hurt Absalom, Tamar's brother. Or Jonadab might think it will help Jonadab in the future.

Amnon likes Jonadab's advice, so Amnon lies down on his bed and pretends to be sick. Many people during Amnon's time slept on a mat on the ground, but Amnon was the son of the king, so Amnon probably had a bed raised off the ground. It is possible that Amnon's bed was raised on a platform near the wall and covered with cushions.

Stop here and look at a picture of a bed. Pause this audio here.

David visits Amnon. Amnon probably looks sick, so maybe it is easy to convince his father, King David, that Amnon is actually sick. Amnon asks for his half-sister Tamar to come prepare him a few cakes. The word for cakes in the original language is difficult to understand. Some people think these might have been some kind of bread that people bake or fry, or they may have been more like dumplings that people boil in water to cook them. David may have agreed for Tamar to come because it is possible that some people during Amnon's time thought that if a virgin prepared food, it would help a sick man get better sooner.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about how you care for a sick person in your community. What kind of food does a sick person eat? Pause this audio here.

Amnon wants to eat the cakes from Tamar's hand, which probably does not mean that Amnon wants Tamar to put the food into his mouth. Amnon probably wants to take the food from Tamar's hands to make sure he is alone with Tamar. Being alone with Tamar is important for Amnon's plan to be able to have sexual relations with Tamar as Amnon wants.

David does what Amnon asks. David asks Tamar to visit her brother Amnon and to prepare some food for Amnon. It is possible that each of King David's wives lived in a different part of the royal palace, and that their children lived with them. Or Amnon might have lived in a completely different house. It is clear in the story that King David does not think Amnon is planning anything evil with Amnon's half-sister Tamar.

Tamar goes to Amnon's house, where Amnon is lying down, pretending to be sick. Tamar takes some dough that she probably made from wheat flour and water mixed together to make a soft mixture. Tamar kneads the dough by pressing it together over and over with her hands and then cooks the bread, maybe by boiling it in water or by baking or frying it. The pan Tamar takes the bread out of is from a word in the original language that means "to hollow out." It is possible that Tamar bakes or fries the bread or cakes because this kind of pan was not deep enough to boil water. Bread was one of the most common foods that people ate during Tamar's time.

Stop here and look at a picture of bread and a picture of cakes as a group. Pause this audio here.

Tamar gives the bread or cakes to Amnon to eat, but Amnon refuses to eat the bread. It is possible that Amnon refuses to eat the bread because a servant brought it to him, and Amnon wants Tamar to give the bread to Amnon herself. The whole idea of Amnon's trick is to find a way to be alone with Tamar, so Amnon sends all of the people out of his house. All the people leave the house, and now Amnon is finally alone with Tamar.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: David's son Amnon falls in love with Tamar, the sister of another one of David's sons named Absalom. Amnon becomes sick because he is not able to do anything to his half-sister Tamar.

In the second scene: Amnon's friend, Jonadab, gives Amnon advice about how to see Tamar alone. Jonadab tells Amnon he should pretend to be sick and ask King David to send Amnon's half-sister Tamar to cook him some bread in Amnon's home.

In the third scene: Amnon pretends to be sick. King David comes to visit Amnon, and Amnon asks for his half-sister Tamar to come cook Amnon some food in his room.

In the fourth scene: David sends Tamar to Amnon's house to cook food for Amnon. Tamar prepares the food and gives it to Amnon to eat. Amnon tells everyone to leave the room.

The characters in this passage are:

- Amnon, David's oldest son
- Absalom, another one of David's sons
- The messenger that David sent to Tamar
- Tamar, Absalom's sister
- Jonadab, Amnon's friend
- The people in Amnon's house
- And King David

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that before this story, the story of 2 Samuel has been all about King David. Also, remember that in previous stories, David sinned by having sexual relations with Bathsheba, and then by ordering Bathsheba's husband Uriah to go to battle, where David knew the enemies would kill Uriah. The prophet Nathan had said that Yahweh would punish David for these sins. Now, in this story, we see more of the results of David's sin and how it affects David's family. In this story and in the following story, David's son Amnon rapes David's daughter Tamar.

This story is similar to the story of when Shechem raped Dinah in Genesis 34. Stories like this one reminded the listener that anyone who rapes a virgin woman in Israel will suffer for it and die for it. Remember that this story is violent and may be difficult for people who have experienced sexual violence or rape. Remember also that this story is the first one in a two-part story.

Immediately before this story, David captured the city of Rabbah and other Ammonite towns. And then, David went back to Jerusalem with the plunder from Rabbah and the Ammonite towns. The first scene begins sometime after the events of the previous passage, but we do not know how long after.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story, and then tell a different story with the same characters that happened sometime after the first story. Pay attention to how you show that some time has passed. How will you translate the first part of this scene to show that time has passed since the end of the previous passage? Pause this audio here.

The first scene introduces all of the main characters. David had a son named Absalom and a daughter named Tamar from the same wife. David also had a son named Amnon from a different wife. Remember that Amnon and Tamar have the same father but different mothers.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the relationships between Amnon, Absalom, and Tamar? What is the best way to describe the relationship between two people who have the same father but different mothers? Pause this audio here.

The final scene in the next passage also includes all of the same main characters: Absalom, Tamar, Amnon, and David. This is a way to show that this is all one connected story. It also shows how different things are at the beginning of the story than at the end of the story. In the first scene, Amnon loves Tamar, but at the end of the last scene, people feel hate and anger.

Some people think that each scene at the beginning of this story is similar to another scene at the end of the second part of this story in the next passage. The most important part of the story is in the middle of the story when Amnon rapes Tamar. After Amnon rapes Tamar, each scene is similar to each of the scenes before the rape of Tamar.

Amnon falls in love with his beautiful half-sister Tamar, but Amnon is frustrated because it is impossible for Amnon to do anything to Tamar. This probably means that Amnon wants to have sexual relations with Tamar and is so distressed or sad that he is sick. Remember that Amnon cannot do anything to Tamar because she is a virgin, and Tamar's family probably protects her from any men.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the idea that "Amnon cannot do anything to her?" What is a good way to talk about sexual relations in your language that does not say the word "sex" but still has the same meaning? Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, Amnon's friend Jonadab comes to help Amnon. Remember that Jonadab is the son of Shimeah, David's brother, so Jonadab is also Amnon's cousin. Remember that Jonadab is also Absalom and Tamar's cousin, too. The most important part of Jonadab and Amnon's relationship in this passage is that Jonadab is Amnon's friend. Jonadab is wise, or crafty. Jonadab is wise or crafty because he knows how to make situations work well for himself. In this case, Jonadab tells Amnon a way to trick Tamar.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a person or an animal that is wise or crafty. In other words, this person or animal uses his intelligence to find ways to trick people and help himself. Pay attention to how you describe the person or animal. What is the best way to describe Jonadab in this passage? Pause this audio here.

Remember that Jonadab asks Amnon why Amnon is so depressed, or tired and sad, every day. Jonadab calls Amnon "the king's son," which shows that Jonadab means he is surprised that Amnon looks so sick every morning. Jonadab seems to think that a king's son should not look sad or sick because they can get whatever they want! Jonadab also asks Amnon politely to tell Jonadab what is wrong. There are different ways to translate Jonadab's questions to Amnon.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What's the best way to translate what Jonadab says to Amnon? Some ideas are:

- O son of the king, why do you look so depressed every morning? Will you not tell me? or
- Should the son of the king look so depressed every day? Can't you tell me? or
- Why are you, of all people, so sad day after day? You are the king's son! Please tell me what is wrong!

Pause this audio here.

Amnon tells Jonadab that he is in love with Tamar, the sister of his half-brother Absalom. In the original language, Amnon says the word Tamar first to show how important Tamar is to him.

Remember that Jonadab tells Amnon to pretend to be sick as a way to find some time alone with Tamar and hopefully have sex with Tamar. Amnon should act like he is sick, or trick people into believing that he is sick.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story where one of the characters tricks another character into believing something. How do you talk about someone pretending to do something, or telling other people that something is true when it is not true? Pause this audio here.

Jonadab knows that David, Amnon's father, will come to visit Amnon. When David comes, Jonadab tells Amnon what Amnon should say to David. It might be best to translate what Amnon should say to David as the exact words that Amnon should say:

- Jonadab tells Amnon he should say, "I would like my sister Tamar to come and give me something to eat. Let her prepare the food in my sight so I may watch her and then eat it from her hand."

Or it might be best to translate it this way:

- "Ask him to send your sister Tamar to prepare some food for you as you watch. And ask him to let her serve it to you herself."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to translate the advice that Jonadab gives to Amnon? Pause this audio here.

The third scene is very similar to the second scene. Amnon does what Jonadab suggests that Amnon should do. Amnon lies down and pretends to be sick. David comes to visit Amnon, and Amnon asks David politely to send his half-sister Tamar to visit Amnon.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you ask someone to do something in your language in a polite way? How will you translate Amnon's request to David? Pause this audio here.

Amnon tells David that the reason Amnon wants Tamar to come is to make Amnon a couple of cakes to eat. It is possible the cakes were more like dumplings because people boiled them in water, or maybe they were bread or cakes that people baked or fried.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the cake or bread that Amnon wants his half-sister Tamar to make for him? Pause this audio here.

Remember that Amnon wants to watch while Tamar cooks the food herself at Amnon's house. Also, remember that Amnon wants to eat the food from her hand. This probably means Amnon wants to be alone with Tamar, and not that Amnon wants Tamar to put the food into Amnon's mouth. Amnon wants Tamar to come from the place where she lives in the royal palace to the place where Amnon lives. Amnon may live outside of the royal palace or in a different part of the large palace area. A palace is the place where the king, the king's family, and the king's servants live.

The fourth scene has two parts. First, David sends a messenger to the royal palace to give Tamar a message. In the message, David asks Tamar to go and visit her sick half-brother, Amnon. David also asks Tamar to prepare some food for Amnon. These are polite requests that a king makes of his daughter. Remember that David does not know that his son Amnon wants to have sex with David's daughter Tamar.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate what King David asks his daughter Tamar to do? Pause this audio here.

In the second part of the fourth scene, Tamar goes to visit her half-brother Amnon at his house. Tamar is doing what her father, King David, asked her to do. Remember that Amnon is the firstborn son of David, so you could also say that Amnon is Tamar's older brother.

Tamar does six things. Tamar takes the dough, kneads the dough, and makes some cakes in Amnon's sight. Then Tamar cooks the cakes, takes the pan of cakes, and puts the food from the pan onto a serving plate. But Amnon refuses to eat the cakes, maybe because a servant brings Amnon the food instead of Tamar herself.

Remember that the dough Tamar kneads is probably wheat flour and water, and it is like small loaves of bread. Tamar might cook the cakes by boiling them in water or by baking or frying them.

Stop here as a group and look at a picture of bread and a picture of cakes again if needed. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe how you cook bread in your culture. How will you describe how Tamar cooks the bread or cakes for Amnon? Pause this audio here.

The fourth scene ends when Amnon orders everyone to leave his house. Amnon wants to be alone with Tamar. Remember that the other people in the house were likely servants. Everyone obeys Amnon's orders and leaves the house.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how does someone with more power order someone with less power to do something? How will you translate what Amnon says to the people in his house? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:1-9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Amnon, David's oldest son
- Absalom, another one of David's sons
- The messenger that David sent to Tamar
- Tamar, Absalom's sister
- Jonadab, Amnon's friend
- The people in Amnon's house
- And King David

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Remember that this story includes many details about sexual violence. Please be sensitive as you choose members of your translation team to act out the different characters in this story. If you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape, you may want to observe the team while they act out the passage instead of being one of the characters yourself.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David had a son named Absalom. Absalom's sister was Tamar. Absalom and Tamar had the same mother and the same father. David also had another son named Amnon, who had a different mother from Absalom and Tamar's mother. Amnon loves Tamar, his half-sister, but Amnon is frustrated and even becomes sick because Amnon cannot do anything to Tamar. Tamar is a virgin.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Amnon, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am feeling sick because I love Tamar so much; or
- I am frustrated because I cannot find a way to be alone with Tamar to do what I want with her. Tamar is well-protected in the palace; or
- I wish there were some way I could find to meet with Tamar alone; or
- I know Tamar is my half-sister, but I have to find a way to have sex with her.

Continue the drama.

Jonadab is Amnon's friend. Jonadab is also the son of Shimeah, who is David's brother. Jonadab is a very shrewd or crafty man. Jonadab asks Amnon, "Should the son of the king look so depressed day after day? Can't you tell me?"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Jonadab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am surprised that Amnon, the firstborn son of the king, is so upset! What could make Amnon so depressed and upset every day? or
- I am worried about my friend Amnon because he looks worse every day. I hope that I can help Amnon with his problem; or
- I hope that Amnon will tell me what is wrong with him!

Continue the drama.

Amnon tells Jonadab, "I am in love with Tamar, the sister of my brother Absalom." Jonadab tells Amnon, "Lie down on your bed and pretend that you are sick. When your father comes to visit you, ask him to send your sister Tamar to come and make you some food. Ask if Tamar can make the food in front of you so you can watch her and then let her serve it to you herself."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Jonadab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I think my idea will work! Amnon will find a way to be alone with Tamar like he wants; or
- Maybe if my idea is successful, Amnon will reward me later on when Amnon becomes the king; or
- I do not like Absalom, so that would make me happy if Amnon does something to Absalom's sister Tamar; or
- I think my idea will help me later because I am sure that if Amnon does what he wants with his sister Tamar, there is no possibility that Amnon will become the king.

Also, ask the person playing Amnon, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Jonadab has a great idea! I think that I will follow Jonadab's advice; or
- I am thankful that I have a good friend like Jonadab. Jonadab is the only person who is helping me finally find a way to be alone with my sister Tamar; or
- I really hope this plan works and that my father, the king, does not see that I am not truly sick; or
- I hope my father and everyone else think that I want Tamar to make the special food because she is a virgin. Everyone knows that if a virgin cooks some food, it will help a sick person get better sooner.

Continue the drama.

Amnon lies down on his bed and pretends to be sick. Amnon's father, David, comes to visit Amnon. Amnon tells David, "Please send my sister Tamar to visit me. I want Tamar to make some special bread in front of me, and I want Tamar to serve the bread to me herself." David sends a message to Tamar at the palace, "Please go to your brother Amnon's house and prepare some food for him."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Amnon, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so excited that Jonadab's plan is working! My father visited me and even sent for my sister Tamar to come visit me and make me some food! or
- I am nervous that someone will notice that I am not truly sick; or
- I feel bad that I tricked my father, the king, but I have to see my sister Tamar; or
- I am glad that my father does not seem to suspect anything is wrong.

Also, ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I hope that Amnon feels better soon. I am sad that my firstborn son is sick! or
- I am glad that Amnon wants to see his half-sister Tamar because sometimes my children do not seem to get along with each other; or
- Amnon has a good idea to ask Tamar to make him some food because Tamar is a virgin, and maybe if she cooks the food, it will help Amnon feel better sooner.

Also, ask the person playing Tamar, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy to go make some special food for my half-brother Amnon; or
- I do not want to go see Amnon. But since my father, the king, is telling me to go visit Amnon and cook food for Amnon, I have no choice; or
- I am surprised that Amnon wants me to come. I wonder why? or
- I hope that Amnon only wants me to cook food for him, and that he does not want me to visit him for any other reason.

Continue the drama.

Tamar goes to her half-brother Amnon's house. Amnon is lying on his bed in his house. Tamar takes some dough and kneads the dough. Then, Tamar makes some bread from the dough. Amnon is watching Tamar make the bread. Tamar cooks the bread. Then Tamar puts the bread on the pan and gives it to Amnon so Amnon can eat the bread. But Amnon refuses to eat the bread. Amnon tells everyone to leave, and everyone leaves.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Amnon, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am upset that Tamar is not alone with me. I want Tamar to give me the food by herself! or
- I hope that Tamar will not refuse to come to my bed when we are alone together; or
- The food that Tamar made me looks really good, but I want to be alone with Tamar, and I do not want to eat the food; or
- I hope that my plan will finally work! I am so close to getting what I want.

Also, ask the person playing Tamar, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am confused about why Amnon did not want to eat the food I made for him. I did everything exactly as Amnon wanted, and he still refused to eat it; or
- I am afraid that something bad is going to happen, now that Amnon told everyone else to leave; or
- I feel helpless because I do not like being alone. No one else is here, and Amnon is larger than me and stronger than me.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

King David had many children. David had a son named Absalom and a daughter named Tamar from the same mother. David's firstborn son was named Amnon, and Amnon had a different mother than Absalom and Tamar.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe the relationships between King David and his two sons, and between the half-brothers and half-sisters. Pause this audio here.

Amnon loves his half-sister, Tamar. Sometimes love means a person loves another person as a friend, or that a person has sexual desire for another person. In this passage, Amnon becomes sick because he is so frustrated that he cannot do anything to Tamar, which probably means Amnon wants to have sex with Tamar.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe different kinds of love in your language, like love for a friend, love for a family member, and love for a husband or wife. What is the best way to translate the idea that Amnon **loves** Tamar? Pause this audio here.

Amnon could not do anything to his half-sister Tamar because Tamar was a virgin. A virgin is a young woman who has not had sexual relations with a man yet. Virgins who were daughters of the king of Israel wore long robes and lived in the palace of the king. People did not expect young men to stay virgins, but people did expect that young women would stay virgins and not have sexual relations before they got married.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate **virgin**? Pause this audio here.

Jonadab asks Amnon, "Why does the son of the **king** look so depressed every day?" A king is the one who rules over a city or territory. David is the king of Israel. Translate king the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary.

David sent a message to Tamar at the **palace**. Use the same word or phrase for palace, or king's house, as you have in previous passages.

Tamar makes **bread**, or **cakes**, for Amnon. It is not clear if Tamar baked or boiled these cakes or bread. In the whole Bible, the word bread is very important to mean all kinds of food. In this story, you may use the specific word for bread or cakes, or you may use the general term for food. People in Israel usually made bread from wheat or barley flour. During the time of Tamar, sometimes people made cakes with flour, water, and oil, and

other times they also added honey or figs. Other times, Yahweh told his people to make cakes without yeast. Cakes are flatter than bread.

Stop here as a group and look at a picture of bread and a picture of cakes again if needed. Pause this audio here.

Also, stop here and discuss this question as a group: What will you call this kind of food? Pause this audio here.

Tamar kneaded the dough or pressed it several times. Tamar either cooked the bread in a clay oven, fried it, or boiled it. Tamar took the bread from the cooking pan and placed it on a serving plate.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe Tamar **kneading the dough** and **cooking the bread**. What words will you use for the cooking **pan**, and for the pan on which she served the bread?

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 13:1–9

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 13:10–22

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 13:10–22 and put it in your hearts.

This two-part story has many details about sexual violence, which may be difficult to hear about if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape.

Before you have any group discussions about this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections? Pause this audio here.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:10–22 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:10–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, Jonadab tells Amnon to pretend that Amnon is sick. Amnon wants a reason to be alone with his half-sister, Tamar. Amnon's father, King David, gives Amnon permission to visit Amnon's half-sister, Tamar. Tamar makes Amnon some food to eat, and then Amnon tells everyone in his house to leave. As the second part of this story begins, Tamar is alone with Amnon. This story is the second part of a two-part story about Amnon's rape of his half-sister Tamar.

This two-part story has many details about sexual violence, which may be difficult to hear about if you or someone you know has experienced sexual violence or rape.

Before you have any group discussions about this passage, stop and decide as a group how you prefer to talk about it. In your culture, what is the best way to talk about these things? Would it be good to divide into groups of men and women for this conversation? Do you want to work in a different way than you do in other sections in this book? Pause this audio here.

Amnon tells Tamar to bring the food to his bedroom so he can eat it from her hand, which means that Amnon wants Tamar to give him the food to eat. Amnon's bedroom is most likely a smaller, dark, inner room where Amnon sleeps. Earlier, Amnon was probably watching Tamar prepare the food through an open door into Amnon's bedroom. When Tamar comes into Amnon's room with the food, Amnon grabs Tamar and tells her, "Come to bed with me, my sister!" Amnon wants his half-sister Tamar to come have sexual relations with Amnon. Some people think that it says "my sister" here not only to show that Tamar is Amnon's half-sister, but also as a way to talk about a lover or a person Amnon wants to have sexual relations with.

Tamar immediately refuses to have sexual relations with Amnon. Tamar says Amnon is her brother and that Amnon should not abuse or dishonor Tamar like this. Tamar also says that having sexual relations with a half-sibling is not something that people in Israel should do. Other people groups who live near the Israelites might have sexual relations with a sibling or half-sibling, but it is not something that Israelites do. We also know from other parts of the Old Testament that Yahweh forbade people to have sex with their brother or sister.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are the sexual relationships in your community that people do not allow? For example, is it acceptable to have a sexual relationship with your siblings? What about your mother's brother's son or daughter, or your father's sister's son or daughter? Pause this audio here.

Tamar says it would be wicked, or wrong, for Amnon to do this to her. Tamar also tells Amnon that she would be very ashamed, and everyone will know Amnon is a wicked man or a fool.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time that someone shamed you or someone you know. How did you or the other person try to get rid of your shame or get back your honor? What are some examples of times when it is not possible to get rid of your shame because of what happened? Pause this audio here.

Tamar tells Amnon he should ask their father, King David, for permission to marry Tamar. Tamar does not say she would be against marrying Amnon. Tamar says she is against Amnon having sexual relations with her outside of marriage. It is not clear if people during Tamar's time followed the Israelite laws about not having sexual relations with your siblings. It is possible that Tamar knew she could not marry Amnon because of the Israelite laws during that time, and that Tamar simply wanted a way to escape from Amnon. However, Abraham married his half-sister Sarah a long time before, so it is possible that Tamar thinks David, the king, can make an exception for Tamar and Amnon.

But Amnon does not listen to Tamar. Instead, Amnon overpowers Tamar and rapes her. The stronger and larger man, Amnon, overpowers and rapes his weaker half-sister, Tamar.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about this kind of violent sexual action in your language? Pause this audio here.

Some people think that Amnon's actions are wrong only because Amnon has sexual relations with an unmarried virgin. These people do not think Amnon is guilty of incest, or having sexual relations with a close family member, because earlier in Israel's history, the Israelites allowed for half-brothers and half-sisters to marry each other.

After Amnon rapes Tamar, Amnon hates Tamar very much. It is possible that Amnon already hated Tamar and her family, and that when the story said before that Amnon loved Tamar, it only meant Amnon wanted to fulfill his physical sexual desires. Amnon tells Tamar to get up and get out! Before, Amnon begged Tamar to come into his room, and now Amnon strongly tells Tamar to leave. Amnon does not call Tamar "sister" this time.

Tamar does not do what Amnon says to do. Tamar also does not call Amnon "brother." In the original language, it is difficult to understand what Tamar says here, maybe because she is so upset about what just happened when Amnon raped her. Tamar says that if Amnon sends her away, that is worse than when Amnon raped her. This could be because, according to Israelite law, a man who has sexual relations with an unmarried virgin needs to pay her father some money and then also marry the girl. If Amnon sends Tamar away, Tamar is left unmarried and ashamed, with no way to get her honor back. People might see Tamar and think the shame is her fault, even though Tamar was completely innocent.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when someone raped or assaulted an unmarried woman in your culture. How do people talk about the woman that the man raped? According to your culture, what, if anything, should a man do for the woman after the man has raped or assaulted the woman? Pause this audio here.

Again, Amnon does not listen to Tamar. Amnon orders his servant to get "this woman" out of Amnon's sight! It is possible that Amnon does not want Tamar nearby so that Amnon will not be reminded of what he did when he raped Tamar. Amnon even tells the servant to lock or fasten the door behind Tamar so she cannot come into the house again. It is possible that Amnon wants other people to think that Tamar did something shameful, and that Amnon had to lock Tamar out of his house.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you lock, fasten, or tie a door shut in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Amnon's servant puts Tamar outside and locks the door behind her. Tamar puts ashes on her head like someone mourning the death of another person. People make ashes by burning wood, plants, or leaves. Tamar also tears her robe. Maybe Tamar tore her robe to show her sadness and grief, or maybe to show that Tamar lost her purity. The king's virgin daughters all wore long, beautiful robes. It is possible the robe had many colors.

Stop here and look at a picture of a long robe as a group. Pause this audio here.

Tamar also puts her hands on her head and wails or cries out loud as she goes. Both of these things show Tamar's grief and sadness about what happened. Tamar probably goes to her brother Absalom's house.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you show great sadness in your culture? Do you put ashes on your head, tear your clothes, put your hands on your head, weep out loud, or something else? Pause this audio here.

Absalom asks his sister Tamar if her brother Amnon was with her. This means that Absalom wants to know if Amnon had sexual relations with Tamar. Absalom tells Tamar not to take this thing to heart or not to worry about what happened. It is possible that Absalom did not want to do anything about it yet because of the law that said Amnon should marry Tamar after raping her. Or Absalom wanted to wait to see what his father, David, did.

Tamar lives in her brother Absalom's house, which was possibly in another part of the royal palace. It is likely that the royal palace had a special area where the virgin daughters of the king lived. So Tamar has to leave her area of the royal palace because Tamar is no longer a virgin. Tamar is desolate, which probably means Tamar is unmarried and childless. In Tamar's culture, it was almost worse than death to not be married and to not have any children.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what happens to an unmarried woman who someone rapes or sexually abuses? Can that woman get married or have children after the rape or the abuse, or what does her life look like after the rape or the abuse? Where does the woman live? Pause this audio here.

The passage ends with another description of all these characters in the story: David, Amnon, Absalom, and Tamar. David gets very angry when he hears about what Amnon did to Tamar, but David does nothing. It is possible that David feels guilty about how David sinned by having sex with Bathsheba, another man's wife, and that David does not think he can punish his son Amnon when Amnon also sins in a similar way.

Some people think this part of the passage also says David did nothing to punish Amnon because Amnon was David's firstborn, and David loved Amnon. David also does not say that Amnon will not become the next king after David dies. It is clear that Amnon is not qualified to become the next king. The next passage will show that Absalom is also not qualified to become the next king.

Absalom hates his brother Amnon, but Absalom does not talk with Amnon to say anything good or bad. This probably means that Absalom does not talk to Amnon at all. We know from the next passage that Absalom stays quiet for two years before he does anything.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:10–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: Amnon tells Tamar to bring the food to his bedroom. When Tamar comes to Amnon's bedroom, Amnon grabs Tamar and tells her to have sex with him.

In the second scene: Tamar tells her brother not to do this to her. Tamar tells Amnon to ask the king to marry her. Amnon does not listen to Tamar, and Amnon rapes Tamar. Amnon hates Tamar with a great hatred.

In the third scene: Amnon tells Tamar to leave, but she refuses. Amnon calls his servant to take Tamar away and lock the door behind Tamar. The servant forces Tamar to leave. Tamar puts ashes on her head, tears her robe, puts her hands on her head, and wails as she goes.

In the fourth scene: Tamar's brother Absalom tells Tamar not to be upset about what Amnon did to her. Tamar lives in the house of her brother, Absalom.

In the fifth scene: King David is angry when he hears about all of this. Absalom says nothing to Amnon, but Absalom hates Amnon for what Amnon did to Tamar.

The characters in this passage are:

- Amnon, David's oldest son
- The servants in Amnon's household
- Absalom, another one of David's sons
- Tamar, Absalom's sister
- King David
- And Amnon's servant, who locks the door

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that in the previous story, Jonadab gave Amnon advice about how to see Tamar alone. Amnon followed Jonadab's advice and pretended to be sick. King David sent Tamar, Amnon's half-sister, to Amnon to cook Amnon some food. Remember that at the end of the first part of this story, Amnon sends everyone out of his house. As the story begins, Amnon and Tamar are alone in Amnon's house.

Remember that this passage is violent and may be difficult for people who have experienced sexual violence or rape. Remember also that this passage is the second part of a two-part story.

In the first scene, Amnon asks Tamar to bring the cakes she made into Amnon's bedroom. Amnon says this is because he wants to eat the cakes from Tamar's hand, but we know that Amnon plans to have sexual relations with Tamar.

Tamar goes to Amnon's room and brings the cakes with her. Then, Amnon grabs Tamar and says to come. Amnon also tells Tamar to lie with him or come to bed with him.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to describe what Amnon tells Tamar here? How can you show that Amnon is forceful and that he wants to have sex with Tamar? Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, Tamar tells Amnon six things, similar to how Tamar did six things when she came to prepare food for Amnon in an earlier scene. Each of the things that Tamar says to Amnon is short and direct. Tamar says that Amnon should not force or abuse Tamar like this! In the original language, this means to rape someone. Sometimes people translate "force" as to shame someone by raping or abusing that person.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, would it be better to translate "do not force me" as "do not humiliate me" or "do not rape me?" What translation best describes the effects the rape has on a woman? Pause this audio here.

Tamar says people in Israel do not have sexual relations with their half-siblings. Tamar tells Amnon not to do this wicked thing! Then, Tamar shows that it would be a terrible choice both for her and for Amnon. Tamar says that if Amnon humiliates Tamar by forcing her to have sex with him, Tamar could never get rid of her shame, and everyone would know Amnon was a wicked fool. A wicked fool is someone who does wicked things, and everyone knows that the person is not wise. In the original language, it says, "as for me" and "as for you" to show how both Tamar and Amnon would have something bad happen to them. Another way to translate this could be, "Think of me," and "Think of yourself."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How can you translate Tamar's description of what would happen to her and to Amnon if Amnon does what he wants to do with Tamar? What is the best way to translate the idea that Tamar will not be able to get rid of her shame? Here are some examples:

- I could not bear my shame; or
- I could never show my face again; or
- How can I ever get rid of my shame?

Pause this audio here.

Finally, Tamar asks Amnon to speak to the king, their father. Tamar already gave all her reasons that Amnon should not rape her, and now Tamar politely asks Amnon to talk to the king, which you could translate as "please" or "I beg you." Tamar says that because their father is the king, maybe he can allow Amnon to marry Amnon's half-sister, Tamar. Remember, it is not clear if, at this time, the Israelites followed the laws Yahweh gave to Moses about not having sexual relations with their siblings or half-siblings.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to describe what Tamar says to Amnon about talking to the king, their father? Pause this audio here.

But Amnon refuses to listen to Tamar. This is similar to how Tamar did six things to prepare the special bread for Amnon, and then Amnon refused to eat it. Here, Amnon does not listen to Tamar. Instead, Amnon overpowers Tamar, and he forcefully rapes her. This is the most important part of the entire story. Amnon finally gets to do what he wants with Tamar.

After Amnon rapes Tamar, Amnon hates Tamar very much. The same word for hate is in this part of the passage many times to show how much Amnon hates Tamar. Amnon loved Tamar before, but now Amnon hates Tamar even more than he loved her before.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you show how much Amnon hates Tamar now? Pause this audio here.

In the third scene, Amnon tells Tamar to get up and get out of his house! Amnon is very angry and wants Tamar to leave right away. But Tamar refuses to leave. Tamar says that if Amnon sends her away, that is worse than the wrong that happened when Amnon raped her. You could choose to change the order of what Tamar says: "You already did wrong to me, and now if you send me away, that wrong is even worse!"

Again, Amnon refuses to listen to Tamar. This is the same as when Amnon refuses to listen to Tamar before he rapes her. Instead, Amnon asks his servant to get "this woman" out of his house. Remember that before, Amnon called Tamar "my sister," but here Amnon is talking like he does not even know Tamar's name. Amnon also tells his servant to lock or fasten the door behind Tamar.

The storyteller gives a description of Tamar's robe and then tells what the servant does and what Tamar does. Tamar is wearing a long robe, like the kind of robe that the virgin daughters of the king normally wore during Tamar's time. Tamar's robe might have many colors like Joseph's robe in Genesis, or it might be simply a long robe that reaches to the ground.

The servant does what Amnon says to do. The servant takes Tamar out of the house and then locks the door behind Tamar. It may be more natural to say that the servant made Tamar leave the house before telling the description of Tamar's robe.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Would it be more natural to describe the background information about Tamar's robe first, before saying that the servant put Tamar out of the house? Pause this audio here.

Tamar does four things to show her grief and sadness. Remember that these four things are all things that a person normally does to mourn someone who has died. First, Tamar puts ashes on her head. Then, Tamar tears her special robe and puts her hands on her head. Finally, Tamar wails and cries as she leaves Amnon's house. It might help to add here, "The things Tamar does are all things that people did during her time when they were mourning someone who died." Remember that Tamar probably goes to her brother Absalom's house after she leaves Amnon's house.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you describe how Tamar shows her sadness? Pause this audio here.

In the fourth scene, Absalom talks with Tamar. Absalom asks Tamar a question and also gives her some advice. Absalom is Tamar's brother, and it is not clear if Tamar is older or younger than Absalom. You can describe Absalom as the "older brother" in your language if your language requires a word for older brother or younger brother.

First, Absalom asks his sister Tamar if her brother Amnon was with her, which is a polite way to ask if Amnon had sexual relations with Tamar. It might be best to translate this so it is clear that Absalom is asking if Amnon had sex with Tamar.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about the previous discussions about polite ways to talk about sex. How will you translate Absalom's question here to Tamar? Pause this audio here.

In the original language, Absalom uses a form of Amnon's name that means Amnon is smaller or younger. Although Amnon is actually the oldest brother, this might be a way to show that Absalom dislikes his brother Amnon. You could translate it as "Amnon, your little brother."

Second, Absalom tells Tamar that she should not take this thing to heart. Absalom wants Tamar to be quiet about the rape, and Absalom does not want Tamar to worry about it.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you describe what Absalom says to Tamar about "not taking this thing to heart?" Other ways to translate it could be, "Do not worry about it so much," or "Do not take it seriously." Pause this audio here.

We do not hear a response from Tamar in this scene. Instead, the storyteller only says that Tamar was a desolate woman. Tamar is unmarried and has no children. This is the worst thing that can happen to a woman in Tamar's culture. Tamar lives with her brother Absalom in his house.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you describe the idea that Tamar is desolate? Remember that Tamar is unmarried and childless, and it is also likely that she is sad and lonely. Pause this audio here.

All of the main characters are in the fifth scene, which is similar to the first scene of the first part of this story. Remember that in the beginning of the story, the storyteller talked about how Amnon loved Tamar, his half-sister. But now, the characters hate each other and are angry at each other. Here, it says that King David was very angry when he heard what his son Amnon did to David's daughter Tamar. In the original language, the storyteller says, "David burned very much."

This is a way to show that the two parts of this story are all one connected story, and it also shows how different things are at the beginning of the story from the end of the story. In the first scene, Amnon loves Tamar, but at the end of the last scene, people feel hate and anger.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the idea that David was very angry? In some languages, people say that a person gets hot with anger or burns with anger. Pause this audio here.

The final part of the last scene of this story is that Absalom hates his brother Amnon. Most people translate this part to say that Absalom does not talk with Amnon at all. Absalom says nothing good or bad to Amnon. Remember that the reason Absalom does not say anything good or bad to Amnon is that Amnon humiliated or violated Absalom's sister, Tamar.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:10–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

The story in this passage is very violent, so the group will not dramatize the passage in this step. The group will remember the story and discuss what each character might be feeling.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Amnon, David's oldest son
- The servants in Amnon's household
- Absalom, another one of David's sons
- Tamar, Absalom's sister
- King David
- And Amnon's servant, who locks the door

Amnon told Tamar, "Bring the food that you made for me into my bedroom so you can serve it to me." Tamar took the bread she had made for Amnon and brought it to her brother Amnon in Amnon's bedroom. When Tamar brought Amnon the bread, Amnon grabbed Tamar and told her, "Come! Sleep with me, my sister!"

Stop here and discuss as a group what Amnon might be thinking or feeling. Maybe Amnon thinks:

- I am glad that I finally have some time with Tamar by myself; or

No one will ever find out about this because only Tamar and I are here, and no one will believe what Tamar says; or Maybe what I am doing today will be good for me, and also it will shame my brother Absalom. Discuss what Tamar might be thinking or feeling. Maybe Tamar thinks: This is exactly what I was worried might happen; or I am terrified, and I do not know what I can do to get away from Amnon; or Maybe if I talk to Amnon, he will

listen to me and not do this terrible thing to me! Continue the drama. Tamar told Amnon, "No, do not force me, brother! Do not humiliate or abuse me! People might do these kinds of wicked or foolish things in other places, but they do not do these things in Israel. I would never be able to get rid of my shame if you do this to me. People would think you are a fool in Israel! Please talk to the king, and I am sure he will let you marry me." But Amnon refused to listen to Tamar. Instead, Amnon overpowered Tamar and raped Tamar. Then Amnon hated Tamar intensely. Amnon hated Tamar even more than he had loved Tamar before. Stop here and discuss as a group what Tamar might be thinking or feeling. Maybe Tamar thinks: I am humiliated and ashamed because of what Amnon did to me; or I tried as hard as I could to give Amnon good reasons not to do this, but he did not listen to me. There was nothing else I could have done; or I hate Amnon. I will never be able to get rid of my shame because of what Amnon did to me; or I am angry at my father, the king, for asking me to come here to make food for my half-brother, Amnon. The king could have prevented this from happening; or I am confused about why this happened. I did nothing wrong, and I did not deserve this. Why did Yahweh let this terrible thing happen to me?" Discuss what Amnon might be thinking or feeling. Maybe Amnon thinks: I finally got what I wanted from Tamar, and it did not satisfy me; or I hate Tamar so intensely that I do not want her around me. Tamar reminds me of what I did, and I need to get rid of her! or I regret what I did to Tamar because now it does not seem worth it, and now I do not know what to do with Tamar. Continue the drama. Amnon told Tamar, "Get up and go!" But Tamar said, "No! If you send me away now, that is worse than what you did to me before." Again, Amnon did not listen to Tamar. Amnon called for his servant to come. Amnon told his servant, "Get this woman out of here, and lock the door behind her!" Amnon's servant took Tamar out of the house and locked the door behind Tamar. Tamar was wearing a long robe, which was common for the king's virgin daughters to wear during that time. In her grief, Tamar put ashes on her head, tore her long robe, put her hands on her head, and wailed as she left Amnon's house. Stop here and discuss as a group what Tamar might be thinking or feeling. Maybe Tamar thinks: I have no hope for my life now because of what Amnon did to me; or I am very sad and in anguish because I am not a virgin now. There is no hope for me ever to get married or have children now, either; or My last hope was to marry Amnon, and now he has put me out of the house. So I have no hope left; or I have no words to describe how I feel. I am broken, hurting, and in deep pain; or Now people will avoid me and stop talking to me! Discuss what Amnon might be thinking or feeling. Maybe Amnon thinks: I am glad that my servant got that woman out of here! I did not want that woman around me anymore; or Maybe people will think that Tamar did something shameful since I locked the door after her, and they will not guess what really happened; or I hope that the servant does not say anything to anyone about this. Discuss what Amnon's servant might be thinking or feeling. Maybe Amnon's servant thinks: I am confused about what happened between Amnon and his half-sister, Tamar. Maybe Tamar did something that offended Amnon? or I feel bad for Tamar because she seems so upset. Maybe my master did something to hurt Tamar, but I have to do what my master Amnon tells me to do; or I am mad at Tamar for making my master so upset. Does Tamar not know that my master has been sick lately? Tamar was supposed to come and help my master feel better, and now he seems more upset than before she came! What did Tamar do to my master?" Continue the drama. Tamar's brother Absalom asked Tamar, "Was Amnon your brother with you? Be quiet about it, my sister, since Amnon is your brother. Do not worry about it." Tamar was a desolate woman and lived in the home of her brother Absalom. King David heard about all these things, and King David was very angry. Absalom did not say anything to Amnon, good or bad. Absalom hated Amnon because of what Amnon did to Absalom's sister Tamar. Stop here and discuss as a group what Tamar might be thinking or feeling. Maybe Tamar thinks: Why does my own brother Absalom not want to do anything to help me? I wish Absalom would go to talk with Amnon to tell Amnon that what happened was wrong; or My life is over. I can never get back what Amnon took from me; or I am very sad that I cannot live in the palace with the other virgin daughters of the king. Now I am suddenly forced to move and live with my brother Absalom, who is doing nothing to help me; or Absalom's advice for me makes it feel worse. This was a terrible thing that happened to me, and Absalom is only telling me to be quiet and not to worry about it. Discuss what Absalom might be thinking or feeling. Maybe Absalom thinks: I know that Amnon did something bad to Tamar because I have never seen Tamar like this before; or I am angry at Amnon. I hate Amnon! I have a plan to someday return the evil back to Amnon for the evil he did to my sister Tamar! I will kill Amnon for this! or I do not want Amnon to marry my sister Tamar, but I still do not know what I should do to pay back what he did to Tamar; or I will just wait and take my time before I plan what I will do next to Amnon. I am not going to say anything to Amnon right now. It is safer to just wait a while. Discuss what David might be thinking or feeling. Maybe David thinks: I cannot believe this happened in my own family! or I wish that I could say something to Amnon about this. But because of my own similar sins, I do not think I have the right to accuse Amnon of sinning; or I love my firstborn son, Amnon. I do not want anything to keep Amnon from becoming the next king

after I die; or I had no idea this was happening when Amnon asked me to send Tamar to make him some special food! This is not my fault! or I feel very sad for my beautiful daughter Tamar. This is terrible what Amnon did to Tamar, but I do not know what I can do about it; or I feel embarrassed that my own family has problems like this. Maybe I failed as a father to my sons, and I should have made different decisions about my sons. Stop here and discuss as a group how this story makes you feel and think. Do you need some time to think or talk about this story with someone in your team or another person? What can you do to take care of yourself as you think about a story like this?

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:10–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Tamar brings the **bread**, or food, to Amnon. Use the same word or phrase for bread as you used in the previous story.

Tamar tries to stop Amnon from raping her. Tamar says that this **wicked** thing is not done in **Israel**. Use the same words for wickedness and Israel that you have used in previous passages, and remember that wicked and Israel are in the Master Glossary.

Tamar says Amnon will be a fool, or a person who is not sensible or wise.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **fool**. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about fool. Pause this audio here.

Tamar asks Amnon to speak to the **king**, meaning King David. Use the same word for king that you have used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about king.

Amnon overpowers Tamar and rapes Tamar. Other ways to translate this are that Amnon took advantage of Tamar and lay with her, or that Amnon forced Tamar to have sex with him. In the Old Testament, if a man raped a woman, the man could pay the woman's father and take the woman as his wife. Rape is a sin according to Yahweh, but rape is not the same as adultery. For more information on rape, refer to adultery in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about the earlier discussion in step 2 about the way you discuss this kind of violent sexual action in your language. How will you translate the part of the passage where Amnon overpowers Tamar and **rapes** her? Pause this audio here.

Amnon calls for his personal **servant** to get Tamar out of Amnon's house. A servant works for his master. Translate servant the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on servant, refer to the Master Glossary.

Tamar is wearing a long **robe** with sleeves. People often call a robe a cloak. Tamar's robe was the robe of a princess since Tamar was a **virgin** daughter of the king of Israel. Translate robe and virgin the same as you have in previous passages and in other parts of the Old Testament. For more information on robe, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and look at a picture of a long robe again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

Absalom tells Tamar not to "take this thing to **heart**." This means that Absalom does not want Tamar to worry about what Amnon did to her. In the original language, the heart is special language for where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen. For more information on heart, refer to the Master Glossary.

*Speaking the Word**Speaking the Word*

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 13:10–22**Audio Content**

[webm zip](#) (24959406 KB)

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2 Samuel 13:23–39

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 13:23–39 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:23–39 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:23–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

The previous story was about when Amnon raped his half-sister, Tamar. After Amnon did this terrible thing, Amnon also forced Tamar to leave his home. Tamar tore her robe and wept as she left. King David heard about what happened, but David did not do anything. At that time, Absalom also did not do anything to take revenge on his half-brother Amnon for what Amnon did to Tamar. Now, in this story, Absalom tells his servants to kill Amnon. The servants do what Absalom says, and King David is very sad that Amnon is dead. Absalom flees to Geshur.

This story happens two years after Amnon rapes Tamar. For two full years, Absalom did not talk to Amnon about anything, good or bad. It is possible that during these two years, Absalom was planning to kill Amnon.

In this story, we learn that Absalom owned sheep. Absalom probably had a lot of money and animals since Absalom was a son of King David. Sheep were common animals during Absalom's time. Sheep's hair grows long, and people need to cut off, or shear, the hair or wool of the sheep. Sheepshearers were the men who cut off the hair of the sheep.

Stop here as a group and look at a picture of sheep and a person shearing a sheep, if needed. Pause this audio here.

During Absalom's time, people often had celebrations after they finished shearing their sheep. Absalom's sheep shearers were in Baal Hazor, which is a town about 25 kilometers north of Jerusalem, near a town called Ephraim. Absalom probably owned some land in Baal Hazor, and Absalom had sheep at Baal Hazor. It was time for the sheep shearers to cut the hair on Absalom's sheep. Absalom invites all the king's sons to a celebration during the sheep shearing time at Baal Hazor. Remember, the king's sons are all David's sons, and they are all Absalom's brothers or half-brothers. Absalom's half-brothers are sons of David, but sons of different mothers.

Stop here and look at a map of the location of Baal Hazor as a group. Pause this audio here.

Also, stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about celebrations around harvests or events that your community has for farming or agriculture. Who do you invite to the celebration? What do you do to celebrate? Pause this audio here.

Absalom also invites his father, King David, to the celebration. Absalom calls himself the king's servant, probably as a way to be respectful to his father. Absalom also asks the king to bring the king's servants to the celebration. It is possible that Absalom expects David to refuse to come to the celebration. David does not accept the invitation because he knows it would be a lot of work and it would cost a lot of money to host that many people. Absalom tries again to invite David to the celebration. In the original language, it says Absalom pressed or urged David to change his mind.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time you invited someone to a celebration, and they refused to come. What did you do? How many times can you try to ask someone to come before you finally accept that they will not come? Pause this audio here.

David gives Absalom a blessing even though David does not agree to go to the party with Absalom. In Israelite culture, to bless someone meant to pray that God would do good things for that person. Here, David may be asking God to give Absalom a good celebration. Or David may be speaking a more general blessing over Absalom as a way to show Absalom that David is ready to stop talking and for Absalom to leave.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you use blessings in your community? Pause this audio here.

Absalom asks David if Absalom's brother Amnon can come to the celebration. This shows that the sons of the king needed permission from the king to be able to leave Jerusalem. David knows that Absalom is angry with his brother Amnon for what Amnon did to Tamar. It is possible that Absalom called Amnon "my brother" so that David would not be suspicious that Absalom planned to do something bad to Amnon. David lets Amnon go with Absalom, though David does ask why Amnon should go. Absalom does not answer David's question. It is possible that David sends his other sons with Amnon in order to protect Amnon.

Absalom prepares the celebration, and Amnon and the other sons of David come to Baal Hazor for the celebration. Absalom has a plan for how he will kill Amnon. Absalom tells his men, or his servants, to wait until Amnon is drunk with alcohol at the celebration. When Amnon is drunk, Amnon will not be able to defend himself. Then, Absalom commands his servants to kill Amnon. Servants had to follow the orders of their master, and Absalom is the one responsible for what his servants do. Absalom also tells the servants to be courageous because the servants were probably nervous about killing the man who would be the king after David.

Absalom's servants do what Absalom tells them to do—the servants kill Amnon. The other sons of King David get up and leave the celebration, and they ride away on their mules. A mule is an animal that is born from a horse and a donkey, usually a female horse and a male donkey. Kings and princes often rode mules during Absalom's time. These mules were probably from people outside of Israel because the laws in Israel said no one could crossbreed animals or make two different kinds of animals breed.

Stop here and look at a picture of a mule as a group. Pause this audio here.

David hears a report about what happened at the celebration. The report says that Absalom killed all of the king's sons, which we know was not true because only Amnon died. Other ways to translate this could be "David heard the news" or "someone told David the rumor."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when you heard a false report or rumor about something that happened in your community. How do rumors or false reports spread in your community? Pause this audio here.

David believes the report that Absalom killed all of David's other sons. David reacts to the news with deep sadness. David stands up, tears his clothing, and lies down on the ground. It is possible that David throws himself on the ground because he is so sad. During David's time, people showed their sadness by tearing their clothing and lying down on the ground. In the earlier passage, Tamar tore her robe after her half-brother Amnon raped her. Also, David lay on the ground all night when he was praying for his sick son, who was born to Bathsheba. David's servants or officials also tear their clothing and stand nearby David.

Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, tries to help King David. Jonadab tells the king that Absalom only killed Amnon, and that Absalom did not kill all of the king's sons like the report said. Absalom said he planned to kill Amnon for what Amnon did to Absalom's sister Tamar, and Jonadab knew about Absalom's plan. Remember that Jonadab is the same person who helped Amnon find a way to be alone with Tamar. Also, remember that Jonadab does not know for sure that Absalom only killed Amnon. Jonadab guesses that Absalom only killed Amnon.

Absalom runs away from Baal Hazor. We will see later in the story where Absalom runs away to. At the same time, a servant is standing watch on the city wall of Jerusalem. Suddenly, the servant sees many people coming down the road behind him, which was next to the mountain. Some translations say that the servant sees people coming from the west on a road called Horonaim, which probably was a road from the two towns of Upper and Lower Beth Horon. Jonadab hears about what the servant sees, and Jonadab tells David that the king's sons are coming to Jerusalem, just like Jonadab told David.

The king's sons arrive, and they weep loudly because they are sad that Amnon died. King David and his servants also weep loudly. King David is sad and mourns the death of his son Amnon every day. Absalom had his servants kill Amnon, which is similar to how David had Joab plan for enemies to kill Uriah. Remember that the prophet Nathan told David that terrible things would happen to David and his family because of David's sin against Bathsheba and Uriah. David is probably thinking about what the prophet Nathan said, and David is also very sad because Amnon is David's oldest son.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about what you do when someone close to you dies, like a family member or a friend. How do you show your sadness? Pause this audio here.

Absalom runs away to a place called Geshur. Absalom's mother, Maakah, was the daughter of King Talmai, the son of Ammihud of Geshur. King Talmai was Absalom's grandfather. It seems like Absalom planned this all very carefully. Absalom probably invites Amnon to Baal Hazor in order to kill Amnon there, since it was close to Geshur, and it would be easy for Absalom to escape to Geshur after he kills Amnon. Absalom stays in Geshur for three years.

King David mourns over his son Amnon day after day. As time passes, David wants to go see Absalom. In the original language, the storyteller says that the spirit of the king longs to go to Absalom. After three years, David probably accepts Amnon's death better, and David wants to see his other son, Absalom.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:23–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has seven scenes.

In the first scene: Absalom invites the king and all the king's sons to a celebration at the end of the time of shearing his sheep. King David says he does not want to be a burden to Absalom. Absalom asks again, but David does not want to go to the celebration.

In the second scene: Absalom asks David if Amnon can come. David asks why Absalom wants Amnon to come, but David sends Amnon and all the king's sons with him anyway.

In the third scene: Absalom tells his servants to kill Amnon when Amnon is drunk. Absalom's servants do what Absalom says to do. The king's sons get on their mules and run away.

In the fourth scene: David hears a report that Absalom killed all of the king's sons. David tears his clothing and lies on the ground. David's servants also tear their clothing.

In the fifth scene: Jonadab tells David that Absalom only killed Amnon, and not all of the king's sons.

In the sixth scene: A watchman sees the king's sons coming on the road. Jonadab tells the king that his sons are coming. The sons weep loudly, and then David and his servants also weep loudly.

In the seventh scene: Absalom runs away to Geshur and stays there for three years. David mourns over his dead son Amnon. David wants to go to Absalom.

The characters in this passage are:

- Absalom
- Absalom's sheepshearers
- Sons of King David
- King David
- Amnon, King David's son
- Absalom's servants
- King David's servants
- Jonadab
- Watchman
- And King Talmai

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that in the previous passage, Amnon raped his half-sister, Tamar, and then Amnon forced Tamar to leave his house. King David was angry about what happened, but David did nothing to punish his son Amnon for what Amnon did. Absalom, Tamar's brother, did not say anything to Amnon, either good or bad.

Now, two full years have passed. This means that two complete or whole years have passed since Amnon raped Tamar.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you say that a full week or a full year passed in your language? Pause this audio here.

Some people divide this story into two main parts. The first part is in scenes one, two, and three, where Absalom plans the murder of his brother Amnon, and then Absalom's servants kill Amnon. The second part is what happens after Amnon's death in scenes four to seven. Absalom runs away, and the king's sons go back to Jerusalem. Also, King David shows his sadness.

In the first scene, Absalom invites the other sons of King David, Absalom's brothers and half-brothers, to a special celebration at Baal Hazor. The celebration is at the end of the time of shearing the hair of Absalom's sheep. Remember that it was common to have a celebration after the workers finished shearing the sheep.

Stop here as a group and look again at pictures of sheep and a person shearing a sheep, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Baal Hazor is a town 25 kilometers north of Jerusalem. Baal Hazor was near a town called Ephraim, which was not the same as the land of the tribe of Ephraim. Absalom is in Jerusalem with David and the king's sons when

Absalom invites them to the celebration. Absalom wants the king's sons to come with him to Baal Hazor for the sheep shearing.

Stop here as a group and look again at a map of the likely location of Baal Hazor, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Absalom also invites the king and the king's servants to the celebration at Baal Hazor. Absalom asks King David very politely to come to the celebration. Absalom calls himself "your servant" to show respect to his father, King David. Absalom also calls his father "the king" and does not talk directly to him as a way to show respect. Some ways to translate this could be, "Please hear what I have to say, O king," or "I hope that you and your servants will join me, your servant, for this celebration," or "Would the king and his servants like to join me?"

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about how you ask someone in authority politely to join you for a celebration or a party. What is the best way to translate Absalom's request for the king and his servants to join Absalom for the celebration at Baal Hazor? Pause this audio here.

David refuses the invitation from Absalom. David says it would be too heavy, or cost Absalom too much, if David and all his servants came to Baal Hazor. Absalom tries again to convince David to change his mind, but David does not change his mind. Some translations say, "But Absalom kept asking," or "Although Absalom urged David."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to translate the idea that Absalom continued asking David to change his mind? Pause this audio here.

In the final part of the first scene, David gives a blessing to Absalom. Remember that the blessing could mean that David is saying goodbye to Absalom or that David hopes Absalom will have a good celebration. David might want Absalom to stop asking David about the celebration.

In the second scene, Absalom asks if Amnon can come to the celebration. Remember that it is possible that Absalom knew David would refuse to come, and that Absalom only wanted to invite Amnon. Absalom was probably already planning to kill Amnon. David shows he might be concerned about what Absalom has planned with Amnon because David asks, "Why should Amnon go with you?" This could also be translated as a statement instead of a question: "I do not see any reason why Amnon should go with you." Remember that David knows what Amnon did to Tamar, Absalom's sister, and David might be concerned about keeping his son Amnon safe.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to translate what David says to Absalom? How will you show that David does not agree that Amnon should go with Absalom? Pause this audio here.

Again, Absalom keeps asking David to allow Amnon to come to the celebration. Usually, when a king says no to someone's request, that person knows they should not ask again. But here, Absalom keeps asking David to allow Amnon to come to the celebration.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you show that people did not expect Absalom to keep asking David to change his mind? Pause this audio here.

At the end of the second scene, some translations say that Absalom makes a banquet fit for a king. These translations probably add this information to help with the flow of the story and to give the missing information about what happens in the story after Amnon and the king's other sons go with Absalom.

In the third scene, Absalom tells his servants to kill Amnon when Amnon's heart is merry with wine. This is special language that means that Amnon is drunk from the alcohol in the wine.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about someone getting drunk in your language? What is the best way to translate this part of the story where Absalom tells his servants to wait until Amnon's heart is merry with wine? Pause this audio here.

Absalom also tells his servants to not be afraid. Absalom reminds the servants that Absalom himself is the one giving the orders, so Absalom is the one who is responsible for killing Amnon. Absalom says, "Have I not commanded you?" Another translation could be, "I am the one who tells you to do this."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to translate what Absalom tells the servants to show that Absalom is the one who is giving the command to the servants? Pause this audio here.

Next, Absalom's servants do exactly what Absalom tells the servants to do. The servants wait until Amnon is drunk on the wine, and then the servants kill Amnon. After this, the other sons of the king get on their mules and run away. Maybe the other sons were afraid that Absalom would kill them next. Remember that a mule is born from a horse and a donkey, and kings and princes rode on mules during Absalom's time.

Stop here and look at a picture of a mule again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

In the fourth scene, David hears a report about what happened in Baal Hazor. Remember that David is in Jerusalem, about 25 kilometers south of Baal Hazor. David hears that Absalom killed all of the king's sons, and not just Amnon. The report also says not one of the sons is still alive, or that all of the sons are dead.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about a false report, rumor, or news in your community? What is the best way to translate "report" in this passage to show that it is not true? Pause this audio here.

David reacts to the report he hears. David believes that all his sons are dead, except for Absalom, so David mourns their deaths. David stands up, tears his clothing, and lies down on the ground. Remember that David's servants tear their clothing, too.

In the fifth scene, Jonadab tries to reassure David that not all of David's sons are dead. Remember that Jonadab is the son of David's brother Shimeah. Jonadab knows that Absalom was planning to kill Amnon for a long time since Amnon raped Absalom's sister, Tamar. Other ways to translate this are that Absalom was plotting this or that Absalom decided to do this. In the original language, it says Absalom decided this by his mouth, probably meaning that Absalom said that he wanted to kill Amnon.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate that Absalom had been planning to kill Amnon for a long time? Pause this audio here.

Jonadab tells David that Absalom killed only Amnon, so David should not be concerned about the report that says all the king's sons are dead. In the original language, the storyteller says that David should not take the report to heart, which is another way to say David should not worry about the report.

In the sixth scene, Absalom runs away. We do not see where Absalom runs away to until the next scene.

While Absalom is running away from Baal Hazor, a watchman is at Jerusalem watching on the walls of the city. The watchman sees people coming. The people could be behind the watchman, or on the road to the west of the watchman. Many people today think this is the Horonaim road, which is the road from Upper Beth Horon and Lower Beth Horon in the mountains of Judah. The towns of Beth Horon are about 16 kilometers from Jerusalem. Remember, the sons of the king are coming from Baal Hazor in the north to Jerusalem in the south. The sons of the king probably did not go directly back to Jerusalem. Instead, the sons of the king went on a longer route back to Jerusalem, maybe to avoid Absalom catching them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you describe where the people are that the watchman sees? Some choices are:

- The people come from the west on a road called Horanaim; or
- The people come from the west on a road beside the hill; or
- The people come on the road behind the watchman by the side of the mountain.

Pause this audio here.

Jonadab finds out about the people coming to Jerusalem, and Jonadab tells David. Jonadab tells David that David's sons are here! Jonadab calls himself "your servant" when he says that what Jonadab said would happen, happened.

The sons of David arrive in Jerusalem, and they are weeping and wailing. The sons are sad because Absalom killed Amnon. David and his servants also weep loudly. In the original language, the storyteller says they "wept a very great weeping." You could also translate this part that David and his servants weep a lot and loudly.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about someone crying loudly from sadness in your language? What is the best way to translate this part of the passage where the king's sons weep loudly, and David and his servants also weep loudly? Pause this audio here.

In the last scene, we find out what happens to Absalom. Absalom flees to Geshur. Absalom stays in Geshur for three years. Remember that Geshur is where Absalom's mother was from. Absalom went to stay with his grandfather, King Talmai, son of Ammihud of Geshur. Geshur was on the east and northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

Stop here and look at a map of the likely location of Geshur as a group. Pause this audio here.

David grieves over his dead son, Amnon, day after day. Another way to translate this is "every day." In the original language, "day after day" means it happened over and over for a long time.

Finally, we see that David wants to go to his son Absalom. Remember that Amnon was David's firstborn son and had been next in line to be the king after David. Now, David accepts Amnon's death as more time passes, and David feels more comforted.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:23–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has seven scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Absalom
- Absalom's sheepshearers
- Sons of King David
- King David
- Amnon, King David's son
- Absalom's servants
- King David's servants
- Jonadab
- Watchman
- And King Talmai

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Two years have passed since the previous story, where Amnon raped his half-sister, Tamar. Absalom is Tamar's brother. Now, Absalom invites his half-brother, Amnon, to a celebration. Absalom's sheepshearers are shearing Absalom's sheep at Baal Hazor, near the town of Ephraim. Absalom wants to have a celebration at Baal Hazor to celebrate during the sheep shearing time. Absalom also asks King David if King David and his servants want to come to the celebration as well.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I have been quiet for two years, but now is the time to do something to get revenge for what Amnon did to my sister Tamar; or
- I think that if I am careful, my father, King David, will not suspect anything from my invitation. Hopefully, my father does not think I am trying to hurt my half-brother, Amnon; or
- I do not think my father, King David, will accept my invitation to come to the celebration at Baal Hazor. I think my father will not come with me, but hopefully, my father will not be suspicious because I invited him to the celebration.

Continue the drama.

But King David told Absalom, "No, my son, we will not all go with you because it would be too much work to take care of all of us at the celebration with you." Absalom tries again to get King David to change his mind, but King David does not change his mind. David blesses Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I wonder why my son Absalom wants me to come to this celebration at Baal Hazor so badly. What is so special about this celebration? or
- I do not want to go with Absalom because I know it will be too much work for Absalom and his servants if I go with him, and if I bring my servants; or
- I wish that Absalom would stop asking me to come with him. Absalom needs to finally accept my answer that I am not coming.

Continue the drama.

Absalom tells King David, "If you will not come with me, then please let my brother Amnon go with us." King David says, "I do not see any reason that Amnon should go with you." But Absalom keeps asking King David to let Amnon go with Absalom. So, David agrees, and David sends Amnon and all the king's sons with Amnon. Absalom, Amnon, and all the king's sons go to Baal Hazor for the celebration that Absalom invited them to.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am relieved that my father finally agreed to let Amnon come to the celebration with us. My plan depends on Amnon coming to Baal Hazor with us; or
- I hope that my father does not suspect anything. Maybe my father thinks I will try to hurt Amnon, and that is why he also sent all of his other sons with me, too? or
- I feel a little bad for my father because I know how much my father loves his son Amnon. But Amnon did something terrible, and Amnon deserves punishment. My father should understand that; or
- I feel angry at my father because my father did nothing to punish Amnon for what Amnon did to my sister, Tamar.

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Now I am starting to think that Absalom might have some kind of evil plan against my son Amnon. Why does Absalom want Amnon to come to the celebration? or
- At least I can send my other sons with Amnon, and maybe these other sons will protect Amnon from anything that Absalom does to Amnon; or
- I do not want my firstborn son, Amnon, to go anywhere. Amnon is too important to me. I suppose one celebration will not hurt, though. Baal Hazor is not too far away from Jerusalem.

Continue the drama.

Absalom tells his servants, "Wait until Amnon is drunk on wine. When I give you the signal, you should kill Amnon! Do not be afraid. I am your master, and I am the one who is commanding you to kill Amnon. Be strong and courageous."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The moment is finally here. I am ready for Amnon to die; or
- I need to make sure my servants follow my orders. I cannot be the one who kills Amnon, but my servants can do it for me; or
- I know that my plan will work. Everything is working how I planned. Amnon is here in Baal Hazor, and now my servants can kill Amnon when Amnon gets drunk on wine.

Also, ask the people playing Absalom's servants, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are afraid. Absalom is our master, but Absalom is asking us to murder the king's firstborn son. What will happen to us if we do what Absalom says to do? or
- We are good servants, so we do what our master tells us to do. Absalom must have a reason for wanting us to kill Amnon. Maybe Absalom wants revenge for what Amnon did to Absalom's sister, Tamar? or
- This is Absalom's idea, so if we kill Amnon, it is not our fault. Absalom will be the one responsible for killing his brother, Amnon.

Continue the drama.

Absalom's servants do exactly what Absalom commanded the servants to do. The servants wait until Amnon is drunk, and then the servants kill Amnon. This is exactly what Absalom tells the servants to do. All the king's sons get up and ride away on their mules.

David hears a report that Absalom killed all the king's sons, and that not one of the sons is still alive. King David gets up, tears his clothing, and then he lies down on the ground. David's servants stand near King David. The servants also tear their clothing.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This is what I suspected! How could Absalom do this to me? Absalom killed my son Amnon, and all of my other sons too! or
- I had no idea that Absalom was planning to kill all of my sons! or
- I am so sad and upset because I have no sons left now except for Absalom, and he is a murderer.

Continue the drama.

Jonadab, the son of David's brother Shimeah, talks to King David. Jonadab says to David, "No, my king. Do not say that they killed all of your sons. Only Amnon is dead. Absalom has talked about killing Amnon since the day that Amnon raped Absalom's sister, Tamar. So please do not worry, my king, about the report that says that all of your sons are dead. It is only Amnon who is dead."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Jonadab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I hope that I can help the king feel better. I know that only one of his sons is dead, and not all of his sons; or
- I am really sad that Amnon is dead. Amnon was the son of my father's brother, and Amnon was also my friend; or
- I wonder how the king did not know about Absalom's plan to kill his brother Amnon someday. I have heard Absalom talk about this for two years now! or
- Before, I was trying to help Amnon find a way to be alone with his half-sister, Tamar. Now, Amnon is dead, so I must quickly find a way to make this situation work to help me have a good relationship with the king.

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Could it really be true what Jonadab is saying? Could it be true that only one of my sons is dead? or
- Even if only one of my sons is dead, this is still terrible news! Amnon is my firstborn son, and I love Amnon! or
- I remember what the prophet Nathan said about terrible things happening to my family after my sin against Uriah and Bathsheba. First, Amnon raped his sister Tamar, and now Absalom has killed Amnon! My family has many problems right now. The prophet Nathan was right in what he said about my family."

Continue the drama.

In the meantime, Absalom escapes from Baal Hazor. The servant who is the watchman on the city walls of Jerusalem looks up. The watchman sees people coming on the road next to the hill. Jonadab tells King David,

"Look! The king's sons are here! They are still alive, just as I told you!" King David's sons arrive in Jerusalem. The king's sons are wailing and weeping. King David and his servants also weep loudly.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing sons of King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are shocked that our brother, Amnon, is dead! We cannot believe that Absalom killed Amnon! or
- We are so glad that we all escaped with our lives. Absalom could have killed us, too! or
- What will we tell our father, King David? Our father will be so sad that his firstborn son, Amnon, is dead; or
- We are worried about what King David will say when we tell him that his son Amnon is dead. Maybe King David will be angry with us for not protecting Amnon better!

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am relieved to see that my other sons are all still alive! or
- I am so sad that my firstborn son, Amnon, is really dead. It is terrible news; or
- I am angry at my son Absalom for killing my son Amnon.

Continue the drama.

Absalom flees to Geshur. Geshur is the land of Absalom's grandfather, King Talmai, the son of Ammihud. King Talmai is the father of Absalom's mother. Absalom stays in Geshur for three years. David grieves over his son Amnon every day. David longs to go see Absalom because David is comforted about the death of his son Amnon.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad that my plan worked and that Amnon is now dead. My sister, Tamar, finally has revenge for what Amnon did to her two years ago; or
- I hope that my father, King David, will not come to find me in Geshur. I think I will be protected here with the father of my mother; or
- I am sad that I had to leave my home and live in another land. I hope that someday I can return home to Jerusalem, and that my father will forgive me for what I did to Amnon.

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am still so sad about my son Amnon. Why did Amnon have to die so young? Amnon was going to be the next king! or
- Amnon's death feels less painful because now it has been three years since Amnon died; or
- I want to see my son Absalom again, even though Absalom killed my other son, Amnon. I still love Absalom, and I want to go see him.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 13:23–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Absalom is the son of **King** David. David is the second king of Israel. A king is a person who rules over a city or territory. As the King, David has many **servants**. A servant works for his master in many ways. Translate king and servant the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on king and servant, refer to the Master Glossary.

It is the time of sheep shearing. Sheep's hair grows long, and people need to cut off, or shear, the hair or wool of the sheep. Sheepshearers were the men who cut off the hair of the sheep.

Stop here as a group and look again at pictures of sheep and a person shearing a sheep, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Also, stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate sheep shearing? Pause this audio here.

Absalom invites King David to a celebration that Absalom will have at Baal Hazor. King David refuses to come with Absalom. Instead, King David **blesses** Absalom. When a person blesses another person, they pray that God will do good things for that person. Translate bless the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on bless, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom tells his servants to wait until Amnon is "merry, or happy, with wine" at the celebration. "Happy with wine" means that a person is drunk.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate "**happy with wine**?" For more information, refer to wine in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

When Amnon is drunk, Absalom tells his servants to "**strike down** Amnon." This means to kill Amnon, probably with a sword. Use the same words or phrases for "strike down" as you have in previous passages.

After Absalom's servants kill Amnon, all of the king's sons get up. The king's sons all get on their **mules** and ride away from Baal Hazor. A mule is an animal that is born from a horse and a donkey, usually a female horse and a male donkey. Kings and princes often rode mules during Absalom's time. Translate mule the same as you have in other parts of the Old Testament.

Jonadab is the son of Shimeah, who is David's older brother. Shimeah was the third son of Jesse, the father of King David. Jonadab was the nephew of King David and the cousin of Absalom, Tamar, and Amnon. Jonadab is also Amnon's friend.

Jonadab tells King David that only Amnon is dead. Jonadab knows that Absalom has wanted to kill Amnon ever since the day that Amnon **humiliated** Tamar. Other ways to translate humiliated in this context are rape, force, and shame. Translate humiliated or raped the same as you did in the previous passage about Amnon and Tamar.

Jonadab calls King David "my **lord**." It was common to call someone lord if that person had authority over you. People often called the king lord. Translate lord the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on "lord," refer to the Master Glossary.

The city of Jerusalem had walls around it. Men stood watch on the walls of the city. One of the watchmen sees people coming on the road behind him, down the side of the mountain. A road is a path or way for people to walk on when they move from place to place. This road is coming from the north near Baal Hazor down to Jerusalem in the south.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **watchmen**. Pause this audio here.

Absalom runs away to Geshur, where his grandfather, King Talmai, lives. Absalom's mother was Maakah, and Talmai was the father of Maakah. Remember that Amnon had a different mother than Absalom.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 13:23–39

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (28060804 KB)

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2 Samuel 14:1–11

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 14:1–11 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:1–11 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:1–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous passage, Absalom killed his brother Amnon. Then, Absalom ran away to live with his grandfather in Geshur. David mourns over his dead son, Amnon. Absalom stays in Geshur for three years, but David longs to see his son Absalom. Now, Joab tries to convince David to let Absalom come back home to Jerusalem. Joab tells a wise woman of Tekoa to help convince David to let Absalom come home. This passage is the first part of a two-part story.

Remember that Joab is the son of David's sister, Zeruah. Joab is also the commander or general of David's army. Joab notices that King David is thinking about Absalom a lot, but the original language is not clear what David was thinking. Some translations say that David's heart longs for Absalom, but it is also possible that David is trying to find a way to fix the problem with his son. This might also mean that David was against his son Absalom, and that David did not want Absalom to come back.

It is possible that Joab wants to help David because Joab feels bad for David. Or Joab might be worried about who will rule the kingdom of Israel if King David dies while Absalom is still in exile outside of his own country. Now that the firstborn son, Amnon, is dead, Absalom is next in line to become king after David dies. It is also possible that Joab already tried many times to convince David to let Absalom come home, and now, this time, Joab has an idea to ask a wise woman to help Joab.

Joab asks someone to go and get a certain wise woman who lives in the town of Tekoa. Joab wants the woman to help Joab with his plan to bring Absalom home. Tekoa was a village south of Jerusalem. Joab probably wants someone to come help him from outside of Jerusalem so that David and the people in David's house do not recognize her.

Stop here and look at a map of Tekoa and Jerusalem as a group. Pause this audio here.

Joab tells the wise woman to pretend she is in mourning. Joab gives the woman specific directions for how to dress and act so that David will believe she is mourning the death of someone close to her. During David's time, people wore clothes like sackcloth to show they were sad about someone dying. Sackcloth was an uncomfortable material that people made from animal hair.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you wear when you are mourning the death of someone close to you? Pause this audio here.

Joab also told the woman not to put oil on herself. People normally put oil on their hair or their bodies to make themselves smell and look good to other people. However, when people mourned the death of someone, they did not put oil on themselves.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you get ready so you look and smell good to others? Pause this audio here.

Joab says the woman should act like someone who has been mourning a dead relative for a long time. This is similar to the previous passage when David mourned his son Amnon every day. Then, Joab tells the woman what to say to King David. Joab probably chooses a wise woman so that she can think about how to give the message to David. Joab is also wise because Joab chooses the Tekoan woman to help with Joab's plan.

The wise woman goes to King David, and she bows down with her face on the ground to show respect for the king. The woman asks the king to help her, and the king asks the woman, "What is the problem?"

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you show respect to a king or leader in your community? Do you bow down, talk in a certain way, or do something else? Pause this audio here.

The woman tells King David her sad story. Remember, this is the story that Joab told the woman to say to David. First, the woman says that she is a widow, and her husband is dead. During David's time, a widow had no one to help her because her husband was dead.

The woman's story is similar to the story of Cain and Abel in the book of Genesis. The woman says that she had two sons. The sons fought each other in a field, and no one was there to stop the sons from fighting. A field is a place where people grow crops for food.

Stop here and look at a picture of a field as a group. Pause this audio here.

During the fight between the two sons, one son killed the other son. It is possible that the son used his hands or some kind of object to kill his brother. No one saw this happen. Now, the woman says that her clan, or all of her relatives and family, wants to kill her remaining son. In the law of Moses, it says that the whole clan must kill a person who murders another person. This punishment avenges or pays back the blood, or the death, of the dead person.

It seems like the woman is hiding or protecting her remaining son from the clan. The woman does not want the clan to kill her last son. The clan tells the woman to hand over the son so they can punish him for the death of his brother. The clan wants to destroy the woman's son, who is the heir, or the one who takes over the family money and land after the father dies. It is possible the clan wants the land and money from the family.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your community, what is the punishment for someone who kills another person with no witnesses? Pause this audio here.

Finally, the woman says that if the clan kills her son, they will put out the last coal she has left. During the woman's time, people kept some of the hot coals at night and used these coals to help start a new fire the next morning. The woman's last son is like her last coal, or her last hope for a son to continue the family name. It was very important for a person to have a son to live after the father was dead, so that someone would be alive who had the same name as his father. In this way, the family name lives on, even after the father dies. The woman's son would also care for her after the son receives the family inheritance. If the woman's son is gone, then she has no one to take care of her anymore, and she is also hopeless.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Why would someone's name be important in your culture? What happens when someone has no living children to carry on their name or family? Pause this audio here.

The woman hopes that David will hear her story and let her remaining son live. The woman knows what the law of Moses says and what her son deserves as punishment. However, the woman hopes that the king will make an exception for her since she is a widow, and her remaining son is the only person who can care for her.

David tells the woman to go back home. David says he will give instructions about the situation later. This probably means that David will give instructions to the woman's clan so that the clan will not kill the woman's remaining son. However, David does not say exactly what his order will be about the woman's situation.

But the woman does not leave, and she is not satisfied with the king's answer. The woman tells King David that if Yahweh or anyone else says that David's decision is wrong, she wants the guilt to be on her and her father's house. The house of the woman's father means her father's family. The woman thinks it is possible someone might criticize David for not punishing her son. The woman wants the king to be without guilt.

King David tells the woman to bring anyone to David who tries to talk to the woman or who demands her son from her. David wants the woman to know that no one will bother her about her son again. The woman asks King David to swear by the name of Yahweh, his God, that David will not let the relative from her clan kill her son. Remember, this relative had the duty to kill the woman's remaining son to punish the living son for killing his brother. In the original language, the woman asks David to remember Yahweh, his God, which is similar to swearing an oath or making a solemn promise. The woman wants David to confirm his promise to protect the woman's son by also swearing an oath.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When do people swear oaths in your culture? Who or what do people swear an oath by? Pause this audio here.

David agrees to take the oath in the name of Yahweh, just as the woman asked David to do. David says that as surely as Yahweh lives, not one hair of the woman's son will fall to the ground. In other words, no one will harm the woman's son.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:1–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: Joab sees that King David is thinking about David's son Absalom. Joab sends for a wise woman from Tekoa. Joab tells the woman to pretend she is in mourning. Joab tells the woman what to say to King David when she goes to see David in Jerusalem.

In the second scene: The wise woman goes to King David. The woman tells David a story. The woman says she is a widow, and that one of her sons killed her other son. Now, the woman's community wants to kill her remaining son. The woman asks David for help.

In the third scene: David tells the woman to go home. The woman says that if anyone blames David for doing the wrong thing in her case, she should take the blame. The woman also asks David to swear on the name of Yahweh that no one will hurt her son. David agrees.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- King David
- Absalom
- The messenger who brings back the wise woman from Tekoa
- A wise woman from Tekoa
- The wise woman's two sons
- And the wise woman's clan, who wants to avenge the killing of her son

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that in the previous passage, Absalom killed his half-brother, Amnon. Then, Absalom ran away to Geshur, where Absalom's grandfather lived. Absalom stayed in Geshur for three years. Meanwhile, King David is very sad about the death of his son Amnon. Remember that in this passage, Joab makes plans to convince David to bring his son Absalom back to Jerusalem. Joab finds a wise woman who tells David a sad story about her two sons. The woman also tells David that David should let his son Absalom come home. Remember, this is the first part of a two-part story.

In the first scene, Joab realizes that King David is thinking about Absalom a lot. Remember that it is difficult to translate this idea. In the original language, it says, "The heart of the king was on Absalom," which probably means that David was thinking about Absalom. We do not know if David was sad that he could not see Absalom, and longed to see Absalom, or if David was still angry at Absalom. Another way to translate it is that David could not forget Absalom.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate that David is thinking about Absalom a lot? Pause this audio here.

Joab sends someone to bring back the wise woman in Tekoa. Remember, we do not know this woman's name, only that she is a wise woman. A wise woman is a woman who makes good decisions and whom everyone respects.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you describe the wise woman? Pause this audio here.

The reason Joab asks someone to go and get the wise woman is that Joab realizes the king is still thinking about Absalom. Tekoa is a town 16 kilometers south of Jerusalem in the desert of Judah. Remember, Joab probably chooses someone to help him from outside of Jerusalem so that David does not recognize the woman. Joab might think that David may later find out the woman's story is not true, but Joab wants David to believe her story at first so that David can have time to think about what the woman says to David.

Stop here and look at a map of Tekoa and Jerusalem as a group. Pause this audio here.

After the woman comes to Jerusalem, Joab gives the wise woman directions for how she should dress, act, and talk when she goes to see King David. Joab gives directions to the wise woman as someone who has authority talks to someone who is under their authority. In the original language, it says, "Joab put the words in her mouth," which probably means Joab gave the woman the general information of what to say. Joab tells the woman to pretend that she is in mourning. This is the same idea as from a previous story, when Amnon pretends to be sick in his room in order to talk to his half-sister, Tamar. Joab tells the wise woman to pretend she is in mourning, to wear mourning clothes, not to put oil on herself, and to act like someone who has been mourning a dead relative for many days.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the part where Joab tells the woman, "Do not put oil on yourself"? How will you show that to put oil on yourself was a common way that people made themselves look and smell good during Joab's time? Pause this audio here.

After Joab tells the wise woman what to do, then Joab tells her what to say. Remember that Joab probably does not tell the woman every word of what she should say to David. Joab probably only gives the woman the general information for her story and how to talk to David about Absalom.

In the second scene, the woman from Tekoa goes to King David. The woman bows down with her face to the ground to show respect for the king. The woman asks David for help. In this story, sometimes the storyteller calls the woman "the woman from Tekoa," and sometimes he just calls her "the woman."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about how you will identify the wise woman of Tekoa. Will you always call her "the wise woman from Tekoa," or will you sometimes call her "the woman" or "the wise woman"? Pause this audio here.

King David asks the woman, "What do you want?" Another way to translate this could be, "What is your trouble?" Remember that King David is the king, the person in authority over the woman. The woman replies to the king very respectfully. The whole time the woman speaks with King David, she is very respectful and polite. The woman calls herself "your servant," which means a lower-level female servant, like a handmaid. The woman also calls King David "the king" instead of speaking directly to King David and saying "you." All of these things show that the woman is respectful and that she wants to honor the king.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you show that the woman is respectful in how she speaks with King David? Pay attention to ways the woman might say "your servant" or other ways she will show honor and respect to the king. Pause this audio here.

The woman tells David that she is a widow and that her husband is dead. A widow is a woman whose husband is dead. The woman probably repeats this two times to show that her situation is very bad.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about how you will translate "widow" and "my husband is dead" in this passage. How can you show how sad it is that the woman has no husband to care for her? Pause this audio here.

Then, the woman tells David her story. Remember that this is not a true story. Joab told the woman to tell this story so that David would be more likely to let his son Absalom come home to Jerusalem. In the story, one son kills the other son in a field with no witnesses.

Stop here and look at a picture of a field again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

The woman says that her whole clan "rises up against her," or wants to kill her remaining son. The woman calls herself David's servant. Remember also that the law of Moses said a person must kill a murderer to pay back for the murder that person did. The woman also says the clan wants to destroy the heir, which might mean they want to take the land and money from the family after they kill the remaining son.

The woman tells David that the clan wants to put out her last remaining coal. Remember that people used coals from the previous night to start a new fire in the morning. Other ways to translate this could be "my only flame of hope" or "my son is like the last spark of a fire." The woman needs her last son to be able to carry on the family name of his father. In the original language, it says that if the woman's son dies, her husband will have "neither name nor remnant left on the face of the earth." A remnant means the descendants or survivors of a family, and name and remnant both refer to continuing the father's family name. The face of the earth means completely, so the woman is saying that her dead husband will have absolutely nothing left—no family or inheritance at all.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Remember the discussion about what happens when someone has no living children to carry on your family name. What is the best way to translate the idea that the woman's husband will have no "name or descendants on the face of the earth"? Pause this audio here.

The woman's story is not exactly the same as the story of Absalom and David. Remember, the woman did not want David to suspect that her story was not true. Absalom planned to kill Amnon, and in the woman's story, her son did not plan to kill the other son. Also, no one tried to kill Absalom to avenge Amnon's death. The main way the two stories are similar is that the clan wanted to punish the son for killing his brother, and King David also wanted to punish Absalom for killing his brother Amnon. The woman hopes David will feel compassion for her and her story, and that David will give this same compassion to his own son Absalom.

In the third scene, David tells the woman to go home. David probably wants the woman not to worry about her situation. David says he will give instructions about the woman, which probably means that David will tell the clan that they cannot kill the woman's remaining son. Remember, it is not clear exactly what David says he will do for the woman.

But even after King David dismisses her, the woman continues to talk with the king. Remember that this is surprising because the king is normally the one who decides when someone can leave, but here, the woman decides to stay longer and speak with the king more. The woman says that she is willing to take the blame and guilt if anyone says it is wrong to let her son stay alive. The woman does not want King David and his throne to have the guilt from his decision to help her. A throne is the place where a king sits, but here it is special language to mean King David's position of power. Anyone who is the king or who is in the king's family is in a position of power in the land of Israel. The woman does not want David, as the king, to be guilty.

Stop here and look at a picture of a throne as a group. Pause this audio here.

Also, stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you talk about the throne of the king or the position of the king? Pause this audio here.

The king says to the woman that he will protect her. The king tells the woman that if anyone tries to take her son from her, the woman should bring this person to the king. David says he will take care of this problem, and David will make sure this person does not bother the woman anymore.

The woman needs one more reassurance from the king that he will protect her and her son. David already told the woman two times that he would take care of her problem. Now, the woman asks David to swear an oath to take care of her son. In the original language, the woman says, "Please remember Yahweh your God," which is a way to swear an oath by Yahweh. The woman wants David to keep "the avenger of blood" from killing her son. Remember that the avenger of blood is the relative from the woman's clan who should kill her son, according to the law that Yahweh gave Moses for his people.

In the last part of the third scene, David reassures the woman for the third time. This final time, David swears an oath "as surely as Yahweh lives." This means that the promise David makes to protect the woman's son is as sure as the fact that Yahweh lives. Remember, the woman asked David to do this so that she would know that David would keep his promise to protect her son. David adds to his oath that not a single hair of her son's head will fall to the ground. This means that no one will touch, or harm, the woman's son in any way.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Remember the discussion in the previous script about how people swear oaths in your culture. How will you talk about David's promise to protect the woman's son from all harm? What is the best way to describe this in your language? Pause this audio here.

As the scene ends, the woman has successfully gotten three promises, and even a vow in the name of Yahweh, that David will protect her son from the relatives who want to kill the son.

It is possible that the woman asks David three times so that David will clearly agree to protect her son. Remember that this is important for her because next, she will compare the situation of David's son Absalom to her story.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:1–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- King David
- Absalom
- The messenger who brings back the wise woman from Tekoa
- A wise woman from Tekoa
- The wise woman's two sons
- And the wise woman's clan, who wants to avenge the killing of her son

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Joab is the son of David's sister Zeruiah. Joab knows that King David cannot stop thinking about his son Absalom. Joab sends someone to get a wise woman from Tekoa, which is a town near Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel bad for King David because he seems to be sad about his son Absalom. I want to help bring Absalom home to David, and I want to help heal their relationship; or
- I keep asking David to let Absalom come home, but David will not listen to me. David is still angry at his son Absalom. But if I find someone David does not know anything about, maybe they can help me to finally convince David to let Absalom come home! or
- I think it would be terrible for Israel if King David dies while his son Absalom is still in exile. I have to bring Absalom back home so that the kingdom does not have a big problem if King David dies. This is best for the kingdom of Israel.

Also, ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am angry at my son Absalom for what he did to my son Amnon! I do not want Absalom to come home, but I cannot stop thinking about him and what he did; or
- I long to see my son Absalom. Absalom is still my son, and I wish there were a way I could bring him home. It seems impossible, though, because it is so shameful what Absalom did to my son Amnon; or
- I cannot forget my son Absalom. I cannot stop thinking about Absalom.

Continue the drama.

Joab tells the woman from Tekoa to pretend she is in mourning. Joab tells the woman to wear mourning clothes, not to put oil on herself, and to act like someone who has been mourning a dead relative for many days. Joab tells the woman to go to King David and tell the king her story. Joab tells the woman what to say to King David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I wish I did not have to trick King David in order to convince him to let his son Absalom come home, but this is the only way that it will work; or
- I need to prepare this woman very well so that she is able to trick King David. This woman must be convincing in what she wears, how she acts, and what she says, or the king will know that her story is not true. It is very important that David believes this woman's story; or
- I think the story I told the woman to say is very good. This story will make the king think about bringing his son Absalom home because he will certainly agree to help this woman in her situation. Then David will see that he must also help his own son! or
- I trust this woman because she is wise. I told her generally what to say to King David, but I know the woman will be able to think quickly about what to do to convince David that her story is true. She will also be able to convince David to let Absalom come home.

Also, ask the person playing the wise woman from Tekoa, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am honored that Joab, the commander of the king's army and the nephew of the king, would ask me for help! or
- I hope that I will be successful in convincing King David to let his son Absalom come home. I also want Absalom to come home! or
- I must be very careful to act like I am in mourning for a dead relative. I must remember my story well and try very hard to show David I am a poor, sad widow.

Continue the drama.

The woman from Tekoa goes to see King David. The woman bows down with her face on the ground to show the king respect and honor. The woman says, "Help me, O King!" King David replies to her, "What is your trouble?" The woman tells the king her story: "I am a widow, and my husband is dead. I had two sons. My sons got into a fight in a field, and no one was there to stop their fight. One of the sons hit the other son and killed him. Now, my whole clan of relatives wants me to give up my remaining son! My clan of relatives wants to kill my son to pay back for the death of his brother. When the clan kills my son, they will destroy my husband's heir. My son is like the last spark of a fire. If the clan kills my son, then there will be no one left on earth to carry on the name of my husband."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the wise woman, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want King David to believe my story is true, so I have tried as hard as I can to tell David a convincing story about my dead husband, my dead son, my living son, and the clan of relatives that want to kill my son; or
- I want to be very careful to give the king respect and honor. I do not want to offend the king in any way while I speak with him; or
- I feel a lot of pressure to say my story correctly to King David. I hope that I did not forget to say anything that Joab told me to say; or
- I want King David to feel sorry for me and my situation in the story I told him. I told King David twice that I am a widow, and my husband is dead, and I made sure that it sounded like things are hopeless for me and my son. Our relatives are trying to kill him, and this will leave my husband without any name on the whole earth. It will also leave me with nothing. I hope my story is convincing to David!

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I have no idea who this woman is, but her story is very sad. I want to help this woman in some way; or
- I know that the law of Moses says that the relatives can kill the living son of the woman because the son killed his brother. But I think there is a way to prevent this from happening. The son did not plan to kill his brother, so I think I can say something to prevent the relatives from killing the living son; or
- I am glad that I am the king of Israel. I like to help people with their problems.

Continue the drama.

King David tells the woman, "Go home. I will take care of your problem for you." The woman does not leave. The woman tells the king, "O King, please blame me and my father's house if anyone says your decision is not right! The king and his throne should be innocent for trying to help me and my son."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I will take care of this woman's problem, but not right away; or
- I need some time to think about how to handle this woman's situation; or
- I am surprised that this woman is still speaking with me, even after I told her that I would take care of things.

Also, ask the person playing the wise woman, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I know that King David said he would take care of my situation, but I need to be sure that he is serious about helping me; or
- I know that some people might think it is not right if my clan of relatives does not kill my son. I hope that these people do not blame the king for letting my son go free! or
- I will wait to start talking about King David's son Absalom until I can be sure that the king feels compassion for me. If the king feels compassion for me, then I hope he will also feel compassion for his own son.

Continue the drama.

David says to the woman, "If anyone causes you any problems, bring him to me. I will make sure that he will not bother you again." The woman tells David, "Then please swear to me by Yahweh your God that you will not let the avenger of blood kill my son. Please do not let my relatives kill my son!" David agrees to swear the oath. David says, "I can promise you that no one will touch your son at all. I swear this will be true as surely as Yahweh lives."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I wonder why the woman wants me to swear an oath that I will protect her son? or
- I feel annoyed at this woman for not believing me the first time. I already told this woman that I would take care of her situation, and now she asked me to swear an oath that I promise to do it! or
- I do not have any problem with swearing an oath by Yahweh my God. Of course, I will help this woman. This woman should have believed me even without an oath!

Also, ask the person playing the wise woman, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Finally, I feel confident that the king truly does plan to protect me and my son. The king swore an oath by Yahweh, and the king must keep his word; or
- I feel a little guilty for continuing to pretend that I am a widow and that one of my sons killed my other son. I know this part of my story is necessary so that I can convince the king to let his son Absalom come home, so I will keep telling the king my story; or
- I am ready to talk to the king about his son, Absalom.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:1–11 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Joab notices that **King** David's **heart** longs to see his son Absalom. A king is someone who rules over a city, region, or country. The heart is where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen. Remember that it is possible to translate this part as "the king cannot stop thinking about Absalom." If your translation includes the word heart, translate heart the same as you have in previous passages. Also, translate king the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on king and heart, refer to the Master Glossary.

Joab asks someone to bring a wise woman from Tekoa to Jerusalem. Joab wants this wise woman to talk to King David. When a person is wise, they have wisdom. A wise person understands many things and makes good decisions.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate **wise** in this passage? Translate wise the same as you have in other parts of the Old Testament. For more information on wise, refer to wisdom in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Joab "puts the words" into the wise woman's mouth. This probably means that Joab gave the wise woman the general information on what to say to David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate this part of the passage that Joab "**put the words**" into the wise woman's mouth? Pause this audio here.

Joab tells the wise woman to act like she is in mourning. Joab tells the woman not to **anoint** herself with oil. Jewish people often put sweet-smelling oil on their hair and skin to make themselves look and smell good. If a person was fasting or in mourning, they did not anoint themselves with oil. Jews also anointed people or things with oil to show they had a special purpose. Translate anoint the same as you have in other parts of the Old Testament. For more information on anoint, refer to the Master Glossary.

The wise woman goes to King David. The woman tells David that she is a **widow**. Translate widow the same as you have in previous passages and in other parts of the Old Testament.

The woman calls herself the **servant** of David. A servant is someone who works for another person. Translate servant the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on servant, refer to the Master Glossary.

The woman says one of her sons killed her other son. Now, the woman's whole **clan** wants to kill her living son. The clan is all of the other members of the man's larger family. The clan could be all the people living in the woman's village of Tekoa. Translate clan the same as you have in other passages in the Old Testament.

The clan wants to kill the remaining brother, which will destroy the heir. An heir is the person who receives all of the father's money and property after the father dies. Normally, the father divides his property to give to all his sons. The oldest son gets double the amount of property. If there are no sons, the daughters get the property. If there are no daughters, the closest relative gets the property. If the clan kills the final living son, then the closest relative will get the father's property.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate **heir** in this passage? Translate heir the same as you have in other parts of the Old Testament. For more information on heir, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The woman says that she wants her and her father's **house** to have the guilt if David's decision about her son is wrong. Her father's house means the household of the woman's father. This includes all the people who live in her father's house. Translate "house of her father" the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on house, refer to household in the Master Glossary.

The woman wants the king and his **throne** to be innocent. The throne is where the king sits. Remember that here, throne means the king's power. If you use the idea of a throne in your translation, translate throne the same as you have in previous passages.

The woman asks King David to remember his God. "Remember your God" means that the woman is asking David to swear an **oath**. Although the word for oath is not in the passage, some translations say that the woman asks David to swear an oath that the avenger of blood will not destroy her son. For more information on oaths, refer to the Master Glossary. If you use the word for oath, use the same word that you have used in previous passages.

Yahweh is **God's** personal name. Translate Yahweh and the general name for God the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh and God, refer to the Master Glossary.

The avenger of **blood** is the close relative from the woman's family. This person wants to kill the woman's son to avenge or punish the son for the blood of the son's brother that he killed. Blood is very important in the Old Testament because it is a symbol of a person's life. Translate blood the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on blood, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the idea of "**avenger of blood**?" If you have translated this idea in previous books of the Bible, use the same phrase here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 14:1–11

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 14:12–24

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 14:12–24 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:12–24 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:12–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This is the second part of a two-part story. In the first part of this story, Joab brings a wise woman to David. Joab wants the wise woman to convince David to let Absalom come home to Jerusalem. The wise woman tells David a story about her two sons, and David agrees that he will protect the woman's living son from anyone who wants to kill him. Now, in this second part of the story, David learns the true reason that the wise woman came to see David.

At the end of the previous part of this story, King David makes an oath that he will protect the woman's son. Then, the wise woman finally talks to the king about the true reason for her visit. The woman politely asks first if she can add something else to what she already said, and the king tells her to continue speaking.

The woman tells King David that what David is doing to the people of God is similar to how her clan of relatives wants to kill her remaining son. The people of God are the people of Israel. The woman does not directly say Absalom's name, but she knows that David is angry at his son Absalom for killing David's other son, Amnon. The woman, and Joab as well, want David to think of the whole nation of Israel instead of only thinking about David's anger toward his son Absalom. The woman and Joab want David to remember that it would be best for the nation of Israel if the oldest living son of the king were in Jerusalem, and not banished to Geshur. If King David dies while Absalom is gone, it would be a disaster for Israel. The woman tells David that David shows himself as guilty when he refuses to bring back his son.

Remember that David did not directly tell Absalom that Absalom could not return to Jerusalem. But David is the person responsible for Absalom staying away from Jerusalem. David agreed to protect the Tekoan woman's son who murdered his brother, but David did not agree to protect his own son, Absalom.

The woman says everyone must die someday, and we are all like water that a person spills on the ground. The woman also says that God will not lift up life. This might mean that God makes no exceptions for anyone because everyone dies eventually. Other people think it means that God does not cause anyone to die. The woman also says God makes ways for a banished person to come home.

Now, the woman finishes what she is saying to David. The woman returns to talking about the story of her two sons, even though David might already know that her story about her two sons is not true. The woman says she is afraid of her clan of relatives who want to kill her remaining son. The woman tells David that she told herself that if she spoke to the king, the king might help her. Remember, the woman wants the king to protect her and her son from the hand, or power, of the person who wants to kill her remaining son. The person in the woman's clan also wants to take the inheritance from the woman and her son. Here, inheritance probably means the land that Yahweh gave to the people of Israel, which includes the land that the woman and her family have as part of the people of Israel. Remember that the woman's story about her two sons is not true, but she wants David to remember that he promised with an oath that he would protect her living son. The woman is comparing David's reaction to her story with how David treated his own son Absalom.

The woman compares David to the angel, or messenger of God, which might be a way to try and impress David. The woman says David can understand the difference between good and evil, and that David is like Yahweh the judge. Finally, the woman finishes by saying, "May Yahweh your God be with you!" The woman probably says "your God" because she is reminding David of his oath that he made earlier about promising to protect her remaining son.

David tells the woman to give David a truthful answer to the question he will ask next. David does not want the woman to lie at all, not even in the smallest detail. The woman agrees that she will be truthful.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about lying and truthfulness in your culture. When is it important to tell the complete truth with no lies, not even in the smallest detail? Tell a story about a time when someone did not tell the complete truth for a certain reason. Pause this audio here.

David asks the woman if Joab is the one who told her to come talk to David. In the original language, it says, "Is the hand of Joab in this?" David finally suspects the woman did not come to speak with David on her own. It is not clear if David knows that the woman's story about her two sons is false or not. It is also not clear if the woman thinks that David knows her story is not true. It is clear that David thinks Joab was a part of the plan to talk to David in some way.

David thinks Joab was the one who told the woman to come talk to David, probably because Joab tried to convince David to let Absalom come home in the past. The woman replies that David is right. The woman confirms what she says with an oath, "as you live," which shows that she is telling the truth. The woman knows that there is no way around the question David asks, not to the right or to the left. Joab, David's official, did tell the woman to come, and Joab also told her what to say to David.

The woman says that Joab wanted to change how David looked at the situation with Absalom. The woman says David's wisdom is like the wisdom of the angel, or messenger, of God. David knows everything happening on the earth, which probably does not mean that David knows every single thing happening all over the world. It probably means David knows what is happening in Israel. The woman is probably flattering David by comparing David to the angel of God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about flattery in your culture. When and how do people give many compliments to try to get someone to do something for them? Pause this audio here.

David speaks with Joab and agrees to let Absalom come back to Jerusalem. David tells Joab to bring the young man Absalom home. Joab is very glad that the king will finally let Absalom come home. Joab bows down on his face before King David to show the king respect. This is similar to how the woman bowed down in front of the king when she came to meet David.

Joab goes to Geshur and brings Absalom back home to Jerusalem. Remember that Absalom has been in exile in Geshur for the past three years. Geshur is where Absalom's mother was from.

Stop here and look at a map of Jerusalem and the likely location of Geshur as a group. Pause this audio here.

Absalom comes back to Jerusalem, but David does not want to see his son Absalom. It is surprising that David refuses to see Absalom when Absalom comes home. This probably shows that David does not fully forgive Absalom for killing David's son Amnon. David says that Absalom must go to his own house and that Absalom cannot see David's face. So, Absalom goes to his own house. Absalom does not come into the presence of the king in the royal court.

Joab did change the situation. Absalom is home in Jerusalem now. But David still does not want to see Absalom.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:12–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: The wise woman tells David the real reason she came to see David. The woman asks David why his son Absalom cannot come back home.

In the second scene: David asks the wise woman if Joab told her to come talk to David. The wise woman tells David that it was Joab's idea to come talk to David.

In the third scene: David tells Joab to go bring Absalom back to Jerusalem. Joab agrees.

In the fourth scene: Joab goes and brings Absalom from Geshur back to Jerusalem. Absalom does not go to David's house or see his father, King David.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- King David
- Absalom
- A wise woman from Tekoa
- The wise woman's two sons
- The wise woman's clan
- And the avenger of blood, the man who wants to kill the wise woman's son to avenge the murder of the son's brother

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that this is the second part of a two-part story. Remember that in the first part of the story, Joab tells a wise woman to visit King David. Joab tells the wise woman what to say to David. The woman tells David a story about her two sons. David agrees to protect the woman's living son. Remember that in this second part of the story, the woman tells David the real reason for her visit to David.

In the first scene, the woman tells the king the true reason for her visit. First, the woman politely asks if she can say something else to David. Remember that David already told the woman to go home after she told her story to him, but the woman continued to talk with David. Now, the woman prepares to say the most important things she came to tell King David. David tells the woman to continue speaking.

First, the woman asks David two questions. The woman asks David, "Why don't you do as much for the people of God as you have promised to do for me?" The woman also asks, "When the king says this, does he not convict himself, for the king has not brought back his banished son?" You could translate these questions as statements instead. For example:

- You are not doing as much for the people of God as you have promised to do for me; or
- You have made yourself guilty when you made this decision. The reason you are guilty is that you refused to bring home your own banished son.

Overall, the woman wants to compare David's situation with her own story. Remember, the woman does not tell David that her story is not true. The woman wants David to see that if he is compassionate with her son and the people who want to kill him, then David should also be compassionate with his own son. David should let his son Absalom come home.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What would be the best way to translate what the woman says to King David here? Would it be more natural to translate these as questions or statements? Pause this audio here.

The woman reminds David that someday, every person will die. The woman compares people to water that someone spills on the ground. After you spill water, you cannot pick up the water again. In the same way, after a person dies, they cannot come back to life again. The woman also says that God will not lift up life. This is a difficult part of the passage to translate. Some people think this means that God does not cause anyone to die. Other people think it means that God does not keep anyone from dying. This means everyone will die, and God makes no exceptions for anyone.

Also, it is difficult to know who the person is who makes ways for the banished person to be restored. It is most likely that it is God, and not King David. It is possible that the woman is comparing God to David. The woman says that David's son Absalom will die, and it might even happen while Absalom is still in exile, or not able to come home to his own land. But God is different. God lets a sinner live, and God even makes a way for a banished person to come home. In the same way that God is merciful to a banished person, David should let his son come home.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the difficult parts of the passage here? Here are some possible translations:

- God does not take away life. Instead, God makes ways for a banished person to come home; or
- God makes no exceptions for anyone. But even though everyone must die, God makes a way, so a banished person does not have to stay away from his home.

Pause this audio here.

Now, the woman talks more about the story that she first told David about her two sons. This is the final part of what the woman of Tekoa wants to say to King David. Again, the woman speaks with respect to the king. The woman calls herself "your servant," and she calls the king "the king" instead of saying "you." The woman reminds the king of her sad story and the reason that she came to talk to him. The woman tells the king that she thought the king could protect her from the people who wanted to kill her son and take her inheritance. The woman probably reminds David of her story so that he will not forget her and her difficult situation. Even though the woman compared David and Absalom with her own situation, the woman still never told David that her story was not true.

The woman ends her talk with David now. It is likely that the woman wants David to be happy with her, so she compares David to God. The woman says David will be the one to give her rest, that David is like an angel of God, and that David knows the difference between good and evil. The woman blesses David and says, "May Yahweh your God be with you!" Remember that the woman does not mean that Yahweh is not also her God. The woman probably says "your God" so that David will not forget about the oath that David made to protect the woman's son.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about how it will sound in your language to say, "May Yahweh your God be with you!" If this sounds like the woman does not also worship Yahweh, then you might choose to translate this "May Yahweh our God be with you!" Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, David speaks again. This time, it is clear that David suspects something more is happening than only what the woman has told David. It is not clear if David thinks the woman's story about her two sons is true or not. First, David tells the woman that he wants a truthful answer. The woman agrees to tell David the truth. Then, David asks the woman if Joab's hand is a part of her coming to speak with David. This means that David realizes that Joab probably sent the woman to speak to David about Absalom. David asks the woman the question in a way that shows he expects her to say, "Yes, Joab was a part of this."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How can you show that David expects the woman to say yes? Here are some possible translations:

- Joab told you to do this, right? or
- Isn't Joab behind all of this?

Pause this audio here.

The woman replies to David that yes, Joab was the one who told her to speak with David. The woman tells David that "one cannot turn to the right hand or the left hand from anything David says." The woman is flattering David, probably so that David will not be angry with her. Other ways to translate this part could be:

- It is impossible to hide anything from you; or
- When you ask a question, I must answer it; or
- No one can avoid answering your question.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to translate the woman's words to King David here? Pause this audio here.

The woman also says that Joab wanted to change the face of the situation. This probably means Joab wanted to change how David understood the situation. It is possible to change the order of this part of the passage. For example, you could first say that Joab wanted to change how David understood the situation, and that Joab told the woman what to say. Or, you could say that Joab told the woman to say all of these things so that Joab could change the way David looked at the situation.

Finally, the scene ends when the woman again says flattering words to David. The woman says that David has wisdom like the wisdom of a messenger of God. The woman also says David knows what is happening all over the land of Israel. This probably does not mean David knows what is happening all over the world. The woman does not say or do anything else in this story.

In the third scene, David speaks with Joab. David finally agrees to let Joab bring Absalom home. David says, "Very well." This shows that David and Joab talked previously about bringing Absalom home, and now David agrees to Joab's request. It is most likely that Joab was not present when the woman spoke with David. Instead, Joab comes to talk with David later, after the conversation with the woman. David calls Absalom "the young man," which might be a way to show love to his son Absalom, or it might be a way to show that Absalom is young and still has a lot to learn.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you show that this scene probably happens later after the conversation between David and the Tekoan woman? Pause this audio here.

Joab is very happy about David's decision. Joab acts respectfully in front of King David. Joab bows down, or falls down on his face and he says the king approves of Joab. Joab also blesses the king, which means that Joab prays that Yahweh will do good things for David.

In the fourth scene, Joab goes from Jerusalem to Geshur. Remember, Geshur is the place where Absalom has been living in exile for the past three years. Geshur was to the east and northeast of the Sea of Galilee. Remember that Absalom's mother is from the land of Geshur. Absalom was living with his mother's father. Joab brings Absalom back to Jerusalem, which is Absalom's home.

Stop here and look at a map of Jerusalem and the likely location of Geshur again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

The final part of this passage shows David's reaction to Absalom's homecoming. David does not want to see his son Absalom. This is surprising because people might expect that if the king allows his exiled son to come home, the king will want to welcome his son home. However, David says he does not want to see Absalom's face. This probably means that Absalom does not come into the presence of the king.

Absalom follows David's instructions and goes to his own house, which may be a part of the palace compound, but in a different area. The storyteller probably repeats this information again to show that Absalom did exactly as David told him to do. Absalom does not see the king, his father. Remember, this might be because David still does not forgive Absalom. David is probably still angry at Absalom for killing David's firstborn son, Amnon.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:12–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- King David
- Absalom
- A wise woman from Tekoa
- The wise woman's two sons
- The wise woman's clan
- And the avenger of blood, the man who wants to kill the wise woman's son to avenge the murder of the son's brother

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The woman asks King David if she can say something else to him. King David tells the woman that she may continue speaking. The woman tells David, "You have promised with an oath to protect my son, so why will you not also take care of the people of God? When you say that you will take care of my son, you are guilty because you still did not bring back your son whom you exiled to another land. You know that everyone must die eventually. All people are like water that someone spills on the ground. No one can pick up the spilled water again. After people die, no one can come back to life again. God makes no exceptions for anyone because

everyone must die. But even though everyone must die, God makes a way, so a banished person does not have to stay exiled."

The woman finishes what she wants to say to the king. The woman says, "I came to talk to you, O king, because I am afraid of my clan of relatives. I told myself, 'I will go talk to the king, and hopefully the king can help me. Maybe the king could save me from the people who want to cut me and my son off from the inheritance that God gave to us.'" The woman also says, "I hope that what you say, O King, will give us peace. You are like an angel of God because you can tell the difference between good and evil. May Yahweh your God be with you!"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the wise woman, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad that I could finally talk to the king about bringing his son Absalom home. This is the reason I came to talk to the king. I hope that the king listens to me and lets his son Absalom come home; or
- I am nervous that King David will be angry at me for talking to him about his son Absalom, or that the king will realize that my story was not true; or
- I hope that I complimented David enough so that he will listen to my request and let Absalom come home.

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am surprised that this woman is talking to me about my son Absalom! How does my son, the son of a king, compare at all to this woman's son? or
- I wonder if this was the true reason for this woman's visit. I wonder if this woman's story about her two sons is a true story, or if she told me the story in order to talk to me about my son, Absalom; or
- I feel embarrassed because the woman is right. I am willing to offer compassion to her and her son, even though her son killed his brother. Maybe I should also consider giving some compassion to my own son Absalom.

Continue the drama.

The king tells the woman that he will ask her a question. The king wants the woman to tell the complete truth to him. The woman says, "Please go ahead and ask your question." King David asks the woman, "Joab told you to do all this, didn't he?" The woman says to the king, "No one can avoid answering your questions. Yes, it was Joab who told me to do and say all these things. Joab, your servant, did all this to help you look at the situation with your son, Absalom, in a different way. You have wisdom like an angel of God, so you know everything happening in the land!"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the wise woman, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am relieved that I finally could talk to the king about Joab and how Joab told me to say all these things. It was hard to pretend for so long in front of the king; or
- I hope that Joab does not get into trouble because the king realized that this was all Joab's idea; or
- I hope that King David can still somehow listen to my advice and let his son Absalom come home to him.

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I knew that there was something strange about this woman and her stories! This whole time, this woman was only trying to convince me to bring my son, Absalom, home; or
- I am shocked that Joab, my own nephew, the commander of my army, would trick me by sending a woman to talk to me about bringing my son home; or
- I am not surprised that Joab was the one behind all this. Joab has been asking me over and over to let Absalom come home. And this time, Joab even sent someone else to ask for him.

Continue the drama.

Joab comes to talk with King David. King David tells Joab, "I will let you do what you want. Go and bring the young man, Absalom, home." Joab bows down with his face on the ground to show respect to King David. Joab says, "Today I know that you are happy with me, O King, because you finally agreed to do what I asked!"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so happy that my plan worked! I had hoped that the wise woman would be able to convince the king to let Absalom come home, and it worked! or
- This is good news for the kingdom of Israel. Now we will have the future king here in Jerusalem; or
- I hope that King David will be able to talk with his son, Absalom, and forgive Absalom for what Absalom did.

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I made a vow by the name of Yahweh, my God, that I would protect that woman's son. So I must also have the same kind of compassion for my own son. I must let Absalom come home; or
- I know that Joab has been looking forward to this day for a long time. I hope Joab is happy that his plan worked. I resent Joab for tricking me into letting Absalom come home; or
- I am still angry at Absalom for what he did. I will let Absalom come home, but I will not forgive him.

Continue the drama.

Joab goes to Geshur and brings Absalom back to Jerusalem. The king says that Absalom can come home, but Absalom must go live in his own house. The king does not want to see Absalom. Absalom does what King David says. Absalom goes to his own house and does not see King David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad that I could come home to Jerusalem. I hope that my relationship with my father will improve now; or
- I am bitter and angry at my father. Why did my father bring me home if he refuses to see me? I wish that my father had left me alone in Geshur; or
- I thought things would be different if I came home to Jerusalem. But now I see that my father still does not care about me because he made me go to my own home. I need to think of some way to have revenge on my father for sending me into exile and for not welcoming me home.

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Joab and the wise woman convinced me to let Absalom come home, but they cannot convince me to forgive Absalom. I did what Joab and the woman wanted me to do, but I refuse to see Absalom.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:12–24 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The woman asks the **king** if she can say something else to him. This time, the woman calls the king, "My **lord** the king." It was common to call someone "lord" if they had authority over you. People often called the king "lord." Translate lord and king the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on lord and king, refer to the Master Glossary.

The woman asks why the king did this to the people of **God**. "The people of God" is another way to talk about Israel, or the people of Israel. The woman wants to know why King David did not bring back his banished son. A person who is banished is someone whom the leader of the country does not allow to return to their home country. Use the same general word for God as you have used in previous passages. God is in the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate **banished** in this passage? If you have already translated this idea, translate banished in the same way as you have in other parts of the Old Testament. Pause this audio here.

The woman says that she is David's **servant**. Use the same word or phrase for servant as you have used previously, and remember that servant is in the Master Glossary.

The woman hopes that David will agree to **rescue** her and her son from the **hand**, or power, of the man who wants to kill the woman's son. Use the same description of rescuing someone from someone else's hand or power as you have used in previous passages.

The woman also says that the person who wants to kill her living son also wants to cut her and her son off from the inheritance that God gave to them. In this passage, inheritance probably means the land that God promised to give to his people. Inheritance could also mean the Israelite people themselves.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate **inheritance** in this passage? Translate inheritance the same as you have in other parts of the Old Testament. For more information on inheritance, refer to heir in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The woman compares King David to an **angel**, or messenger, of God because King David can understand the difference between good and **evil**. Evil is the opposite of good. Translate evil the same as you have in previous

passages. Translate "angel from God" the same as you have in other parts of the Old Testament. For more information on evil and angel, refer to evil and angel in the Master Glossary.

The woman asks that **Yahweh**, David's God, be with David. Use the same word for Yahweh here as you have previously, and see the Master Glossary for more information about Yahweh.

The woman says that David has **wisdom** from God. Use the same word or phrase for wisdom as you used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about wisdom.

Joab bows down to King David, and Joab also **blesses** the king. Translate bless the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on bless, refer to the Master Glossary.

Joab goes to Geshur to get David's son, Absalom. Joab brings Absalom back to Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the most important city in Israel, and it is where King David and his family live. Absalom used to live in Jerusalem before Absalom fled to Geshur three years in the past.

Stop here as a group and look again at a map of Jerusalem and the likely location of Geshur, if needed.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 14:12–24

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 14:25–33

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 14:25–33 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:25–33 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:25–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

The previous two passages were a two-part story. In the first part, Joab sent a wise woman from Tekoa to talk with King David. The wise woman told King David a story about her two sons. In the second part of the story, the woman asked David why he did not bring his son Absalom home to Jerusalem. At the end of the story, King

David told Joab to bring Absalom home from Geshur, where Absalom was in exile. Absalom returned home, but King David did not see Absalom. Now, two years have passed since Absalom came back to Jerusalem. Absalom still has not seen King David. Absalom tries to find a way to see his father, the king.

As this story begins, we learn more about Absalom. Absalom is handsome. Absalom has long, thick hair, and everyone admires him. Everyone in all of Israel knows that Absalom is the most handsome man in all the land. Remember that Absalom's father, King David, is also handsome, and Absalom's sister, Tamar, is beautiful. Absalom is perfect, from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. Another way to say this is that Absalom is physically perfect in every way. Absalom has no flaws or blemishes in his body.

Absalom also has very long hair. During Absalom's time, some men grew long hair because of a Nazarite vow, like Samson. It is unlikely that Absalom himself was a Nazarite, but he probably grew his hair long to show his power and attractive appearance. Some people think it is important to know that Absalom had long hair because Absalom's death in a later story is related to his long hair. Absalom normally cut or shaved his hair from time to time because it was so heavy. This probably means that Absalom cut his hair about once a year. It is possible that Absalom only cut off most of his hair, or maybe he shaved all of his hair off.

Absalom weighed his hair when he cut it, and it weighed 200 shekels, or more than 2 kilos. A shekel was a way that people measured the weight of something, and there were different standards that showed exactly how much a shekel was. These shekels are not the same as the coins called shekels because people did not start to use coin shekels until much later. To measure his hair, Absalom used the standard weight of a shekel that King David set. It was unusual for hair to weigh 200 shekels. Some people think the storyteller exaggerated how much Absalom's hair weighed.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about beauty in your culture. What kinds of things make a man handsome or a woman beautiful? Describe someone you know who is physically perfect. Pause this audio here.

Also, stop here and discuss this question as a group: Why would a man have long hair in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Absalom has four children. Absalom has three sons, but there are no names for the sons in this story. In a later story, Absalom says he has no sons at all, which might mean that the three sons of Absalom die young. Absalom also has one daughter. Absalom names his daughter Tamar, probably after his sister Tamar. Absalom's daughter Tamar is very beautiful, just like Absalom's sister Tamar is also beautiful.

Absalom lives in Jerusalem for two years after he returns from exile in Geshur. During these two years, Absalom does not see his father, King David, at all. Remember that at the end of the previous story, King David says that he does not want to see Absalom.

After Absalom lives in his house for two years, Absalom sends someone to ask for Joab's help. Absalom wants Joab to see King David. It seems likely that Absalom could not choose to go to King David by himself. Joab refuses to come to see Absalom. Absalom asks Joab again, and Joab refuses again. It is surprising that Joab does not want to help Absalom now, after Joab was the one who brought Absalom back to Jerusalem from his exile in Geshur.

Absalom decides to do anything he can to get Joab's attention. Absalom tells his servants to go set Joab's field on fire. Joab's field was next to Absalom's field, and there was barley in Joab's field. A field is a place where people grow crops for food. These fields were probably somewhere outside of Jerusalem. Barley is one of the common crops of grain that people grew during Absalom and Joab's time. It is possible the barley was still growing in the field, or maybe people had already cut the barley, but it was still sitting in the field.

Stop here and look at a picture that has a field with barley in it as a group. Pause this audio here.

Absalom hopes that if the servants burn Joab's field of barley, Joab will finally come talk to Absalom. It is possible Absalom also wants to hurt Joab because Joab refused to come help Absalom, and it was shameful and insulting in Absalom's culture to refuse a request. The servants go to Joab's barley field, and Absalom's servants set the field on fire. A whole field of barley was worth a lot of money, and there were laws in the law of Moses that said Absalom must pay money back to Joab for the destruction of Joab's field.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about a time someone you know did something to pay back a wrong that someone else did to them. What did that person do? Why was it important for the person to pay back the wrong that happened to them? Pause this audio here.

Some people think there is extra information at the end of this part of the story about Joab's servants. The extra information says that Joab's servants came to Joab wearing torn clothing, and they told Joab that Absalom's servants burned Joab's field of barley. This information is not necessary to understand the story, but it does show that someone told Joab about his burned field.

Joab finally goes to Absalom's house to ask Absalom why his servants set Joab's barley field on fire. Joab knows that Absalom told his servants to set fire to Joab's field. Joab is angry about his field, and this seems more important to him than whether Absalom and King David have a good relationship.

Absalom reminds Joab that Joab did not reply to any of Absalom's messages. Absalom wanted Joab to come to visit him so that Absalom could send Joab with a message to King David. The message that Absalom wanted Joab to take to King David is this: "Why did you bring me home to Jerusalem? I think it would be better if I were still in Geshur, rather than being in Jerusalem and not able to see my father and not able to have my father's forgiveness!"

Absalom also tells Joab that he wants to see his father, the king. Absalom says that if he is guilty of anything, his father should kill him. Absalom thinks it would be better to die than to live without his father's forgiveness. It is hard to understand why Absalom says, "If I am guilty," because we know that Absalom killed his brother, Amnon. Maybe Absalom thinks that when he killed his brother, it was not a sin because it was to pay back for when Amnon raped Absalom's sister, Tamar. It is possible that Absalom is exaggerating when he says he wants to die if he is guilty.

After Joab and Absalom talk at Absalom's house, Joab goes to King David. Joab tells King David what Absalom said. It is possible that Joab only tells King David the exact message, "Why have I come from Geshur? It would be better for me if I were still there." Or maybe Joab tells the king everything that Absalom said to Joab.

King David tells Absalom to come to see him. When Absalom arrives at the royal court of King David, Absalom bows down with his face on the ground in front of his father, the king. This was common for people to do during Absalom's time when they were in the presence of a king. It does not necessarily show that Absalom loves or respects his father, the king.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you do when you meet an important leader, like the leader of a clan or tribe, or a king? Pause this audio here.

Absalom gets up from the ground, and then King David kisses Absalom. A kiss is a sign of love or a way to greet people. This probably means that David was happy to see his son. This kiss does not show that King David wants Absalom to be the king after him, however. It is possible that while Absalom was in exile, David made his next son in line, Adonijah, the heir. The heir is the next person to become king after King David dies.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: If you had a conflict or problem with someone else, what does one person do to show they are now happy with the other person? Examples could be a hug, a kiss, a handshake, giving a gift, or saying something specific. Pause this audio here.

As the story ends, Absalom and David finally see each other. Remember that David made an oath to Yahweh when he talked with the Tekoan woman that he would not let any harm come to her son. This oath also included protection for his own son Absalom, which is probably why David does not kill Absalom to pay for the murder of his brother, Amnon.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:25-33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: Everyone in Israel thinks Absalom is the most handsome man in the land of Israel. Absalom has long hair. Absalom also has three sons, and a daughter named Tamar.

In the second scene: Absalom lives in Jerusalem for two years without seeing King David. Absalom asks Joab twice to send Absalom to King David, but two times, Joab refuses to help Absalom.

In the third scene: Absalom tells his servants to set a fire in Joab's barley field. Absalom's servants do what Absalom tells them to do.

In the fourth scene: Joab comes to Absalom's house and asks why Absalom's servants burned Joab's field. Absalom tells Joab that Joab did not listen to Absalom's messages. Absalom asks again if Joab can take Absalom to see King David.

In the fifth scene: Joab tells King David the message from Absalom. King David asks Absalom to come to him. Absalom comes and bows down before King David, and David kisses Absalom.

The characters in this passage are:

- All the people in Israel
- Absalom
- Absalom's three sons
- Absalom's daughter, Tamar
- Joab
- Absalom's servants
- And King David

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that in the previous stories, Joab sent a wise woman to King David to talk with the king. The wise woman convinced King David to let Absalom come home. Joab brought Absalom back from Geshur. Absalom is now home in Jerusalem, but King David still does not want to see Absalom. In this current story, we learn the next part of the story about the father, King David, and his son, Absalom.

In the original language, the first scene begins with a word to show that this is a new section of the story between David and Absalom. Absalom and David are finally in the same city of Jerusalem, but they still do not have peace with each other.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story that has several different parts. Pay attention to how you start each new part of the story. How will you start this passage to show it is a new section of the story about David and Absalom? Pause this audio here.

There are three main parts of the first scene. First, we hear about Absalom's handsome appearance. Then, we hear about how Absalom has long, thick hair that Absalom cuts once a year. Finally, there is a description of Absalom's four children.

Absalom is a very handsome man. All of the people in Israel think that no one else is as handsome as Absalom. People admire and praise Absalom for being so handsome. Absalom does not have a single flaw or problem with his body in any way. Absalom is perfect from the bottom of his feet to the top of his head. Another way to say this is that Absalom is perfect from the top to the bottom, meaning the top of his head to the bottom of his feet. In the original language, it describes two opposite parts of Absalom and shows that everything between his feet and his head is completely flawless. Physically, Absalom is a perfect man.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what do you say to describe a person's appearance as completely or totally beautiful, handsome, or ugly? Pause this audio here.

Remember that Absalom grows his hair out very long. Absalom's hair is also very heavy, so Absalom has to cut his hair about once a year. Absalom also weighs his hair. The hair weighs 200 shekels according to the standard weight of a shekel that King David set. Remember that 200 shekels is about 2 kilograms.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the weight of Absalom's hair? Would it be best to say it weighs 200 shekels, or 2 kilos? Pause this audio here.

In the original language, it says that "when Absalom would cut his hair, he would weigh it." In the middle of this sentence, there is extra information about how Absalom usually cut his hair every year when it got too heavy for him. We do not know exactly how Absalom cut his hair. It is possible that Absalom cut off part of his hair, or maybe Absalom shaved off all of his hair. It might be easier to understand in your language if you first describe Absalom's long hair and how he had to cut it once a year when it got too heavy for him. Then, you could describe how Absalom weighed his hair and how much it weighed.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the easiest way to translate the section of the passage about Absalom's hair? What should go first? Pause this audio here.

The final part of the first scene describes Absalom's family. The story does not tell information about Absalom's wife, but it does say that Absalom has three sons and one daughter. There are no names for Absalom's sons, maybe because the three sons died young. The name of Absalom's daughter is Tamar, which is the same name as Absalom's sister, Tamar. Remember that Absalom's sister Tamar probably still lives with Absalom in his house because she came to live there after her half-brother, Amnon, raped her. Absalom's daughter named Tamar is very beautiful, just like her father's sister, Tamar.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you describe a man who is physically attractive? How do you describe a woman who is physically attractive? How will you translate the part of the first scene where it says that Absalom is handsome, and the part at the end of the first scene where it says that Absalom's daughter, Tamar, is beautiful? Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, Absalom lives in Jerusalem in his own house for two years. Remember that this is the same amount of time that Absalom waited to kill Amnon. Absalom does not see his father, King David, during these two years back in Jerusalem.

Next, Absalom tries to ask Joab for help. Absalom sends someone to Joab. Absalom wants Joab to go see King David with a message from Absalom, but Joab refuses to help Absalom. It is surprising that Joab does not help Absalom since Joab is the one who wanted Absalom to come home from exile in Geshur, and Joab is the one who brought Absalom back to Jerusalem.

Absalom tries a second time to get Joab to help him, and a second time, Joab refuses to come to see Absalom. Absalom probably feels like Joab is shaming and ignoring Absalom.

In the third scene, Absalom finally does something. Absalom is finished waiting to see his father. Absalom tells his servants to set fire to Joab's field of barley that is near Absalom's field. Remember that barley was a common crop during Joab and Absalom's time. If there is a different word in your language for a crop that is still growing and a crop that is already cut or harvested, choose the word here that says the barley is still growing in the field.

Stop here and look at a picture of a field with barley in it again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

Absalom's servants do what Absalom tells them to do. The servants set fire to Joab's field of barley. Remember that a field of barley was worth a lot of money, and that the law of Moses said Joab could ask Absalom to pay back for the field that burned.

In the fourth scene, we see that Absalom gets what he wants from Joab. Joab finally comes to talk with Absalom. The reason that Joab comes to talk with Absalom is because of the fire in Joab's field. Joab asks Absalom, "Why did your servants set my field on fire?" It is also possible to translate this part of the passage without directly quoting Joab: "Then Joab went to Absalom's house and asked him why Absalom's servants had set fire to Joab's field."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is best in your language? Does it sound more natural to translate this as a direct quote of what Joab says, or as a description of what Joab says? Pause this audio here.

Then, Absalom talks to Joab. Absalom starts with a word that shows he wants Joab to pay careful attention to what Absalom is about to say to Joab. This might be translated as "Look!" Absalom first reminds Joab that Absalom sent messages to Joab to ask for help. Absalom wanted Joab to bring a message from Absalom to King David. Remember that the message Absalom wanted to send to King David was to ask the king why he brought Absalom home from Geshur to Jerusalem. Remember that Geshur is the place where Absalom lived in exile for the past three years before David had Joab bring Absalom back to Jerusalem. Geshur was to the east and northeast of the Sea of Galilee.

Stop here and look at a map of Jerusalem and the likely location of Geshur as a group. Pause this audio here.

Absalom also wanted to tell his father, the king, that it would have been better if Absalom had stayed in exile in Geshur. Remember that Absalom is angry. Absalom does not understand why his father brought him home if his father does not want to see Absalom or forgive him.

After the message that Absalom says he wanted Joab to give to King David, Absalom also says two more things to Joab. First, Absalom says that now he wants to see the king's face. This means Absalom wants the king to let Absalom come into his presence. Second, Absalom says that if he is guilty of anything, then the king should kill Absalom because of that guilt. Remember that it is not clear why Absalom does not say he is guilty, because we know that Absalom did kill his brother, Amnon.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you show the difference between the message that Absalom wants Joab to give to King David, and the other things that Absalom says to Joab at the beginning and the end of his speech to Joab? Pause this audio here.

In the fifth scene, Joab goes to King David. Joab tells King David what Absalom said to Joab. Remember that now King David changes his mind. The king sends for his son, Absalom, to come to visit him. Absalom comes and bows down with his face on the ground in front of Absalom's father, King David. Remember, this is a way to show respect and honor to someone in authority.

King David kisses Absalom. It is likely that David kisses Absalom on the cheek, forehead, or beard because this was a common way that male relatives kissed one another during David's time. When David kisses Absalom, this probably shows that David is glad to see Absalom, but it does not mean the problems between Absalom and David are over.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:25–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- All the people in Israel
- Absalom
- Absalom's three sons
- Absalom's daughter, Tamar
- Joab
- Absalom's servants
- And King David

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

All the people in Israel said that Absalom was the most handsome man in Israel. Absalom was perfect from head to toe. Absalom also had long hair that Absalom cut once a year when his hair got too heavy. When Absalom cut his hair, he weighed it. Absalom's hair weighed 200 shekels, according to the standard weight of a shekel that King David set. Absalom also had three sons and one daughter. Absalom's daughter was named Tamar, and she was very beautiful.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing all the people in Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are amazed at how handsome Absalom is! Absalom is perfect! or
- We admire Absalom more than anyone else because Absalom's body is perfect; or
- We are glad that Absalom is back in Jerusalem now and that he is not in exile in Geshur any longer; or
- Absalom's hair is so long! That shows how handsome, strong, and powerful Absalom is.

Also, ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very proud of how handsome I am; or
- I love my long, thick, heavy hair. It shows that I am powerful; or
- No one is like me in all of Israel. The people love me so much that I could probably do anything I want, and people will follow me! or
- I am proud of my three sons and my beautiful daughter, Tamar. My daughter reminds me of my sister, Tamar.

Continue the drama.

Absalom lives in Jerusalem for two years after he returns from exile in Geshur. During these two years, Absalom does not see King David at all. Then, Absalom sends someone to talk with Joab. Absalom wants Joab to give the

king a message for Absalom, but Joab refuses to come to see Absalom. Absalom asks a second time for Joab to come, and Joab refuses for a second time to come to talk with Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I do not understand why Joab will not come to talk with me. Joab wanted me to come home to Jerusalem, so I thought Joab would support me and help me be able to see my father, King David; or
- I feel embarrassed that Joab ignored me twice. That is shameful, and I have to do something to hurt Joab now, so Joab knows that I am angry with him; or
- I am surprised that Joab will not at least come talk to me. I only want to see my father, the king. I wish that Joab would come to hear my message to the king.

Also, ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Why does Absalom keep sending me messages? I do not want anything to do with Absalom anymore. I am afraid of King David because I know King David does not want to see Absalom. I wish Absalom would understand that; or
- I do not want to try and fix the problem between King David and his son, Absalom, any longer. I got Absalom back to Jerusalem, and if the king does not want to see his son, that is not my concern; or
- I think that Absalom needs to be patient. If King David wants to see his son, David will send for his son. Until then, Absalom should just wait patiently.

Continue the drama.

Absalom tells his servants that Joab has a field with barley in it. Joab's field is next to Absalom's field. Absalom tells his servants to go to Joab's field and set Joab's field on fire.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I tried to talk to Joab two times, and Joab refused to talk to me. Now I will try to get Joab's attention in a different way; or
- I want my servants to burn Joab's field so that Joab will feel some of the pain that I feel! I want to see my father, the king, and Joab should help me be able to see the king! or
- I do not like to destroy another person's property, but this is necessary, even if I have to pay for it. Joab needs to listen to me, and this is the only way to make him listen.

Also, ask the people playing Absalom's servants, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We do not understand why Absalom wants us to burn Joab's field, but we do what Absalom tells us to do because we are his servants; or
- We have known Absalom a long time, and we know how sad he is about not seeing his father, the king. We wish that Absalom would be able to see the king; or
- Maybe burning Joab's field will be a good thing because then Absalom will be able to go see King David; or
- I hope that we do not get into trouble with Joab because we did what Absalom told us to do!

Continue the drama.

Joab comes to Absalom's house. Joab asks Absalom, "Why did you tell your servants to burn my field?" Absalom says to Joab, "I sent you a message to ask you to come and talk to me. I wanted you to come to me so I could give you a message to my father, the king." The message that Absalom wants Joab to give to King David is this: "Why did I come here from Geshur? I should have stayed in Geshur instead of coming home!" Absalom also tells Joab, "I want to see the king! If the king says I am guilty, then he can kill me."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am angry at Absalom for burning my field of barley. That field was worth a lot of money! or
- I think that Absalom is immature. I ignored Absalom when he tried to get me to come see him, and so he destroyed my field! Absalom is acting like a child; or
- Absalom wants me to bring his message to King David, so I will bring it to the king. We will see what happens and whether King David wants to see his son Absalom now.

Also, ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am angry at Joab for ignoring my messages and for not helping me see my father; or
- I am angry at my father, the king, for refusing to see me for two years. I wish I were back in exile rather than here without my father's forgiveness; or
- I would rather die than remain in this painful separation from my father. I want my father either to punish me with death or finally agree to see me and accept me again.

Continue the drama.

Joab goes to King David. Joab tells King David what Absalom said to Joab. King David asks for Absalom to come to see him. Absalom comes to see his father, King David. Absalom bows down with his face on the ground. Then, King David kisses Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am surprised that David agreed for Absalom to come to see him. I remember the king said he did not want to see his son; or
- I am surprised that King David kissed his son! Does this mean that the problem is over between David and Absalom? or
- I am worried that there is still a problem between Absalom and David. Absalom was very angry and bitter, and I do not think that one kiss changes that bitterness toward his father.

Also, ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy to see my father; or
- I am still very angry at my father for not letting me come home for three years, and then not letting me see him for two more years; or
- My father still does not understand why I had to kill Amnon. Amnon raped my sister, Tamar! Tamar is also David's father, so why does David not care about her? My father should understand why I had to kill Amnon to pay for Amnon's rape of my sister; or
- I have a plan to hurt my father and make him suffer in the same way that I have been suffering for the past five years.

Also, ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad to see my son Absalom because it has been so long since I saw him; or
- I made an oath to Yahweh that I would protect the Tekoan woman's son, and that also includes protecting my own son. I wish I had not made the oath, but I did, so I cannot punish my son Absalom by killing him; or
- I hope that things improve between Absalom and me now.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 14:25–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

In all of **Israel**, no man was as handsome as Absalom. Absalom was one of the sons of King David. Israel is the name of the land where the Israelites lived. Translate Israel the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom weighed his hair after he cut it off. The weight of Absalom's hair was 200 shekels. A shekel is about 11.4 grams, so the weight of Absalom's hair was about 2 kilograms. People used a standard shekel weight to measure the weight of things.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about how you will translate **shekel**. Translate shekel the same as you have in other parts of the Old Testament. For more information on shekel, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Absalom used the **king's** standard to weigh his hair. A king is someone who rules over a city or a territory. Translate king the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom tells his **servants** to burn Joab's field of barley. Servants are people who do work for someone else. Barley is a kind of grain that people grow for food. Translate servant the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on servant, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here as a group and look again at a picture of a field with barley in it, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Also, stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about how you will translate "**field with barley in it**." Pause this audio here.

Absalom **bows** down to his father, David. Use the same word or phrase for bow as you have used in previous passages. Bow is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 14:25–33

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 15:1–12

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 15:1–12 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:1–12 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:1–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, we learn that everyone in Israel says Absalom is the most handsome man in Israel. Absalom sends his servants to burn Joab's field in order to convince Joab to help Absalom see King David. Finally, Absalom goes to see King David. King David kisses Absalom. Now, Absalom plans to take over the kingdom of Israel from his father, King David. Absalom wins the affection of the people, and four years later, Absalom declares himself king at Hebron.

Remember that Absalom was in Jerusalem for two years before he was able to see his father, King David. Now, more time has passed since Absalom saw King David. Absalom gets a chariot and horses. A chariot is a vehicle with two wheels. Horses pull the chariot, and often kings use chariots. Horses are common animals that pull chariots or that people ride.

Stop here and look at a picture of a chariot and a picture of horses as a group. Pause this audio here.

Absalom also has 50 men run ahead of him to prepare the way for him. A group of 50 men was the normal size of a group in the military during Absalom's time. These 50 men are like a royal guard for Absalom because they protect and serve Absalom. It is likely that Absalom wants people to see his chariot, horses, and royal guard so that people will think Absalom looks like a king.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about what a king or ruler does in your culture so that everyone knows that they are a king or ruler. Pause this audio here.

Absalom also gets up early every morning. Absalom goes from his house in Jerusalem to stand by the road that goes through the city gate. The city gate is the main opening in the walls around the city of Jerusalem. People shut the gates at night and opened the gates in the morning. All the people came through the city gate when they came to Jerusalem to see King David.

Stop here and look at a picture of a city gate. Pause this audio here.

Absalom asks the people coming into Jerusalem, "What city are you from?" This is the kind of question a king or superior person would ask an inferior person. The people coming to Jerusalem have cases or complaints that they want to bring to the king for help. The people answer Absalom that they are from one of the 12 tribes, or families, of Israel. Then, Absalom tells the people that their claims are good and right. Absalom wants the people to feel comfortable with him and to feel confident that Absalom will get justice for them in their problems. Absalom does not act as a judge for their cases.

In fact, Absalom also tells the people that there is no representative from the king to listen to their complaints. This probably shows a problem with King David's rule because there should be someone who will listen to the people's complaints. Absalom wants the people to feel like Absalom is on their side and that Absalom is willing to help them, even if King David is not. Absalom asks, "Who will make me judge in the land of Israel?" Absalom does not want an answer to this question. Absalom is trying to show that he wishes he were the judge. Absalom thinks he would be able to get justice for the people. Absalom wants to win the loyalty of the people by showing that Absalom would be a better king for them than his father, King David.

When a person tries to bow down in front of Absalom, Absalom does not let the person bow down. Absalom puts out his hand instead and treats the person like an equal. This is unusual for Absalom's time because usually a superior did not reach out his hand to someone inferior to him. Absalom shows the people respect, and Absalom even hugs the people and kisses them. This was a normal way for people to greet each other as equals. Absalom wants the people to think that he respects them and cares about them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How does a person in authority greet a person under their authority in your community? When would a person in authority greet someone differently than usual? Tell a story about a time when someone in authority greeted someone in an unusual way. Why did that person do that? Pause this audio here.

Absalom acts like this for all the people in Israel who come to Jerusalem with their problems. Absalom steals the hearts of all the people of Israel, which means that Absalom brings the Israelites over to his side secretly without King David knowing about it. Before, people loved King David, but now, Absalom steals that affection for himself. Now, everyone in Israel is more loyal to Absalom than to King David. It is most likely that the people who love Absalom are from outside of Jerusalem because it would have been hard for Absalom to do these things without his father, King David, hearing about it.

Four years later, Absalom goes to talk to King David. Some versions say 40 years instead of 4 years, but 4 years is most likely correct because it is not likely that Absalom took 40 years to plan to take the kingdom from his father. Also, King David only ruled for 40 years.

Absalom asks King David politely if he can go to Hebron to keep a vow that Absalom made to Yahweh when Absalom was living in Geshur.

Stop here and look at a map of Geshur in Aram, Jerusalem, and Hebron as a group. Pause this audio here.

A vow is a promise that someone makes to Yahweh, and the law of Moses says that a person who makes a vow to Yahweh must keep their vow to Yahweh. Absalom says the vow he made while he was in Geshur in Aram was this: "If Yahweh lets me return to Jerusalem, I will serve, or worship, Yahweh." Most likely, Absalom had told Yahweh that he would worship Yahweh in Hebron. Remember that Absalom was in exile for two years in Geshur after Absalom killed his half-brother, Amnon. Geshur is where Absalom's grandfather lived. Aram is the area of the current country of Syria.

We know from the next part of the passage that Absalom is lying to King David. Absalom does not plan to go worship Yahweh at Hebron. Absalom plans to do something else at Hebron. But King David does not know this. It is surprising that King David is not suspicious about Absalom's request because Absalom also asked if Amnon could come with him to Baal Hazor in a previous story, and then Absalom killed Amnon. King David gives Absalom permission to leave Jerusalem and go to Hebron. King David says, "Go in peace," which means "goodbye," or "I hope you have a safe trip to Hebron." Absalom leaves Jerusalem and goes to Hebron.

In the next part of the passage, Absalom sends spies throughout Israel to tell people that Absalom is king in Hebron. The spies are secret messengers that Absalom sends into all of Israel to see how people all over Israel and Judah are feeling about Absalom. Absalom probably wants to know if the people will support him as the new king. Absalom tells the spies that when they hear the sound of the horn, they should say, "Absalom is king in Hebron!" This does not mean that Absalom is only king in Hebron, but that Absalom is king over all of Israel, with Hebron as his main capital city. The horn is probably the horn of a ram. Another word for a horn is a trumpet. People blew on a horn to send out a signal, or to announce that there is a new king.

Stop here and look at a picture of a horn as a group. Pause this audio here.

It is likely that Absalom chooses Hebron as the new city for his new kingdom because Hebron is where David became king of Israel. Hebron is where King David was the strongest, and now Absalom wants the people to see that Absalom is the strongest at Hebron. It is also possible that many people in Hebron are not happy that King David moved the capital of Israel from Hebron to Jerusalem. Absalom hopes that many people in Hebron will support Absalom as the new king of Israel.

Two hundred men come with Absalom from Jerusalem to Hebron. Absalom invites these men to come with him, but Absalom does not tell the men about his plan to become the new king of Israel. These 200 men are

innocent and do not know anything about Absalom's plan. Now, these 200 men are not in Jerusalem to help David. Absalom took away David's help from David.

Absalom offers sacrifices at Hebron. A sacrifice means killing an animal to offer it to Yahweh in worship. It is most likely that Absalom makes these sacrifices to celebrate becoming the new king of Israel, not to fulfill a vow that Absalom made to Yahweh. While Absalom offers the sacrifices, Absalom also sends for someone to go and get Ahithophel the Gilonite and bring him to Hebron. Ahithophel is King David's advisor, and Ahithophel lives in Giloh.

Stop here and look at a map that includes Giloh and Hebron as a group. Pause this audio here.

It is likely that Ahithophel already knows about Absalom's plans and that Ahithophel is ready to join Absalom at Hebron. As the story ends, the conspiracy to make Absalom the new king continues to grow. A conspiracy is when people come together for an evil purpose. More and more people start to follow Absalom as their new king instead of King David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Review all of the ways in this passage that Absalom successfully gained the favor of the people. Then, talk about a time someone took power from the rulers in your community. How did it happen? How did the new leader gain followers and take power from the ruler?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:1–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: Absalom gets a chariot and horses, and 50 men to run ahead of his chariot. Absalom sits at the city gate each day to hear the complaints of the people of Israel. Absalom treats the people of Israel with respect. Absalom wins the loyalty of the people of Israel.

In the second scene: Absalom asks King David for permission to go keep a vow to Yahweh at Hebron. King David gives Absalom permission to go to Hebron to keep the vow.

In the third scene: Two hundred men go with Absalom from Jerusalem to Hebron. Absalom sends spies throughout Israel to tell people to declare that Absalom is king when they hear the horn.

In the fourth scene: Absalom sends for Ahithophel, David's advisor, to come to Hebron from the town of Giloh. Absalom's conspiracy keeps growing.

The characters in this passage are:

- Absalom
- 50 men who ran ahead of Absalom's chariot
- People of Israel
- King David
- Yahweh
- Spies for Absalom
- 200 men from Jerusalem
- And Ahithophel from the town of Giloh

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that in the previous story, Absalom was in Jerusalem for two years before his father agreed to see Absalom. King David finally agreed to see his son Absalom. King David kissed Absalom, and it seemed like David and Absalom might have a better relationship.

In the first scene of this story, more time has passed since Absalom first saw his father, King David. It is important to show that some time has passed since the previous passage, but we are not sure how long.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you show that some time has passed since the previous story? Pause this audio here.

In the first and second scenes, Absalom does several things to show that he is the best choice for the next king of the people of Israel. First, Absalom gets a chariot and horses, and 50 men to run ahead of Absalom like royal guards. Absalom wants to look like a king. It is not clear if Absalom is the next in line to become king after King David, or maybe Adonijah is next in line to be king. Adonijah does the same thing with a chariot, horses, and royal guards when he tries to become king later on.

Stop here and look at a picture of a chariot and a picture of horses again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

Absalom also acts like a king. It is important to translate Absalom's actions in this scene as things that Absalom did over and over again. This shows that Absalom made a habit of standing by the city gate, and a habit of talking to the people of Israel and treating them with respect. Absalom stands by the city gate early every morning to talk to the people who come to Jerusalem to see King David. Absalom tells the people that he would take care of their problems better than King David can take care of their problems.

The people brought problems to King David that were complaints, or things people needed judgments on. In the original language, the storyteller says "a complaint and a judgment." Together, these two words describe the same idea. It means that people brought any kind of complaint to King David in Jerusalem so that he could use his authority to fix the problem.

Absalom tells the people their complaints are good and right. In the original language, Absalom says, "good and straight." Absalom tells the people what they want to hear, that Absalom will get the justice that people need for their problems.

Absalom also tells the people that no one from King David's government will listen to them. This is another way that Absalom tries to get the people of Israel to love Absalom more than King David. Absalom wants to become a judge in Israel. Remember, a judge is someone who makes decisions about who is right when people have a problem. Absalom asks the question, "Who will make me judge in the land of Israel?" Remember that Absalom does not want an answer to this question. It might be better to have this as a statement instead of a question: "I wish someone would make me judge in the land of Israel!"

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about whether your group wants to translate this as a question, "Who will make me judge in the land of Israel?" or a statement, "I wish someone would make me judge in the land of Israel." Pause this audio here.

Remember that Absalom wants the power to be a judge in Israel, but it is not clear that Absalom actually wanted to help the people of Israel with their problems. Absalom might only want the people to be loyal to him so that Absalom can later become the new king instead of his father, King David.

Absalom does not let a person bow down in front of him. Instead, Absalom treats the person like an equal and puts out his hand to the person. Absalom hugs and kisses the person. In all of these ways, Absalom steals the affection and loyalty away from King David.

The first scene ends with a summary statement that people in Israel love Absalom more than they love King David. It is possible to translate this part as "Absalom steals the affection of the people of Israel," or to translate it that now people in Israel are more loyal to Absalom than to King David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the idea that Absalom "steals the hearts of the people of Israel?" Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, Absalom goes to talk to King David. This scene happens four years after Absalom comes back to Jerusalem from his exile in Geshur. Absalom speaks politely to King David. Absalom asks if he can leave Jerusalem to go to Hebron to keep a vow Absalom made to Yahweh. Absalom also calls himself David's servant as a way to show King David respect.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you make a polite request to someone who is in authority over you in your community? What is the best way to translate Absalom's request to King David here? Pause this audio here.

In the original language, it says that Absalom asks if he can repay his vow to Yahweh. Repay does not mean money here. Instead, it means that Absalom wants to complete or fulfill the vow, or promise, that he made to Yahweh. When a person completes a vow to Yahweh, Yahweh releases the person from the vow. Absalom made this promise while he was in exile in Geshur for two years. Remember that we do not know if Absalom actually made a vow to Yahweh or not, but we do know that Absalom has something else planned for after David gives Absalom permission to go to Hebron.

Stop here and look at a map of Geshur in Aram, Jerusalem, and Hebron as a group. Pause this audio here.

Remember also that David tells Absalom to "go in peace," which can mean "have a safe journey."

Also, stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you say goodbye to someone who is going on a journey or trip? Pause this audio here.

In the third scene, remember that now Absalom is in Hebron. From Hebron, Absalom sends spies throughout the land of Israel. Absalom also brings 200 men with him from Jerusalem to Hebron. It might be more natural in this scene to first include the part where Absalom brings 200 men with him, because this happens before Absalom sends out the spies throughout the land. Then, the next part of the scene would be where the spies declare Absalom is king in Hebron.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the most natural way to translate this scene of the passage? Would it be best to include the part where Absalom sends out spies throughout the land first or last in this scene? Pause this audio here.

Absalom sends out spies in order to see if people in Israel want Absalom to become the next king of Israel. It is possible that some spies talked with people who did not want Absalom to become the next king, and then those spies would probably not declare that Absalom is king in Hebron when they hear the sound of the horn. Absalom tells the spies they will hear the horn, and when they hear it, they should say, "Absalom is king in Hebron!" It is also possible to translate this part of the passage in this way: "Absalom tells the spies that they should say Absalom is king in Hebron as soon as they hear the sound of the horn." In those days, people often sent signals from one city to the next by blowing horns loudly so that everyone could hear them. Sometimes the horns were warnings, and sometimes they were instructions.

In the next part of this scene, the storyteller describes that Absalom had invited 200 men to come with him from Jerusalem to Hebron. This probably happened while Absalom was still in Jerusalem, and these men had come with Absalom to Hebron. These 200 men did not know anything about Absalom's plan to declare himself the king of Israel.

In the fourth scene, while Absalom offers sacrifices at Hebron, Absalom sends someone to bring Ahithophel the Gilonite to Hebron from his town of Giloh. Remember that Ahithophel was King David's advisor. Giloh is probably one of the towns in the Judean hill country, and it is close to Hebron.

Stop here and look at a map of Giloh and Hebron again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

Finally, as the final scene ends, we hear another summary statement about the success of Absalom's plans to become the new king of Israel. More and more people join Absalom, and Absalom's conspiracy continues to grow and become more popular with the people.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:1–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Absalom
- 50 men who ran ahead of Absalom's chariot
- People of Israel
- King David
- Yahweh
- Spies for Absalom
- 200 men from Jerusalem
- And Ahithophel from the town of Giloh

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

This story happens sometime after the previous story, when Absalom saw King David. Absalom gets a chariot and horses, and also 50 men who run ahead of Absalom. These 50 men are like royal guards for Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I deserve to be treated like a king because I should be the next king after my father, King David; or
- I hope that people will think of me as someone powerful and like a king when they see my chariot, my horses, and my royal guard; or
- I am angry at my father, King David, for how he treated me by refusing to see me for two years. I have a plan to take the kingdom away from my father!

Also, ask the people playing the people of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are really impressed by young Absalom. Absalom is so handsome, and now he has these horses, a chariot, and a royal guard! or
- Maybe we should start following Absalom. Absalom seems to be powerful, and he looks like a king; or
- We feel that David did not treat Absalom fairly. We feel bad for Absalom and wish that King David would be kinder to Absalom.

Continue the drama.

Absalom gets up early every morning. Absalom goes to stand next to the road that goes through the city gate of Jerusalem. Any people of Israel who come to Jerusalem pass through the city gate. When Absalom comes to Jerusalem, Absalom talks to each person who comes to bring a complaint to King David. Absalom asks the person, "What town are you from?" The person answers that they are from one of the tribes of Israel. Absalom says to the person that the person's claims are good and right, but there is no one from King David to hear the person's claims. Absalom also says, "If only I were the judge in the land of Israel!" Absalom says that if Absalom were the judge, everyone would get justice.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I hope that the people feel comfortable with me, and that they know I am on their side. I want all the people of Israel to like me; or
- It is King David's fault that there is no one from his government to hear the complaints of these people. I am just trying to seem helpful to them! or
- I hope that the people trust me as a better judge than King David. If I can win the people's loyalty and love, then it will be easier for me to take the kingdom from my father; or
- I do not actually care about these people and their problems. I want to win the people's loyalty so I can become the next king and take the kingdom away from my father.

Also, ask the people playing the people of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- Absalom is so kind to ask about where we are from and to care about our problems. Absalom cares more about us than King David does; or
- We wish that Absalom could become the judge in the land. It seems like Absalom would fight for justice for us more than King David does; or
- Why does King David not sit by the city gate like Absalom? King David should listen to our complaints like Absalom does. Maybe it is time for a new king.

Continue the drama.

When the people of Israel come to bow down before Absalom, Absalom does not let the people bow down. Instead, Absalom puts out his hand to people to show them respect. Absalom also hugs and kisses the people. Absalom acts like this for all of the Israelites who come to King David for justice. Absalom steals the love of the people of Israel, so now the people of Israel love Absalom more than they love King David.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the people of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We definitely like Absalom better than King David now! Absalom treats us like equals; or
- We feel like Absalom honors and respects us because Absalom puts his hand out to us and hugs and kisses us. Absalom does not treat us like his servants; or
- We are ready to follow Absalom anywhere. Absalom seems like a good leader.

Continue the drama.

Four years after Absalom is in Jerusalem, Absalom asks King David for a favor. Absalom asks if he can go to Hebron to keep a vow that he made to Yahweh while he was in Geshur in Aram. The vow was that if Yahweh returns Absalom back to Jerusalem, Absalom will go worship Yahweh in Hebron. King David tells Absalom, "Go in peace." So, Absalom goes to Hebron.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want to do anything I can to help restore my relationship with my son Absalom, so it is ok if Absalom goes to Hebron; or
- I wonder why Absalom did not want to keep his vow to Yahweh sooner than now; or
- I do not care what Absalom does. I am still very sad about Amnon's death, and I am still angry at Absalom for killing Amnon.

Also, ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad that my father gave me permission to leave Jerusalem and go to Hebron. Everything is going according to my plans; or
- I am surprised that my father is not suspicious about my request. It seems like my father should be more concerned about my requests after I killed Amnon last time, when I asked if Amnon could come with me to Baal Hazor; or
- I have no plans to fulfill any vows to Yahweh at Hebron. My plan is to become the next king of Israel!

Continue the drama.

Absalom sends out spies to the tribes of Israel. Absalom tells the spies that as soon as they hear the sound of the horn, the spies should say, "Absalom is king in Hebron!"

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the people of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We want Absalom to be our new king! or
- We are glad that Absalom is the king. Absalom looks like a king, and he acts like a king, too. It is time for a new king; or
- We are worried about what will happen when King David hears that Absalom declared himself king in Hebron. Will people fight a battle or a war?

Also, ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so happy that I am finally the king! or
- I am glad that my father is not the king anymore. I have the support of the people, and I deserve to be the next king; or
- I am ready for whatever my father does to try to stop me. There is no way my father can stop what is going to happen now.

Continue the drama.

When Absalom came to Hebron, Absalom brought 200 men with him from Jerusalem. These 200 men did not know anything about Absalom's plan to become king in Hebron.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the 200 men from Jerusalem, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are shocked that Absalom is saying he is the new king. We had no idea that Absalom was planning to take the kingdom from his father; or
- We are worried that King David will think we support Absalom in this. We are not sure if we support Absalom or King David now, and it looks bad for us that we are here in Hebron with Absalom; or
- We do not support Absalom as the new king! We want King David to remain the king of Israel.

Continue the drama.

Absalom offers sacrifices in Hebron. While Absalom offers the sacrifices, Absalom sends for someone to bring David's counselor, Ahithophel, to Hebron from his hometown of Giloh. Absalom's conspiracy keeps growing, and more and more people start to follow Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ahithophel of Giloh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am ready to serve Absalom as the new king of Israel; or
- I knew about Absalom's plans to become king, and I support Absalom; or
- I am loyal to King David, and I do not know what to do now. If I refuse to come to Absalom, then what will happen to me?

Also, ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad to make these sacrifices in my own honor on my first day of being king in Israel; or
- My plan is to have my father's closest advisor come to support me. This will make my father very sad and alone, and that is my goal. I want my father to feel the pain that I felt while I was in exile in Geshur; or
- I am glad that my plans are working out how I want. I am ready for whatever happens next.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:1–12 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Absalom is the son of King David. Absalom gets a **chariot** and **horses** and 50 men to run ahead of Absalom. Translate chariot and horses the same way as you have in previous passages.

Every morning, Absalom gets up early and stands by the side of the **road** that leads to the city gate. A road is a path that many people and animals use to walk and ride on. Roads go from cities and towns to other cities and towns. Translate road the same as you have in previous passages.

A city **gate** is at the entrance to a city. People made announcements at the gate, and sometimes there were markets at the gate to buy things. The gate swung open and shut from the posts, and gates often had wood bars or metal on them to make them stronger. Translate gate the same as you have in previous passages.

Anyone who came to the city with a complaint for the **king** needed to go through the city gate to go into the city. A king is someone who rules over a city or a territory. In this passage, King David is the king. Translate king the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom asks the person, "What **city** are you from?" Then the person would answer, "Your **servant** is from one of the **tribes of Israel**." A servant is someone who works for another person.

The person is from one of the 12 tribes of Israel. Translate city, servant, and "tribes of Israel" the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on servant and Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom says that he wishes someone would make him the **judge** in the land. Judges decided disputes between Israelites to decide who was guilty or innocent. Translate judge the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on judge, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom says he would give the people **justice**. Justice is when someone treats someone fairly according to the law. Translate justice the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on justice, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom steals the **hearts** of the **Israelites**. The Israelites are the people of Israel. The heart is special language for where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen. Absalom stole the loyalty of the people of Israel. Translate heart and Israelites the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on heart and Israelites, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom asks King David if he can go to **Hebron** to fulfill a vow to **Yahweh**. Yahweh is God's personal name. Hebron is an important city in the Old Testament. Abraham lived in Hebron when people still called the city "Mamre." David also became king at Hebron. Absalom was born in Hebron. Translate Hebron and Yahweh the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on Hebron and Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom's **vow** to Yahweh was a promise to Yahweh. A person who is making a vow is asking God to do something for them. The person is also offering to do something in return. Translate vow the same as you have in previous parts of the Old Testament. For more information on vow, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom vowed to **serve**, or worship, Yahweh at Hebron. Worship means to give honor to Yahweh. In this context, worship means giving sacrifices to Yahweh. Translate "serve" the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on serve, refer to worship in the Master Glossary.

Absalom told Yahweh he would keep his vow if Yahweh brought Absalom back to **Jerusalem** from his exile in Geshur in Aram. Jerusalem is the capital city of Israel. For more information on Jerusalem, refer to the Master Glossary.

David tells Absalom that he can go in **peace**. When people have peace, they have a good relationship with each other. David uses a common blessing to wish Absalom safety and good relationships with people. Use the same word for peace as you have used in previous passages, and see the Master Glossary for more information about peace.

Absalom sends **spies**, or secret messengers, throughout the tribes of Israel. Translate spies the same as you have in previous passages.

Absalom tells the spies that when they hear the sound of the **horn**, they should say, "Absalom is king in Hebron!" People used the horn of an animal, like a ram, to blow into to make a loud noise. Another word for a horn is a

trumpet. People blew on a horn to send out a signal, or to announce that there is a new king. Translate horn the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on horn, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom offers **sacrifices** at Hebron. Sacrifices often include killing an animal and then burning the animal on the altar as a gift to Yahweh. Translate sacrifices the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on sacrifices, refer to the Master Glossary.

Absalom sent for Ahithophel to come to Hebron. Ahithophel was King David's **advisor**. An advisor gives advice to a king. Another word for advisor is counselor. Translate advisor the same as in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 15:1–12

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 15:13–23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 15:13–23 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:13–23 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:13–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, Absalom declared himself the new king of Israel at the city of Hebron. Absalom also brought his father David's advisor, Ahithophel, to Hebron. More and more people started to be loyal to Absalom instead of being loyal to Absalom's father, David.

Now, David hears that the people of Israel are loyal to Absalom. David quickly leaves the city of Jerusalem. David brings his servants, most of the people who live in his house, his guards, and 600 men from Gath with David. David also tells Ittai the Gittite not to come with him, but Ittai decides to come anyway. Many people in Israel weep as they see David's people leave Jerusalem.

A messenger comes to David in Jerusalem. A messenger is someone who reports news or talks about something that happened. It is possible that David himself sent the messenger to see what Absalom was doing at Hebron. Or maybe someone loyal to David was at Hebron and saw that Absalom made himself the new king. The messenger tells David that the men, or people, of Israel are now loyal to Absalom instead of to David. In the original language, the messenger says that the hearts of the men of Israel are now with Absalom. This is similar to how Absalom stole the hearts of the men of Israel in a previous story.

After David hears the message, David immediately makes a plan. David tells his servants that David's household must hurry and leave Jerusalem. David's servants were probably his court officials. David knows they must leave quickly because if Absalom arrives in Jerusalem, Absalom will kill the people in the city of Jerusalem with the sword. A sword is a weapon that people use to kill or injure other people in a battle. David probably also wants to leave Jerusalem so he can have some time to gather David's own followers and his army.

Stop here and look at a picture of a sword as a group. Pause this audio here.

Also, stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time someone in your country or in another country took over the government from another leader. Describe what happened and what the former leader did. Pause this audio here.

David's servants tell David that they will leave the city with King David. The servants, or officials, want to do whatever David thinks is best to do. It is likely that Absalom would kill David's officials if they stayed in Jerusalem, so the officials also do not have much choice.

So, David and all the people who live in David's house leave Jerusalem. This probably includes David's wives, children, servants, and anyone else who supports David. All the people of David's house follow David. David leaves 10 of his concubines behind to take care of the palace. The palace is the place where the king and his family live in Jerusalem. A concubine is a second-class wife who does not have the same rights as a man's regular wife. The concubines have no choice about whether they will stay in Jerusalem or leave Jerusalem.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about marriage in your culture. If some men have more than one wife, are there different types of wives, like a regular wife and a second-class wife? Pause this audio here.

David and the people with David stop at the last house at the edge of the city of Jerusalem. It is possible this is a well-known house on the road out of Jerusalem. David and the people stop there to let all of the men pass by. David probably wants to see all of the people who are loyal to David as they pass in front of him. It is also possible that these men are the guards going in front of David to protect him. The people are probably the men or personal soldiers who are loyal to David. It is likely that the main army of Israel is now loyal to Absalom.

Many people pass by David. First, there are servants, who are probably court officials. Some people think that the Kerethites and Pelethites are examples of some of these servants. The Kerethites and the Pelethites most likely are non-Israelites. The Kerethites and Pelethites are the bodyguards, or special royal guards, responsible for protecting King David. The Kerethites and Pelethites have been with David since he was in Ziklag. There were also 600 men from Gath, who are called Gittites. It is possible these are the same men who went with David when David ran away from Saul in the past.

Stop here and look at a map of Gath and Jerusalem as a group. Pause this audio here.

Next, David talks to Ittai, who is the leader of the 600 men from Gath. Ittai is a Philistine who now serves David, but we do not know the story about why Ittai serves David. David asks Ittai why Ittai wants to go with David and his other men. David does not want Ittai to give a reason for coming with David. Instead, David wants to give Ittai permission to leave David and his men. Ittai is a foreigner and is not able to live in his own country. David wants Ittai to feel free to go back to Jerusalem to serve the new king, Absalom. It is possible that David asks Ittai this question because David wants to show how even this foreign soldier is more loyal to David than David's own son, Absalom.

David tells Ittai that Ittai has only been with David for a short time. David does not want to make Ittai wander around with David and his men. David does not know where he is going, and David wants Ittai to go back to Jerusalem and take his men with him. Finally, David says, "May steadfast love and faithfulness be with you." This is a blessing that David gives to Ittai.

Then, Ittai replies to David. We would expect that Ittai would follow David's advice and go back to Jerusalem with his men because Ittai is not an Israelite. But Ittai decides to stay with King David instead. Ittai says as surely as Yahweh lives and as David lives, Ittai will be faithful to David in death or in life. This is similar to the book of Ruth when Ruth swears an oath to be faithful to an Israelite, even though Ruth is not an Israelite herself. "Life and death" is the normal order to say it, but Ittai says "death or life," which might show that Ittai thinks

death may be more likely than life if he stays with David. Ittai also calls himself David's servant to show respect to David.

David agrees to let Ittai come with him, so Ittai and all his people cross over to be with David. All the little ones that belong to Ittai and the Gittites also come with Ittai and his men. This probably includes children, families, women, and even older people who cannot take care of themselves.

As all of the people with David leave Jerusalem, all of the people who did not go with David weep. These people live in or near Jerusalem. The people are very sad as they see David's people pass by. The king crosses through the Kidron Valley, which is a dry valley most of the year.

Stop here and look at a map that includes the Kidron Valley. Pause this audio here.

All the people leave the city of Jerusalem and go toward the wilderness. A wilderness is a place where people do not live. All of the people go first, and then David follows at the end of the group.

Stop here and look at a picture of wilderness.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:13–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: A messenger comes to tell David that the men of Israel are loyal to Absalom.

In the second scene: David tells his servants that they need to leave Jerusalem immediately. David's servants agree to go with David.

In the third scene: David and his household leave Jerusalem. David leaves 10 concubines to take care of the palace. David stops outside of Jerusalem to let the people pass in front of David.

In the fourth scene: David tells Ittai the Gittite to return to his home. But, Ittai tells King David that Ittai wants to come with David. David agrees to let Ittai come, so Ittai and his people come with King David.

In the fifth scene: All the people weep when they see the people pass by them. King David also passes by the people on the road to the wilderness.

The characters in this passage are:

- A messenger
- King David
- The men of Israel
- Absalom
- David's servants, including his government officials
- David's household
- David's 10 concubines that he leaves in the palace
- The Kerethites and the Pelethites
- Ittai the Gittite
- The 600 Gittites whom Ittai leads
- All the little ones with Ittai
- And the people in Israel who see David and his people pass by

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that before this story, Absalom declared that he was the new king instead of his father, David. Remember that Absalom was in Hebron, and David was still in Jerusalem. Now, in this story, David hears about what Absalom did. David decides to leave Jerusalem with his servants, family, and soldiers.

The first part of this story, in the first three scenes, is about how David leaves Jerusalem. In the second part of this story, David and Ittai have a conversation. This is the first of three conversations that David has with three of his supporters. The next two conversations are with Zadok and Hushai in the following story.

In the first scene, a messenger comes to Jerusalem to give David a message. Remember that the message is not good news for David. The messenger tells David that the hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom. This means that now many people of Israel are loyal to Absalom instead of to David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the message that the messenger brings to David? Here are some examples of ways to translate the message:

- The messenger said, "The hearts of the people of Israel are with Absalom"; or
- The messenger told David that the people of Israel are loyal to Absalom.

Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, David prepares to leave Jerusalem. The second scene shows us clearly that David decides to leave Jerusalem because of what the messenger told David. David tells his servants that they must get up and go quickly. David knows that if the people do not leave Jerusalem quickly, no one will escape Absalom. You could also translate this part as, "Absalom will certainly catch them if they stay in Jerusalem." It is likely that David does not stop and think for a long time about what he should do because it is important to leave Jerusalem immediately.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group. Tell a story that involves a lot of action that happens quickly. Think about how you can translate this part of the story to show that David wants to leave Jerusalem very quickly. Pause this audio here.

David also says that Absalom will bring disaster on the people. Absalom will come and strike the city with the edge of a sword. This means that Absalom will kill the people in the city of Jerusalem. The edge of a sword is very sharp. A possible translation here is that Absalom will come and kill the people of Jerusalem with swords in battle if the people stay in Jerusalem.

Stop here and look at a picture of a sword again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

David's servants agree with David that they should leave the city of Jerusalem. The servants call themselves "your servants" to show respect to David. In the original language, the servants use a special word to emphasize that they are David's servants, and that they are ready to do anything David decides to do. You could translate this as, "Look! We are your servants. We are ready to do anything that you, our lord and king, choose to do." Remember, these servants probably include David's court, or government, officials. The servants also call David "my lord the king" to show David respect and to show that they still consider David the true king of Israel.

The beginning of the third scene shows that David leaves Jerusalem as the next step in his plan. Be sure in your translation that it is clear that David is doing the next thing in David's plan. The servants agree to go with David, and David knows they must hurry and leave Jerusalem quickly.

David and all the people in his household leave Jerusalem together. Remember, this includes David's family, except for the 10 concubines. It also includes David's servants and supporters. The people in this scene do a lot of moving about as they follow David out of the city, cross the valley, and move from place to place in the story. It is important to think about how you will translate the words to show David and his people moving quickly from place to place.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story that has a lot of characters who move from place to place. Pay attention to how you say words like march, cross, go up, go down, and move from place to place. Pause this audio here.

David begins walking away from Jerusalem, and all David's people follow after him. It is also possible to translate this part so that the people are "at David's feet" or that they all start walking. The only people that David leaves in Jerusalem are 10 of his concubines to take care of his palace. Remember that a concubine is not the same as a man's regular wife. David's regular wives and his other concubines go with David when they leave Jerusalem.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Remember your discussion about different kinds of wives in your culture. How will you translate concubine in this passage? Pause this audio here.

David and the people start walking, and they stop at the last house on the edge of the city of Jerusalem. It seems that David wants all his people to pass in front of David so he can see who is following him. All the people probably also include David's guards, soldiers, and men who are still loyal to David. Remember that at first, David leads the way out of Jerusalem, and all the people follow behind David. Now, David stops and lets the people pass in front of David so that David's men lead the way.

There are a few groups of people who pass in front of David. The first people to pass in front of David are his servants. Some people think that the Kerethites and the Pelethites are examples of some of David's servants because the Kerethites and Pelethites serve David by guarding him.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate this part of the passage about who passes in front of David? Some options are:

- David's servants pass in front of David. The Kerethites and the Pelethites also pass in front of David; or
- David's servants pass in front of David. Some of these servants are the Kerethites and the Pelethites.

Pause this audio here.

The last group of people who pass in front of David is a group of 600 men from Gath. Gath is a city about 39 kilometers southwest of Jerusalem, and it is in a part of the Philistine land. Remember that the people from Gath are called Gittites. These men are probably men who joined David in Jerusalem and are now loyal to David.

Stop here and look at a map of Gath and Jerusalem again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

The second part of the story includes David's conversation with Ittai. In the fourth scene, David speaks to Ittai, and Ittai replies to David.

In the fourth scene, David speaks with the leader of the Gittites. Remember that the leader is named Ittai, and that Ittai is a Philistine who now serves David. David asks Ittai, "Why are you coming with us?" Remember that

David wants Ittai to have the choice to leave David and return to Jerusalem. Another way to translate this is, "You do not have to come with us."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Would it be more natural in your language to translate this as a question or a statement? Pause this audio here.

David wants Ittai to have permission to stay and serve King Absalom. In the original language, David says only "the king." You could translate this as "King Absalom" or "the new king" to make sure people know David is talking about King Absalom. David knows Absalom declared himself the new king at Hebron.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What would be the best way to translate this part of the passage? Here are some different ways you could translate it:

- Go back and stay with King Absalom; or
- Go back and serve the king; or
- Go back to the new king.

Pause this audio here.

David says that Ittai is a foreigner. This means that Ittai is not an Israelite. Because Ittai is not an Israelite, Ittai does not need to stay loyal to David. Ittai can choose to serve the new Israelite king, King Absalom. Ittai is also in exile from his own country. Remember, we do not know why, but we know that Ittai cannot go back to his home of Gath. It might be better to include this information that Ittai is a foreigner before David tells Ittai to return to the king. For example: "You do not have to come with us. You are a foreigner and you are not able to return to your land. Go back to serve the new king instead of coming with us."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Would it be better to include this information that Ittai is a foreigner and an exile from his land before or after David tells Ittai to return to serve the new king? Pause this audio here.

Also, David says that Ittai also has not been in Israel for long, and David does not want to make Ittai travel around now with David and his men. You could ask this as a question: "Should I make you wander around with me when you only recently arrived?" In the original language, David says that Ittai came "yesterday," and now David does not want to make Ittai wander "today." "Yesterday" probably means recently, and not actually the day before. "Today" probably means now. David tells Ittai again to go back and to take Ittai's men with him. These men are the 600 men of Gath.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the part where David tells Ittai that Ittai came to Jerusalem only yesterday? How will you translate the part that David does not want Ittai to wander with them today? Pause this audio here.

Finally, David tells Ittai, "May steadfast love and faithfulness be with you." Remember that Yahweh's name is not in the original language, but it is also possible to translate this as, "May Yahweh give you steadfast love and may Yahweh be faithful to you and protect you."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate the blessing that David gives to Ittai? Pause this audio here.

Then, Ittai gives his answer to David. Remember that it is surprising that Ittai decides to stay with David because Ittai is not an Israelite. We would expect Ittai to take David's advice and go back to Jerusalem to serve King Absalom.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you show the contrast between what we expect Ittai to do, and what Ittai actually chooses to do? Pause this audio here.

Ittai makes an oath to show that Ittai wants to stay with David no matter what happens to Ittai. Ittai's oath shows that he promises to stay with David, and by saying "as Yahweh lives" and "as my lord the king lives," Ittai makes his promise even stronger. Remember that Ittai promises to stay with David even in death or life. This means that Ittai will stay with David even if it means he will die. Also, Ittai calls himself David's "servant," and Ittai calls the king "my lord" to show respect to David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell some common oaths in your language. How will you translate this oath that Ittai makes to David? Pause this audio here.

David agrees for Ittai to come and join his group of people. Ittai and his people cross over, which may mean they cross over a stream or river. It may also mean they cross over the Kidron Valley that the storyteller describes next. The people who come with Ittai also include the children, families, and others who need help to care for themselves.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate "little ones" in this verse? Other ideas could be "families" or "all the women, children, and other people with Ittai." Pause this audio here.

Finally, in the fifth scene, we see how the people in Jerusalem react as they watch David's people leave Jerusalem. The people are very sad, and they weep or cry loudly. The people who cry do not leave Jerusalem with David. In the original language, the storyteller says, "The country wept loudly," but this means that the people of the country weep, and not the land itself.

Then King David crosses over. Remember that David follows after all of his people. David crosses the Kidron Valley, which is the boundary between the city of Jerusalem and the Mount of Olives on the eastern side. The Kidron Valley is dry most of the year, but it has a strong river in the winter from the rain and melting snow. Ahead of David, all the people pass on toward the wilderness. This wilderness is the northern part of the desert of Judah.

Stop here as a group and look again at a map of the Kidron Valley and a picture of wilderness, if needed. Pause this audio here.

This final scene of the passage is between two conversations that David has with David's supporters. In both conversations, David wants the other person to go back to Jerusalem and not to come with David. The first conversation is in the second half of this story with Ittai, and the next conversation is with Zadok in the following story.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:13–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- A messenger
- King David
- The men of Israel
- Absalom
- David's servants, including his government officials
- David's household
- David's 10 concubines that he leaves in the palace
- The Kerethites and the Pelethites
- Ittai the Gittite
- The 600 Gittites whom Ittai leads
- All the little ones with Ittai
- And the people in Israel who see David and his people pass by

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

A messenger comes to David with a message. The messenger tells David, "The people of Israel are loyal to Absalom."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am shocked to hear that my people want to follow Absalom instead of me; or
- I had a feeling this was going to happen. I heard some things about how Absalom wanted to take the kingdom from me, but I did not really believe it could ever happen; or
- I must immediately make a plan! I must escape Jerusalem before Absalom gets here!

Also, ask the person playing the messenger, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am worried that King David will be angry at me for bringing him this terrible news; or
- I am so sad that David's son, Absalom, is now the new king. This is really bad news for Israel; or
- I hope King David has a good plan for what we should do next.

Continue the drama.

David tells his officials who are with David in Jerusalem that they must leave Jerusalem immediately. David says, "Let's get up and leave quickly! If we do not leave now, no one will escape Absalom. We must go quickly because Absalom will certainly catch us and kill all the people of Jerusalem if we stay here in Jerusalem." David's officials tell David, "We are your servants, and you are the king. We are ready to do whatever you choose."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so angry and sad about what Absalom did to me. I do not have time to think about that right now, though; or
- I must protect my servants, my officials, my family, and my people. That is the most important thing to me right now because I know Absalom will be here soon; or
- Maybe after we leave Jerusalem, I can make a plan and figure out what to do to get my kingdom back from Absalom. For now, though, it is the safest choice to leave.

Also, ask the people playing the government officials, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are terrified for our lives! We know that Absalom will kill us if we stay here; or
- We do not want to leave Jerusalem, but we do not have another choice; or
- We are loyal to King David, and we want to stay with him. If David thinks it is the right choice to leave Jerusalem now, we will go with David.

Continue the drama.

King David sets out, and his household follows him. David leaves 10 concubines behind in Jerusalem to take care of the palace. All the people follow behind the king. The people all stop at the last house on the edge of the city of Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the household of David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are very scared! We want to move quickly so that Absalom does not catch us; or
- We are sad that we had to leave the palace in Jerusalem; or
- We hope that we can return to Jerusalem someday.

Also, ask the people playing the ten concubines, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are terrified. Why did David choose to leave us behind to take care of the palace? What will happen to us when Absalom arrives in Jerusalem? or
- We wish we could leave Jerusalem with the rest of David's household; or
- We are honored that David chose us to stay behind and take care of the palace. We will make sure the palace is ready for when David returns someday.

Continue the drama.

All of David's servants pass in front of David. All of the Kerethites and Pelethites pass in front of David. All of the 600 Gittites also pass in front of David. These 600 Gittites had come with David from Gath.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing the servants of David, the Kerethites, the Pelethites, and the 600 Gittites, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are ready to go wherever David wants to go; or
- We will protect our king, King David, from anything; or
- We wish we did not have to leave Jerusalem. We want to stay here and fight Absalom when he comes to Jerusalem instead of leaving the city now.

Also, ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad that all of these men are still loyal to me; or
- I do not think I have enough people to be able to fight against Absalom right now, so it is the right choice to leave Jerusalem before Absalom arrives; or
- I want to protect my family and my people from Absalom. I want all of the people to hurry so we get away to safety before Absalom arrives.

Continue the drama.

King David talks with Ittai, the leader of the Gittites. David says, "Why are you coming with us? You are not an Israelite, and you cannot go back to your own land. You should go back to Jerusalem and stay with King Absalom. You arrived here recently, so I do not want to make you wander around with us. I do not even know where we are going now. Go back to Jerusalem and take your people with you. May Yahweh show you unfailing love and faithfulness."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want Ittai to feel permission to go back to Jerusalem. Ittai does not need to come with me; or
- Ittai is not even an Israelite, so he does not need to stay with me now. I want Ittai to go back to serve Absalom now; or
- I wish that my own son, Absalom, would follow me and be loyal to me like this foreigner is following me now!

Also, ask the person playing Ittai the Gittite, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am loyal to David, even if his son Absalom betrays him and decides he is the new king; or
- It does not matter to me that I have only been here for a short time. I still will continue to be loyal to my king, David; or
- I am offended that David thinks I want to abandon him now. I already left Jerusalem and brought all my men with me, and all of the families, too.

Continue the drama.

But Ittai tells King David, "As surely as Yahweh lives, and as surely as you, my king live, I will go with you wherever you go. You are my king, and I will stay with you whether it means death or life." David tells Ittai, "Then you may come with us." So Ittai, his men, and all their families continue going with David's people.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ittai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am proud to stay with David and his people. I am loyal to King David; or
- I know that my choice might mean that I will die, but I still choose to stay with David and his people; or
- I made my promise in the strongest way I could because nothing is stronger than making an oath by the life of Yahweh.

Also, ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am shocked that Ittai decided to stay with me. I expected Ittai to leave and go back to Jerusalem; or
- I will accept Ittai's choice because I told Ittai all the reasons he should go back to Jerusalem, and this is Ittai's choice to stay with me now; or
- I am glad that Ittai chose to stay with me. I feel comfort that this foreigner chose to be loyal to me, even if my own son, Absalom, betrayed me.

Continue the drama.

All the people weep loudly when they see David's people cross over the Kidron Valley. The king also crosses over the Kidron Valley. All of the people with David leave on the road that leads to the wilderness.

Pause the drama. Ask the people in Israel who see David and his people pass by, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are so sad to see the people leave Jerusalem. What will happen to them? or
- We wish that David did not have to leave Jerusalem! We loved David as our king, and we do not want David to leave; or
- We are crying because we are scared for our lives. What will happen to us when Absalom arrives in Jerusalem?

Also, ask the people playing all the people walking ahead of David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We are ready to go wherever David wants to go; or
- We are terrified because we are going to the wilderness. No one can survive in the wilderness! or
- We are worried that we did not bring enough food and supplies with us for our journey into the wilderness.

Also, ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- These are all the people who are loyal to me. I am proud to see all these people cross over and walk into the wilderness with me; or
- I hope that I can find some more men to fight with us, because there are so few of us; or
- I was the king of Israel for a long time, and I am very sad to leave the city of Jerusalem. I hope that Yahweh will bring me back to Jerusalem.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:13–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

A **messenger** brings David a message that the **hearts** of the men of Israel are loyal to David's son, Absalom. A messenger is someone who brings news to someone. Translate heart and messenger the same as you have in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about heart.

David is the second king of **Israel**. The men of Israel are also called the Israelites. Translate Israel the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

David tells his servants in **Jerusalem** that they must quickly escape. Servants work for their master. Throughout this story, David's servants probably means David's court officials. Translate Jerusalem the same way as you have in previous passages. For more information on Jerusalem, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about how you will translate **servants** here. Should you translate it as servants, or officials? Translate servants here in the same way you have translated it for officials in previous stories. For more information on servants, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

David tells his servants that if they do not leave quickly, Absalom will come and strike the city with the edge of the **sword**. Translate sword the same way as you have in previous passages.

The servants tell their **king**, King David, that they will do whatever their king decides to do. A king is someone who rules over a city or a territory. In this passage, King David is the king, except for one part where David tells Ittai to go back to Jerusalem to stay with the new king, King Absalom. Translate king the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary.

All of the king's **household** leaves with King David, except for 10 of David's concubines. The household includes all of the people who live together in the house. In David's house, this includes his wives, concubines, children, servants, officials, and anyone else living in David's house in Jerusalem. Translate household the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on household, refer to the Master Glossary.

The king leaves behind 10 **concubines** to take care of the **palace**. Concubines are second-class wives who do not have the same rights as a man's regular wife. The palace is the place where the king and his family live in Jerusalem. Translate concubines and palace the same as you have in previous passages.

The **Kerethites and Pelethites** also go with David. You will remember from a previous story that the Kerethites and Pelethites are non-Israelites who are David's special guards. Translate Kerethites and Pelethites in the same way you have in previous stories.

David tells Ittai the Gittite to go back to Jerusalem. David says, "You are a **foreigner**. You are in exile from your land." A foreigner is a person who lives in a country where that person was not born. Translate foreigner the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on foreigner, refer to the Master Glossary.

David tells Ittai, "May **steadfast love** and faithfulness protect you!" Translate steadfast love, or kindness, the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on steadfast love, refer to the Master Glossary.

Yahweh is faithful because Yahweh keeps his promises.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate "**faithfulness**" in your language? Pause this audio here.

Ittai says that as surely as **Yahweh** lives, and as surely as his **lord** the king lives, Ittai will stay with David. Yahweh is God's personal name. Ittai calls the king lord, or master, to show the king respect as a person in authority over Ittai. Translate Yahweh and lord the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh and lord, refer to the Master Glossary.

David's people cross over the Kidron Valley. Kidron Valley is the lower ground between the hill that Jerusalem is on and another hill. During the rainy months, a river flows through this valley. The people leave on the road, or way, to the **wilderness**. The wilderness is a place where there is no water, and no people live there. Translate wilderness the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on wilderness, refer to the Master Glossary.

*Speaking the Word**Speaking the Word*

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 15:13–23**Audio Content**

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2 Samuel 15:24–37

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 15:24–37 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:24–37 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:24–37 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous stories, David's son Absalom declared himself the new king of Israel. David heard this news, and David fled Jerusalem with all his household and men. The people went east from the city into the wilderness. David tried to tell Ittai, the Gittite, to return to Jerusalem, but Ittai decided to go with David. Now, David tells Zadok the priest to return to Jerusalem with the ark of God. David wants Zadok, Abiathar, and their sons to go back to Jerusalem as spies for David. David also tells his advisor, Hushai, to go back to Jerusalem to frustrate Ahithophel's advice to Absalom. David wants Hushai to be a spy as well.

This passage begins with Zadok the priest and all the Levites who are with Zadok. The priest Abiathar is also there. We do not know if Abiathar offers sacrifices or if he is only there with Zadok and the Levites. The priests and Levites all come with David out of Jerusalem, and the Levites are probably the ones carrying the ark of the covenant of God. Sometimes people call the ark of the covenant of God "the ark of God." This ark is where the Israelites believed God's presence lived among them.

Stop here and look at an image of the ark of the covenant of God. Pause this audio here.

The priests and the Levites set down the ark of God and do not pick it up again until all the people leave the city of Jerusalem. The priests and Levites probably do this to give all the people time to leave the city. It is possible that the priests and Levites bring the ark of God with them out of Jerusalem because they think the ark will help them win a battle against Absalom.

David likely did not tell the priests and Levites to bring the ark with them out of the city when they first left, because now David tells the priests and Levites to carry the ark back to Jerusalem. Zadok does not have to carry the ark by himself because the Levites help carry the ark of God. It is possible that David knows it is not good to keep the ark of God with them. David tells Zadok that David might come back to Jerusalem and see Yahweh's house again if Yahweh is pleased with David.

It seems like David trusts Yahweh's plan for what happens next in David's life, but at the same time, David sends back spies to Jerusalem to learn what Absalom is doing. Spies are people who try to find out information secretly without other people knowing what the spies are doing. Some people think that this shows David does not completely trust Yahweh's plan because David also makes his own plans.

David also tells Zadok, "Are you not a seer?" This is a difficult part to translate. Sometimes people translate this as "Do you see?" or "Look!" David wants Zadok to go back to Jerusalem quietly. Zadok should also bring his son Ahimaaz, Abiathar's son Jonathan, and Abiathar with him.

Finally, David tells Zadok that David will wait for them at the fords of the wilderness until someone brings a message from Zadok to David. The fords of the wilderness are a place where people and animals can cross a stream or river. David wants Zadok, Abiathar, and their sons to be in Jerusalem so they can collect information about Absalom to tell David.

Zadok and Abiathar do what David says to do. The men take the ark of God back to Jerusalem and stay in Jerusalem. When Zadok and Abiathar bring the ark back to Jerusalem, this gives them a good reason to stay in the city. David probably plans to use Zadok and Abiathar as spies to gather information in Jerusalem.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when you or someone you know had a secret plan to get information from someone else. What was your plan? How did you learn the information? How many people helped you to learn the information? Pause this audio here.

At the same time, David is going up the Mount of Olives. The Mount of Olives is a mountain on the east side of Jerusalem. There are three main high ridges on the Mount of Olives. David keeps going up, and it is possible that David is on the second and steepest of the high places on the Mount of Olives.

Stop here and look at a map of the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem. Pause this audio here.

David weeps and covers his head to show his sadness. David walks barefoot, without sandals on his feet, probably to show how shameful it is for David to leave his city. The people who walk with David also cover their heads and weep as they go up the Mount of Olives.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe how you show sadness. In your community, is it common to cover your head, uncover your head, or wear certain clothing or shoes? Pause this audio here.

Someone tells David that Ahithophel is now with Absalom. It is possible that David is also weeping as he walks because David knows that Ahithophel betrayed David. Remember, Ahithophel used to be David's advisor, but Ahithophel betrayed David and is now helping Absalom. Some people say that when Ahithophel betrayed David, this is similar to how Judas betrayed Jesus.

David prays to Yahweh that Yahweh would turn Ahithophel's advice into foolishness. Foolishness is the opposite of wisdom. We know from a later story that Ahithophel is known for giving very good advice, and David wants Yahweh to make Ahithophel's counsel not helpful for Absalom.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about who you talk to for advice in your community. How do you know if the advice is wise or foolish? Pause this audio here.

David gets to the top of the Mount of Olives, which is where people used to worship God in the past. It is surprising that Hushai the Arkite is there to meet David! It seems like Hushai is the answer to the prayer that David prayed on the way up the Mount of Olives. Hushai is from the clan, or family, of the Arkites, who are a part of the tribe of Benjamin. We know from later in this story that Hushai is one of David's close personal

advisors. It seems like Hushai plans to go with David because Hushai is waiting for David on the top of the Mount of Olives.

Hushai has torn his tunic and has dirt on his head. Both of these things show Hushai's sadness. A tunic is a long shirt that men and women wore during David's time.

Stop here and look at a picture of a tunic as a group. Pause this audio here.

David has a plan for how Hushai can help David. David's plan for Hushai is similar to David's plan earlier in this passage for Zadok and Abiathar. David says Hushai will be a burden to David if Hushai comes with David. It is possible that Hushai is old and sick. But if Hushai returns to Jerusalem, Hushai can be a lot of help to David because Hushai is loyal to David. Hushai can pretend to be Absalom's servant and frustrate, or ruin, Ahithophel's advice to Absalom.

David also tells Hushai that Zadok, Abiathar, and their sons Ahimaaz and Jonathan will be in Jerusalem. Hushai must listen to everything that he hears in the palace. The palace is the place where the king and his family live in Jerusalem, and David knows that Absalom will come to live in the king's palace in Jerusalem. Hushai should send Ahimaaz and Jonathan to David with any information that Hushai learns about what Absalom is doing.

Hushai does what David tells Hushai to do. Hushai goes back to Jerusalem. Here we see that Hushai is David's friend. This most likely means that Hushai is an important royal official who helps and advises the king.

Hushai arrives in Jerusalem at the same time that Absalom also arrives in Jerusalem.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:24–37 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: Zadok and the Levites carry the ark of God out of the city.

In the second scene: King David tells Zadok, Zadok's son Ahimaaz, Abiathar, and Abiathar's son, Jonathan, to take the ark of God back to Jerusalem. The men go back to Jerusalem.

In the third scene: David goes up the Mount of Olives. David prays for Yahweh to make Ahithophel's advice foolish.

In the fourth scene: David meets Hushai at the top of the Mount of Olives. David tells Hushai to go back to Jerusalem to be Absalom's servant. David wants Hushai to get information for David.

In the fifth scene: Hushai goes back to Jerusalem. Hushai arrives in Jerusalem at the same time that Absalom arrives in Jerusalem.

The characters in this passage are:

- Zadok the priest
- The Levites
- Abiathar the priest
- The people leaving Jerusalem with David
- King David
- Yahweh
- Zadok's son, Ahimaaz
- Abiathar's son, Jonathan
- Ahithophel
- Hushai the Arkite
- And Absalom

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that David and his people left Jerusalem quickly. David and the people are trying to get away from Jerusalem before Absalom arrives in Jerusalem. In the second part of the previous passage, David talked with Ittai the Gittite. David tried to convince Ittai not to come with him, but Ittai decided to continue with David. Now, in this passage, David has two more conversations with his supporters. First, David tells Zadok the priest to take the ark of God back to Jerusalem. Then, David tells his close advisor, Hushai, to also return to Jerusalem. David's purpose is to send spies back to Jerusalem to learn information about Absalom.

In the first scene, Zadok the priest also comes out of Jerusalem. The storyteller begins by drawing special attention to Zadok. You could translate this as, "Look!"

All of the Levites also come with Zadok. They carry the ark of the covenant of God. Remember, the ark of God is very important for the Israelite people because it is where God's presence lives. Abiathar the priest is also there. Remember that it is difficult to know if Abiathar offers sacrifices or if Abiathar "goes up" to where David and the ark are, because in the original language, "go up" is a common way to mean go up and offer sacrifices. It is less likely to mean "offer sacrifices" because it would not be common for a priest to offer sacrifices outside of Jerusalem.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate this part of the passage where Abiathar comes up, or Abiathar "offers sacrifices?" Pause this audio here.

Remember that the Levites put down the ark of God, and they do not pick the ark up again until all of the people who are following David leave the city of Jerusalem.

In the second scene, David gives Zadok some instructions. First, David tells Zadok to take the ark of God back to Jerusalem. David says that if Yahweh is satisfied with David, Yahweh will return David to Jerusalem someday and let David see Yahweh's house again. Yahweh's house was where the people kept the ark of the covenant of God. In the original language, the storyteller says, "If I find favor in Yahweh's eyes...." David means that he hopes Yahweh will be happy or pleased with David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to translate, "If I find favor in Yahweh's eyes"? Pause this audio here.

David also says that if Yahweh is not pleased with David, then David is ready for Yahweh to do whatever Yahweh wants to do to David. David knows this might mean that David will never see Jerusalem again. This shows that David accepts Yahweh's plan for David.

Next, David asks Zadok a question. David says, "Are you not a seer?" Remember that this is a hard part to translate because in the original language, it could mean "Look!" or "Do you not see what is happening?" or "You are not a seer, you are a priest." A seer was someone who could predict the future. David does not want

an answer to his question, "Are you not a seer?" David wants to show that Zadok does actually understand things. Zadok really does understand what is happening. David wants Zadok to return to Jerusalem in order to observe, listen, and report information back to David about what is happening in Jerusalem.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to translate David's question to Zadok here? Here are some ideas:

- Are you not a seer? or
- Do you not see what is happening? or
- You are a person who understands things; or
- Do you understand? or
- You are not a seer, or prophet. You are a priest.

Pause this audio here.

Next, David tells Zadok to return to Jerusalem in peace. This probably means that Zadok should go quietly, or that Zadok should return to the safety of Jerusalem. Remember that David also tells Zadok that several other people should return with Zadok. Zadok should bring his son Ahimaaz, Abiathar's son Jonathan, and Abiathar with him. It is also likely that at least some of the Levites went with Zadok as well, so that they could help carry the ark of God to Jerusalem.

Finally, David gives his last instructions to Zadok. David tells Zadok that David will wait at the fords of the wilderness for information from Zadok. David expects Zadok to send someone with a message to David. Remember that the fords of the wilderness are a place where people and animals can cross a stream or river. It is possible this is the same crossing at the Kidron Valley from the previous story.

Zadok has all of his instructions now. David told Zadok to go back to Jerusalem with the ark of God, to watch and listen for what is happening in the palace. David also told Zadok to take Zadok's son, Abiathar, and Abiathar's son with Zadok. And David told Zadok where to send messages so that David will know what is happening in Jerusalem. Zadok obeys what David says to do and goes back to Jerusalem with Abiathar. We also know that Zadok's son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son, Jonathan, come with them.

In the third scene, the story is now about David again and where David is going. David goes up the Mount of Olives at the same time that Zadok goes back to Jerusalem with the ark of God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story that begins by talking mostly about one character. Then, in the second part of the story, tell more about a second character. Pay attention to how you change the information about the second character. How should you translate the beginning of the third scene in this passage? Pause this audio here.

Remember that the Mount of Olives is a mountain on the east side of Jerusalem. In the original language, it says that David "goes up" two times to show that David continues to climb up the Mount of Olives.

Stop here and look at a map of the Mount of Olives and Jerusalem again as a group if needed. Pause this audio here.

As David goes up the Mount of Olives, David weeps, covers his head, and walks with his feet bare. The people with David also cover their heads and weep as they go up the Mount of Olives. David and the people are all very sad.

Someone told David that his advisor Ahithophel is now one of Absalom's supporters. The person may have told David while they walked up the Mount of Olives, or maybe David heard this information before he went up the Mount of Olives.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What is the best way to translate this part in your language? Here are some ways you could translate it:

- Someone told David that Ahithophel is now supporting Absalom; or
- Someone told David, "Ahithophel is one of the people who support Absalom now."

Pause this audio here.

In the last part of the third scene, David prays to Yahweh. David knows that Ahithophel will give good advice to Absalom because Ahithophel always gives good advice. David prays that Yahweh will turn Ahithophel's advice into foolishness. David wants Ahithophel to give foolish advice to Absalom. In David's prayer, he says, "please" or "I beg you" to show how much David wants Yahweh to answer his prayer.

In the fourth scene, David arrives at the top of the Mount of Olives. The top of a mountain or hill is also called a summit. This is a place where people used to worship God in the past. And then, suddenly, David sees Hushai the Arkite there at the top of the Mount of Olives! Hushai is already there. David does not expect to see Hushai. Hushai had torn his tunic and put dirt on his head to show how sad Hushai was.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story where a new character suddenly enters the story in an unexpected way. How can you show that it is surprising that Hushai meets David at the top of the Mount of Olives? Pause this audio here.

David now gives Hushai instructions, which are similar to the instructions that David gave to Zadok in the second scene of this passage. First, David tells Hushai, "If you go with me, you will be a burden to me." David shows the contrast between what might happen if Hushai stays with David and what might happen if Hushai goes back to Jerusalem. If Hushai returns to the city of Jerusalem, Hushai can help David.

Then, David tells Hushai exactly how Hushai can help David. David tells Hushai to go back to Jerusalem and tell Absalom that Hushai wants to be Absalom's servant now instead of David's servant. It is possible to translate the exact words that David wants Hushai to say to Absalom, or a summary of what David wants Hushai to say to Absalom. For example:

- Go back to Jerusalem and say to Absalom, "I will be your servant now, my king. I was your father's servant before, but now I am your servant"; or
- Go back to Jerusalem and tell Absalom that you will be his servant now. Tell Absalom that in the past, you were his father's servant, but now you will be loyal to Absalom as your king.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Would it be more natural to translate the exact words that David wants Hushai to say to Absalom, or a summary of what David wants Hushai to say to Absalom? Pause this audio here.

David also tells Hushai the reason that Hushai should be Absalom's servant. David wants Hushai to confuse Ahithophel's advice. David wants Hushai to give Absalom different advice than the advice that Ahithophel tells Absalom so that Absalom does not follow Ahithophel's good advice.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Think about a time that you or a person you know got advice from two different people. What would be the best way to translate this part of the passage that David wants Hushai to confuse or defeat the advice of Ahithophel? Pause this audio here.

David also asks Hushai, "Will not the priests Zadok and Abiathar be there with you in Jerusalem?" David does not want Hushai to answer this question. David asks this question to show that the priests Zadok and Abiathar will be in Jerusalem. David wants to reassure Hushai that Hushai will not be alone in Jerusalem on his secret mission to get information from Absalom. Another way to translate this could be, "You will have Zadok and Abiathar there with you."

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What would be the best way to translate this part of the passage where David tells Hushai that Hushai will not be alone in Jerusalem? Pause this audio here.

David tells Hushai that Zadok and Abiathar's two sons are also there in Jerusalem. David wants Hushai to listen to information in the palace, then tell Zadok and Abiathar this information. Then David wants Zadok and Abiathar to tell their sons, Ahimaaz and Jonathan, this same information. Then Ahimaaz and Jonathan will take

this information to David. We know from earlier in this passage that Ahimaaz and Jonathan will meet David at the fords of the desert with this information.

In the last scene, Hushai does what David tells him to do. The story does not say that Hushai says anything to David, only that because of what David tells Hushai, Hushai goes back to Jerusalem. Hushai is David's friend, which probably means that Hushai is David's advisor or an important court official.

Hushai arrives in Jerusalem at the same time that Absalom arrives in Jerusalem. Remember that David knew Absalom was coming, and now we know that David and his people all escaped Jerusalem before Absalom arrived.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:24–37 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Zadok the priest
- The Levites
- Abiathar the priest
- The people leaving Jerusalem with David
- King David
- Yahweh
- Zadok's son, Ahimaaz
- Abiathar's son, Jonathan
- Ahithophel
- Hushai the Arkite
- And Absalom

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The priests, Zadok and Abiathar, are also leaving Jerusalem with David and the people. Some Levites are also with Zadok the priest. These Levites carry the ark of the covenant of God. After the Levites put the ark of God down on the ground, the Levites do not pick up the ark of God again until all of the people leave Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing Zadok, Abiathar, and the Levites, "What are you feeling or thinking?" These people might answer things like:

- We want to come with David and his people so that Absalom will not kill us when Absalom arrives in Jerusalem; or
- We want to bring the ark of the covenant of God with us so that David will have success in any battles against Absalom; or
- We are very sad to leave Jerusalem. It is sad to watch all of the people walk past us, too. I wonder if any of us will ever come back to Jerusalem.

Also, ask the people playing the people leaving Jerusalem with David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" These people might answer things like:

- We are sad to leave our city. We never thought that we would have to run away from Jerusalem! or
- We are very happy that the priests and Levites are bringing the ark of God with us. Hopefully, this means that Yahweh will come with us as we leave Jerusalem; or
- We wonder if it is good for the priests and Levites to bring the ark of God with us. Maybe the ark of God should stay in Jerusalem?

Continue the drama.

King David tells Zadok, "Go back to Jerusalem. Take the ark of God with you. If Yahweh is happy with me, someday Yahweh will bring me back to Jerusalem and I will see Jerusalem and Yahweh's house again. But if Yahweh is not happy with me, then Yahweh will do whatever he wants to do to me. I accept Yahweh's will for me."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want the ark of God to be back in Jerusalem because that is where the ark of God belongs. I have no idea where I am going, and I do not want to put the ark of God in danger. I know Yahweh will be with me; or
- I want Zadok to take the ark of God back to Jerusalem because it gives Zadok a good reason to return to Jerusalem. No one will be suspicious about why Zadok is returning to Jerusalem; or
- I hope that Yahweh will let me come back to Jerusalem someday; or
- I accept Yahweh's correction for me. I know that I might never see Jerusalem or Yahweh's house again. Maybe all of this is happening with my son Absalom because of my sin against Yahweh, and all of this is Yahweh's correction.

Also, ask the person playing Zadok, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am confused about why David wants us to take the ark of God back to Jerusalem. I thought that David would want us to bring the ark of God with us; or
- I am disappointed that David told me to go back to Jerusalem. I wanted to come with David and the people; or
- I am nervous about going back to Jerusalem. Absalom will come to Jerusalem, and I do not want to serve Absalom as my king.

Continue the drama.

King David also tells Zadok the priest, "You see many things. Go back to Jerusalem quietly. Bring Abiathar with you, and also bring your son Ahimaaz and Abiathar's son, Jonathan, with you. I will wait to hear from you at the fords of the wilderness. Send someone to bring me a message there." So Zadok and Abiathar and their sons went back to Jerusalem with the ark of God, and they stayed in Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I trust Yahweh for what he wants to do with me, whether that means Yahweh will bring me back to Jerusalem someday or not. But I also want to make sure I have some of my loyal people in Jerusalem to listen to Absalom's plans; or
- I hope that Zadok and Abiathar will hear some important information in Jerusalem. I have a good plan to learn about what Absalom will do next; or
- I do not think that Absalom or anyone else will be suspicious of the priests and their sons, especially when they come back to Jerusalem with the ark of God.

Also, ask the people playing Zadok, Abiathar, and the Levites, "What are you feeling or thinking?" These people might answer things like:

- Now we understand better why David wants us to take the ark back to Jerusalem. Now we know that David wants us to be spies for him; or
- We do not feel comfortable becoming spies for David. We want to go with David still, but we have to do what our king tells us to do; or
- We are honored that David trusts us with the task to bring him information from Jerusalem.

Continue the drama.

David goes up the Mount of Olives. As David goes up, he weeps. David has covered his head out of grief, and David's feet are bare. All of the people with David also have their heads covered, and they are also all weeping as they go up the Mount of Olives. Someone had told David that Ahithophel is not one of Absalom's supporters. So, David prays to Yahweh. David prays, "O Yahweh, please make the advice of Ahithophel foolish!"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very sad that I have to leave my city of Jerusalem. I am sad that my son, Absalom, betrayed me and took the kingdom from me; or
- I am ashamed that I have to leave my city. I was the king! or
- I am very sad and disappointed that my advisor, Ahithophel, betrayed me and now is one of Absalom's supporters; or
- I hope that Yahweh will hear my prayer and make Ahithophel's advice into foolishness. I do not want Absalom to have any good advice from Ahithophel.

Also, ask the people playing the people leaving Jerusalem with David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" These people might answer things like:

- We are very sad for ourselves and for King David. Why did this happen? or
- We wonder if David knows where he is going to take us; or
- We wonder why we are going up the Mount of Olives one last time. Maybe King David wants to worship God on the Mount of Olives like people used to do.

Continue the drama.

David arrives at the top of the Mount of Olives. This is where people used to worship God in the past. And there, suddenly, David sees Hushai the Arkite! Hushai is already at the top of the Mount of Olives, waiting to meet King David. Hushai has torn his tunic, and Hushai has dust on his head to show how sad he is.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am sad that my king, King David, had to leave his city; or
- I planned to meet King David here so that I can speak with him; or
- I have some important ideas to tell King David, and I hope he listens to my advice now; or
- I have no idea what I want to tell King David, but I know that I want to see him and comfort him during this terrible time for all of us.

Also, ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am shocked to see Hushai here! or
- I wonder why Hushai was waiting for me here; or
- I think that Hushai is here as an answer to my prayer that I prayed to Yahweh on the way up the Mount of Olives. I have an idea of how Hushai can help me to ruin the advice of Ahithophel to Absalom.

Continue the drama.

David tells Hushai, "If you come with me, you will not help me at all. But if you go back to Jerusalem, you can be a lot of help to me. You can go tell Absalom that you will be his servant now. Tell Absalom that in the past, you were his father's servant, but now you will be loyal to Absalom as your king. The reason that you should become Absalom's servant is so that you can ruin Ahithophel's advice to Absalom."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am offended that King David thinks I will be a burden to him; or
- I understand why David wants me to return to Jerusalem, and I think it is a good idea. I am willing to go back to Jerusalem to help King David learn about Absalom's plans; or
- I am disappointed that David does not want me to come with David. But David is the king, and I am ready to do whatever David thinks is the best thing to do; or
- I am nervous about going back to pretend to be Absalom's servant.

Continue the drama.

David also tells Hushai, "You will have Zadok and Abiathar there with you. Listen to everything you hear in the king's palace, and then tell Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, and Jonathan, Abiathar's son, what you hear. Then send Ahimaaz and Jonathan to me with what you hear from the king's palace."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am impressed with King David's plan to get information from inside the king's palace; or
- I hope that Ahimaaz and Jonathan are reliable and trustworthy. If they are, then this plan might work, and King David will be able to learn important information about Absalom; or
- I hope that no one in the king's palace suspects that I am only pretending to be Absalom's servant. I am not sure if I am ready to do this; or
- I am ready to go back to Jerusalem and help the king any way I can.

Also, ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I hope that my plan works to put people loyal to me into the palace in Jerusalem; or
- I am still very sad about leaving Jerusalem, but I feel better now that I have done something to learn more information about what Absalom is planning to do; or
- I trust Hushai, Zadok, Abiathar, Ahimaaz, and Jonathan. I trust these men to do what I asked them to do.

Continue the drama.

After David finishes giving instructions to Hushai, Hushai goes back to Jerusalem. Hushai arrives in Jerusalem at the same time that Absalom also arrives in Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad that I made it back to Jerusalem safely; or
- I hope that Absalom allows me to become his servant, like David asked me to do; or
- I am ready to serve my true king, King David. I am ready to learn anything I can in the king's palace. I am also ready to ruin Ahithophel's advice.

Also, ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am finally here in the city of Jerusalem as the new king! or
- I am disappointed that my father has already left the city because I wanted to fight against him as the new king; or
- I am pleased that it is so easy to take the city of Jerusalem without a fight; or
- I will be an even stronger and better king than my father ever was.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 15:24–37 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The **Levites** are there with Zadok. The Levites carry **the ark of the covenant of God**. Levites are men in the tribe of Levi, one of the 12 tribes of Israel. Levites help the priests with their work. The ark of the covenant of God is the box that God told Moses to make. The Israelites believed that God's presence lived directly above the ark. Translate Levites and "ark of the covenant of God" the same as you have in other parts of the Old Testament. For more information on Levites and the ark of the covenant of God, refer to the Master Glossary.

It is possible that Abiathar offered **sacrifices** in front of the ark as people were leaving Jerusalem. If you translate in this way, use the same word for sacrifice as you used previously, and see the Master Glossary for more information about sacrifice.

Zadok and the Levites put the ark of the covenant of God down until all of the people finished leaving the **city** of Jerusalem. A city is a place where many people live, and a city usually had high walls around it. Translate "city" the same as you have in previous passages.

King David tells Zadok to take the ark of God back into the city of Jerusalem. If David finds favor in the eyes of **Yahweh**, Yahweh will bring David back again. "Favor in the eyes of someone" means that a person is pleased or happy with another person. A king is someone who rules over a city or a territory. Yahweh is God's personal name. Translate king and Yahweh the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on king and Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

King David also tells Zadok the priest to go back to the city in **peace**. In this case, David is telling Zadok that he should go back into Jerusalem quietly and without causing trouble. David wants Zadok to be safe. If you use your word or phrase for peace here, use the same word or phrase for peace that you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about peace.

Priests are people who worked in the temple of God in Jerusalem. Priests are from the tribe of Levi. Translate priests the same as you have in previous passages. For more information on priests, refer to the Master Glossary.

King David tells Zadok that David will be at the fords of the **wilderness** to hear information from Zadok. People do not live in the wilderness, and there is no water. Translate wilderness the same way as you have in previous passages. For more information on wilderness, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate the idea of a **ford**, or a place where people can cross a stream or river easily. If you have translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word here. Pause this audio here.

Zadok and Abiathar go back to **Jerusalem** with the ark of God. Jerusalem is the capital city of Israel. Translate Jerusalem the same way as you have in previous passages. For more information on Jerusalem, refer to the Master Glossary.

David talks to Yahweh, which you can translate as "pray" if you would like. David asks Yahweh to make the counsel of Ahithophel foolish. Prayer means that David is talking to Yahweh. In this prayer, David asks Yahweh for help.

Stop here and discuss as a group: If you choose to use your word or phrase for "**pray**," translate pray the same as you have in other parts of the Old Testament where someone prays to Yahweh for help. For more information on pray, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

The counsel of Ahithophel means the advice that Ahithophel gives to someone else. Often, a king had many people to give him advice on what he should do. David wants Yahweh to take Ahithophel's normally wise advice and turn it into foolishness.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate **counsel** and **foolishness** in this passage? Pause this audio here.

David gets to the top of the Mount of Olives. This is where people used to bow down or worship God in the past. God created everything. Worship is when people give honor to God. Olives are a fruit from an olive tree. The Mount of Olives got its name because there were many olive trees on this mountain. Translate God the same way as you have in previous passages. For more information on **God**, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Translate **worship** the same way as you have in other parts of the Old Testament. For more information on worship, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

David sees Hushai the Arkite at the top of the Mount of Olives. The Arkites are also in Joshua 16:2, and they are a part of the tribe of Benjamin. Hushai was probably from the clan, or family group, of the Arkites. Hushai is an Israelite who is loyal to King David. Hushai had torn his **robe** and put dust on his head to show that Hushai was sad. Use the same word or phrase for robe as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about robe.

David tells Hushai to go back to Jerusalem. David wants Hushai to pretend to be the **servant**, or official, of Absalom. Hushai will tell David anything Hushai hears in the **palace**. A servant works for their master. Translate palace and servant the same as you have in previous passages when servant means a government official or government advisor. For more information on servant, refer to the Master Glossary.

David's friend, Hushai, goes back to Jerusalem. In this passage, friend probably means that Hushai is an important royal official to David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How will you translate **friend** in this passage?

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 15:24–37

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 16:1–4

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 16:1–4 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:1–4 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, King David sent Hushai back to Jerusalem to ruin the advice that Ahithophel would give to Absalom and also to spy for David.

In this story, King David and the people with David had just gone a little distance past the top of the Mount of Olives. Suddenly, a man named Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, meets King David. Ziba has brought gifts with him for David. Mephibosheth is the son of Jonathan and grandson of King Saul. After enemies had killed Saul and Jonathan, King David gave Mephibosheth the lands that belonged to King Saul and put Ziba in charge of those lands. Ziba and all his household became servants of Mephibosheth. Ziba had 15 sons and 20 of his own servants. Ziba probably came from the direction that King David was heading toward. Although we do not know for sure, it is likely that King David was traveling from west to east. Ziba meets King David with a yoke or pair of donkeys. A yoke is a wooden frame that people place over the necks of two animals so that the animals can pull a plow or cart together.

Stop here and look at a picture of a yoke of donkeys as a group. Pause this audio here.

It is likely that people had first wrapped cloth or leather around the donkeys' bodies and then tied the supplies that Ziba now brings to King David to the donkeys.

Stop here and look at a picture of a harnessed donkey as a group. Discuss this question as a group: How do you transport heavy loads on animals in your community? How do you tie the heavy loads on the animal? Pause this audio here.

The donkeys carry 200 loaves of bread. Bread was the most common food in Israel. People made bread from grains, such as wheat or barley, that they ground into a fine powder. People would then mix the powder with water to make a dough, which they kneaded and formed into thin cakes to bake.

Stop here and look at a picture of bread as a group. Discuss this question as a group: What is the most common food in your community and why? Pause this audio here.

The donkeys also carry 100 bunches of raisins. Bunches of raisins are grapes that people dry and press together into cakes. Grapes grow in abundance in the land of Israel, but people cannot keep grapes for a long time after harvesting because the grapes rot. Drying grapes is a way of preserving them so people can eat them throughout the year.

Stop here and look at a picture of a cluster of grapes and a bunch of raisins as a group. Pause this audio here.

Ziba also carries a hundred summer fruits on the donkeys. Because of the warm climate of the land of Israel, the farmers were able to grow a variety of fruits. In the summertime, people harvested grapes, olives, dates, figs, pomegranates, and many other fruits. We do not know exactly what kind of summer fruits Ziba brings, but it could be any or all of these. It is most likely figs or pomegranates.

Stop here and look at a picture of Israel's summer fruits as a group. Pause this audio here.

Ziba also brings a skin of wine. Wine was a common drink that people made from fermented grapes. People sometimes also used pomegranates, dates, or figs to make wine. People put the wine into jars or fresh goatskins that they used as bottles. When people thought of wine, they often thought of joy, celebration, and also sacrifice. People also used wine as a substitute for water where water was in low supply or was unclear to drink.

Stop here and look at a picture of a wineskin as a group. Discuss these questions as a group: Which fruits do you harvest in your community and at which times of the year? Which foods does a person going on a long journey carry to eat on the journey? Pause this audio here.

Because Ziba is Mephibosheth's servant, it is very likely that all these gifts are from Mephibosheth's store and not from Ziba's.

When King David sees Ziba and the things that Ziba has brought on donkeys, David asks Ziba what the meaning of those things is. King David wants to know what Ziba is planning. It is likely that King David is suspicious of Ziba's motives or where Ziba got the gifts from. But rather than respond to the question that the king asked him, Ziba answers the king and tells him what the gifts are for. Ziba says that the donkeys are for the king and the people of the king's household to ride on. This might suggest that there are more than two donkeys, but it is more likely that Ziba means for the king and the people to ride on the donkeys in turns. Ziba says that the bread and summer fruits are for the young men, or the king's servants, to eat, and the wine is for any who would become tired or exhausted in the desert to drink. It is likely that Ziba wants to show the king that Ziba supports the king and believes that David will be victorious in his fight against his son Absalom.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when someone challenged the leader of your country or community. What kind of actions would show who you supported in the conflict? Pause audio here.

The king asks Ziba where the grandson of Ziba's master, Saul, is. It is likely that King David is suspicious of Ziba and wants to speak to Mephibosheth for himself. Ziba answers the king that Ziba's master, Mephibosheth, has remained in Jerusalem because Mephibosheth believes that the people of Israel will return to Mephibosheth the kingdom of Israel that belonged to his grandfather Saul before David. Although we do not know, it is probable that Ziba is lying to King David. If this is the case, Ziba probably hopes that King David will be angry with Mephibosheth and give Mephibosheth's lands to Ziba. Later on, Mephibosheth will deny what Ziba said and tell King David that Ziba was plotting against Mephibosheth. Mephibosheth is crippled in both feet, while King David's son Absalom is strong, and the people of Israel love Absalom. It is unlikely that Mephibosheth could think that the people of Israel would choose him as their king over Absalom.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What made the person who challenged the leader of your country or community think that he should lead? Discuss the reasons that made him confident and encouraged him to challenge the leader. Pause this audio here.

King David responds and says that all that belonged to Mephibosheth is now Ziba's. Kings had the authority to take lands and property that belonged to one person and give them to another. It seems that King David believed Ziba.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about the things that the greatest leader in your community or country can give or take away from individuals with whom he is happy or angry. Pause this audio here.

Ziba answers the king and says that Ziba bows before the king or lies at the king's feet. It is likely that Ziba both says the words and actually lies himself flat on the ground before King David. This was a custom people did to show honor and humility before a great person.

Stop here and look at a picture of someone lying down before a king as a group. Discuss this question as a group: Which actions do you do to show humility before a great person like a king? Pause this audio here.

Ziba's actions could also be a sign that Ziba is accepting and thanking King David for the gift of Mephibosheth's property. As Ziba lies before the king, Ziba asks the king to always treat Ziba with kindness. Ziba calls King David Ziba's master and king.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: King David and the people who were with him had gone a little beyond the top of the Mount of Olives when Mephibosheth's servant, Ziba, came to meet David with gifts.

In the second scene: King David asked Ziba what the meaning of the gifts was. Ziba answered the king that the gifts were for the king, his household, and his servants.

In the third scene: King David asked Ziba where Mephibosheth, Ziba's master's grandson, was, and Ziba answered the king that Mephibosheth had remained in Jerusalem because he wanted to be king of Israel.

In the fourth scene: King David declared that he would give Ziba all the property that belonged to Mephibosheth. Ziba lay down on the ground before the king and thanked the king for his kindness.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Ziba
- Mephibosheth
- The king's household
- And the king's servants or fighting men

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the previous story, David met Hushai the Arkite at the top of the Mount of Olives. Hushai wanted to go with David, but David sent Hushai back to Jerusalem. This story tells us what happened after that. In the first scene, King David had gone a little beyond the summit or top of the Mount of Olives when he suddenly met Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant. The storyteller focuses on Ziba as the new character in the story. It seems clear that King David was surprised to see Ziba. It is probable that Ziba had been waiting for David there and that David did not see Ziba until he went over the top of the hill.

Stop here and look at a picture of the Mount of Olives. Do this activity as a group: Pretend someone is climbing a hill. Pretend that someone else that this person does not expect to see is waiting for him on the other side of the hill, where he cannot see. Have someone tell the story of the journey of the traveler as he travels. As the person climbing the hill gets to the top and then begins to go down the other side, the storyteller should point at the person waiting and introduce him into the story at the moment that the climber sees that person. The storyteller should use a word or phrase that focuses the attention of the listeners on the new character. Repeat the activity again and try out several other words. Pay attention to the words the storyteller uses to bring focus to the person waiting. Pause the audio here.

The action of the story stops as the storyteller describes the gifts that Ziba brought with him for David. Ziba had a pair, or yoke, of donkeys that he had loaded with a supply of food that was good for people on a long march to eat. It is most likely that Ziba had two donkeys, but it is also possible that Ziba had several pairs of donkeys. Ziba had tied the food supply onto the donkeys, probably with leather or cloth that people threw around the donkeys' backs. This is the list of the food that Ziba had loaded on the donkeys: Two hundred loaves of bread, a hundred bunches of raisins, a hundred summer fruits, and a skin of wine. The list shows us Ziba's generosity, although it is likely that Ziba took these gifts from his master, Mephibosheth's stores.

In the second scene, the action of the story continues. When King David saw Ziba and the gifts that Ziba had brought, David asked Ziba what Ziba was planning to do with all those things. It is likely that King David and the people who were with David stopped walking as the king spoke to Ziba. The people with the king would also have been interested to hear what Ziba would say. Ziba answered the king and said that the donkeys were for the king and the king's household to ride on. The bread and the summer fruit were for the young men or soldiers to eat, and the wine was for anyone who would become weak or exhausted in the desert.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Recreate the scene of David meeting Ziba. The person playing David should ask Ziba to explain what the gifts mean. The person should be serious and eager to know. The person playing Ziba should be very careful to speak as someone who wants the king to love him. Pause this audio here.

In the third scene, the king asked Ziba where the son or grandson of Ziba's master was. Ziba was originally the servant of Saul but became the servant of Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson, after Saul died. King David probably asked Ziba where Mephibosheth was because Ziba did not really answer the first question. It is likely that King David thought that Mephibosheth, who was lame or not able to walk, had sent these gifts to David to show David his loyalty. Ziba answered the king and said that Mephibosheth was staying in Jerusalem because he believed that the house or people of Israel would give him back his father's or grandfather's kingdom. Ziba is telling King David that Mephibosheth wants to be king now that David has run away from the city. Ziba begins his answer with a word that focuses on what he says Mephibosheth had done. It is likely that Ziba wants King David to have a strong emotional reaction to the news.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How can you translate what Ziba says to show that Ziba is calling attention to what Mephibosheth has done? Pause audio here.

In the fourth scene, King David said to Ziba that he would give Ziba all the property that belonged to Mephibosheth. It seems that King David believed the words that Ziba spoke about Ziba's master, Mephibosheth. A king could give or take away any property in his kingdom. It is likely that in this case, Mephibosheth's property would only become Ziba's property if King David was able to defeat Absalom and return to his throne in Jerusalem. Ziba said that he humbly bowed before the king. Usually, someone either said they humbly bowed or actually bowed physically. It is likely that Ziba did both. In this way, Ziba accepted the king's reward of Mephibosheth's property and thanked the king. Ziba also begged that he might always find favor in the king's eyes. Ziba is saying that King David has treated Ziba kindly and is asking that the king would always treat Ziba this way.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you physically show honor and beg a great person for their kindness in your community? Discuss how you will speak about how Ziba lays himself down at the feet of King David. Pause audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Ziba
- [Mephibosheth]{.mark}
- The king's household
- And the king's servants or fighting men

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first scene, King David had just gone a little beyond the top of the Mount of Olives when, surprisingly, there was Ziba, Mephibosheth's servant, to meet David. Ziba had brought donkeys that he had loaded with 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches of raisins, 100 summer fruits, and a skin of wine.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ziba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel desperate and scared to meet the king. I am very nervous. I want the king to like me. The king's son Absalom wants to overthrow the king, but I know that King David is a man of war. David will defeat Absalom; or
- I heard how the king and his household ran away from Jerusalem, and I have come here to meet him. I brought the king supplies. The king and his household left Jerusalem in a hurry. The king's household may not have had enough time to prepare enough provisions. I pray that the king will be pleased with me and accept my gift. If the king likes me, he will make me a great man. I want to make my house and my name famous; or
- I am excited at the thought that the king will honor me and my house when he remembers that I was his friend when his son turned against him. It is a big risk because the people love Absalom, and if Absalom defeats his father, David, and becomes king, Absalom might kill me if he hears that I sided with David. But then I could always say that I was just doing what my master, Mephibosheth, told me.

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel very sad. My heart is broken. My own son has become my enemy; or
- Isn't this Saul's servant? What does he mean by these gifts? Why is this servant here, and where is his master, Mephibosheth? Is this a trap? or
- I will find out what this servant has to say for himself. I will stop and ask the servant to explain himself. Maybe Mephibosheth sent him.

Continue the drama.

In the second scene, when King David saw Ziba and the gifts that Ziba had brought to David, David asked Ziba what he was planning to do with all those things.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am confused. It is not usual for a servant to come and meet the king without his master. Where is Mephibosheth, and what do these things mean? or
- I must be very careful. I do not know whom I can trust. My most loyal friends have turned against me. This could be a trap to capture me and hand me over to Absalom. I need an explanation; or
- I will listen to what Ziba has to say. I have not forgotten that Ziba was formerly a servant of my enemy, Saul. Who knows whether today Ziba has come to avenge his master's death on me and my family.

Ask the person playing the king's servants, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are ready to fight. We must protect the king at all costs. Enemies of the king are everywhere, so we must be very watchful; or
- We need provisions. Perhaps this is a friend of the king who has come to show his loyalty by bringing us these things. But we must stand ready to fight until the king says that this man is not a threat; or
- The wilderness is a dangerous place for women and children. The king's household is in great danger. Many strong men have died from hunger and thirst in the desert. We do not know how long we will be in the wilderness. All provisions will be useful.

Continue the drama.

Ziba told the king that the donkeys were for the king's household to ride on, the bread and fruit were for the men to eat, and the wine was for refreshing those who might become exhausted in the wilderness.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ziba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The king is suspicious of my motives. I must be very careful how I answer. I want the king to be pleased with me. I must choose my words very carefully; or
- I am nervous. I fear making the king angry. I will show him how generous and usual my gifts are; or
- The king loves his wives and children. The king will be happy that I have provided donkeys for them to ride and food for his men to keep strong. I will not talk about my intentions or plans.

Ask the person playing the king's household, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Oh, wonderful. We were worried for our little children. How long could the children manage to walk in the hot wilderness? Could the children keep up with the men? What if Absalom chases us? or
- These donkeys will be very useful. Our troubled hearts have been cheered by this man's gifts. May Yahweh bless this man for thinking of us; or
- And food too! We are so happy! The dried fruits will last long and will not rot.

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The food supply and donkeys are a good gift. These things will be helpful; or
- Are these gifts from Mephibosheth, and why did he not bring them himself? Did Mephibosheth not want people to see Mephibosheth with me? or
- Ziba has not answered the question that I asked him. Does Ziba think that I have not noticed? I will ask Ziba more directly.

Continue the drama.

In the third scene, King David asked Ziba where his master's grandson, Mephibosheth, was.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ziba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The king suspects me of plotting. The king's questions to me are questions of a person who is suspicious; or
- Did I hear a change in the king's tone of voice? I think I heard a tone of anger. I should not frustrate the king again by dodging his question. The king is already troubled by what Absalom has done. The king's reaction to me might not be a patient one; or
- I will answer the king directly. I will say what I came to say. I will tell the king that my master, Mephibosheth, is a traitor.

Continue the drama.

Ziba answered the king and said that Mephibosheth was staying in Jerusalem because he believed and said that the house or people of Israel would give Mephibosheth back his father's or grandfather's kingdom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- What? Even Mephibosheth has turned against me? After all the kindness I showed to Mephibosheth? or
- My own son has betrayed me. What else can I expect from the grandson of my enemy? This adds to my sadness. Everyone has betrayed me. Everyone hates me without cause; or
- I will trust in Yahweh. I will hope in Yahweh's mercy. I know that nothing happens outside of Yahweh's knowledge. Yahweh knows what is happening to me, and he will repay my enemies.

Ask the person playing the king's fighting men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Traitors. More traitors. The whole nation has turned against King David, the man who led us to war and defeated our enemies; the king who brought prosperity and made us rich and safe; or
- Mephibosheth cannot certainly believe that he will be king. Who would follow Mephibosheth to battle? Can Mephibosheth run with and charge the enemy in front of the soldiers of Israel? or
- But Mephibosheth does have a son. I think he is about 20 years old. He is a capable young man. Maybe Mephibosheth thinks that his son will rule as king.

Continue the drama.

In the fourth scene, King David said to Ziba that David gave Ziba all the property that belonged to Mephibosheth.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Mephibosheth has become a traitor. I will take away all that I gave him and give it to Ziba, who has risked his own safety to show loyalty to me; or
- When Yahweh seats me on the throne of Israel again, Mephibosheth will have no lands in Israel. Mephibosheth will not be served but will become a servant; or
- An evil man repays good with evil, as Mephibosheth has done. I hate all evil men, and I pray that Yahweh will remove them from the land. I pray that Yahweh will exalt good men like Ziba, who has acted faithfully.

Ask the person playing the king's fighting men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Is this what Ziba planned? Is this a plot to rob his master Mephibosheth of all his property? or
- If Ziba is lying to the king, he is putting Mephibosheth in great danger. Who knows what the king will do to Mephibosheth? You can never trust these kinds of people. People like this lie to get what they want; or
- It seems that the king believes Ziba.

Continue the drama.

Ziba lay at King David's feet and said that he humbly bowed before the king, asking that the king would always consider or treat Ziba with kindness.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ziba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Wonderful! How blessed I am. The king honors me and makes me very rich. The king has believed me and has made my name and house famous; or
- I will not be a servant any longer. I have served all my life. Now it is time for me to be a rich master; or
- Mephibosheth does not deserve the love of the king. May the good king show me that love, and may he always consider me his friend.

Ask the person playing the king's fighting men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Look at Ziba, how he kisses the ground. Ziba has clearly had a lot of practice. I wonder whether Ziba is being genuine or lying. It is so hard to tell; or
- How rich the king has made Ziba! No wonder Ziba is so happy; or
- What will Mephibosheth do when he finds out the thing that has happened to him today?

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Look at the man. Ziba humbles himself before me and is not ashamed to show that he is loyal to me. Ziba knows that Absalom would kill him for this, but still Ziba is on my side; or
- Ziba is a good man and deserves for me to reward him; or
- Ziba has proved today that he is my friend.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:1-4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Ziba, the **servant** of Mephibosheth, was waiting to meet **King** David a little distance past the top of the Mount of Olives. A servant, or a slave, is a man or a woman who works for another person. Use the same words or phrases for servant and king as you used in previous passages. For more information on servant or king, refer to the Master Glossary.

Ziba had a yoke of **donkeys** that were saddled [and loaded with 200 loaves of bread, 100 bunches or cakes of raisins, 100 bunches or cakes of figs, and a skin of wine. A donkey]{.mark} is an animal that is big enough to carry heavy loads or people. People kept donkeys to help them work in their fields or to carry burdens. People also rode on donkeys, especially women and children, on long journeys. Use the same word or phrase for donkey as you used in previous passages. For more information on donkey, refer to the Master Glossary.

A **yoke** is a wooden collar with two openings that people use to tie two oxen or two other animals together. Then the animals can walk together to pull a plow or a cart. The yoke helps the animals to walk in step with each other so that they can pull their load smoothly. The word yoke is also special language for saying two animals. The words "pair" or "team" also mean two animals. Use the same word or phrase for yoke as you used in previous passages. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information on yoke.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for "**yoke of donkeys**." Pause this audio here.

The donkeys were carrying **bread, raisins, summer fruits, and wine**.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the different fruits. Pause this audio here.

A skin of **wine** was a bottle that people made of goatskin for fermenting and carrying wine. People put new wine into new wineskins because the gases that fermentation produced would cause old wineskins to burst and waste the wine. Wine is fermented grape juice. People made wine by squeezing the juice of grapes and putting it in jars or goatskins that people called skins or wineskins until it fermented into alcohol, which takes several days to several weeks. People could make wine in such a way that it did not become too alcoholic and could be used as a substitute for water. Use the same word or phrase for wine as you used in previous passages. For more information on wine, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **skin of wine**. If you have already translated this word or phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

When the king asked Ziba why he had brought those things, Ziba said that the donkeys were for the king's **household** to ride on. Household refers to all the people who are living together in one house. Use the same word or phrase for household as you used in previous passages. For more information on household, refer to the Master Glossary.

Ziba said that the bread and the fruit were for the **men** to eat. The word Ziba used for men means young men, but in this story, it likely refers to the servants and fighting men who went with David.

Ziba said that the wine was for those who would become exhausted in the **wilderness**. A wilderness is a lonely, barren place without water. There are almost no trees or bushes growing in the wilderness. The ground is dry and rocky, and there are wild animals roaming around. People do not live in the wilderness. Use the same word or phrase for wilderness as you used in previous passages. For more information on wilderness, refer to the Master Glossary.

King David asked Ziba where his **lord's**, or **master's**, grandson was. A lord is a general respectful title for someone in a high position or status. Ziba also calls David his lord later in this story. Use the same word or phrase for master as you used in previous passages. For more information on master, refer to the Master Glossary.

Ziba told the king that Mephibosheth had stayed in Jerusalem and expected that the **house of Israel** would return the **kingdom** to him. People used the word house to mean a large group of people who did not live in the same house, but who had something in common. For instance, sometimes people call the Israelites the house of Israel. A kingdom is the territory or the people that a king rules. Use the same word or phrase for "house of Israel" and kingdom as you used in previous passages. For more information on kingdom, refer to the Master Glossary.

After King David gave all of Mephibosheth's property to Ziba, Ziba fell on his face and said to the king "I humbly **bow**." When a person bows down before someone else, they lower their head or the whole top of their body forward. A person does this to show respect and humility. A person can also bow down by kneeling in front of a person and putting their head to the ground. Sometimes people even stretched themselves out flat on the ground in front of a person. This is called falling at someone's feet. Use the same word or phrase for bow as you used in previous passages. For more information on bow, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 16:1–4**Audio Content**

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2 Samuel 16:5–14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 16:5–14 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:5–14 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:5–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last story, King David and the people with him had gone a little past the top of the Mount of Olives when Ziba met them with gifts. Ziba told King David that Ziba's master, Mephibosheth, the grandson of King Saul, had become a traitor.

King David and the people with David now came to a town in the territory of Benjamin that people called Bahurim. Bahurim was located on an old road that went from Jerusalem to Jericho. Bahurim was in the territory of the tribe of Benjamin, King Saul's tribe.

Stop here and look at a map of the area that includes Bahurim as a group. Pause this audio here.

Suddenly, a man called Shimei, who lived in Bahurim, came out and insulted King David. Shimei, the son of Gera, was from the same clan, or family group, as King Saul.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How does your community group people in their families and clans? Which people would you consider as members of your clan? Pause this audio here.

King Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin, but King David was from the tribe of Judah. Some of the people from the tribe of Benjamin were angry and bitter that David had replaced Saul as king of Israel. It is likely that Shimei was showing the anger that his tribe felt. It is also possible that other members of the clan of Saul came out with Shimei, but Shimei is the one who insulted the king.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of tribes or families that have been enemies for a long time. What caused these people to be enemies, and what kind of things did they do to each other? Pause this audio here.

Shimei kept insulting King David with many insults and was throwing stones at David and all his servants. Throwing stones was a way someone showed that they hated someone else. Throwing stones was also how people executed murderers. It is likely that Shimei thought that Yahweh was pleased with Shimei's actions. Shimei kept doing this even though all of the King's men and the king's mighty or special warriors were surrounding the king to protect him.

Shimei shouted at King David to get out of Bahurim and called King David a murderer and a wicked man. Shimei said that Yahweh was punishing King David because David took power from King Saul. Shimei blamed King David for the deaths of members of Saul's household. Shimei believed that David deserved for Yahweh to punish him, and that Yahweh was punishing David by making Absalom the king. Shimei told King David that these things were happening to David because of all the evil things that David had done.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of when someone has celebrated when something terrible has happened to someone else. Why did that person celebrate, and how did they do it? Pause this audio here.

One of King David's special soldiers, Abishai, the son of a woman called Zeruiah, heard the things that Shimei said. Abishai and his brother Joab, who had both fled Jerusalem with David, were officers in David's army, and they were also David's nephews. Abishai and Joab were probably both with David at the time. Abishai immediately called Shimei a man as worthless as a dead dog. The Israelites despised dogs because dogs were unclean and had disgusting habits. Comparing someone to a dead dog shows that you feel that the person is nothing. Abishai said that Shimei should not speak to King David like that. Yahweh had commanded the people to never speak evil things about Yahweh or to curse their ruler. Abishai asked the king for permission to cross over to the side of the road that Shimei was on in order to chop off Shimei's head. Abishai was a mighty and fierce warrior. Abishai was very loyal to King David. Abishai often thought that military force was the way to deal with problems. Shimei's insults probably increased the anger and frustrations that David's household and soldiers had been feeling since they had to leave Jerusalem. Abishai was a high-ranking official as well as a soldier, so it is possible that Abishai felt like he had the right to make the suggestion to the king. But King David told Abishai and his brother Joab to mind their own business and not get involved. King David told the men that maybe Shimei was cursing David because Yahweh sent Shimei to do that. It is possible that King David also thought that Yahweh was punishing David, but David was not sure. David told Abishai and all David's men that if David's own son Absalom was trying to kill David, a person from another tribe, like Shimei the Benjamite, would want even more to harm David. So David told Abishai to leave Shimei alone and let Shimei keep cursing.

Perhaps it was Yahweh who had told Shimei to curse David. It is likely that David remembered the words of the prophet Nathan, who told David that Yahweh would punish David for his sin with Bathsheba with someone from David's own family.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: [Tell a story of when someone has betrayed someone else from their own family. What happened, and how did the person whom the other person betrayed respond?]{.mark} Pause this audio here.

David was willing to be patient and endure the difficult circumstances that Yahweh put David in. But David was hopeful that Yahweh would reward David. David said that maybe Yahweh would look down on David's suffering and repay him with good things in place of Shimei's curse.

So David and his men kept on going on the road. David and his men did not enter Bahurim or get any food or supplies from the town. Shimei went along the hillside, which was opposite the side of the road that David was on. Shimei kept cursing and throwing stones and dust at the king.

The king and all the people who were with him reached their destination, very tired.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of when someone or a group of people has had a long and difficult journey. Talk about how people were tired physically, mentally, and emotionally. What did people do when they arrived? How did people refresh themselves? Pause this audio here.

The king and all the people were able to refresh themselves at their destination. It is very likely that the king and his people camped near the Jordan River. It is possible that this was where they had planned to camp. If Absalom and his men came to attack, David's people could all cross the river, and then David and his soldiers could resist Absalom's men and protect David's people.

Stop here and look at a map of the area as a group.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:5-14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: King David and the people with him approach a town called Bahurim. Suddenly, a man named Shimei, a man from the same clan as King Saul, comes out of the town to meet King David. Shimei comes out, shouts many insults at King David, and throws stones at David and his men.

In the second scene: Abishai, one of King David's special warriors, asks King David for permission to go and kill Shimei. But King David tells Abishai and Abishai's brother Joab to leave Shimei alone. David says that it could be Yahweh who has sent Shimei to insult David. King David tells all his officials to leave Shimei alone because it is far worse for David that his own son Absalom seeks to kill David.

In the third scene: King David and the people with him continue walking along the road. Shimei follows on a hillside on the other side of the road. Shimei continues to insult King David and throw stones and dust at him.

In the fourth scene: King David and the people with him arrive at their destination very tired. The people rest and refresh themselves there.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Shimei, son of Gera, the Benjamite
- The king's family
- The king's servants
- The king's soldiers
- The king's special or most-trained soldiers
- Yahweh
- Abishai, son of Zeruiah
- Absalom
- And Joab (Although Joab is not mentioned directly, David refers to Joab and Joab's brother when David says, "Sons of Zeruiah.")

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, King David and the people with him approach a town called Bahurim. Bahurim was a town not far from Jerusalem on the road that went from Jerusalem to Jericho. It is likely that the king and the people with him were just passing by the town on their way to the Jordan River and did not plan to enter the town.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Have one member of the group tell a story of a journey that they have recently taken. The person should tell you the final destination of the journey at the beginning of the story. The person should mention things that happened, for example, people they met or how they felt along the way. The person must be careful to make sure that they point out where it happened. Pay attention to the phrases the person uses for coming near, entering, or being close to a place. Pause this audio here.

King David and his warriors are very likely feeling threatened because anyone in Israel could be on Absalom's side and might try to attack them in order to help Absalom. As the people are walking on the road, suddenly a man comes out of the town cursing or insulting King David. The man insults the king over and over with many insults. The man is called Shimei, the son of Gera, and he is from the same clan as King Saul's family. It is likely that many people from the tribe and clan of King Saul live in this town because it is in the land of Benjamin, their ancestor. People would expect that friends of the king would support the king if he came near their town as he fled from danger. But Shimei curses and throws stones at King David, even though all of King David's men and his mighty men, or specially trained warriors, are on the king's right and left sides. These men are surrounding David to protect him. Shimei is not scared to disrespect the king even in front of the warriors. Shimei insults the king with these words. Shimei tells David to get out of Bahurim. Shimei tells David to get out as if the king were a filthy, unwanted animal.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What kind of phrases do you use to chase away animals from places where they are not allowed? Use phrases that show disgust and hate. Pause this audio here.

Shimei calls the king a murderer or a man of blood. A man of blood is a man who has killed many people and loves to kill. Shimei also calls David a man who has no value, who is not worth anything.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you refer to someone who has killed many people? Discuss phrases that suggest that the man loves to shed blood. Discuss also a name or names you would give to someone who does evil. How would you say that a person is hopeless as far as doing good is concerned? Pause this audio here.

Shimei keeps cursing King David and tells him that Yahweh is repaying or punishing David for ruling in Saul's place and for the people of King Saul's household that David killed. It is not clear which people Shimei is accusing King David of killing. In earlier passages, King David claimed to be innocent of the killing of Abner, who was a relative of King Saul. Shimei could be referring to the seven men from Saul's household that David allowed the Gibeonites to kill. It is also possible that Shimei thinks that David was responsible for the people

his soldiers killed. Shimei says that it is Yahweh who has given the kingdom of King David to Absalom. Shimei tells King David that all the disaster that David had caused the family of Saul has now come back on David.

Stop here and discuss phrases that you use in your language to say that someone's evil deeds have come back on him. Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, one of King David's most trained warriors and high officials, Abishai, the son of a woman called Zeruiah, spoke to the King after he heard what Shimei said. Abishai's mother, Zeruiah, was King David's sister. Abishai was angry with Shimei and wanted to stop him from cursing the king. Abishai told King David that a man as worthless as a dead dog should not curse a great man like King David. Abishai told King David this by asking David a question that does not need an answer.

Stop here and discuss the following question as a group: How will you translate the phrase "dead dog" that Abishai uses to refer to Shimei? Pause this audio here.

Abishai asked the king to allow Abishai to cross over to where Shimei was and cut off Shimei's head. Shimei was on a hill opposite King David and his men, who were on the road.

Abishai referred to King David respectfully as lord or master and king, but he referred to Shimei as the most worthless thing in Israelite culture. It is interesting that Shimei accuses King David of being a man who is thirsty for blood, and Abishai responds by wanting to cut Shimei's head off. But King David does not feel or think the same way as Abishai. It is likely that King David was not angry but calm. King David responds by asking Abishai and his brother Joab, the "sons of Zeruiah," what Shimei's curses had to do with them. Although King David does not say Joab's name, we know that Joab is the other son of Zeruiah. It is likely that Joab is joining with Abishai and wants to punish Shimei. King David was not expecting Abishai or his brother to answer David's question. David was making a statement with his question. Abishai and Joab had murdered someone from King Saul's family soon after David became king. It is likely that King David is remembering that he was not happy that they did that. David is also telling the brothers that this does not concern them. David also includes Joab in the answer, probably because David knew or could see that Joab felt the same way as his brother Abishai. King David considered that it was possible that Shimei was cursing him because Yahweh had told Shimei to do so. King David sounds as if he is not sure whether it was Yahweh who told Shimei to curse him. King David says that no one can stop Shimei because it might be Yahweh who has sent Shimei to curse David.

Then King David turned and spoke to Abishai and all his servants, officials, or soldiers. It is likely that the "servants" refers to the men who would have fought under Abishai. Perhaps these men felt the same way that Abishai felt and were ready to kill Shimei and anyone with him. King David told them that David's very own son, who came from his own body, was seeking David's life or trying to kill him. That Absalom came from King David's own body is a special way of saying that Absalom was David's son.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss some of the special language that you use in your culture to say that someone is the son of someone else. Pause this audio here.

Then David asked the men how much more a person from the tribe of Benjamin, like Shimei, would want to harm David. King David is pointing out that Absalom is closer to David, because Absalom is David's own son. And so the fact that Absalom wants to kill David is far worse than what Shimei is doing.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What phrases do you use in your language to talk about killing someone? Pause this audio here.

David told Abishai and Joab to leave Shimei alone and let him continue to curse because it was Yahweh who told Shimei to curse David. King David seems unsure of whether Yahweh told Shimei to curse David or not.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of a time when you have been unsure of the will of God. Talk about how you thought that God might do one thing or another thing. Pay close attention to the words and phrases that you use to show uncertainty. Pause this audio here.

Then King David said that maybe Yahweh would see David's affliction or the bad things that people were doing to David and repay him with good things for all the curses he had received that day. It is interesting that Shimei said that Yahweh was giving David evil because David murdered Shimei's relatives. In contrast, David says that Yahweh will repay David with good for the evil that Shimei and others were doing to David.

In the third scene, King David and the people with him continued to walk along the road while Shimei went along the hillside opposite them. Shimei continued to curse King David and throw stones and dust at David. Shimei was likely above David and the people on the path and followed them until they went past Bahurim.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What kind of actions do you do to show someone that you hate them and that they are disgraceful in your culture? Tell stories of such events. Pause this audio here.

In the fourth scene, King David and all the people with him arrived at their destination and were very tired. It is likely that their destination was the Jordan River. The people refreshed themselves there. It is likely that the people made camp, ate and drank from the river, and rested from all the walking they had done that day. The soldiers would probably have set guards in place in case Absalom came to attack them.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:5–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Shimei, son of Gera, the Benjamite
- The king's family
- The king's servants
- The king's soldiers
- The king's special or most-trained soldiers
- Yahweh
- Abishai, son of Zeruiah
- Absalom
- And Joab (Although Joab is not mentioned directly, David refers to Joab and Joab's brother when David says, "Sons of Zeruiah.")

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first scene, King David and the people with him approach a town called Bahurim.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are tired, friendless, and surrounded by enemies; or
- Bahurim is a town of Benjamin. Many relatives of King Saul live here. Saul's relatives blame me for Saul's death and think that I stole the kingdom of Israel from him. I do not know what the people here will do to us. The people might attack.

Ask the person playing the king's trained soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We feel alert and cautious. We are watching for enemies that want to attack the king; or
- We should not enter this town. We are not safe here. Saul's relatives in this town will not be loyal to King David, because they hate David; or
- All our men are ready with their weapons. We will protect the king, women, and children. We will kill anyone from Bahurim who tries to attack the king.

Continue the drama.

Immediately, a man from the clan of Saul came out from Bahurim. The man's name was Shimei, son of Gera, and he came out cursing King David repeatedly. Shimei cursed and threw stones at King David, even though all of King David's men and his mighty men, or specially trained warriors, were surrounding David to protect him.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Shimei, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel angry. Very angry. I hate this man. This man is no king. This man is a murderer. This man killed many people of King Saul's family so that he could take Saul's throne. This man deserves to die; or
- We will not welcome this man into our town. We will not help this man or his people. This man deserves everything that is happening to him; or
- If we could, we would attack this man and kill him. But this man is a man of war, and his soldiers are great fighters. This man must leave Bahurim at once. I am not scared to tell this man, even if he has his soldiers with him.

Ask the person playing the King's servants, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel worried. What does this man intend? How many are there? We must be ready to fight; or
- This is a dangerous place. We are trapped! The enemy is positioned above us. If we are not careful, the king and his family will be injured or killed; or
- We must surround the king and protect him.

Ask the person playing the king's family, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Oh no! This is terrifying. Everybody wants to kill us; or
- Our children are terrified. Our children are screaming in fear. Maybe some of them have been hit; or
- Will this turn into a fight with weapons? Are there more men with this man who have come to attack us? How will we escape? We cannot run with our little ones. Oh, what will we do?

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- More enemies. More people who hate me. My wives and children are in danger because of me. I am angry and sad. My sorrow is overwhelming; or
- Look at how Shimei hates me. How quickly the people have turned against me. I have brought peace to Israel and wealth and prosperity, and this is how they repay me; or
- Yahweh is punishing me. I sinned with Bathsheba, and Yahweh promised all this evil would come upon me. My heart is broken. People hate me and consider me a stinking thing. O please, Yahweh, remember me and have mercy on me.

Continue the drama.

Shimei cursed King David and told him to get out of Bahurim because David was a murderer and a wicked man. Shimei told David that Yahweh had repaid David for killing people from the family of Saul and for stealing Saul's throne. Shimei told David that all David's evil deeds had come back on David, and Yahweh had given David's kingdom, or rule, to Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Shimei, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This filthy man must get out. This man is not fit to enter Bahurim. No! This man shall not enter our town; or
- Yahweh does not allow wicked men to go unpunished. Wicked men may succeed for some time, but eventually Yahweh repays them for their wickedness. David is now paying for all his murders.

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I did not kill Saul's cousin Abner. Joab killed Abner. And assassins killed Saul's son Ish-Bosheth just two years after Abner made Ish-Bosheth king. I was very displeased with those people, and I killed them for killing Saul's son. I buried Saul's son honorably. Have people forgotten all of these things that I did? or
- People hate me without cause. Did I not give all that belonged to Saul back to Jonathan's son? Did I not make Ish-Bosheth sit and eat at my table continually?

Continue the drama.

Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, one of David's specially trained soldiers, told King David that a man as worthless as a dead dog should not curse a great man like King David. Abishai asked the king to allow Abishai to cross over to where Shimei was and cut off his head.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abishai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very angry. I cannot believe that this silly man would dare talk to the king like that. Who does this man think he is? This man is nothing; or
- Why does King David, a mighty man in war, allow this dead dog to continue insulting David? or
- I will ask the king to let me cross over and chop off this man's head.

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel sad. People hate me; or
- Abishai always wants to solve things with his sword. Even now that I am called a blood thirsty man, Abishai still thinks that chopping a man's head off is the way to make things better; or
- I must trust in Yahweh. Yahweh is a righteous judge. Yahweh will defend me. If Yahweh is angry with me and is punishing me, surely killing a man will only make Yahweh even angrier.

Continue the drama.

King David asked Abishai and Abishai's brother Joab what the insults of Shimei had to do with them. David told the men that if Shimei was cursing David because Yahweh had told him to curse King David, no one should stop Shimei. Then King David also spoke to all his servants, officials, or soldiers. David told the men that it was a small thing that Shimei, the Benjamite, was cursing David because Absalom, David's very own son, who came from his own body, was seeking David's life or trying to kill him. Then King David said that maybe Yahweh would see all the bad things that were being done to David and repay David with good things for all the curses he had received that day.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I do not want to be associated with Abishai and Joab's violent behavior; or
- My soldiers are angry with Shimei, and I understand their anger, but we will not kill Shimei. My soldiers must remember that they have a big war to fight and not focus on Shimei; or
- Yahweh's will is what is important here. It is not a question of whether Shimei is rudely insulting me, but whether Yahweh has sent him to do it.

Ask the person playing the king's servant and soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We feel angry. We want to draw our swords and kill Shimei and any other Benjamite who might think it is a clever thing to insult our master, the king; or
- The king makes sense. We should not be focused on the wrong thing. Our battle is with Absalom and his soldiers, and we will fight until we have returned the king to his throne.

Continue the drama.

In the third scene, King David and the people with him continued walking along the road while Shimei went along the hillside opposite them. Shimei continued to curse King David and throw stones and dust at him.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the king's family, servants, and soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We feel tired. The sun is very hot, and our hearts are hurting. This is the most disrespectful thing we have ever seen anyone do to the king. Shimei is treating the king as if he were a dirty animal; or
- The king is very merciful. The king has allowed this horrible man, who is insulting him, to live when we could have killed the man immediately.

Ask the person playing Shimei, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I will drive this man out of Bahurim. I hate this evil man. This man's hands are full of blood; or
- I am brave. I am not scared of this man's soldiers and their swords. I will speak the truth about him and stand up to him; or
- All Israel accepted this man as king after he killed Saul's family because they were scared of him, but I will not be frightened. I will treat him like the evil man that he is and drive him away from Bahurim.

Continue the drama.

In the fourth scene, King David and all the people with him arrived at their destination exhausted. The people refreshed themselves there.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the king's family and servants, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We feel tired, hungry, and sad; or
- Finally, we have reached our destination. This is the strategic place we chose to rest and hide out. We can defend this location. We can use the river as a separation between us and Absalom's men if they attack; or
- We shall camp quickly and prepare food and drink for the people. The children must be exhausted.

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am glad we have arrived safely. I am glad that no one attacked us along the way. It would have been hard to fight with the women and children; or
- I will continue to pray and seek Yahweh's help. Only Yahweh can guide me out of this trouble that I am in; or
- I do not feel like eating. My heart is broken, and I have no appetite, but we need to feed the children.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:5-14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

As **King** David approached Bahurim, a man from the same clan as Saul's family came out from the city. A king is someone who rules over a city or territory, like a region or a country. Use the same word or phrase for king as you used in previous passages. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary.

A **clan** is a tribe or collection of families that are united under one individual. Members of the same clan normally have the same common ancestor. Use the same word or phrase for clan as you used in previous passages.

The man's name was Shimei, son of Gera, and he cursed King David as he came out. To curse someone is the opposite of to bless someone. When you bless someone, you wish that something good will happen to the person you bless. When you curse someone, you wish that something bad will happen to them. Insulting someone can also be a way of cursing them.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **curse**. Look up curse in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Shimei threw stones at David, though all David's **servants** and special guard were surrounding David. A servant usually refers to a man or a woman who works for another person. In this case, the word translated "servants" might mean David's officials and soldiers. The special guard was the most elite or trained soldiers in Israel. These men fought with David very closely and were the bravest fighters in all Israel. Use the same word or phrase for servants as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **special guard**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Shimei told David to get out of Bahurim and called him a man of blood and a worthless or wicked man. A man of blood means someone who loves to kill or shed blood. A wicked man refers to someone who is worthless and does evil things. It probably means hellish or "son of hell."

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **man of blood** and **wicked man**. If you have already translated these ideas in another book of the Bible, use the same words or phrases that you have used there. If you use the terms for wicked and blood in this translation, refer to the Master Glossary for wickedness and blood. Pause this audio here.

Shimei told David that **Yahweh** had repaid David for the blood he shed in the **household** of Saul. Use the same words or phrases for Yahweh and household as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh and household, refer to the Master Glossary.

Shimei said that Yahweh had handed the **kingdom** to David's son Absalom. A kingdom is the territory or the people that a king rules. Use the same word or phrase for kingdom as you used in previous passages. For more information on kingdom, refer to the Master Glossary.

Abishai asked the king why he allowed a **dead dog** to curse him. Abishai called David his **lord** and king. A dead dog is special language for saying a worthless person. A lord is someone who is a master over other people, who has full authority, and who deserves for people to give him respect. When you address someone as "lord," you are saying that person has authority over you. Use the same word or phrase for lord as you used in previous passages. For more information on lord, refer to the Master Glossary.

David asked Abishai and all his officials why they were surprised that Shimei the **Benjamite** was against David, since David's own son, who came from David's own body, was trying to take David's life. A Benjamite is someone who is from the tribe of Benjamin. Use the same word or phrase for Benjamite as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 16:5–14

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 16:15–23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 16:15–23 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:15–23 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, King David and the people with him reached their destination. David and the people felt very tired after meeting Shimei, who insulted David and threw stones at him. This story returns to when David's friend or advisor, Hushai, arrived back in Jerusalem after meeting David on the Mount of Olives. In that previous story, Hushai had wanted to go with David, but David instead sent Hushai back to Jerusalem to ruin the advice that Ahithophel would give to Absalom.

Absalom and all the people and soldiers of Israel who were with him had reached Jerusalem. People who supported Absalom had probably surrounded him and cheered Absalom as he entered Jerusalem. Absalom likely considered himself a conqueror, and other people considered Absalom a conqueror too. Absalom had promised many people good things when he was plotting against David, so it is likely that many people welcomed Absalom gladly.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell of a time when a new leader chased away a former leader and took his place. How did the new leader present himself, or how did the new leader's supporters present him to show that he was the one now in charge? Pause this audio here.

Ahithophel also came with Absalom to Jerusalem. Ahithophel used to be David's advisor, but Ahithophel joined Absalom's rebellion and became Absalom's advisor. Ahithophel was likely the most important person to Absalom because Ahithophel was very respected and had been a close advisor of King David. The support of Ahithophel strengthened Absalom's position as the new king to the people of Israel.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In the story you discussed above, who was the most important person who supported the new leader and what made that person so important? Pause this audio here.

Hushai, the Arkite, David's advisor, went to Absalom and greeted him well and publicly. It was customary for the leaders of the people to go to a new king and greet him with gifts to show that they would be loyal to the new king. It is very likely that Absalom was in the palace. Hushai greeted Absalom with a phrase that people used to anoint or crown a new king. But Hushai did not mention Absalom's name in the greeting. It is likely that

Hushai really meant King David when he said, "Long live the king," but he wanted Absalom to think he was talking about Absalom. Hushai likely bowed himself low to the ground before Absalom as he said this.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you greet leaders in your culture? What kind of gestures do you use? Tell a story about a time when someone pretended to be loyal to a leader. What kinds of things did that person do to try to prove they were loyal? Pause this audio here.

When Absalom saw this, Absalom asked Hushai if this was the love or loyalty he showed to David, Hushai's friend. Absalom was probably surprised that Hushai had abandoned Hushai's close friend David. It is also likely that Absalom was criticising Hushai because Absalom also asked Hushai why he did not go with his friend, King David. Absalom probably believed that staying in Jerusalem meant that Hushai was no longer loyal to David. The truth is that Hushai had returned to Jerusalem because he was loyal to David. Absalom probably did not know that Hushai had met with David on the Mount of Olives.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories about when someone betrayed their leader. How did other people feel about the person who betrayed their leader? Pause this audio here.

Hushai said that he could not leave Jerusalem. Hushai said that Yahweh had chosen the person whom all the people of Israel had made king. That king was Hushai's master, and Hushai would remain with him. Hushai did not mention the name of the king Hushai meant. Hushai could have meant David or Absalom. It is likely that Hushai meant David but chose to speak vaguely so that Absalom would assume Hushai meant Absalom. David was the one whom Yahweh chose to be king, not Absalom. In addition to that, Hushai also told Absalom that it was right for Hushai to serve Absalom because Absalom is David's son. Hushai promised to serve Absalom in the same way as he had previously served Absalom's father, David. When David sent Hushai back to Jerusalem, David asked Hushai to tell Absalom that Hushai would serve Absalom just as Hushai had served David. David wanted Hushai to do this so that he could get close to Absalom and challenge the advice that Ahithophel would give Absalom. It is likely that Absalom thought that Hushai had betrayed David by offering to serve and be loyal to Absalom.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How would you speak to a very powerful person that you do not like if you knew that the person could kill you if you made them angry? Tell stories of a time when someone did not like a powerful leader, but he spoke to that leader in a way that made the leader feel important or special. Pause this audio here.

It is likely that Absalom was satisfied that Hushai was telling Absalom the truth because Absalom did not question Hushai further.

Then Absalom turned and asked his advisors to give Absalom their advice on what they should do next in the plan to make Absalom king of Israel. Ahithophel, who was likely the leader of the advisors, answered Absalom. Ahithophel told Absalom that the first thing Absalom should do is to sleep with or have sexual relations with Absalom's father's concubines that David had left to take care of the palace. Concubines were wives of a lower class. Concubines had a lower status than the first wife but a higher status than a slave. Kings tended to have many concubines because they married the daughters of other rulers when they made peace deals with those rulers. When a king died or people forced him out, all the king's concubines became the property of the new king. Sleeping with the wife or concubine of a king was considered a way of making a claim on the kingdom as the new king.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss the marriage customs of your people. How many wives can a man have, and what are their statuses in the marriage? What happens when the man dies? For example, how do people divide the man's property between his many wives? Pause this audio here.

Ahithophel told Absalom that all the people of Israel would hear that Absalom had done this thing. Then people would know that Absalom had disgraced his father, David, and completely destroyed their relationship. Yahweh had commanded that people should not sleep with their father's wives, as this would disgrace their father. It is likely that Ahithophel wanted the people who supported Absalom to be sure that Absalom would not change his mind and try to make peace with David. David had previously forgiven Absalom after Absalom killed his brother, so it is likely that they felt that David might also forgive Absalom for rebelling. Ahithophel said that when the people heard that Absalom was offensive or unforgivable to David, Absalom and his people

would become more powerful. It is possible that Ahithophel also meant that the people would be more determined and strong in their support of Absalom.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are some things, especially sexual matters, that people consider very offensive and unforgivable in your culture? Pause this audio here.

So people put up a tent on the flat roof of the palace. The tent was likely the kind of tent that people put up for a bride and groom on their wedding day. In Israelite culture, houses had flat roofs. In a marriage, people might put up a tent on the roof of the bridegroom's father's house. Then the bride and groom would spend seven days in this tent to complete their marriage by having sexual relations.

Stop here and look at a picture of a bridal tent on a flat roof as a group. Pause this audio here.

Absalom went into the bridal tent and slept with his father's concubines. All the people of Israel were able to see the tent on the roof of the palace. People would have known why Absalom was going into the tent with the concubines, but they were not able to see what happened inside. You will remember that Yahweh had told David through the prophet Nathan that someone close to David would publicly do with David's wives the same thing David had done with Bathsheba secretly.

During those days, people greatly respected Ahithophel's advice. People trusted Ahithophel's advice the same way that they trusted the teaching, or word, of God. Both David and Absalom valued Ahithophel's advice in this way.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of a time when you have asked someone for advice. Why did you choose that person?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: Absalom and all the men of Israel, or the troops with Absalom, came to Jerusalem. Ahithophel also came with Absalom.

In the second scene: Hushai, David's advisor, went to Absalom and greeted him warmly with a greeting that people used to greet kings. Absalom responded to Hushai's greeting by asking him why he had not gone with David, Hushai's friend. Hushai said that he could not have left Jerusalem because he served the man that Yahweh had chosen and the people had made king. Hushai told Absalom that he would serve Absalom as he had served Absalom's father, David.

In the third scene: Absalom asked his advisors for advice on what they should do next. Ahithophel advised Absalom to take David's concubines that David had left in the palace and sleep with them so that all the people in Israel would know what Absalom had done.

In the fourth scene: Absalom's men put up a tent for Absalom on the roof of the palace. Absalom publicly went into the tent with David's concubines and slept with them.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- Absalom
- All the men or troops of Israel who were with Absalom
- Ahithophel
- Hushai
- David
- David's concubines
- All the people of Israel

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This story returns to the day that Absalom entered Jerusalem. The stories of Ziba and Shimei interrupted the flow of the action, so the storyteller begins this story with a word that tells us what was happening back in Jerusalem while Shimei was insulting David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine telling a story that has more than one scene. You have been describing one scene, but now want to tell the listener things that had been happening in another scene at the same time. What connecting words or phrases would you use to introduce the new scene? Pause this audio here.

Absalom and all the people, or troops of Israel who were with Absalom, had reached Jerusalem. Absalom did not have all the people of Israel with Absalom, but only those who supported Absalom. Two hundred men had come with Absalom on the day that Absalom left Jerusalem, so it is likely that these 200 and maybe others who had joined Absalom from other cities of Israel are the ones who came with him in this story. David also had some people of Israel with him when he left Jerusalem, and it is likely that other people stayed in their homes. Ahithophel, David's former advisor, was also among the people who came with Absalom. The storyteller mentions Ahithophel by name because he is one of the main characters of this story. Ahithophel came with Absalom because he had betrayed David and had begun to support Absalom. It is likely that Absalom and his men had already gone into the palace and that Absalom was sitting on David's throne.

In the second scene, Hushai, the Arkite, David's friend or advisor, went to Absalom. It is likely that the great men of Jerusalem were going to the palace to greet Absalom. It was a common custom that the leading men of the city would bring gifts to a new king and bow down to him to show their loyalty. Hushai came and proclaimed or shouted a saying that people used to wish a new king a long life. When someone used this phrase, they were saying that the new king is the rightful king, and they were promising to be loyal to him. People would usually bow before the king when they said this to him and even mention the king's name. Many people who spoke these words to King David when he became king used David's name. Hushai did not use Absalom's name. It is likely that Hushai did not really mean the words or accept that Absalom was the rightful king.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Imagine someone who wants to be king has chased away a king from his kingdom. Choose a member of the group to play an important man of your community and another to play the new king. The rest of the group can play the king's warriors. Let the important man come to the new king and greet him with typical words or phrases you use to greet a new king. The important man should be careful not to make the new king angry, but he should hide the fact that he does not really support the new king or want him to be king. The rest of the group may suggest better words or phrases for the greeting. Pause this audio here.

Absalom answered Hushai by asking if this was the way Hushai was showing loyalty or faithfulness to his friend David. As David's counselor, Hushai had to be committed, or faithful, to David. If Hushai supported Absalom, he would be disloyal to David. Absalom did not expect Hushai to answer this question. Absalom was saying that Hushai was betraying David. It is likely that Absalom was surprised that Hushai would betray King David. It is important to remember that although Hushai appeared disloyal to David, Hushai was really there because David had sent him. Absalom probably did not call Hushai by his official title of advisor, but instead used the

more common word for friend or companion. Absalom probably did this to mock Hushai for abandoning David. Absalom asked Hushai why he did not go with his friend David, but Absalom did not mention David's name. It is likely that Absalom was making fun of Hushai and showing how much people did not love David. This time, Absalom expected Hushai to answer his question. Hushai answered that he could not have gone with David or left Jerusalem. Hushai told Absalom that he would remain with and belong to or serve the person that Yahweh had chosen—the same person that both the people who were there and all the people of Israel had made their king. It is unclear which person Hushai was referring to because he did not mention the names of either Absalom or David. Hushai spoke vaguely about who he would give his loyalty to. It is likely that Hushai wanted Absalom to reach his own conclusions. Hushai continued speaking and gave Absalom another reason for why he did not go with David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Imagine you are having a debate or proving something to someone. You give that person one point and want to add another point to make your case stronger. Which words would you use to add the second point? The word should show the connection between the first point and the second point. Pause this audio here.

Hushai asked Absalom in whose presence he should serve. Hushai did not expect an answer to this question because Hushai answered it himself. Hushai said that he would serve in the presence of David's son. It is likely that Hushai wanted Absalom to see that Hushai had not been unfaithful to David by transferring his loyalty to Absalom because David was Absalom's father. However, David had asked Hushai on the Mount of Olives to offer to serve Absalom. Hushai could therefore serve Absalom while at the same time serving and remaining loyal to David. Hushai promised to serve Absalom just as Hushai had served Absalom's father, David. Hushai uses his words very cleverly.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of someone who has used clever words to save themselves from trouble. Pause this audio here.

In the third scene, Absalom turned and asked Ahithophel to give him advice. Absalom wanted Ahithophel to tell Absalom what he should do next in the plan to strengthen Absalom as king. It is likely that Absalom spoke to a group of advisors, but Ahithophel, their leader, answered. Ahithophel told Absalom to sleep with his father's concubines. You will remember that David had left these concubines in the palace to look after it.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What polite word or phrase do you use in your culture to refer to a man and a woman sleeping together? Make sure the word or phrase would not be offensive to mention in public. How can you refer to a woman who is married as a second-class wife with lower status than other wives? Pause this audio here.

Ahithophel told Absalom that all the people of Israel would hear that Absalom had made himself offensive to his father, David. The storyteller uses a word that means something smells really bad to tell Absalom to make himself offensive to David. The people would know that Absalom had completely challenged his father, David, and had broken their relationship. Then all the people who supported Absalom would become more powerful or stronger. Ahithophel probably thought that unless the wrong that Absalom did to David was very horrible, there was always a possibility that David would forgive Absalom. And if Absalom's supporters thought the same way, then they would not support Absalom completely because they would be afraid that when David forgave Absalom, David would kill Absalom's supporters.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about someone who did the most unforgivable thing in your culture. Use special language to describe how the community or the person he wronged felt about him. Pause audio here.

In the fourth scene, some of Absalom's men put up a tent for Absalom on the flat roof of the palace. And Absalom slept with his father's concubines in the tent, where everyone understood what Absalom was doing. Houses in Israel had flat roofs that everyone could see. David was on such a roof when he saw Bathsheba bathing. When people saw David's concubine go into the tent and Absalom follow them, people would have understood what was happening. People likely spread this gossip across the country very quickly, especially because this was what Ahithophel intended to happen. It is important to remember that concubines are not prostitutes but wives. Sleeping with your father's wife was not only against the law of Moses but also a horrible and hateful thing to do in Israel. Reuben, the firstborn son of Israel, lost his inheritance for doing this same thing.

The storyteller finishes this story by telling us that in those days, the advice of Ahithophel was as highly valued as the word of God, and that both David and Absalom valued Ahithophel's advice. The storyteller probably says this to explain why Absalom would follow Ahithophel's advice and agree to sleep with his father's concubines.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- Absalom
- All the men or troops of Israel who were with Absalom
- Ahithophel
- Hushai
- David
- David's concubines
- All the people of Israel

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first scene, Absalom and all the people or troops of Israel who were with him had reached Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the troops of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Hurray! We feel very happy. We did not even need to fight; or
- King David and his men ran away from us. The kingdom belongs to Absalom; or
- We have been with Absalom during his exile. We have served Absalom courageously. Absalom will surely reward us.

Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel happy and strong. I am king! or
- I must be very careful to make sure that I secure myself. My father, David, will be back to fight for the kingdom. Even now, David may have traps set up for me here; or
- The leading men of the city have all come to me bearing gifts. These men want to show their loyalty to me.

Ask the person playing all the people of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It is a new day. Jerusalem rejoices because Absalom is king. May the king live a long life and bring peace and prosperity to us. What a handsome young man Absalom is; or
- A few of us are sad for King David. David has been a good king and has saved us from our enemies, but we have to be careful. If we show any love for David, Absalom and his men might kill us.

Continue the drama.

Ahithophel also came with Absalom to Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ahithophel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Finally, our plans have succeeded! or
- It is nice to be back in the palace again. I will be even more powerful and rich than before. Absalom has promised me great things; or
- The people have gladly received Absalom. It seems the people were tired of David's rule. Maybe the people will not think of me as a traitor to David since they have all sided with Absalom also.

Ask the person playing all the people of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Look! Look! Even Ahithophel has gone over to Absalom's side; or
- Surely if a man of such wisdom has turned his back on King David, there is a very good reason. Ahithophel knows all the secret things that we do not know. We should follow Ahithophel and turn our backs on David, too. Yes! Let us support Absalom just like Ahithophel does.

Continue the drama.

In the second scene, Hushai, David's advisor, went to Absalom and said to Absalom, "Long live the King! Long live the King!"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very nervous. I should be very careful. Absalom is a dangerous man, and Absalom's people are ready to kill for him; or
- I must be very careful. One wrong word and Absalom will discover that I am not really loyal to him. The people must believe that I am betraying David and supporting Absalom. I must convince people, or I will have failed in my mission; or
- I will say, "Long live the king," instead of, "Long live King Absalom." That way, Absalom will think I mean him when I really mean, "Long live King David."

Continue the drama.

Absalom questioned Hushai's loyalty to David and asked him why he did not go with David, Hushai's friend.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- What? Is this Hushai, David's closest advisor? We all know how much Hushai loves my father, David. Hushai has served David for a long time. Why would Hushai betray David now? or
- Look at how low Hushai bows before me. Hushai proclaims me king without shame for his disloyalty. What a poor friend to David Hushai has proved to be. Hushai was happy to live with David in luxury, but he will not suffer with him now; or
- Who would choose to serve a weak king like David when they can serve a mighty warrior like Absalom? God favors me!

Ask the person playing the troops of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The king is very funny. He mocks David and Hushai; or
- Hushai was in a covenant with David to serve David as a friend of the king. But Hushai has not been able to show David even the most basic and common of friendship.

Continue the drama.

Hushai told Absalom that Hushai could not have left Jerusalem or gone with David because Hushai would serve the person whom Yahweh had chosen. Hushai would serve the same person whom the people there and all the people of Israel had chosen as their king. Hushai also said that it was right for him to serve Absalom because Absalom was David's son. Hushai promised to serve Absalom as Hushai had served David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel under pressure. I am sweating. I must convince Absalom that I sincerely support him and that my support is valuable. Absalom thinks that I have betrayed David. How will I make Absalom value my friendship? or
- I will tell Absalom that my loyalty is to the person that Yahweh has chosen, but I will not mention his name because Yahweh chose David. I will also say that my master is the same person whom these people and all Israel have made king. People will obviously believe that I am referring to Absalom, but I mean David; or
- I will flatter Absalom. Absalom has a big ego and thinks very well of himself. Absalom will find it easy to believe anything good said about him. Absalom thinks so highly of himself.

Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Hushai is slippery like a snake but very wise. Hushai has betrayed David and come to me, but Hushai speaks as if he has done nothing wrong; or
- But Hushai is right. Yahweh has chosen me, and these people have made me king. It is wise of Hushai to serve me. Hushai has risked his life to betray David for me. I will keep Hushai with me. It is good for the people to see that all of David's advisors have abandoned David; or
- Hushai's service will be valuable. David trusted Hushai's counsel. A king should have many councillors

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I have never chosen Absalom to be king. I chose David and promised him an everlasting kingdom; or
- I have not rejected David. David is still my chosen one. I am just correcting David. David remains king even now; or
- Absalom is rebellious. I will punish Absalom.

Continue the drama.

In the third scene, Absalom turned to the other advisors and asked for advice on what they should do next. Ahithophel told Absalom that Absalom should sleep with his father's concubines.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ahithophel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It is not enough that Absalom has Jerusalem and the palace. Even though many of David's former supporters have come to Absalom, there is still a chance Absalom could be unable to keep the kingdom; or
- David forgave Absalom when Joab begged for him. There is a chance that David could forgive Absalom again. We all know how much David loves his children; or
- Absalom should do something that is unforgivable. Absalom should sleep with David's wives. David has left concubines here in the palace. If Absalom sleeps with the concubines and the people hear of it, they will know that Absalom and David's relationship is completely ruined. Absalom's troops will be stronger when they see how committed Absalom is to take David's kingdom.

Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I think this is a good idea. The concubines of the former king belong to the new king. Yes. This will show the people that there is a new king in Jerusalem; or
- My father, David, will never forgive me, but I do not care. I do not want David's forgiveness. I want David dead. I want David's kingdom; or
- If this will prove to my followers that I am committed and will not turn back from this path, so be it. I will do it. I will listen to this wise advice.

Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel very sad. This is a sad day. A son should not do such a thing with his father's wives. Poor David! David's enemies have fought against him; or
- Ahithophel gives disgusting advice, but I must admit that it is wise. Sleeping with a king's wives is the same as taking the king's throne. I will not try to counter this advice at the moment because I have just arrived here and am not sure whether Absalom trusts me yet; or
- I am worried that Ahithophel is right. Absalom's followers will be greatly encouraged by this act. The people will be firm in their support.

Continue the drama.

In the fourth scene, servants set up a tent for Absalom on the roof of the palace. Absalom publicly went into the tent with David's concubines and slept with them. Absalom did this because he trusted Ahithophel's advice just as Absalom's father, David, and all the people had trusted Ahithophel's advice. People trusted the advice of Ahithophel as much as they trusted the word of God.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing concubines, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- What can we do? Can we fight? Are we men that we should defeat Absalom? We either do as Absalom says or we lose our lives; or
- Why did David not take us with him? This would not have happened! But now we are defenseless, and Absalom does with us as he chooses; or
- We are shamed in the sight of all Israel. What will happen if David is able to retake Jerusalem and recover his kingdom? What will David do to us? Will David punish us? Oh Yahweh, help us!

Ask the person playing the troops, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are glad. Our king is on his throne. Absalom has taken the wives of David as he should; or
- We are confident that Absalom means business and will not turn back from taking David's throne; or
- David cannot forgive this. Absalom's relationship with David is completely destroyed. Now, Absalom will have no choice but to chase David until he kills David, and we will be with Absalom.

Ask the person playing the people of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We heard that Absalom slept with his father's concubines. What a disgrace it is to David that his own son hated and insulted David like this; or
- David has shown his love for Absalom many times. David forgave Absalom when many of us thought David would kill Absalom. But this changes everything; or
- Surely David will forever hate his son. If David gets the chance, he will surely kill Absalom.

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am sad. Absalom has been very bad. Absalom has done evil things that I did not tell him to do; or
- I will punish Absalom for his sin just as I have used his evil behaviour to punish David for the sin that David committed with Bathsheba; or
- I promised David an everlasting kingdom. I will return David to ruling Israel after I have corrected him. I correct David because I love him.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 16:15–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Now Absalom and all the people, the men of **Israel**, came to Jerusalem. And Ahithophel also came with Absalom. Use the same word or phrase for Israel as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

Hushai the Arkite, David's **friend**, came to Absalom and proclaimed, "Long live the king!" The word for friend here is a title for a king's advisor. You may translate it as advisor, councilor, or "friend of the king." Translate this friend, or advisor, in the same way as you translated it in the earlier story when King David meets Hushai at the top of the Mount of Olives in 2 Samuel 15:37.

"Long live the king" is a phrase that people spoke to kings to wish that they would live a long time. This phrase may also be translated in the form of a prayer, such as, "May the king live long."

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **long live the king**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Remember that king is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

Absalom asked Hushai if this was the loyalty, or **steadfast love**, that Hushai showed his friend. Loyalty in this context means that people expected Hushai to obey David faithfully. Loyalty is steadfast, or loyal, love. Hushai had probably made a vow to serve King David, so to betray David would have been disloyal. Use the same word or phrase for steadfast love as you have used in previous passages. Steadfast love is in the Master Glossary.

When Absalom calls David Hushai's friend, he does not use the official title but a common word for normal friend.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **friend**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Hushai told Absalom that he would remain with the one whom **Yahweh** had chosen. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

Hushai also promised to **serve** Absalom as he had served David. A servant, or a slave, is a man or a woman who works for another person. Hushai is promising to work for and be loyal to Absalom. Use the same word or phrase for serve as you used in previous passages. For more information on servant, refer to the Master Glossary.

Ahithophel counseled Absalom to sleep with Absalom's father's **concubines**. A concubine was a secondary wife. A concubine had rights and privileges, but was lower in status compared to the first wife. A concubine was not a prostitute. People had concubines for many reasons. A king had many concubines, mostly as a result of making treaties with other nations. Use the same word or phrase for concubine as you used in previous passages.

People sought the advice of Ahithophel in those days. People considered Ahithophel's advice as trustworthy as the **word of God**. The narrator does not use the personal name of Yahweh here but the more general word for God. Use the same word or phrase for "word" and for God as you used in previous passages. For more information on word and God, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 16:15–23

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 17:1–14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 17:1–14 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:1–14 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last story, Ahithophel advised Absalom to sleep with Absalom's father's concubines so that all the people of Israel would know that Absalom had disgraced his father, David.

In this story, the storyteller tells us the rest of the advice that Ahithophel gave Absalom. Soon after Ahithophel gave Absalom the first advice, Ahithophel told Absalom how to conquer David. Ahithophel asked Absalom to let Ahithophel choose 12,000 men or troops to take with Ahithophel and go after David. Ahithophel said that he would take the troops and go that same night and hunt David. Ahithophel said that he would surprise David and attack him whilst David was still tired, weak, and discouraged. Ahithophel said that Ahithophel's sudden attack would cause David's men to panic and run away. Ahithophel's plan was to move quickly so that they could surprise David and his men at night.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of times when an enemy has attacked your community when you least expected it. How did the people of your community react? Pause this audio here.

Ahithophel said that he would kill David only and return the rest of the men who were with David to Absalom. Ahithophel said that he would bring them to Absalom the same way a bride or woman comes home to her

husband. Ahithophel probably meant that the people who were loyal to David would return to Absalom, who he thought was the rightful king. Ahithophel told Absalom that he would bring back all the people to him except the one man, David, whom Absalom wanted to kill. Ahithophel told Absalom that in this way all the people of Israel would be at peace. It is likely that Ahithophel meant that after he killed David, the people of Israel would no longer be divided between Absalom and David, and the conflict that divided the nation would be over.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when there was internal conflict in your community or country. What caused the conflict, and how did it end? Did the solution bring lasting peace? If not, can you suggest other solutions that would have brought lasting peace? Pause this audio here.

Absalom saw that Ahithophel's plan was good, and so did all the elders of Israel. The elders represented the people of Israel and were likely there to make an agreement with Absalom, the new king, on behalf of the people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of a time when your fighting men have been successful in battle. What strategy or plan helped the men win, and who was the person responsible for the strategy? Pause audio here.

Although Absalom thought that Ahithophel's advice was wise, Absalom decided to have people bring Hushai to Absalom to see if Hushai agreed. It is likely that Hushai was not part of the group of elders or official advisors at that moment. When Hushai came in, Absalom told him the advice that Ahithophel had given. Absalom asked Hushai if he agreed with Ahithophel and told Hushai that if he did not agree, then he should speak and give Absalom his advice. It was common for kings to have several advisors and for the advisors to give the king different opinions. The king would decide the best advice to follow.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Who advises kings or leaders in your community? How many advisors do those people have, and what happens when the advisors have different opinions? Pause this audio here.

Hushai answered Absalom and said that on this occasion, Ahithophel had not given good advice, even though Ahithophel usually gave wise advice. Hushai explained to Absalom why Ahithophel's advice was not good. Hushai said that Absalom's father, David, and his men were mighty men or well-trained fighters, and that they were very angry or bitter. Hushai compared the men to a bear or a large animal in the field that had been robbed of her children. It is likely that Hushai meant that David's men were very angry because Absalom had stolen David's kingdom.

Stop here and look at a picture of an angry bear. Pause this audio here.

Hushai probably meant that David and his mighty men would fight fiercely. Hushai also said that David was a man of war, or experienced in battle, and would not spend the night in the same place as his troops. Hushai told Absalom that David would hide himself in a cave or another suitable place. David had gained great experience in hiding himself in caves when Saul was hunting David.

Stop here and look at a picture of a cave as a group. Discuss this question as a group: Talk about some of the strategies that people in your community have used to gain an advantage over a much stronger enemy. Pause this audio here.

Hushai likely meant that David would hide himself so that he and his mighty men could attack Ahithophel and the 12,000 men by surprise. Hushai told Absalom that if David attacked first and killed some of Absalom's fighting men, people would exaggerate the news and anyone who heard it would believe that David had killed all of Absalom's men. Hushai said that this would cause the bravest man in Absalom's army, who is as fearless as a lion, to tremble because David and his men are mighty fighters. People know lions as the most fearless animal because lions are not scared of any animal. Therefore, people say that a brave man has the heart of a lion. It is interesting that Hushai compares David to two dangerous animals that David had bravely fought with.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about a time when a strong and violent enemy threatened you or your people. What effect did the reputation of your enemy have on you before the attack? Pause this audio here.

These are the reasons that Hushai gave Absalom for why he did not agree with Ahithophel's advice. It is likely that Hushai thought that Ahithophel's advice was actually good. But Hushai wanted to cause Absalom to doubt Ahithophel's advice because Hushai had promised David that he would frustrate Ahithophel's advice.

After challenging Ahithophel's advice, Hushai then gave his own advice to Absalom. Absalom had asked Hushai to agree with Ahithophel or give Absalom different advice. Hushai said that Absalom should gather to himself all the people of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba. Dan was the most northern city of Israel, and Beersheba was the most southern city.

Stop here and look at a map of Dan to Beersheba as a group. Pause this audio here.

Hushai told Absalom to gather all of those people, as many as the sand of the sea, and lead them himself to battle against David. Whereas Ahithophel had advised a small number of men to fight against David, Hushai advised a large number. Hushai said that with this large number of fighters, together the people could fall on or attack David in whatever place he was. Hushai compared their attack to the way dew covers the ground. Hushai likely meant that together, all of the people would overpower David with their larger numbers. Hushai said that they would kill all the people who were with David. Ahithophel had said that he would only kill David. Hushai said that if David withdrew or retreated into a city to hide, Absalom's large force of people would bring ropes and drag that city into a valley so that not even a pebble would be left. It is likely that Hushai means that they would break down the city walls. Cities commonly had high, strong walls for protection against a military attack. Hushai is suggesting that a large army is able to completely destroy even a well-built city.

Stop here and look at a picture of a wall surrounding a city as a group. Pause this audio here.

Ahithophel suggested a light secret attack, but Hushai disagreed and said that a large, public attack would be better. It is likely that Hushai wants to delay Absalom. This would give David time to escape because Hushai's plan would take time to organise. People could carry out Ahithophel's plan immediately and catch David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story of the biggest war you know of. Talk about the details of the war, like the time people spent making preparations, the number of fighters, and the results of the war. Then tell another story of the smallest war you know of. Talk about the details of the small war and compare them to the larger war. Pause this audio here.

Hushai probably wanted to make sure that Absalom did not send Ahithophel to hunt David that night. The delay would give Hushai time to warn David.

Absalom and all the men of Israel who were with him liked Hushai's advice and said that it was better than Ahithophel's advice. This happened because Yahweh had planned to defeat the good advice of Ahithophel and bring disaster upon Absalom. Yahweh can accomplish his plans using good or bad people. Absalom accepted Hushai's advice and rejected Ahithophel's.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: Ahithophel advises Absalom to give him a small group of troops, 12,000, to go with him to hunt David. Ahithophel says it is best to chase David whilst he is tired and discouraged and kill only David. Ahithophel says that if he kills David only, the rest of the people will return to Absalom and all Israel will be at peace. Absalom and all the elders of Israel liked Ahithophel's advice.

In the second scene: Absalom sends for Hushai to hear his opinion. Hushai disagrees with Ahithophel's advice and says that it would not work because King David and his men are experienced warriors who are very angry and bitter. Hushai says that if David is able to attack first, the report would go out that there had been a great

slaughter of Absalom's men. And the bravest man in Absalom's army would become very afraid because everybody knew that King David and his men were fearless warriors.

In the third scene: Hushai advised Absalom that he should gather all of the men of Israel and lead them to battle himself. Hushai said that with the large number of people, they could overpower David wherever they found him, even in a strong city. Absalom and the men of Israel who were with him accepted Hushai's advice.

In the fourth scene: The storyteller tells us that this happened because Yahweh had determined to defeat Ahithophel's advice and bring disaster upon Absalom.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- Absalom
- David
- Ahithophel
- Hushai the Arkite
- The elders of Israel
- The 12,000 men Ahithophel wanted to take with him to hunt David
- The men who were with David
- The people of Israel whom Hushai advised Absalom to gather from Dan to Beersheba
- And the men of Israel who were with Absalom

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This story begins with a word that shows that the events of this story are closely connected with the previous story. However, Hushai is not present at the beginning of this story. After Ahithophel had advised Absalom to sleep with his father's concubines, Ahithophel asked Absalom for permission to choose 12,000 men or troops so that Ahithophel could take them and go after David that same night. Ahithophel explained to Absalom what he would do with the 12,000 men if Absalom allowed him to take them. Ahithophel said that he would come upon or attack David by surprise whilst David was still weak of hands. "Weak of hands" is special language that means someone is discouraged and does not have a lot of power.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell of a time when a strong warrior fought many enemies. Talk about how the warrior became physically and emotionally exhausted. Pay attention to the words and phrases you use to describe how the warrior felt. Pause this audio here.

Ahithophel said that he would throw David into a panic or make him afraid by the surprise attack, and all the people who were with David would run away.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What special words or phrases can you use in your language to talk about causing your enemy to panic and run away by a surprise attack? Pause this audio here.

Ahithophel said that he would personally kill King David and then return the rest of the people to Absalom as if they were a bride or woman coming home to her husband. Ahithophel explained that if he killed David only, the rest of the people would not be harmed. It is likely that Ahithophel means that the conflict would be over and all Israel would be at peace. But Ahithophel might also be saying that no one would harm David's followers. It is important to remember that Ahithophel was speaking to Absalom, probably in the palace, and explaining what he would do for him. But the things Ahithophel said did not actually happen.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of times when your community has turned away or left its leader, for example, a politician, and then later returned to him. Describe the events that led to that person's return. Pay attention to the words and phrases you use when describing how the people returned to that person. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller says that Ahithophel's advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the elders of Israel who were there. This is special language that means that Absalom and the elders considered Ahithophel's advice very wise.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate the special language that Ahithophel's advice "seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the elders of Israel." Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, Absalom sent for Hushai to hear his opinion also. When Hushai came in, Absalom told Hushai what Ahithophel had advised. Absalom asked Hushai whether they should do as Ahithophel had advised, and if not, then Hushai should say what was in his mouth also. To say what was in Hushai's mouth means to give Hushai's own advice.

Stop here and do this activity as a group: Choose a person to play Absalom, another to play Ahithophel, and another to play Hushai. The person playing Ahithophel should give his advice to Absalom. Absalom should then say that he wants to hear what Hushai thinks also. Absalom should speak in a way that makes it clear that what Hushai thinks is equally important to him. Pause this audio here.

Hushai answered Absalom and said that on this occasion, Ahithophel's advice was not good. By saying that Ahithophel's advice was not good this time, Hushai was saying that Ahithophel usually gives good advice and was limiting his criticism of Ahithophel's advice to this one instance. Hushai may also have been comparing it to the previous advice that Ahithophel gave Absalom in the previous story. Hushai continued speaking and explained why he said that Ahithophel's advice was not good.

Hushai spoke to Absalom personally and told him that Hushai himself knew that Absalom's father, David, and David's men were mighty men or highly trained soldiers. Hushai told Absalom that David's men were also bitter of soul or very angry at this time. Hushai compared the men's anger to the anger that a bear feels when someone has taken away her children. A bear is a large, fierce wild animal. Hushai probably meant that Absalom had robbed David of his throne and chased him out of Jerusalem, and the anger this caused made David and his men very dangerous. Hushai likely wanted Absalom to doubt Ahithophel's plan by showing him that it would not be as easy to defeat David and his men as Ahithophel had suggested.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of when an enemy surrounded or overcame a person or some warriors. Talk about how the people kept fighting hard even though their enemy was much stronger. Describe the way in which the people fought. Pay attention to the words and phrases you use to describe how they fought. How will you translate the special language, "bitter of soul," that the storyteller uses to describe how David and his men felt? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about how Hushai compares David's men's anger to an angry bear. Pause this audio here.

Hushai continued to speak to Absalom personally and gave him a second reason why Ahithophel's advice was not good.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss words or phrases that you can use to introduce a second reason in an argument. Pause this audio here.

Hushai told Absalom that his father, David, is a man of war, or experienced in war, and would not spend the night with the other soldiers. Hushai likely wanted to discourage Absalom regarding the plan of Ahithophel, which required finding David and killing him. Hushai said that even at that moment, as they were speaking, David had hidden himself in one of the caves or somewhere else. Hushai could not see David or know for sure that David was in a cave. It is likely that Hushai spoke about David being hidden in a cave with certainty because he wanted Absalom to doubt the certainty of finding David and killing him. Hushai also wanted Absalom to imagine that David would make the first attack. Hushai said that if David killed some of Absalom's men at the first attack, anyone who heard the report would say that David had killed many of the people who were with Absalom. It is likely that Hushai meant that people would exaggerate the report and make Absalom seem weak. Hushai said that because everyone knew that David and his men were great warriors, even the bravest man who followed Absalom would become weak with fear when they heard this. Even if a soldier had the fearless heart of a lion, his heart would melt because of David and his men. Someone with the heart of a lion is very brave and fearless, just like a lion is brave, powerful, and fearless.

Stop here and look at a picture of a lion as a group. Discuss this question as a group: Tell stories about a time when news about the strength of the enemy has caused your warriors to be afraid. Describe how the warriors went from being brave to feeling fearful. Pay attention to the words and phrases you use to describe their bravery and fear. Pause this audio here.

In the third scene, after Hushai had criticised Ahithophel's advice, Hushai gave his own advice to Absalom. Hushai told Absalom to gather all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, to himself. Dan and Beersheba are both cities of Israel. Dan is in the north, and Beersheba is in the south. When people use "from Dan to Beersheba" as a phrase, it means all of the land of Israel. Hushai told Absalom that Absalom should lead a large number of fighters, as many as the sand of the sea, to battle.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you describe large numbers of people. It is difficult to count the number of grains of sand, so that was one way to describe a very large number of people. How will you describe the large number of fighters that Hushai tells Absalom to gather? Pause this audio here.

It was common for kings to lead their armies to battle and for their armies to fight more bravely when their king was with them. Hushai suggested a large number of fighters, unlike the 12,000 that Ahithophel suggested. Hushai also told Absalom to lead the fighters himself rather than sending Ahithophel. It is likely that Hushai wanted Absalom to think of the praise he would get from the people if he led them against David publicly rather than sending Ahithophel secretly.

Hushai continued speaking and told Absalom why his plan would succeed. Hushai said that they would find David in whatever place he was, and they would fall upon David or attack him as dew falls upon the ground. It is likely that Hushai meant that with the large number of fighters, Absalom would be able to overpower David like dew covers the ground. Dew is the drops of water that form on the ground and other surfaces outside during the night.

Stop here and look at a picture of dew as a group. Discuss how you will translate this special language as a group. Pause this audio here.

Hushai said that Absalom and his men should kill David and all his men. Hushai said that even if David and his men withdrew into a walled city, Absalom's men would be able to get David, because all the men of Israel that Absalom would have gathered from Dan to Beersheba would bring ropes and drag the city to the valley, leaving not even a small stone in the city. Large stone walls protected cities and made it difficult for armies to attack the people inside. Hushai is suggesting that with a large number of fighters, Absalom could tear the walls of the city down or destroy it completely. Ahithophel had advised killing only David in a surprise attack. Hushai suggests killing David and all of David's men in a public way. It is likely that Hushai wants Absalom to think of the glory that he would get from his plan.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell of different military leaders in your community and their victories. Compare the size of the enemy they fought and the glory or praise they received for it. Pause this audio here.

Absalom and all the men of Israel who were with him liked Hushai's advice and said that it was better than Ahithophel's advice.

In the fourth scene, the narrator tells us that they chose Hushai's advice because Yahweh had commanded or planned to defeat Ahithophel's good or better advice in order to bring disaster upon Absalom.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- Absalom
- David
- Ahithophel
- Hushai the Arkite
- The elders of Israel
- The 12,000 men Ahithophel wanted to take with him to hunt David
- The men who were with David
- The people of Israel whom Hushai advised Absalom to gather from Dan to Beersheba
- And the men of Israel who were with Absalom

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first scene, Ahithophel asked Absalom to give him permission to choose 12,000 men or troops so that he could take them and go after David that same night. Ahithophel said that he would attack David by surprise whilst David was still tired and discouraged. Ahithophel said that he would throw David into a panic, and all the people who were with David would run away. Ahithophel said that he would personally kill King David and then return the rest of the people to Absalom as if they were a bride or woman coming home to her husband. Ahithophel explained that if only David were killed, the rest of the people would be at peace.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ahithophel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It is important that we act quickly. We can waste no time. David and his men are weak. We must pursue David and his men immediately. We cannot allow David's men time to rest or recover their strength.

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Ahithophel gives Absalom good military advice; or
- The tactics are wise. But I will not let them come to pass. I do not want Absalom to succeed, so I will cause Ahithophel's advice to be frustrated; or
- I plan to punish Absalom. I will bring disaster upon Absalom.

Continue the drama.

The advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the elders of Israel who were there.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Wow. I like this plan. It sounds very simple and effective. Ahithophel is a wise man. I think Ahithophel will do a good job of leading my men; or
- How wonderful it would be if this worked. I can hear it now: "David is dead!" What wonderful news that would be. It would be even better if, as Ahithophel says, David were the only one he killed and David's men came back to me. He has some great warriors with him.

Ask the person playing elders of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Quick, silent, and immediate! What a great strategy. Only Ahithophel would think of such a wise move. Ahithophel's reputation is well deserved; or
- The quicker people do this, the sooner the nation will be at peace. We do not want this conflict to last many days because we do not want the people to be divided; or
- "As long as David is alive, Absalom will never rule in peace. There will be war in Israel until he is killed. Ahithophel is right, the death of David will mean peace for the whole nation."

Continue the drama.

In the second scene, Absalom sent for Hushai to hear his opinion also. When people had brought Hushai in, Absalom told Hushai what Ahithophel had spoken or advised. Absalom asked Hushai to agree with Ahithophel or give the advice that was in his own mouth.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I will make sure all my wise men have given me their thoughts before I proceed; or
- Hushai has been a close advisor of my father and has spent time with him. Maybe Hushai will understand my father better than the rest of my advisors; or
- However, Ahithophel's advice is very good.

Ask the person playing Ahithophel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I think that they have accepted my advice. I am happy because it seems that King Absalom will give me my request; or
- The elders are also pleased. All the councillors and men of Israel present are in agreement. We shall strike David tonight; or
- Hushai is a wise man. Hushai will see the wisdom of my advice. I am confident that Hushai will agree.

Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Oh no! Ahithophel's advice is very good and wise. If Absalom follows it, Ahithophel will have killed David by morning. I must be wise and protect my king. This is why David sent me here, to frustrate Ahithophel's advice; or
- It is not enough to give Absalom different advice. I must first prove to Absalom that Ahithophel's advice will fail; or
- The best solution is to delay Absalom. If he moves a little bit slower, I can send a message to David, and David can escape. I must make sure that Absalom does not send Ahithophel after David tonight.

Continue the drama.

Hushai answered Absalom and said that on this occasion, Ahithophel's advice was not good. Hushai reminded Absalom that Absalom's father, David, and his men were mighty men and that they were as angry as a bear when someone takes her children away.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- My lord King David is in great danger if Absalom follows Ahithophel's advice. Surely David and his men are weak and most vulnerable tonight; or
- I must convince Absalom that David is not weak. I must remind Absalom that King David and his men are the most fierce warriors in all of Israel. I cannot allow Absalom to think of David as weak and vulnerable; or
- A bear is a dangerous animal when someone robs her of her children. If Absalom can imagine this picture, he may be able to view David as the dangerous bear.

Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It is true, my father is a mighty warrior, and so are his men. I cannot assume that it will be easy to kill my father; or
- Maybe Ahithophel has forgotten what kind of warrior David is; or
- David and his men might be at their most dangerous now. I would not go near a bear that has been robbed of her children. Maybe we should wait before attacking? I wonder what the elders think.

Continue the drama.

Hushai told Absalom that Absalom's father, David, was a man of war and would not spend the night with the other soldiers. Hushai said that even at that moment, as they were speaking, David had hidden himself in one of the caves or somewhere else. Hushai told Absalom that if David attacked first, David would kill some of Absalom's men, and people would report that there had been a great slaughter among Absalom's men. This would cause the bravest man in Absalom's army to become very fearful because they all knew that David and his men were great warriors.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I must make Absalom doubt that Ahithophel would be able to find David if he sent him out against him. I must remind Absalom that David is wise in battle and will not be easy to catch; or
- For many years, Saul hunted David and was unable to find him because David was very clever in hiding himself. I want Absalom to feel that he will not be able to find David, even with the 12,000 men;

Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Oh no! Hushai is right. We cannot take any chances. We must attack first, and our attack must be successful and decisive; or
- The people of Israel must view David as a weak, defeated king, not as a warrior fighting back; or
- Ahithophel's plan has many weaknesses that I had not seen. It is good to have many advisors. If Hushai had not been here, we would have made a big mistake.

Continue the drama.

In the third scene, Hushai gave his own advice to Absalom. Hushai told Absalom to gather all Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, as many fighters as the sand of the sea, and to lead them to battle against David himself. Hushai told Absalom that with this number, Absalom would be able to defeat David wherever he found him, even inside a walled city.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I can see in Absalom's face that I am convincing him. Absalom wants the love of the people. Absalom wants the people to think highly of Absalom and to love him as he loves himself. I will use this against Absalom; or
- Absalom would love to be the mighty warrior at the head of a huge army. Maybe Absalom is jealous of his father's reputation. I want Absalom to think that with a huge battle like this, he can gain a reputation like his father's. I know Absalom would love to be known as the man who defeated the great king David; or
- Absalom believes that all of Israel hates his father and loves him. Absalom likes the thought of all the people of Israel being gathered to fight for him. Look at how the thought of pulling down a city excites him. What a silly boy. Absalom does not know that I am just delaying him. If Absalom were wise, he would have listened to Ahithophel and acted immediately.

Continue the drama.

In the fourth scene, the storyteller tells us that they chose the advice of Hushai because Yahweh had commanded or planned to defeat the good or better advice of Ahithophel in order to bring disaster upon Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Ahithophel gives the better military tactic, but it is not my will that Absalom should be king. I gave David the kingdom, not Absalom. Absalom has done evil in rebelling against his father. I hate rebellion. Rebellion is like witchcraft in my sight. Absalom shall not prosper; or
- I will punish Absalom for his evil. I will cause Absalom to be foolish and to listen to the wrong advice; or
- I love David and will keep him alive. Ahithophel will not kill my anointed king. I am happy with Hushai. Hushai has shown loyalty to his master, David, and has served him well. I will bless Hushai.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Ahithophel advised Absalom to let him attack **King** David whilst David was still tired and discouraged. A king is someone who rules over a city or territory, like a region or a country. Use the same word or phrase for king as you used in previous passages. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary.

Ahithophel's advice seemed right in the eyes of Absalom and all the **elders** of Israel. An elder is a person with authority in the community. In the Old Testament, an elder was usually the head of a family or a group of families. A group of elders would meet together to make decisions about the affairs in the community. Use the same word or phrase for elder as you used in previous passages. For more information on elder, refer to the Master Glossary.

When Absalom asked Hushai to advise him, Hushai reminded Absalom that David and his men were **mighty men**. Mighty men were elite or specially trained soldiers. Use a similar description here as you have previously when you have described David's mighty, brave soldiers.

Hushai said that if David withdrew to a **city**, Absalom's army would drag that city to a valley or river with ropes until not even a small stone was left. A city was a large town that was surrounded by high walls for protection. Use the same word or phrase for city as you used in previous passages.

Absalom and the men of Israel who were with Absalom preferred Hushai's advice because **Yahweh** had planned to bring harm on Absalom. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 17:1–14

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 17:15–29

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 17:15–29 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:15–29 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.

2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:15–29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, Ahithophel advised Absalom to send Ahithophel immediately with 12,000 soldiers to kill David. But Hushai advised that it would be better to wait and organise the whole army of Israel to attack King David. Absalom followed Hushai's advice.

The storyteller tells us what Hushai did immediately after giving his advice to Absalom. Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, the advice that Ahithophel had given to Absalom and the advice that he himself had given to Absalom. Hushai asked Zadok and Abiathar to inform David as quickly as possible. It is likely that Hushai was not very confident that Absalom would follow his advice rather than Ahithophel's. In an earlier story, David had sent Zadok and Abiathar back to Jerusalem with the ark of the covenant. David had told Zadok and Abiathar that he would wait at the fords of the wilderness, or the place where people cross the river on the road to the wilderness, for them to send David reports of what Absalom was doing. Now, in this story, Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar to tell David that he should not spend the night at the fords of the wilderness. Hushai said that if David did not immediately cross over the Jordan River and go to the other side, Absalom's men would swallow up, or destroy, David and all the people with him.

Stop here and look at a picture of a ford in the wilderness as a group. Discuss this question as a group: Tell of a time when an enemy harmed or completely destroyed a person or a group of people. What could that person or group have done to avoid this? Pause this audio here.

Jonathan, Abiathar's son, and Ahimaaz, Zadok's son, were waiting at the spring of Rogel. The spring of Rogel was located less than a mile outside Jerusalem on the border between the land of Benjamin and Judah. Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting there for messages from their fathers, which they would take to David. Jonathan and Ahimaaz could not go in and out of Jerusalem because Absalom would have suspected that they were David's spies. It is likely that Absalom found out that their fathers, Zadok and Abiathar, had wanted to go with David.

Stop here and look at a map of the area as a group. Discuss the distance from Jerusalem to the spring of Rogel and the Jordan River. Tell stories of someone who has had to carry secret messages back and forth. Pause this audio here.

So a female servant or slave, who probably belonged to one of the priests, was to take this message to Jonathan and Ahimaaz. It is likely that the female servant had taken other messages before. Jonathan and Ahimaaz were then to take the message to King David. But a young man or servant saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz and went and told Absalom. It is likely that Absalom had set spies to watch the priests Zadok and Abiathar, and their sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, because Absalom knew that he could not trust Zadok and Abiathar. Jonathan and Ahimaaz, who already had the message from the priest's female servant, ran away quickly and went to the house of a man who lived in Bahurim. Bahurim is the town where Shimei, the man who insulted David, lived.

Stop here and look at a map of the journey from Jerusalem to Bahurim. Pause this audio here.

But it seems that there were people in Bahurim who supported David. The man had a well, or a place where people drew water, in the courtyard of his house.

Stop here and look at a picture of a well in the compound of a house. Pause this audio here.

It is likely that the well was dry at the time because Jonathan and Ahimaaz went down into this well to hide. It was common for wells to dry up from time to time. The wife of the man who owned the house spread a covering over the top or mouth of the well and spread grain over the covering so that no one could tell that the men were hiding in there.

Stop here and look at a picture of grain that is drying. Pause this audio here.

It was common for wells to have a covering to hide them and protect the water from evaporating in the sun. It is also likely that the top of this well was level with the ground.

When Absalom's men or servants came and asked where Jonathan and Ahimaaz were, the woman told them that they had gone over the brook, or small stream of water. It is likely that the woman was referring to a stream connected with the Jordan River. After Absalom's men had looked for Jonathan and Ahimaaz and failed to find them, Absalom's men returned to Jerusalem.

When Absalom's men had gone, Jonathan and Ahimaaz came out of the well and went and told David what Ahithophel had planned against David and his men. David and all the men with him immediately crossed the river. By morning, they had all crossed to the other side.

Stop here and tell stories of a time when a large group of people had to move from danger very quickly. Pause this audio here.

David likely thought that a wise king would follow Ahithophel's advice and attack immediately. So David did not waste any time and crossed the Jordan River as Hushai had advised him.

When Ahithophel realised that Absalom had not followed his advice, Ahithophel took his donkey and went home to his own city, Giloh. When he got there, Ahithophel put his own house in order. Ahithophel gave instructions about how his property should be divided. And then Ahithophel killed himself by hanging himself.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How does a person in your community make sure that people will divide his property the way he would like after he dies? Pause this audio here.

Ahithophel's family buried Ahithophel in his father's tomb. The Israelites buried people in caves. Several people, especially family members, shared a cave or tomb. The fact that Ahithophel's family buried him in his father's tomb suggests that at this time, to kill yourself was not considered a shameful or disgraceful way to die.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: List several reasons why someone from your community might decide to kill themselves. What would people in your community think of what Ahithophel did? Pause this audio here.

It is probable that Ahithophel decided to kill himself after he saw that Absalom did not follow his advice. Ahithophel probably knew that David would defeat Absalom, and Ahithophel did not want to face David after betraying him.

Some time later, David and his men had come to Mahanaim, a town located in the territory of Gilead, about 40 kilometers east of the Jordan River. Absalom and his men also crossed the Jordan.

Stop here and look at a map of the journey from the Jordan River to Mahanaim. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller wants us to know that the armies of David and those of Absalom are now on the same side of the river. Absalom had made Amasa the commander of his army. Amasa, Joab, the commander of David's army, and Absalom were all cousins, which means that both Amasa and Joab were nephews of David. Amasa was the son of a man named Jether the Ishmaelite. His mother was Abigail, the daughter of Nahash and sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother. Absalom and his men also made their camp in the land of Gilead. The land of Gilead was a large area on the east side of the Jordan River. You will remember that previously, Ish-Bosheth, the son of Saul, had been king of Gilead when he rebelled against David. It is likely that David had enemies there.

When David was at Mahanaim, some men from lands east of the Jordan River brought David and the people with him supplies. It is likely that these were rich and important men in their community who brought David supplies to show him their loyalty and support. The first man was Shobi, the son of Nahash, an Ammonite from Rabbah. Shobi was probably the king of the Ammonites, and David had likely appointed Shobi king after David

had conquered Rabbah. The second was Makir, the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar. Makir had been a supporter of the family of Saul and had even looked after Mephibosheth after Jonathan died. The third was Barzillai, a Gileadite from a town called Rogelim in that region. Barzillai was a rich man and a friend of King David. These three brought beds or sleeping mats and blankets. The men also brought basins or wide containers that people made from wood or metal. The men brought earthen vessels or containers that people made of clay and usually used for cooking.

Stop here and look at a picture of beds, basins, and earthen vessels as a group. What do you think the people used the basins and earthen vessels for? Pause this audio here.

The men also brought wheat, barley, flour, parched or roasted grain, beans, and lentils.

Stop here and look at pictures of wheat, barley, flour, parched grain, beans, and lentils as a group. Pause this audio here.

The men also brought honey, curds, cow cheese, and sheep. Curds and cheese are two different solid foods that people make from milk.

Stop here and look at a picture of curds and cheese as a group. Discuss the different foods that your community makes from milk. Pause this audio here.

The three men brought these supplies to David and his men to eat because they knew that David and David's men were hungry, tired, and thirsty in the wilderness. In those days, it was private individuals, usually rich ones, who provided supplies for armies. To supply an army showed you were loyal to that army and its leader or king. These men were likely showing that they and their kingdoms supported David. A war in Israel between David and Absalom would affect their people as well.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell of a time when neighbouring communities have been at war with one another. How did their war affect your community?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:15–29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has seven scenes.

In the first scene: Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar the advice that both he and Ahithophel had given Absalom. Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar to tell David to cross the river immediately.

In the second scene: Zadok and Abiathar sent a servant girl to the spring of Rogel to give the message to their two sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, so that they could take it to David. A young man saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz and went and told Absalom.

In the third scene: Jonathan and Ahimaaz ran to Bahurim and hid in a well at a man's house. The man's wife covered the well and told Absalom's men, when they came, that Jonathan and Ahimaaz had gone over the water brook. Absalom's men searched for Jonathan and Ahimaaz, without finding them, and returned to Jerusalem.

In the fourth scene: Jonathan and Ahimaaz came out of the well and went and told David all that Ahithophel had planned against him. David and all the people with him crossed the river before sunrise.

In the fifth scene: When Ahithophel saw that Absalom had not followed his advice, Ahithophel went to his hometown and killed himself.

In the sixth scene: When David and his men had come to Mahanaim, Absalom and his men crossed the Jordan River also and camped in the land of Gilead.

In the seventh scene: Whilst David was at Mahanaim, Shobi, Makir and Barzillai brought David supplies to refresh him and the people that were with him.

The characters in this passage are:

- Hushai
- Zadok
- Abiathar
- Ahithophel
- Leaders of Israel
- Jonathan
- Ahimaaz
- The female servant whom Zadok and Abiathar regularly sent to Jonathan and Ahimaaz
- A young man who saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz at the spring of en-Rogel and went and told Absalom
- Absalom
- The wife of the man whose house Jonathan and Abiathar ran to
- Absalom's men whom he sent to find Jonathan and Abiathar
- King David
- All the people with King David, his soldiers, servants, officials, and family
- The men of Israel, the ones who were in Absalom's army
- Amasa, the son of Jether, who married Abigail and was the commander of Absalom's army
- Abigail, the daughter of Nahash and sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother
- Joab
- Shobi, son of Nahash
- Makir, son of Ammiel
- And Barzillai

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the previous story, Absalom told Hushai the advice that Ahithophel had given him and asked Hushai if he agreed. Hushai gave Absalom his own different advice. The first scene of this story begins with a word that shows that Hushai spoke to Zadok and Abiathar immediately or very soon after coming back from advising Absalom.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Which words or phrases do you use in your language to connect two stories together when you want to show that the events of the two stories happened immediately after one another? Pause this audio here.

Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar the advice that he and Ahithophel had given Absalom. Hushai likely told Zadok and Abiathar all the details, but in the story, the storyteller uses special language to summarize what Hushai said. The storyteller uses one special phrase to summarize Abiathar's advice and another special phrase to summarize Hushai's advice. This reminds us that Hushai gave Absalom different advice than Ahithophel because Hushai was on David's side.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What kind of words, phrases, and special language do you use in your culture to summarize many details of a story or information that the storyteller has already said? Pause this audio here.

Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar to send a message to David at once or right away and tell David not to camp that night at the fords of the wilderness. A ford is a place where people and animals are able to cross a stream or river. David camped near such a ford on the west side of the Jordan River. Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar, the priests, to tell David that he must cross over to the east side of the river. Otherwise, Absalom would swallow up or destroy David and all the people with him. Hushai spoke in a strong and powerful way.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of a time when you have sent or received a message that warned of immediate danger. Talk about how important it was to make the message you sent persuasive or convincing. Pay attention to the words and phrases that were used to state the danger. Suggest other strong and powerful words you would use to warn someone of danger and to tell that person how they can avoid the danger as soon as possible. Pause this audio here.

Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the sons of Zadok and Abiathar, were waiting at the spring of Rogel. The spring of Rogel is a water source located in the Kidron Valley near the place where it joins the Hinnom Valley to the southeast of the city of Jerusalem. Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting at the spring of Rogel because they did not want anyone to see them entering Jerusalem. This is likely because Absalom knew that their fathers, Zadok and Abiathar, supported David. So a female servant or slave would go and tell Jonathan and Ahimaaz the news that Zadok and Abiathar had for David and Jonathan. And then Jonathan and Ahimaaz would go and tell David.

In the third scene, a young man sees Jonathan and Ahimaaz talking to the female slave. The third scene begins with a word that connects what Jonathan and Ahimaaz did with the fact that the young man saw them and went to tell Absalom. It shows that Jonathan and Ahimaaz knew that the young man had seen them and that he was going to report them. Jonathan and Ahimaaz ran out of the spring of Rogel.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of a time when you had to save yourself from danger by running away quickly. Pay attention to the word that you use for running away in order to save yourself. Pause this audio here.

Jonathan and Ahimaaz came to Bahurim and entered the house of a certain man there. We do not know if the man was home, but he must have been a supporter of David. The man had a well in his courtyard, and Jonathan and Ahimaaz went down into this well to hide. A well is a hole that people dig in the ground in order to get water. Sometimes these wells dried up because groundwater depends on good rains. It is likely that this well was dry. The wife of the man who owned the house took a covering and covered the mouth or opening of the well. Then she spread grain on the cover to hide the well so that no one could tell that Jonathan and Ahimaaz were hiding in the well.

When the officials Absalom sent to look for the men came to the house and asked the woman where Jonathan and Ahimaaz were, the woman misled Absalom's men. The woman told Absalom's men that Jonathan and Ahimaaz had gone over the brook of water. It is unclear exactly what the woman meant, but it is likely that she meant a stream nearby that was connected to the Jordan River.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Which words or phrases do you use in your language to say that someone has already crossed a small stream? Pause this audio here.

When Absalom's men had looked for Jonathan and Ahimaaz and could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

In the fourth scene, after Absalom's officials had gone, Jonathan and Ahimaaz came up out of the well and went and told King David what Ahithophel had planned against David and his men. Although Jonathan and Ahimaaz probably reported the words that Ahithophel spoke against David in detail, the storyteller summarizes it in special language. The storyteller says that Jonathan and Ahimaaz told David to arise and cross the river quickly because Ahithophel advised Absalom to do certain things. Therefore, David and all the people with him arose and crossed the Jordan. When the storyteller says David arose, he means that David and the people with him started to cross the Jordan, not that they stood up from sitting or lying down.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss words and phrases you use in your language to say that someone has begun a journey. Pause this audio here.

By the time the sun rose again the following morning, David and all the people with him had crossed to the east side of the Jordan River. None of them was left behind on the west side of the Jordan River.

In the fifth scene, the storyteller breaks from the flow of the action to tell us what happened to Ahithophel. It is likely that what he tells us in this scene happened earlier, maybe soon after Hushai gave his advice to Absalom. When Ahithophel saw that Absalom did not follow his advice, Ahithophel saddled his donkey and went home to his own hometown. Before the journey, people would prepare or saddle a donkey by putting clothes on its back to make it more comfortable to sit on. The storyteller uses special language to say that when he arrived home, Ahithophel gave instructions about how people should distribute his property when he died. In other words, Ahithophel set his own house in order.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell stories of a time when someone has given instructions about their property before they died. Pay attention to the words you use to describe these instructions. Suggest any special language that you may use to talk about these instructions. Pause this audio here.

After Ahithophel had given instructions about his property, Ahithophel killed himself by using a rope around his neck. Ahithophel's relatives buried him in the tomb of his ancestors. At this time, they buried people in caves, which members of the same family usually shared.

Stop here and look at a picture of a burial cave as a group. Discuss how you think they put people in these kinds of caves, and compare with how you bury people in your culture. Pause this audio here.

In the sixth scene, the storyteller returns to the action of the story.

Discuss this question as a group: What words and phrases do you use when you tell stories to show you have interrupted the flow of the story? Pause this audio here.

David and his men were at Mahanaim, a town in the territory of Gad in Gilead. Absalom crossed the Jordan with all the men, or army, of Israel that were with him. It would have taken Absalom some time to organise the army, so it is likely that he crossed the Jordan some time after David had already reached Mahanaim. It is likely that the storyteller wants us to know that both David and Absalom, with their men, are now on the same side of the river.

The storyteller breaks from the flow of the action to tell us who Absalom has made the commander of his army. Joab, the commander of Israel's army, was on David's side, so Absalom needed a new commander. Absalom made Amasa, the son of a man named Jether, an Ishmaelite, commander of his army. Amasa's mother was Abigail. Abigail was the daughter of Nahash, and Abigail was a sister of Zeruiah, Joab's mother, as well as a sister of David. We are not sure why the storyteller says that Abigail was the daughter of Nahash, since David and Zeruiah would have been the children of Jesse. Some translations change the name of Nahash to Jesse. In any case, Amasa, Joab, and Absalom were all cousins, and both Amasa and Joab were nephews of David.

The storyteller returns to the action of the story to tell us that Israel's army and Absalom made their camp in the land of Gilead. Therefore, both David and Absalom were in the land of Gilead, about 40 kilometers apart.

Stop here and look at a map of the journey from the Jordan River to Mahanaim. Pause this audio here.

In the seventh scene, David had already come to Mahanaim in the land of Gilead. Absalom and his army were also in the land of Gilead. The storyteller tells us what had been happening in Mahanaim, where David was. It is likely that the seventh scene happened at the same time as scene six was taking place. David has reached Mahanaim and made his camp there. Three men from east of the Jordan River came and brought supplies to David and his men. The men were: Shobi, the son of Nahash from the city of Rabbah, who David had likely made king of the Ammonites after David defeated Hanun; Makir, the son of Ammiel from Lo Debar, who had previously welcomed Mephibosheth to live with him after the death of Jonathan and Saul; and Barzillai the Gileadite from Rogelim, who was a friend of David. These men brought beds or sleeping mats with blankets, basins or wide containers that people made from wood or metal, and earthen vessels that people made of clay. People usually used these clay containers for cooking. The men also brought wheat, barley, flour, parched or roasted grain, beans and lentils, honey, curds, cow cheese, and sheep. The men brought these things for David

and the people with him because they knew that David and his men were hungry, tired, and thirsty in the wilderness.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:15–29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has seven scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Hushai
- Zadok
- Abiathar
- Ahithophel
- Leaders of Israel
- Jonathan
- Ahimaaz
- The female servant whom Zadok and Abiathar regularly sent to Jonathan and Ahimaaz
- A young man who saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz at the spring of En-Rogel and went and told Absalom
- Absalom
- The wife of the man whose house Jonathan and Abiathar ran to
- Absalom's men whom he sent to find Jonathan and Abiathar
- King David
- All the people with King David, his soldiers, servants, officials, and family
- The men of Israel, the ones who were in Absalom's army
- Amasa, the son of Jether, who married Abigail and was the commander of Absalom's army
- Abigail, the daughter of Nahash and sister to Zeruiah, Joab's mother
- Joab
- Shobi, son of Nahash
- Makir, son of Ammiel
- And Barzillai

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

In the first scene, Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar the advice that both Ahithophel and Hushai had given Absalom. Hushai told them to send a message to David immediately and tell him to cross the Jordan immediately.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Hushai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel very afraid. Absalom might capture or kill King David; or
- I must warn David immediately. David must cross the Jordan immediately and escape; or
- The priests must make sure the message reaches the king as fast as possible.

Ask the person playing Zadok and Abiathar, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This is serious. The king will be in great danger if Absalom follows Ahithophel's advice; or
- We must send David a message immediately. There is no time to waste. David's life is in great danger; or
- We pray that Absalom listens to Hushai's advice. O Yahweh, please save David.

Continue the drama.

In the second scene, Zadok and Abiathar sent a servant girl to the spring of Rogel, where their two sons, Jonathan and Ahimaaz, were waiting for messages from them to David. A young man saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz and went and told Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the servant girl, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel very tired. I have run very fast, but I am finally here; or
- I am glad that I have delivered the message that I was sent to deliver; or
- Oh no, someone saw us! I know that young man. He is a spy for Absalom.

Ask the person playing the young man, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I have caught the traitors! or
- What are Jonathan and Ahimaaz whispering about with that servant girl? They must be plotting something against Absalom; or
- I will run and tell Absalom. Maybe Absalom will give me a reward.

Ask the person playing Jonathan and Ahimaaz, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Our king is in great danger. We cannot waste time. We must deliver the news immediately; or
- But someone has seen us! What shall we do? or
- We are desperate! Absalom will send his men to catch us. Absalom's men will probably be here soon. We cannot stay here. We will run to Bahurim. King David has a friend in Bahurim who will help us.

Continue the drama.

In the third scene, Jonathan and Ahimaaz ran to Bahurim and hid themselves inside a well at a certain man's house. The man's wife covered the well. Absalom's men came and asked the woman where Jonathan and Ahimaaz were. The woman told Absalom's men that Jonathan and Ahimaaz had gone over the small river, or brook. Absalom's men looked for Jonathan and Ahimaaz, and when they could not find them, they returned to Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the man's wife, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We support King David. It is very dangerous, but he is the rightful king; or
- I will hide the king's spies until Absalom's men have gone. I will not show that I am hiding these men; or
- I am very afraid that Absalom's men might look in the well.

Ask the person playing Absalom's men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We feel very suspicious. We cannot trust anyone. We are looking for David's spies; or
- We must catch King Absalom's enemies quickly. This woman has told us where they went. We must chase after them. We are very keen to catch these men; or
- We are also very careful not to get caught ourselves.

Continue the drama.

In the fourth scene, Jonathan and Ahimaaz came out of the well and went and told David all that Ahithophel had planned against him. David and all the people with him crossed the river before sunrise.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David and the people with him, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We feel worried. We are in great danger; or
- We must do as Hushai says. We cannot delay; or
- Escape or die—these are our options.

Continue the drama.

In the fifth scene, when Ahithophel saw that Absalom had not followed his advice, Ahithophel went to his hometown and killed himself.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ahithophel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel great sorrow. My heart is broken. My good name is destroyed. I do not want to live; or
- David will surely defeat Absalom in battle. Then what will my life be? or
- David will disgrace me and put me to death.

Continue the drama.

In the sixth scene, David and his men had come to Mahanaim. Then Absalom and his men crossed the Jordan River also and camped in the land of Gilead. Absalom had made Amasa the commander of his army.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are safe for now; or
- There is some distance between us and Absalom, but we must prepare to meet them in battle soon; or
- We will camp at Mahanaim, gather our supporters, and prepare ourselves.

Ask the person playing Absalom and the army of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- If we had followed Ahithophel's advice, we would have surprised David and killed him by now; or
- We are ready to fight. We are strong and brave and have a great army; or
- We cannot wait for the battle.

Ask the person playing Amasa, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- King Absalom has honoured me by making me the commander of Israel. I am very happy; or
- I must be careful not to disappoint Absalom; or
- The men are ready to fight, and I know that they will fight bravely. I think that we have a stronger army than David.

Continue the drama.

In the seventh scene, whilst David was at Mahanaim, Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai brought David supplies to refresh him and the people that were with him.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Shobi, Makir, and Barzillai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We support David, and we must show him support. We cannot let the king of Israel and his family suffer in the wilderness. We will bring David food and supplies; or
- We are very sad for David because of what his son is doing to him. But we are confident that David will be victorious and return to his throne in Jerusalem; or
- David is a mighty warrior! We will take David's side even if we risk making Absalom very angry with us.

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel encouraged. It is good to see these friends of mine; or
- These men have brought joy to my camp. The people were tired and hungry, but we have been refreshed by their gifts; or
- I will not forget these men's loyalty.

Ask the person playing King David's servants and family, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are very tired and hungry. We have marched very fast to escape from Absalom; or
- The desert is a terrible place. We thought that we would run out of food, but the king's friends have brought us more. We are very happy; or
- These men even brought beds. We are glad that we do not have to sleep on the hard ground.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 17:15–29 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

After giving his advice to Absalom, Hushai went and told Zadok and Abiathar, the **priests**, everything that Ahithophel and he had said to Absalom and the **elders of Israel**. Priests were people who worked in the tabernacle. An elder is a person with authority in the community. An elder was usually the head of a family or a group of families. The elders of Israel are likely all the elders of each of the tribes of Israel. Israel can refer to the entire land or people. In this story, Israel likely refers to the people who were on the side of Absalom. Use the same words or phrases for priest, elders, and Israel as you used in previous passages. For more information on priest, elders, or Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

Hushai told Zadok and Abiathar to send a message to David quickly and tell him not to stay at the **fords of the wilderness** that night but to cross over. Hushai said that if they did not cross over, Absalom would swallow up the king and all the people with him**. A ford is a place where people and animals are able to cross a stream or river. Use the same word or phrase for fords of the wilderness as you have used in previous passages.

A desert or **wilderness** is a lonely, barren place without water. Hushai says that Absalom will swallow up the **king** and all the people with him. To avoid confusion, you may want to use David's name and say King David. Use the same words or phrases for wilderness and king as you used in previous passages. For more information on wilderness and king, refer to the Master Glossary.

"Swallowed up" is special language that means that David and all the people with him will be killed.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **swallowed up**, or destroyed. Pause this audio here.

The priests sent a **female slave**, or servant, to En Rogel, where Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting to take the news to King David. Use the same word or phrase for a female servant as you used in previous passages. En Rogel is a water source located in the Kidron Valley near the place where it joins the Hinnom Valley to the southeast of the city of Jerusalem. It is best to call En Rogel "the spring of Rogel."

Stop here and discuss as a group what you will call **En Rogel**. Pause this audio here.

Jonathan and Ahimaaz were waiting there because they could not be seen entering the **city**. The city here is Jerusalem. Use the same word for city as you used in previous passages.

A young man saw Jonathan and Ahimaaz and went and told Absalom. So Jonathan and Ahimaaz went away quickly and went to the house of a man in Bahurim and hid in his **well** in the **courtyard** of his house**. If you

find this difficult to translate, you can say something like "a hole in the ground that people draw water from. This hole was near his house."

When Absalom's men came looking for Jonathan and Ahimaaz, the wife of the man whose house it was told them that Jonathan and Ahimaaz had gone over the "brook of water." It is unclear what this phrase means, but it probably means a small stream of water that was perhaps connected to the Jordan River.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **brook of water**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

When Ahithophel saw that Absalom had not followed his advice, Ahithophel prepared his **donkey** and went to his hometown. Ahithophel put his house in order and then **hanged** himself**. So Ahithophel died, and people buried Ahithophel in his father's **tomb**. When someone hangs themselves, they kill themselves using a rope. A tomb is the name for a place where people bury a dead person. In the Bible, a tomb could be a natural cave in a rock, or it could be a hole that people cut out of rock. Wealthy people could have a large tomb that they carved out of rock and decorated with many decorations. Families might bury poor people inside a natural cave, or even just in the sand. Look up tomb and donkey in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there.

David came to Mahanaim, and Absalom crossed the Jordan River with **all the men of Israel**. All the men of Israel here does not mean every man in Israel, but the army or the men that were fighting on Absalom's side. Absalom had **appointed** Amasa over the army in place of Joab. That Absalom has appointed Amasa over the army means that Absalom had made Amasa the commander or leader.

Be sure to use the same names for the people and places as you have used in previous passages. You have already translated the names of the **Jordan River**, Makir, Rabbah, and Gilead. For more information about the Jordan River, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 17:15–29

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 18:1–8

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 18:1–8 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:1–8 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

Continuing on from previous stories, David and his faithful men are now in the city of Mahanaim in the land of Gilead, east of the Jordan River. Generous gifts of food and supplies in Mahanaim helped the men feel better after their long journey. Meanwhile, David's son, Absalom, and the Israelite army followed David across the Jordan River into Gilead. There, Absalom and his followers set up camp, ready to fight a battle against David and his men. This story is about that battle.

Once David and his men have regained their strength after the long journey, David gathers and organises all his men. David separates the men into troops, or groups of 1,000 men, and appoints commanders to lead each group. Then David separates each group of 1,000 men into 10 groups of 100 men, and appoints leaders over each of those groups, too. The leaders of the groups of 1,000 men have authority over the leaders of the groups of 100 men.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What kinds of things might a ruler in your culture do to prepare his men for battle? Talk about how the ruler might organise his men into groups or make a plan about how to attack the enemy. Pause this audio here.

David continues to organise his army of men by giving the groups of thousands to three chief leaders. David appoints his nephew, Joab, as the chief leader of one group. Then David appoints Joab's brother, Abishai, as the chief leader of another group. Finally, David appoints a man called Ittai, from Gath, as chief leader of the last group. You will remember Ittai from a previous story when he showed great loyalty by staying with King David when David was running away from Absalom. These three chief leaders have authority over all the other leaders and the soldiers.

In those days, and in that culture, it was normal for kings to lead their armies into battle. King David tells the men that he will surely lead his army into battle against Absalom and the army of Israel, but David's men disagree. The men respectfully tell David that he must not go into battle with them. David's men think that Absalom and the Israelite army are only interested in finding and killing King David. The men say that David's whole army could run away, or that half of them could die, and it would not matter to Absalom and his men. David's men understand they are not as valuable or useful to Absalom as David is.

Then the men make a comparison and say that David is worth 10,000 of them. David's men think it would be a worse situation for King David to die in the battle than for 10,000 of David's men to die. The men ask David to stay in the city, where David will be safer. The men say it is better for David to stay in the city and send help to his men if they need it, than to risk Absalom's men capturing and killing David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What might a ruler from your culture do in David's situation? Would the ruler consider the advice of his men? Tell a story about a time when your people had a conflict with another group of people, and talk about what the ruler did. Pause this audio here.

The king listens to the advice of his men and agrees to stay in Mahanaim. Then David stands by the gate, or entrance of the city, as his men march, or walk in an organised way, out of the city. The men march in groups of hundreds, within the groups of thousands, just as David had organised them.

As the men leave the city, David speaks so that everyone can hear David. David orders his chief leaders, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, to deal gently with Absalom when they find him. David wants the men to make sure that no one hurts or kills his son, Absalom, in battle. All the men hear David give this order. In that culture, the king had complete authority over the whole army.

The soldiers march towards the battle against the soldiers of Israel who are with Absalom. The battle begins in the forest, or place of many trees, in Ephraim. The exact location of the forest of Ephraim is not clear, but it was probably somewhere near Mahanaim, in the region of Gilead, on the east side of the Jordan River. Gilead was a hilly region with many trees.

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of a forest area. Pause this audio here.

On the first day of battle, David's men defeat, or kill, 20,000 Israelite soldiers. The battle continues and spreads out over the land. The battle might have spread out because the soldiers felt disorientated, or confused about where they were, because of all the trees. That same day, more men died because of the forest than because of the sword. This suggests that of the 20,000 men who died that day, more deaths happened because of the

dangerous, hostile conditions of the land than because of the fighting. These hostile conditions may have included dangerous animals, poisonous plants, or uneven ground and deep holes that plants covered. Some scholars think David chose to fight the battle in this region because David and his men had previous experience fighting and surviving in the harsh conditions of the land. David probably used this experience to his advantage.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when someone got lost in an unfamiliar place. In your story, talk about the different kinds of dangers in that place.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two scenes.

In the first scene: King David organises his army and appoints leaders. David wants to lead his army into battle, but listens to the advice of his men and decides to stay in the city. All the men hear David command the chief leaders to protect Absalom's life. David's army marches out of Mahanaim to go to battle.

In the second scene: The battle between David's army and the Israelite army begins in the area of Gilead, which has many trees, the forest of Ephraim. Many soldiers of the Israelite army die that day.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- The men with David
- Joab, David's nephew
- Abishai, brother of Joab and also David's nephew
- Ittai, the man from Gath (a Gittite)
- And the Israelite army

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, David and his men are in Mahanaim, a city where people from the tribe of Levites lived. In the previous story, some people who were loyal to King David brought food and supplies to Mahanaim to help King David and his men. Now, David is preparing to go to battle against Absalom and the Israelite army by organising his men into groups and appointing leaders over them. It is not clear how many thousands of men are in David's army. David splits the army into three equal groups and places Joab, Abishai, and Ittai as the chief commanders over each group.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about David splitting up his men into three groups of soldiers with equal numbers of men? Pause this audio here.

David says strongly that he intends to lead his army into battle. But David's men strongly object because the men think it is better for David to stay in the city, where David will be safer. In your translation, be sure to use words that show how determined David is to lead his people to war. This is important because it will highlight the strong contrast between David's intention to go and the response from David's men asking David to stay. Although the men are objecting to David, it is also important to note that the men still speak respectfully to David, as their king. David's men do not speak in a demanding or rebellious way.

Stop here and discuss as a group the tone, or emotion, which David and his men use to speak to each other. Discuss what words or phrases you will use to show that the men speak respectfully to David. Think about how someone in your culture might respectfully object or make suggestions to a leader. Pause this audio here.

The men say that Absalom and the Israelite army will only be looking for King David. The men make a comparison and say that Absalom and his men will not care, or be interested, if all of David's army were to run away, or if half of David's army were to die in battle. This comparison shows how valuable King David is to Absalom and why David's men want to protect David. If your language does not have a word for half, you can say "one of every two." Then David's men emphasise how important it is to protect David by repeating the comparison, but in a slightly different way. The men say King David is worth 10,000 of David's own men.

Having highlighted David's great value, the men suggest a different plan to David. The men ask David to stay in the city and be ready to send help or support to the soldiers in battle if they need it. David listens to his men's advice and agrees to go along with their plan.

Then King David stands at the entrance gate of the city of Mahanaim as all of David's troops march out of the city in groups of hundreds, within their groups of thousands. Marching is when soldiers walk together in an organised way.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what words or phrases you will use in your language to talk about military actions, like walking in groups in an organized way. Talk about how you will say that David "gathered" his troops, and how the troops "marched" out. Pause the audio here.

As they are leaving, David gives a final command to his chief leaders, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai. All the men hear David command his chief leaders because David speaks openly, in front of everyone. All the men hear David tell his chief leaders to "treat Absalom gently, for my sake." This is special language to say that David wants his chief leaders to show David respect and honour by making sure that no one hurts or kills his son, Absalom, in the battle. It is like David is saying he will hold the men personally responsible if anyone hurts Absalom. The storyteller uses repetition to show how important David's instruction about Absalom is. Firstly, we hear that David gave orders to his chief leaders. Secondly, we hear that everyone heard the orders which King David gave to his chief leaders.

After hearing David's final instructions, the soldiers continue marching towards the place where they will fight against Israel. The battle between David's men and the men of Israel, who supported Absalom, begins in the forest of Ephraim, which is an area with many trees. It is not clear what time of day David's men left Mahanaim or when the battle started, but most Bible scholars think Mahanaim was close to the forest of Ephraim.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use to describe the forest of Ephraim. If needed, look again at a picture of a forest area. Pause this audio here.

The battle spreads out over the land, and that same day, David's men win a great victory by defeating, or killing, 20,000 Israelite soldiers! We hear that more Israelite soldiers died because of the forest than because someone killed them with a sword. This means that the forest caused more men to die than the battle did. Your version of the Bible might say the forest devoured, or swallowed, the men up like an animal eats another animal. This means the men died because of the forest. It is not clear how the forest killed the men. Some scholars suggest the forest of Ephraim was a harsh land with natural dangers such as uneven ground, wild animals, and poisonous plants.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will say that more Israelite men died because of the forest than in battle, by the sword.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- The men with David
- Joab, David's nephew
- Abishai, brother of Joab and also David's nephew
- Ittai, the man from Gath (a Gittite)
- And the Israelite army

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David organises his men into large groups and appoints leaders over them. Then David divides the groups amongst his chief leaders, Joab, Abishai, and Ittai.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel ready. I have a plan about how I will win this battle against Absalom and the Israelite army. The first step is to organise my men into groups, under the leadership of my most trusted and able commanders.

Continue the drama.

King David announces to the men that he will lead them all into battle. David's men strongly disagree and suggest that David stay in the city to send help, if needed.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like:

- I will not hide in fear from my enemies whilst my people fight for me. I shall lead my people with courage; or
- I am sad and angry that my son Absalom has rebelled against me. I never thought I would need to lead my men in battle against my own son!

Ask the people playing David's men, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The people might answer things like:

- We cannot let King David go with us into battle! We must protect David from his enemies!

Continue the drama.

David listens to his men and agrees to stay in the city. David stands by the entrance to the city whilst his men march out. David orders Joab, Abishai, and Ittai to protect the life of David's son Absalom. All the soldiers hear King David give this order to his chief leaders.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The person might answer things like:

- My men are brave and experienced warriors. I expect to win this battle, but I cannot bear the thought of my son Absalom dying. I feel compassion towards my son, even though he is rebellious and has caused me much harm.

Ask the people playing Joab, Abishai, and Ittai, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The people might answer things like:

- King David is a good leader. I will be sure to follow his instructions; or
- King David is too soft towards his son Absalom. If King David allows Absalom to live, Absalom will continue to cause problems for King David and all of Israel.

Continue the drama.

David's army of men marches into battle in the forest of Ephraim. As the battle spreads out, 20,000 men die that day. The men either die in battle or because of the harsh conditions of the land.

Pause the drama. Ask the people playing David's men, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The people might answer things like:

- This is amazing! We keep finding Israelite soldiers who have already died. Yahweh must be helping us win this battle! or
- It is good for us to fight the Israelite army here because we have more experience of this harsh land than they do.

Ask the people playing the Israelite army, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The people might answer things like:

- This battle is much harder than we expected. Even the forest seems to be against us! or
- David's men are brave and more experienced than we are, but the land is even more dangerous to us than David's men! or
- We cannot understand why so many of our men are dying. Our army has suffered a great loss today.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:1–8 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David gathered all his men and appointed **commanders**, or generals, over them. Commanders and generals are like chief leaders. If you have already translated this word, use the same word you used before.

David sent the **army**, or troops, into battle. In the original language, the storyteller says that David sent out "his people." However, these people were specifically soldiers in David's army. An army is a group of soldiers or warriors. Use the same word for army as you used previously.

The **king** told the men he would go out with, or lead, the men in battle. A king is someone who rules over a territory or nation. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word for king as you used previously.

The men convinced David to stay in the **city**. Use the same word for city that you have used in previous passages. David **commanded**, or gave orders to, his chief leaders to protect the life of his son Absalom. A command is an instruction that a person must obey. All the soldiers heard King David command his chief leaders to protect Absalom.

David's army went out of the city to the forest of Ephraim to fight a battle against Absalom and the army of **Israel**. Use the same word for Israel that you have used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about Israel.

A forest is an area of land with many trees that are close together.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **forest**. If you have already translated "forest" in another book of the Bible, use the same word or phrase as you used there. Pause this audio here.

Twenty thousand men died in the battle that day. More men died because of the forest than "by the sword," meaning the fight or battle. Use the same words or phrases for "by the sword" that you have used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 18:1–8

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 18:9–18

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 18:9–18 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:9–18 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:9–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, King David's men fought a battle against David's son Absalom and the Israelite army in the forest of Ephraim. Many Israelite men died in the battle that day. This story happens during that battle and describes how Absalom died.

In this story, Yahweh brings harm to Absalom, just as Yahweh planned before. Remember how Yahweh made Absalom reject Ahithophel's advice in an earlier story? Ahithophel told Absalom to stay in Jerusalem while Ahithophel and 12,000 men would go to kill David. But instead, Absalom listened to David's friend Hushai, who told Absalom to gather Israel's men and lead them into battle himself.

Now, Absalom is in the battle and happens to meet some of David's men. Absalom is riding a mule, which is an animal that is a mix between a horse and a donkey. It was normal for the king's sons to ride on mules. Absalom tries to escape from David's men, but Absalom's mule goes beneath the thick branches of an oak tree. Oak trees in that region are strong and their branches spread out, providing plenty of shade beneath. These oak trees do not grow as tall as the oak trees that grow in other regions.

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of an example of a mule and an oak tree from the region. Pause the audio here.

As Absalom's mule goes beneath the thick branches of the large oak tree, Absalom's head gets caught, or trapped, in the branches of the tree. Some scholars think that Absalom's hair got caught on the branches, but the original language says that Absalom's head got caught in the branches. You will remember from a previous story that Absalom had a lot of hair before he cut it off each year. Therefore, although it is not clear exactly how Absalom became caught in the tree, it is possible that Absalom's head got stuck because of his hair.

As Absalom's mule moves forward, Absalom's head gets caught, and he hangs from the tree's branches. Absalom cannot free himself from the tree and dangles helplessly in midair, with his feet off the ground. You will remember a previous story where Moses told the people of Israel that Yahweh has cursed, or condemned, anyone hanged on a tree. Some Bible scholars think that Absalom getting stuck in the tree in such a strange way means that Yahweh was punishing Absalom.

One of David's men sees Absalom hanging from the tree and tells one of the chief leaders, Joab, what he has seen. Then Joab speaks roughly to the man. Joab wants to know why the man did not kill Absalom immediately. Joab tells the man that Joab would have been happy to give the man a great reward for killing Absalom. Joab would have given as much as 10 pieces, or shekels, of silver and a special belt that brave men wear! Silver is a precious metal that people used to measure the weight of something. Ten pieces of silver were worth about a whole year's salary, or wages. These pieces of silver may have weighed a little over 100 grams. The special belt suggests that Joab would have promoted this man, or given the man a place of more honour within the army.

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of silver. Then have someone in the group tell a story about a brave warrior who received great wealth and honour from a chief leader because of a time that warrior showed great courage. Pause the audio here.

But the man does not care about great wealth or honour for himself. The man tells Joab he would never kill the king's son, not even for 1,000 shekels, which would be like a 100 years' worth of his salary. No payment or reward would be enough to convince the man to kill the king's son, because the man knows very well that it is more honourable to obey the king's orders. You will remember the previous story when David instructed Joab, Abishai, and Ittai to make sure that no harm came to Absalom. Now the man reminds Joab how everyone heard the king's command. The man understands that if he kills the king's son, he would be betraying the king. In that culture, kings punished disobedience by death. The man knows that the king will eventually find out who killed the king's son. The man also knows that Joab would not protect the man if the king found out that he killed Absalom.

Joab seems to become impatient with the man and ends the discussion. Then Joab goes to where Absalom is hanging from the tree. Now, Joab disobeys the king's command. Joab strikes three javelins, or stick-like weapons, into Absalom's heart. Some Bible scholars think the javelins were sharp sticks, and others think the sticks were blunt. But the storyteller says Joab plunged the javelins into Absalom's heart, suggesting that the javelins went deep inside Absalom's body. It is more likely that the weapons were sharp enough to go into Absalom's body. It is possible that the "heart" refers to the actual muscle inside a person's body that keeps blood flowing, or the general midsection of Absalom's body. Joab might have stabbed Absalom in the heart, or Joab could have struck Absalom's midsection with the javelins. It is clear that Joab seriously injured Absalom, but he did not kill him.

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of a javelin. Pause this audio here.

Then, 10 young men, whose work was to help and protect Joab in battle, surround Absalom and strike him until he dies. We do not know if Absalom was still hanging from the tree or if he had fallen to the ground already. These young men are "armour bearers," or armour carriers. This name describes part of the young men's work, which was to carry the armour of their leaders. The armour was special clothing that protected people in battle. In that culture, leaders selected armour bearers to work for them because they were especially brave and loyal men.

Once the men have killed Absalom, Joab makes a loud sound using a special trumpet that people made of a ram's horn. The ram's horn can make a very loud sound. Blowing long or short breaths into the horn creates different patterns of sound. In that culture, leaders used the different sound patterns of the horn to communicate with their armies over large distances. The noise Joab makes with the horn tells David's men that the battle has ended, so the men stop chasing the Israelite army.

Stop here and look at a picture of a ram's horn. If available, listen to an audio of a man blowing a horn, or look at a video of a man blowing a horn. Pause the audio here

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What things do people in your culture do to communicate with someone who is far away? What about a long time ago? How did people communicate an important message with someone who was far away? Pause the audio here.

David's men took Absalom's dead body and threw it into a deep pit, or hole, in the forest. Then the men covered Absalom and the pit with a big heap of stones, or rocks. Whilst David's men did this, Absalom's followers from the Israelite army quickly ran away back to their own homes.

At some point in Absalom's life, Absalom built a pillar or a monument in honour of himself in the King's Valley, near Jerusalem. A pillar is usually a large stone monument that represents or symbolizes something. It was normal for ancient world leaders to celebrate their own achievements in this way, but people rarely did this in Israel. We are told that Absalom built the monument because he did not have any sons to continue his name. In that culture, the sons would inherit the family name from their father. Absalom names the monument "Absalom's Monument" after himself, because he has no sons to give his name to. Absalom wants the monument to help people remember Absalom's name and achievements for a long time. You will remember a previous story that tells of Absalom having one daughter and three sons. This probably means that Absalom either became a father after he built the monument or that his sons died before Absalom built the monument.

Stop here and discuss as a group some of the things people in your culture do to make sure people remember their name after they die. Pause the audio here.

However, instead of reminding people of Absalom's great achievements, this monument probably reminded people of the terrible consequences of Absalom's actions. These consequences were the result of Absalom's desire for greatness, which led Absalom to try to overthrow his own father, King David. It seems the storyteller is comparing the dishonour of people burying Absalom under a pile of rocks amongst the trees of a forest, with Absalom's desire for people to honor him and bury him amongst the kings.

The storyteller ends this story by saying that Absalom's monument still existed at the time of writing the story

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:9–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: David's men find Absalom, and as Absalom tries to escape, his mule goes under a tree, and Absalom's head gets caught on the branches. Absalom's mule keeps going and leaves Absalom hanging helplessly from the tree.

In the second scene: One of David's men sees this happening to Absalom and reports the news to Joab, a chief leader. Joab asks the man why he did not kill Absalom immediately. Joab says he would have rewarded the man for killing Absalom. The man says he would not disobey the king's command that they should protect Absalom's life.

In the third scene: Joab stops talking to the man and goes to where Absalom is hanging from the tree. Joab strikes Absalom with three javelins. Then 10 of Joab's men surround Absalom and kill him. Joab blows the horn to end the battle.

In the fourth scene: Men from David's army throw Absalom into a deep pit and cover him with many stones. All the men in the Israelite army quickly retreat and return to their homes.

In the fifth scene: The storyteller gives us extra information about a time when Absalom built a monument and named it after himself.

The characters in this passage are:

- David's men
- Absalom, David's son
- One of David's men
- Joab, David's nephew
- 10 of Joab's armour bearers
- And the Israelite army

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

In the first scene, Absalom "happens to" meet David's men, which gives the idea that Absalom met David's men by chance. However, it is important to remember that in a previous story, Yahweh caused certain things to happen because Yahweh planned to bring harm to Absalom.

Stop here and, as a group, talk about what word or phrase you will use to show how Absalom appears to have met David's men by chance. It is important to include this in your translation.

Pause the audio here.

Absalom is riding a mule and tries to escape from David's men, but the mule goes under the thick branches of an oak tree. In your translation, it is important to make sure you do not say that Absalom rides or takes the mule under the tree on purpose, but rather, that the mule goes under the tree.

As the mule takes Absalom under the thick branches of a large oak tree, Absalom's head gets caught, or trapped, in the branches. The storyteller actually says that Absalom's head gets caught, but some Bible translations say Absalom's hair got caught, since it seems that it was Absalom's long hair that helped his head get caught in the branches.

The mule moves forward, leaving Absalom hanging by his head from the tree branches. Absalom hangs from the tree between heaven and earth, which is special language to say that Absalom was hanging in midair, with his feet off the ground. Some Bible scholars think the image of Absalom hanging from the tree has a symbolic meaning. The scholars think this shows how Absalom's pride and ambition brought him to a place where he lost all power and control. They also think this unusual story, and the language used, suggest that what is happening to Absalom is all under Yahweh's control.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will say that Absalom is hanging in midair. Pause the audio here.

In scene two, one of David's men sees what happens to Absalom and how he gets caught on the tree branch. The man goes to where Joab is and tells Joab that he saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree. This repetition in the story highlights the point that Absalom was a man hanging in a tree. The storyteller probably says this to remind us of a previous story when Moses told the Israelites that Yahweh has cursed anyone hanged on a tree. It is not clear where Joab is at this point, but he is not where Absalom is.

Joab responds harshly to the man and asks why the man did not strike Absalom to the ground, or kill Absalom when he saw him. Joab says he would have given the man a great reward for killing Absalom. By saying this, Joab is telling the man that he would have been very happy with the man if he had killed Absalom. Joab would have been so happy that he says he would have given the man 10 pieces of silver, worth a year's wages, and a special belt for brave men. The special belt suggests that Joab would have given the man a promotion or special honour in the army.

But the man responds to Joab and says that even if the man felt the weight of 1,000 pieces of silver in his hand, the man would not disobey the king and harm Absalom. To feel the weight of the silver in his hand is a special phrase to say that even if Joab had already given the man the 1,000 pieces of silver, the man still would not raise his hand against, or cause harm to, Absalom.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss how you will talk about the soldier feeling the weight of silver in his hand in your language. Pause the audio here.

The man reminds Joab that all of David's men heard, or witnessed, the king command Joab, Abishai, and Ittai to protect the young man Absalom from harm. David told the chief leaders to protect Absalom for David's "sake." This is special language to say that David wants them to do as he commands out of respect for David. David wants the men to protect Absalom's life for David's benefit, because it will please David.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss how you will say that the men should protect Absalom's life for David's sake, in your language. Pause the audio here.

The man continues to speak to Joab. The man says killing Absalom would count as treason, or betrayal of the king. When someone betrayed the king, the king would punish that person by killing them. The man knows that the king will eventually find out that the man betrayed the king's orders. Then the man challenges Joab and says that Joab would have abandoned him before King David. This is special language to say that the man believed Joab would do nothing to protect the man from the king if the man killed Absalom.

In scene three, Joab abruptly ends the discussion with the man. Joab is probably concerned that Absalom might escape, and quickly goes to where Absalom is hanging from the tree. Absalom is still alive and hangs helplessly in the tree. Absalom can do nothing to defend himself. Joab takes three javelins, which may have been sharp or blunt—it is not clear. Then Joab strikes Absalom's heart with the javelins. The heart may refer to the actual heart, or the general area of the mid-section of Absalom's body. Joab plunged the javelins into Absalom. This gives us the idea that the javelins went deep inside Absalom's body. It is important to note that Absalom does not die immediately from the injuries Joab caused.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss which words or phrases you will use to say Joab strikes deeply into Absalom's heart with three javelins. Pause the audio here.

Then 10 of Joab's armour bearers, all young men, surround Absalom and strike him to death. Armour bearers are a special type of soldier. Armour bearers had the special work of helping carry a leader's weapons and protective clothing, and protecting the leaders from danger. Leaders often selected a particular armour bearer for his bravery. It is not clear if Absalom fell to the ground after Joab hit him, or if Absalom is still hanging in the tree when Joab's armour bearers kill him.

After Joab's armour bearers kill Absalom, Joab blows a trumpet of a ram's horn to send a signal to all of David's men that the battle has ended. The sound of the horn is loud and the soldiers can hear it from far away. All David's men stop chasing after the Israelite army and gather together again.

In scene four, some men take Absalom's body and throw it into a large pit in the forest. It is not clear if these men were Joab's armour bearers, so it may be best to just say "David's men" in your translation. David's men heap piles of rocks on top of Absalom.

Whilst David's men are piling rocks on Absalom, the Israelite soldiers flee, or run away. Each soldier returns to where he lives.

The storyteller ends this story in scene five by talking about a monument which Absalom built for himself in the Valley of Kings, near Jerusalem, sometime before the events of this story. Make sure it is clear in your translation that Absalom built the monument before this story happened. Absalom set up the great pillar, or stone, in honour of himself, because Absalom wanted people to see it and remember his name after his death.

To remember someone's name after they die means to remember a person's character and achievements. Absalom probably wanted people to praise Absalom after his death.

When Absalom built the monument, Absalom had no son to continue the memory of his name. So, Absalom named the monument "Absalom's monument," and it still existed at the time the storyteller told this story.

Stop here and discuss as a team how you will show that this event happened sometime before the story of Absalom's death happened. Talk about how you might show the contrast between what Absalom wanted to happen with what actually happened to him. Pause the audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:9–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David's men
- Absalom, David's son
- One of David's men
- Joab, David's nephew
- 10 of Joab's armour bearers
- And the Israelite army

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Absalom happened to meet some of David's men during the battle. As Absalom tried to escape on his mule, Absalom's head or hair got trapped in the branches of a tree. Absalom is left hanging from the tree because his mule keeps walking.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I cannot believe this is happening! Whoever heard of a man getting stuck in the branches of a tree like this? or
- I cannot get down! I hope my men find me before David's men do! David's men will surely kill me if they find me! I cannot defend myself hanging from this tree.

Continue the drama.

One of David's men sees what happens to Absalom and goes to tell Joab, one of the chief leaders, that he saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the man who saw what happened to Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Surely Yahweh has handed Absalom over to us! We do not even need to fight to capture Absalom; or
- I am glad I found Joab to tell him where Absalom is. Now the battle with Israel can end!

Continue the drama.

Joab wants to know why the man did not kill Absalom. Joab tells the man that he would have given the man a great reward if he had killed Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I cannot understand why this soldier did not use this opportunity to kill Absalom! Can he not see that Yahweh has trapped Absalom so that we can punish Absalom for rebelling against his father, King David? or
- This man had the opportunity to show everyone how valiant he is, but he failed to do so. I would have given this man such a great reward. This man would have returned home from the battle with great honour and wealth.

Continue the drama.

But the man says he would not harm Absalom even if Joab had already given him 1,000 pieces of silver, because he heard King David's command to protect Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the man who saw what happened to Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Joab is wrong in what he says, and I am not afraid to tell him. I know as well as Joab does that King David ordered us to protect Absalom; or
- To obey the king's instructions is more honourable and valuable than anything else. I can see that Joab does not care about the king's instructions.

Continue the drama.

The man tells Joab that to disobey the king would be treason, an act punishable by death. The man says he thinks Joab would not protect him from the king.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the man who saw what happened to Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I would be guilty of treason if I killed Absalom. The king would surely find me and take my life! or
- I do not believe Joab's words. Joab says he would have given me a great reward, but if someone caught me for betraying the king, Joab would be the first to abandon me! or
- If Joab can so easily defy the king's orders, I know that I cannot trust him. Joab can just as easily betray me as well.

Continue the drama.

Joab ends the discussion and goes to Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I do not have the patience to listen to this man! I need to deal with Absalom before he escapes!

Continue the drama.

Joab strikes Absalom with three javelins. Then 10 of Joab's armour bearers surround Absalom and kill him.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I must protect King David from himself. David is too soft towards his son Absalom. If we allow Absalom to live, Absalom will cause more problems for the king in the future; or
- I know what the king commanded, but I think it is better for the nation of Israel for us to kill Absalom now. Otherwise, many more people may die in battle because of Absalom's rebellion.

Ask the people playing Joab's armour bearers, "What are you thinking or feeling?" The people might answer things like:

- We all heard the king's command to protect Absalom, but our loyalty is with Joab; or
- Joab is not making emotional decisions like King David, so we will follow Joab. This man, Absalom, has caused enough harm to Israel. We will end it here.

Continue the drama.

Then Joab blows a ram's horn to signal the end of the battle to the troops. When the troops hear the signal, they stop chasing the Israelite army. David's men throw Absalom's dead body into a large hole in the forest. Then they cover Absalom and the hole with many rocks. Absalom's followers run away, each to his own home.

Before the events of this story happened, Absalom had built a monument in the King's Valley, which he named "Absalom's Monument."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Absalom, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I do not have a son who will carry my name and cause people to remember me after I die, so I will build a monument in my honour instead. I will name it "Absalom's Monument" so that when people see it, they will remember me and praise, or glorify, me. I will put the monument in the King's Valley because I am a great and powerful man.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:9–18 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Absalom tried to escape from David's men. The **mule** Absalom was riding on went under the thick branches of an oak tree. A mule is a mix between a horse and a donkey. Mules are infertile and cannot reproduce. Use the same word for mule as you have used previously.

The oak trees that grow in the hilly region of Gilead are strong and have many branches, but they are not very tall. The area of Bashan in Gilead is well known for having many oak trees.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what word or phrase you will use to say **oak tree**. Look again at a picture of an oak tree if needed. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

One of David's men sees what happened to Absalom and tells Joab that he saw Absalom hanging in an oak tree. Joab asks why the man did not kill Absalom. Joab says he would have gladly given the man 10 pieces, or shekels, of silver. Silver is a precious metal that people used at that time to measure the weight of something. Ten shekels of silver may have weighed a little over 100 grams. People also used to exchange shekels of silver to buy things.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **shekels of silver**. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Remember that shekel is in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

But the man says he would not harm Absalom even if Joab had already given him 1,000 shekels, or pieces of silver, because he heard King David's command to protect Absalom. The man knows that to disobey, or betray the king is an act of **treason**. Such things are punishable by death, and the man does not believe Joab would protect him if the king were to discover who killed Absalom. If you have translated treacherously, or treason in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Joab strikes Absalom in the heart with three javelins. The heart is the muscle inside a person's body that keeps the blood flowing. Here, the heart may refer to the general midsection of Absalom's body, or his actual heart. A javelin is a spear-like weapon, or a stick, which probably had a pointed end.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what words or phrases you will use for **heart** and **javelin**. For more information, refer to heart in the Master Glossary, but remember that the heart here refers to the part of a person's physical body. If you have translated the word heart in this kind of context in another book of the Bible, then use the same word you used previously. If you have translated javelin in another book in the Bible, use the same word you used previously.

Pause this audio here.

Ten of Joab's armour bearers surround Absalom and strike him until he dies. Armour bearers are a special type of soldier. Armour bearers had the special work of helping carry a leader's weapons, but also to help protect the leaders from danger. Leaders often selected a particular armour bearer for his bravery.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use for **armour bearer**. If you have translated the idea of an armour bearer in another book of the Bible, then use the same word you used previously. Pause this audio here.

Then Joab blows a **trumpet**, or **horn**, to signal to the troops that the battle has ended. A trumpet is a ram's horn. The Israelites used to blow into the ram's horn to make patterns of loud sounds which could communicate messages to troops during a battle. Use the same word or phrase for horn as you have used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 18:9–18

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 18:19–33

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 18:19–33 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:19–33 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:19–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This story continues the previous story about how David's men killed Absalom and buried him in a pit. In this story, the messengers deliver news to King David, who is waiting in Mahanaim, about the battle and Absalom's death, and David responds to the news of the death of his son Absalom.

After David's men threw Absalom's body into a big hole, the priest Zadok's son, Ahimaaz, requests permission to go to King David and tell him the good news of the battle victory. You will remember from previous stories that Ahimaaz served as a loyal messenger for David when David ran away from Absalom. Previously, when Ahimaaz delivered messages to David, he helped David escape in safety. Now, Ahimaaz wants the honour of giving David the good news that the battle is over, which will mean that David can return safely to Jerusalem. In that culture, armies used to send important messages with men called runners, or messengers, who could run quickly from one place to another.

Joab, the commander of the army, tells Ahimaaz that Ahimaaz may not carry news or deliver any messages to the king that day because the king's son is dead.

Remember that in a previous story, David instructed Joab and the other chief leaders of the army to protect Absalom's life. Joab understands that news of the death of the king's son, Absalom, will not be good news for King David. You will remember previous stories when David killed the messengers who thought they were delivering good news when they told David his enemies were dead. Joab probably stopped Ahimaaz from delivering the news of the death of the king's son because he feared David might kill Ahimaaz, too.

Stop here and, as a group, talk about a time when someone had to give some bad news to another person. What kinds of things did the messenger have to consider when thinking about the best way to deliver the bad news? Pause the audio here.

Instead of sending Ahimaaz, Joab sends a non-Israelite man from Cush, who was probably one of David's or Joab's servants, to tell the king what he had seen happen that day. Joab probably sent a non-Israelite servant to deliver the news because the servant's life was not as valuable to him as the life of Ahimaaz the priest. The Cushite agrees to go and bows before Joab, showing he was willing to obey Joab and go. Then the Cushite man runs towards Mahanaim to deliver news to the king.

Stop here and discuss as a group the things someone in your culture might do to show a leader that he or she is willing to obey the leader. Pause the audio here.

Ahimaaz asks Joab again for permission to go. Joab responds by asking Ahimaaz why he wants to go, because he will probably not receive a reward. Joab does not speak to Ahimaaz in the same way that a commander of the army might usually speak. By saying "my son," Joab is showing the affection and concern of a father towards Ahimaaz, even though Joab is not Ahimaaz's father. This also shows that Ahimaaz was probably a young man, young enough to be Joab's son. Ahimaaz insists once more that he does not care what happens. Ahimaaz just wants to run to King David. Finally, Joab agrees and tells Ahimaaz to run.

Ahimaaz starts running towards Mahanaim, but he goes a different way than the Cushite. Ahimaaz runs the flatter, easier way on the plains, or flatlands, in the Jordan Valley. The Jordan Valley is the low, flat land that runs alongside the Jordan River. The Cushite probably runs a more direct but hilly area back towards Mahanaim. Even though the route along the plains was probably longer than the route the Cushite ran, Ahimaaz arrived at Mahanaim before the Cushite.

David sits waiting between the inner and outer gates of the city of Mahanaim. In those days, people built walls of protection around their cities. The walls had gates, or watchtowers, where the people would come in and go out of the city. One gate would be on the outer part of the city, and another would be on the inner part of the city. This left an area in between the two gates, which had rooms for the guards. David is probably waiting in one of these rooms.

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of an example of what the entrance gates might have looked like. Notice that the watchtowers also have an area on top, where a guard, or watchman, can stand guard and look out from. Pause the audio here.

Stop here and, as a group, tell a story about a time when you waited for some important news. What kind of news were you waiting for? How did you feel while you were waiting?

Pause the audio here.

A watchman goes up the wall onto the rooftop of the watchtower. From on top of the gate, the watchman in this story sees a man running alone towards the city entrance. The watchman calls out to tell the king what he can see. The king thinks that the running man must be a messenger bringing news because he is alone. If more men were running towards them, David might think they were soldiers running away from the battle.

As the running man gets closer and closer, the watchman suddenly sees another man running towards them. The watchman calls down to the king to tell him there is another man who is running alone. The king thinks that the second runner must also be bringing news.

The watchman tells the king that he thinks he can see Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok. In that culture, people identified other people by their name and also by saying whose son they were, because so many people had the same names. The watchman seems to recognise Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok, by the way he is running. The king thinks that because Ahimaaz is a good man, Ahimaaz must be bringing good news.

As Ahimaaz approaches the king, Ahimaaz calls out a traditional greeting from that culture that means peace, or everything is alright. This gives David the impression that Ahimaaz brings good news.

When Ahimaaz reaches David, Ahimaaz bows down before David with his face all the way down to the ground to show honour and respect to King David. Then Ahimaaz praises Yahweh and tells David the news of victory over his enemies, or those men who rebelled against David. Ahimaaz calls David lord, or master, to show that he recognises the king's authority over Ahimaaz.

David immediately asks Ahimaaz if Absalom is alright. David says nothing about the victory that Yahweh has given him. This shows that David's greater concern is for his son Absalom. Ahimaaz probably realises at this point that he would be delivering very bad news to the king if he says that Absalom has died.

Ahimaaz avoids telling the king that Absalom is dead by pretending not to know what happened to Absalom. Ahimaaz says that when Joab sent him to David, Ahimaaz saw a lot of disturbance amongst the men, but he did not know what was happening. By telling the king that Joab sent him, Ahimaaz is probably trying to protect himself from any angry reactions the king may have towards Ahimaaz as a messenger. It is like Ahimaaz is saying he did not come because he wanted to, but because Ahimaaz's authority, Joab, sent him. That way, Joab would be responsible for any news that displeased the king, instead of Ahimaaz.

The king tells Ahimaaz to step to the side and wait, as the Cushite man is approaching, so Ahimaaz does as the king instructs him to do.

Then the Cushite man arrives and also tells his master, the king, that he comes with good news. The Cushite says that today Yahweh has delivered, or saved, King David from the hand, or power, of all the people who acted rebelliously against David. Again, the king seems to pay no attention to this good news, but immediately asks the Cushite for news about Absalom's well-being. The Cushite says that he hopes all the king's enemies, and all who rise up against the king for evil, or to harm the king, may share the same fate as the young man Absalom. Although the Cushite does not directly say that Absalom has died, David immediately understood from his words that Absalom is dead.

Feeling overcome with emotion at the news of Absalom's death, the king moves away from the people and goes up to the room above the gate, where he can be alone to cry. David begins to cry out in despair and says, "My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! I wish that I had died instead of you! Absalom, my son, my son!" Even though Absalom rebelled against King David and became his enemy, David loved Absalom so much that he would have preferred to give his own life rather than for Absalom to die because he rebelled against the king.

Stop here and, if anyone in the group is willing, talk about a time when someone you loved very much died. Talk about how strong your reaction was to the news of the death of your loved one, what emotions you felt, and the kinds of things you said.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:19–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: Ahimaaz asks Joab to allow him to take news to King David. Joab does not allow Ahimaaz to go. Joab tells a Cushite man to report what he has seen to King David instead. Ahimaaz asks Joab again, and this time Joab gives Ahimaaz permission to go to David.

In the second scene: Ahimaaz goes by an easier route and overtakes the Cushite.

In the third scene: David is sitting between the gates at the entrance of Mahanaim, and the watchman goes up to the roof. The watchman first sees Ahimaaz running towards them and reports it to the king. Then the watchman sees another man running towards them and also reports it to the king.

In the third scene: Ahimaaz arrives and tells the king that Yahweh has given David victory over his enemies. Then Ahimaaz pretends not to know what happened to David's son, Absalom. The Cushite man arrives and tells the king that Yahweh has given David victory over his enemies. Then the Cushite man informs the king that his son Absalom is dead.

In scene five: King David goes to the room that is over the entrance gate to the city and cries because his son Absalom is dead.

The characters in this passage are:

- Ahimaaz, son of Zadok the high priest
- Joab, King David's nephew and commander of David's army
- The Cushite man
- King David
- A watchman
- And a gatekeeper

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The storyteller repeats the phrase "the king" many times in this passage. It is important to make clear in your translation that the king always refers to David, the king of Israel.

Scene one probably begins in the same place where the previous story ended, where King David's men buried Absalom's body in a pit, under a pile of rocks. Ahimaaz, who is the son of Zadok the high priest, requests permission to run to the king and deliver the good news that Yahweh has rescued King David from the hand of his enemies. You will remember that to rescue someone from the hand of his enemies is special language to say that David's enemies can no longer harm him because Yahweh has defeated them. At this point, it is not clear if Ahimaaz is speaking directly to someone or if he just says his request out loud amongst the other men.

The commander of the army, Joab, responds to Ahimaaz. Joab says Ahimaaz cannot deliver any news to the king that day because the king's son is dead. In your translation, try to make it clear that Joab knows Absalom's death will be bad, or distressing news for King David. Joab says that Ahimaaz can take messages another day. This shows that Joab trusted Ahimaaz to deliver messages, but he did not want Ahimaaz to deliver any messages that day.

Then Joab tells the Cushite man to go and tell the king what he has seen, meaning that the Cushite should tell the king about the news of victory in the battle and Absalom's death. The passage does not mention the Cushite man's name, but the storyteller seems to make it clear that King David and his men already knew this man, and he was probably the only man from Cush among them. The Cushite bows respectfully before Joab. Then the Cushite leaves quickly and runs towards Mahanaim to deliver news to the king.

Then, Ahimaaz says he wants to run after the Cushite, even if something bad happens. Ahimaaz uses special language to say, "It does not matter what happens, even if I only run behind the Cushite, I still want to go." Joab does not speak to Ahimaaz in the way a chief leader might usually speak to his soldiers. Joab replies with a question that he does not really mean for Ahimaaz to answer. Joab asks Ahimaaz why he will run, seeing as he will have no reward for delivering the news. Joab uses an affectionate phrase to say something like, "My dear boy, there is no need for you to go as well. You will not receive any reward."

Stop here and, as a group, talk about how an older man in your culture might talk to a younger man when he wants to show he cares about him. Pause this audio here.

Ahimaaz insists one more time to Joab and repeats that he does not care what happens to him. Ahimaaz repeats himself to show how determined Ahimaaz is to go to King David, no matter what happens. Finally, Joab agrees and tells Ahimaaz to run.

In scene two, Ahimaaz runs a different, easier way to Mahanaim than the Cushite man runs. Ahimaaz runs the flatter way on the plains, or areas of flat land by the Jordan Valley. This allows Ahimaaz to arrive at Mahanaim before the Cushite, even though he started running after the Cushite.

In scene three, David is sitting somewhere between the inner and outer gates, or watchtowers, of the city, possibly in one of the rooms the guards use. A watchman goes up the fortified wall to the top of the outer tower. From there, the watchman lifts up his eyes, or looks out, and sees one man running towards him.

The watchman shouts down to tell King David what he can see, and the king replies. The king says that if the man is alone, he has news in his mouth. This is special language to say the man must have a message to give King David. As the running man gets closer and closer to them, the watchman sees another runner approaching the city. This surprises the watchman, who does not expect to see a second man! The watchman quickly shouts down to tell the gatekeeper that he can see another man, who is also running alone. The king replies, saying that the second man must also be bringing news. It is not clear if the king is speaking to the gatekeeper or the watchman when he replies.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you say that someone is coming with news of something that happened. How will you translate that the runners coming must have a message to give to King David? Pause this audio here.

The first runner is now close enough for the watchman to recognise. By the way the man is running, the watchman thinks he must be Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss times when you could recognise someone from a long distance, just by the way that person walks or runs. Pause the audio here.

This seems to please the king, who responds that Ahimaaz is a good man who must be coming with good news. Be sure to emphasize that David calls both the man and the news the man is bringing good.

In scene four, as Ahimaaz approaches the king, he shouts out a traditional greeting from that culture that means "peace" or "all is well."

Stop here and, as a group, discuss how you would traditionally greet someone and say that everything is good. How will you translate Ahimaaz's greeting of "Peace," or "All is well"? Pause this audio here.

Once Ahimaaz reaches the king, he bows down with his face to the ground and praises David's God, Yahweh. Ahimaaz is probably out of breath from running. Ahimaaz is closer to the king now, so he does not shout. Ahimaaz tells David that Yahweh has delivered, or handed over, the men who lifted their hand, or rebelled against the king. Delivering, or handing over, is special language to say that Yahweh had given David victory over his enemies. Ahimaaz refers to David's enemies as the men who lifted up their hand against the king. When someone lifts up their hand, this is special language to say that the men had rebelled against King David as their leader. Ahimaaz shows great respect and honour by bowing before King David and calling him lord, which means master.

David does not say anything to Ahimaaz about the victory that Yahweh has given him. David only wants to know if Absalom is alright. After Ahimaaz shouts out "peace" as a greeting, David replies by asking if Absalom has "peace." In this way, David is asking if Absalom is well. Ahimaaz avoids telling David that Absalom is dead by pretending that he did not understand what was happening amongst the men when Joab sent him to deliver news to the king. It is not clear if Ahimaaz says that Joab, who is the king's servant, sent Ahimaaz, or if Ahimaaz says that Joab sent the king's servants, Ahimaaz and the Cushite, to the king.

The king tells Ahimaaz to step aside and wait, which is a friendly way to ask Ahimaaz to move out of the way, because the Cushite man is approaching. Ahimaaz does according to the king's request. Then the Cushite arrives and assures the king that he brings good news for the king. Again, it is likely that the Cushite is exhausted and out of breath from running so far. The Cushite repeats what Ahimaaz said earlier. The Cushite says that Yahweh has judged David to be right, and Yahweh has delivered, or rescued, David from the hand of all the men who rose up against David in rebellion. This is special language to say that Yahweh had defeated the people who did not want David to rule over them, and that they could no longer cause David harm. This is indeed good news! But again, David does not rejoice over this good news. Instead, David asks the Cushite for news about Absalom.

David repeats the same question he asked Ahimaaz. This repetition shows how much concern David felt for Absalom's welfare.

The Cushite does not say directly that Absalom is dead. The Cushite carefully chooses his words to find a gentle way to deliver the bad news to King David. The Cushite respectfully says he hopes that all the enemies of his lord, the king, and anyone else who might rise up or want to harm the king, would be like that young man. The Cushite is saying he hopes that all of David's enemies might experience the same outcome as Absalom. This phrase heavily implies, or indirectly tells, David that Absalom has suffered a very bad outcome and is dead.

In scene five, the king feels overcome with emotion at the news of Absalom's death. David goes up to the room above the gate and cries a lot. As he walks up to the room, David cries out in despair, or great pain and sorrow. David repeats the words, "My son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom! I wish that I had died instead of you! Absalom, my son, my son!" David's intense emotional response and the repetition of his words show how much David loved his son Absalom.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you show intense emotion when someone has died? How will you translate David's mourning here? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:19–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Ahimaaz, son of Zadok the high priest
- Joab, King David's nephew and commander of David's army
- The Cushite man
- King David
- A watchman
- And a gatekeeper

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Ahimaaz requests permission to run to King David to deliver the good news that Yahweh has helped David's men win the battle against the Israelite army.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ahimaaz, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It will please King David to know that Yahweh has defeated his enemies. It will mean the king can go home to Jerusalem. I want to be the person who has the honour of delivering this good news to the king; or
- I know the king is waiting to hear about what has happened in the battle. I want to go quickly to the king so that he will stop worrying;

Continue the drama.

Joab does not allow Ahimaaz to take any news to the king because the king's son is dead. Instead, Joab sends the Cushite man.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I trust Ahimaaz to deliver the message, but if David becomes angry because of the news about the death of his son, David might kill the messenger. I do not want to risk sending someone as important or valuable as Ahimaaz because he is the son of the high priest.

Continue the drama.

The Cushite man bows before Joab and runs towards Mahanaim to deliver the news to King David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the Cushite, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This is a special honour! I feel proud because Joab chose me to tell the king of our victory on the battlefield.

Continue the drama.

Ahimaaz asks Joab again to let him go to David, even though the Cushite has already left and Joab has told Ahimaaz that he will not receive any reward for going to David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Ahimaaz, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am determined to go to King David. I do not care about receiving a reward.

Continue the drama.

Joab allows Ahimaaz to go to David. Ahimaaz runs an easier, flatter route than the Cushite towards Mahanaim.

King David is waiting between the two entrance gates at Mahanaim, and a watchman is keeping guard from the roof above. The watchman tells King David there is a man running towards them, and David recognises he must be a messenger.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Finally, I am about to hear what has been happening on the battlefield! I have been anxiously waiting for news; or
- I am nervous about what may have happened.

Continue the drama.

Suddenly, the watchman reports to David that he can see another man running towards them. The king thinks the second running man is also coming with news for the king. The watchman tells the king that the first runner

seems to be Ahimaaz, the son of Zadok. The king says Ahimaaz is a good man and thinks that Ahimaaz will bring good news.

When Ahimaaz is close enough for David to hear him, Ahimaaz shouts aloud to the king that all is well. Then Ahimaaz bows in front of the king and announces the news that Yahweh has given David victory over his enemies. The king immediately asks Ahimaaz for information about his son Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I knew Ahimaaz would bring good news! That pleases me, but the thing I am most concerned about is my son Absalom. I cannot feel peace until I know Absalom is alright.

Continue the drama.

Ahimaaz pretends not to know what has happened to Absalom. David instructs Ahimaaz to wait until the Cushite man arrives. The Cushite says he comes with good news for the king. The Cushite says that Yahweh has given David victory over his enemies. The king responds by asking the Cushite for information about his son Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the Cushite, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I wonder how Ahimaaz arrived here before me; or
- Even so, I am honoured to deliver this good news to the king.

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This Cushite man has confirmed the good news that Ahimaaz told me, but I urgently need to know what has happened to my son. I am losing my patience.

Continue the drama.

The Cushite says he hopes that all of King David's enemies will end up in the same situation as Absalom. David immediately understands that Absalom is dead.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the Cushite, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I do not want to be the person to deliver this bad news to the king; or
- How can I deliver this bad news to the king in a kind and gentle way? This news is going to make the king feel terrible.

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The thing that I feared the most has happened! I need to be alone!

Continue the drama.

The king goes up to a room over the gate and cries. On his way there, the king says in a loud voice that he wishes he could have died instead of his son Absalom.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This pain and sorrow are too much for me to bear! All this time, I have longed to restore peace between my rebellious son and me. Now Absalom is dead, and that can never happen! or
- I wish I could change what has happened! I would willingly give my life so that my son could live again.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 18:19–33 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Ahimaaz requests permission to take a message to King David. The message is that Yahweh has vindicated David, or judged David to be right. Both Ahimaaz and the Cushite say that Yahweh has judged David to be right. When Yahweh judges someone, he decides who is wrong or right, and therefore who is guilty and who is innocent of breaking Yahweh's law.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you say that Yahweh has **judged** David to be right? Refer to the Master Glossary for judge. Note that this idea is similar to previous passages in 2 Samuel when people judged whether others were guilty or innocent. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh has rescued David from his enemies. A **king** is someone who rules over a territory or nation. Yahweh is God's personal name. Use the same words for king and Yahweh as you used previously, and remember that king and Yahweh are in the Master Glossary.

Ahimaaz wants to tell David that Yahweh has rescued David from the hand, or power, of David's enemies. Use the same phrase for "from the hand, or power, of enemies" as you have used in previous passages.

Joab does not allow Ahimaaz to take news, or a message, to David. Joab sends a Cushite man instead. Ahimaaz pleads again for Joab to allow him to follow after the Cushite man. Joab finally tells Ahimaaz to go, so Ahimaaz runs by way of the plain and arrives at Mahanaim before the Cushite. The plain is the flatland of the Jordan Valley, to the east of the Jordan River.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **plain**. If you have already translated plain in another book of the Bible, use the same word you used previously. Pause the audio here.

David sat between the two gates. The two gates were the places where people could enter and leave a fortified city that was protected by a big wall. People often built the gates high so that someone could stand on them and look at the area surrounding the city.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use to say the inner and outer **gates**, or watchtowers. If you have translated these words previously, use the same words you used before. Pause the audio here.

The watchman went up to the roof by climbing up the city wall and saw a man running towards the city. A watchman is the person who would go up on top of a gate, or watchtower, to keep guard over the city. From the high point of the tower, a watchman can look out at the surrounding area and tell the people below if anything dangerous or threatening is approaching the city. The watchman shouted down to the gatekeeper to tell him that a second man was running towards the city. A gatekeeper is a person who guards the entrance to a city.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what words or phrases you will use for watchman and gatekeeper. Pause the audio here.

Ahimaaz shouts that everything is alright and praises David's **God**, Yahweh, for giving David victory over his enemies. In the Bible, "God" refers to God who created everything and is the most powerful spiritual being. Use

the same word or phrase for God as you used in previous passages. For more information on God, refer to the Master Glossary.

Ahimaaz refers to himself as the king's **servant**. A servant is a person who does work for someone else. Use the same word for servant as you used previously, and remember that servant is in the Master Glossary.

The Cushite man calls King David his **lord**. A lord is someone who is a master over other people. Use the same word for lord as you used previously, and remember that lord is in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 18:19–33

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 19:1–8a

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 19:1–8a and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:1–8a three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:1–8a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

The previous story ended as King David went into a private room to cry because of the news that his son Absalom had died in battle. This story continues that story, but begins in a different location. It begins amongst David's men as they journey back towards Mahanaim after winning a victorious battle. In this story, Joab will disapprove of King David's behaviour towards the men who fought in battle to protect the king.

Someone tells Joab that King David is crying in mourning for Absalom. In some cultures, when people mourn, they cry loudly. [David cried loudly and lamented in the previous story when, whilst crying, he said, "O my son Absalom, my son, my son Absalom!"]{.mark}

David's men were probably happy because they won the battle. But when they hear the king is mourning for his son Absalom, the men no longer feel joy, but rather great sadness. Army soldiers sometimes feel like they must show the same emotions as the leader does. So if the king is happy about winning the battle, then the people can also be happy. But if the king is mourning and sad, then the people will be sad as well.

When the men arrive at Mahanaim, they do not celebrate their battle victory as a victorious army would usually do. Instead, the men return there quietly, like an army would do if they felt ashamed after having lost a battle

and had to run away. Meanwhile, King David is in a room crying bitterly over Absalom's death. David covers his face, probably with his hands, as he continues crying.

Stop here and discuss as a group: When people in your culture cry or mourn because someone close to them has died, what do they do? How do they show their grief? How is this similar to or different from what David did? Pause this audio here.

Joab enters the room where the king is crying and strongly rebukes the king. Joab reminds the king that his men saved not only the king's life but also the lives of the king's whole family, including his sons, daughters, wives, and concubines. You will remember that concubines were lower-ranking wives in royal households at the time. Joab says the king is showing so much sorrow that his men feel ashamed instead of proud of the work they have done to protect the king and his family.

Joab criticizes the king's behaviour toward his men. Joab says King David is showing more love toward the people who hate the king and less love toward the men who showed their loyalty by risking their own lives to defend David. Joab is probably trying to say he thinks that David is behaving unreasonably.

Stop here and, as a group, talk about a time when someone made bad decisions because they felt very strong emotions about something. Talk about what happened when they made those bad decisions. Pause the audio here.

Joab rebukes David for showing that he cares more for Absalom than for David's commanders and servants. Joab even says he thinks the king would be happy if all his men had died, but Absalom had lived.

Joab tells the king he should get up, leave the room, and congratulate his men. Then Joab makes a promise in Yahweh's name and says that if David does not do what Joab asks, then all David's men will abandon him before the night ends. It is not clear if Joab will lead the men in a mutiny to abandon David, or if Joab simply knows what the men will do if David does not go to reassure the men.

Joab finishes speaking to David with a warning. Joab says that if all the men leave the king, it will be the worst thing that has happened since the king was a young man. It is unusual for a commander to rebuke a king openly because the king has authority over the commander. Joab probably feels he needs to rebuke the king because he understands the problems the king may bring upon himself and the nation of Israel if the king does not encourage the men.

King David gets up and sits in his raised seat at the city gateway, where leaders would usually speak to the people. All the men hear that King David has left his room and is now sitting in the gateway, so the men gather around David, ready to hear what he will say.

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of a city gateway that shows where David may have sat. Then talk about the kinds of places in your culture where chief leaders go to speak openly to the people. Are the people quiet or noisy when the leader wants to speak?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:1–8a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: Joab and the men hear that King David is mourning the death of his son Absalom. Instead of celebrating the victory, the men return to Mahanaim with feelings of mourning and shame.

In the second scene: The king cries in his room. Joab goes to the king and rebukes him because the king has not thanked the men who saved the lives of the king and his whole family. Then Joab warns the king that all his men will abandon him if he does not encourage the men.

In the third scene: King David goes to sit in his seat at the entrance gate to the city. The men hear that the king is sitting in his seat and gather before him.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- King David
- And all the people, or David's men

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The first scene of this story begins as David's men return from the victorious battle that they fought against Absalom's supporters in a previous story. The men probably began their journey rejoicing over their victory. Somewhere along the way, Joab hears the news about David weeping and mourning because of the death of his son, Absalom.

The people abruptly stop rejoicing when they hear that King David is mourning. The victory, which is normally a cause for rejoicing, now becomes a cause for mourning amongst the people because their king is grieving for his son. There is a strong contrast between the rejoicing of King David's men and the mourning that King David is feeling.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what words or phrases you will use to describe how the victory celebration of the army suddenly became a time of mourning. Pause the audio here.

The men arrive at Mahanaim, but instead of making a triumphant entrance to celebrate their victory, the people "stole into the city." This is special language that means the people sneak back into the city, like people who have done something wrong and do not want anyone to see them. The men enter the city quietly, almost secretly. The storyteller compares David's men as they enter the city to how people might return from battle if they had lost the battle, or had run away. The people come back feeling a sense of shame.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use to show how the men entered the city. Pause the audio here.

The second scene begins in the room where King David has been crying and mourning for Absalom. The king covers his face with his hands as he cries, and repeats again and again the phrase "Absalom, my son." The repetition emphasizes the reason why David is feeling such intense emotions. It is important to note that David is speaking in a loud voice, and the people near David's room can probably hear him.

It is not clear how much time passes, but at some point that same day, Joab enters the room where the king has been mourning and rebukes the king. Joab says that today the king has "covered the men's faces with shame," which is special language to say that David made the men feel ashamed of themselves, instead of proud of themselves for protecting the king. Joab reminds the king that the men saved not only the king's life that day, but also the lives of the king's sons, daughters, wives, and concubines. This reminder highlights a big contrast that Joab probably wants David to see. David is here mourning the death of his rebellious son, instead of celebrating and being grateful because he and all the other members of David's family are safe.

Stop here and, as a group, talk about a time when someone made someone else feel ashamed about something. Pay attention to the words and phrases you use to talk about it. Then discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use to show that David made his men feel ashamed.

Pause the audio here.

Joab emphasises this point again, but in a different way. Joab says the king loves the people who hate him and hates the people who love him. Love is the opposite of hate. By using opposites, Joab highlights the extreme contrast between the attitude that Absalom had towards his father and the attitude that David's loyal servants had towards him. In your translation, you can exchange the idea of "love" for "loyal" and "hate" for "disloyal" if it makes more sense in your language.

Joab explains that the reason the men feel ashamed is because that same day, David showed by his actions that he cares more about his son Absalom than he does about all his commanders and servants combined. Joab tells the king that Joab believes the king would be happier if all of David's men had died instead of Absalom.

Joab tells the king to fix this bad situation by going to his men and speaking encouragingly to them. Joab asks the king to take quick action that will avoid making the situation worse. Joab uses the strong language of swearing an oath, or making a promise in Yahweh's name. Joab does this to show how serious the situation is and how sure he is that all of David's men will abandon David that same day if he does not do as Joab says. Joab assures the king that if the men leave, it would create a far worse situation for the king than anything else David has experienced since being a young man.

Notice that Joab says today, or this day, four times whilst speaking to King David. This repetition draws attention to the urgency of the crisis. David needs to take immediate action to avoid losing the loyalty of all his men that same day.

David seems to remain silent when Joab finishes speaking. In scene three, the king gets up and goes to the entrance gate, where he sits in the special king's seat, ready to speak to the men. It is not clear if David was lying face down on the floor or if he was sitting down when he got up to leave the room. When the men hear the king is in the gateway, they all gather around to hear what he will say.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:1–8a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- King David
- And all the people, or David's men

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Someone tells Joab that King David is weeping and mourning because his son Absalom is dead. All the men also hear that King David is grieving the death of his son. Instead of the men celebrating the great victory that Yahweh had given them over David's enemies, the men feel shame and sadness.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It does not surprise me that the king is grieving because of Absalom. I will tell the men to show understanding about the king's suffering by restraining their joy for a while; or
- I understand the king feels very sad about Absalom, but he could have sent a message to thank or encourage these men who have risked their lives in battle to defend him today.

Continue the drama.

The men enter Mahanaim quietly, like people who feel shame about something they have done wrong.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing all the people, or David's men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- There is no glory for an army if the king is not pleased. Today, we consider our victory a loss; or
- Maybe the king thinks it is our fault that Absalom died. The king may consider us to be his enemies now and want to punish us.

Continue the drama.

The king covers his face with his hands as he continues crying and says in a loud voice, "O my son Absalom! O Absalom, my son, my son!"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- My sorrow is too great, I cannot bear it! or
- I feel overwhelmed with sadness. Nothing can soothe the pain I feel inside because my son is dead.

Continue the drama.

Then Joab enters the room where King David is mourning and rebukes the king. Joab thinks the king is causing his men to feel as though they have done something wrong. Joab tells King David that the men saved the king's life, and the lives of all the king's sons, daughters, wives, and concubines.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel bothered because the king does not show honour to the men who risked their lives to protect him. The king seems blinded by his grief and unable to see how much his men love him; or
- I care about the king and the nation of Israel. I cannot stand by and allow the king to bring a worse situation upon himself and our nation. As long as the king does not control his emotions, he cannot lead his people well. I have to help the king see clearly.

Continue the drama.

Joab says the king is making it very clear by the way he cries and cries for his son Absalom that the king loves his enemies and hates those who do good to him. Joab says the king does not value the lives of his commanders and men. Joab believes that the king would feel happier if all his men were dead, as long as Absalom were still alive. Joab warns the king that all his men will abandon the king if he does not change his attitude and encourage his men.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The king's behaviour only reveals what is in his heart. The king's actions show us that he loves his rebellious son more than all of us loyal men combined; or
- The king is behaving foolishly and risks losing the loyalty of all his men! If the men leave the king, then our victory will count for nothing! or
- I know the king has authority over me, but if I do not say anything now, he will bring disaster upon us all.

Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Joab is right. Even though I feel crushed inside because my son Absalom is dead, I cannot keep ignoring my men and the good they have done for me; or
- I feel very sad, but I need to control my feelings for a moment and be a good leader to my men. My men deserve recognition for their loyalty and efforts; or
- What does it matter if all these men leave me? If my own son turned against me and is dead now, how can I believe these men will not also turn against me one day?

Continue the drama.

The king responds to Joab's warning by going to sit in his seat at the entrance gate to the city.

All the men hear that David is sitting at the gate, so the men all gather there before David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing all the people, or David's men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- We heard the king is at the gate, so we had better hurry to get there and hear what he has to say; or
- We feel uncertain about what the king will say. Will the king be pleased with us or not?

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:1–8a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Someone tells Joab that **King** David is crying and **mourning** because Absalom is dead. A king is a man who rules over a territory or a nation. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about king. Use the same word for king as you used previously. People mourn when they feel deep sadness, usually when someone they love dies. Use the same words for mourn as you used previously.

All of David's people, or soldiers from the army, decide not to celebrate their victory in battle. In the original language, the storyteller calls the soldiers "people," but you can call them soldiers or David's army to be clear about who they are.

Joab approaches the king and rebukes him for not showing appreciation to his men who saved David's life. Joab says the men saved not only David's life but also the lives of David's sons and daughters, his wives and concubines. You will remember that wives and concubines are very similar, but wives have a higher ranking, or are more important within a family than concubines.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use to describe David's family members, particularly his **concubines**. You may find it makes more sense in your language to say "David's whole family." If you have translated concubine in a previous passage, use the same word or phrase as you used before. Pause the audio here.

Joab says that David seems to love the people who hate him and to hate the people who love him. Joab says that David is showing by his actions that he does not value his **commanders** and all his men as much as he values his son Absalom. Commanders are officers, or chief leaders, within an army. Use the same word for commander as you used previously.

Joab swears an **oath**, or strong promise, in **Yahweh**'s name, saying that if David does not encourage his men, then his men will stop following David. Use the same words or phrase for "swear an oath" as you have used in previous passages. Yahweh is God's personal name. Refer to Yahweh and oath in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same words for Yahweh and oath as you used previously.

Then King David gets up and goes to sit in his seat at the entrance **gate** to the city. An entrance gate is the place where people enter and leave a city that is protected by a big wall. Use the same word for gate as you used in the previous story.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 19:1–8a

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 19:8b–18a

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 19:8b-18a and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:8b-18a three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:8b-18a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In a previous story, when David's men killed Absalom, all of Absalom's supporters ran away from the battleground back to their own homes. At that same time, David's men returned to Mahanaim, where the king

was mourning the death of his son Absalom. This story describes what happened amongst the northern tribes of Israel during that time and how the whole nation of Israel later made David their king again.

After the men who supported Absalom went home, everyone in Israel started arguing amongst themselves. In this story, Israel probably refers to all the tribes of Israel, except the tribe of Judah. When people refer to Israel, but do not include the tribe of Judah, they often say "the northern tribes of Israel."

The northern tribes of Israel discuss what to do about King David now that Absalom is dead. The people say that King David has done good things for them. David rescued the people from their enemies and saved them from the Philistines. The Philistines had been enemies of the Israelites for a long time.

The northern tribes continue to talk about David. The people discuss some things that David has done. First, they recognise that David saved them from their enemies quite a few times. But more recently, David ran away to the part of Israel that is to the east of the Jordan River, to escape from his own son Absalom! Then the people say that this Absalom, whom they themselves anointed, or chose to rule over them instead of David, died in battle! You will remember a previous story when the men of Israel secretly agreed with Absalom to make him their new king, instead of King David.

Finally, the people agree that because Absalom is dead and David has been a good king, the people should make David their king again.

Stop here and discuss as a group how people appoint, or choose rulers in your culture. Talk about the kinds of people you want to be your leaders: maybe people who are courageous, wise, or fair when they rule others? Talk about why it is important for a group of people to have good leaders. Pause the audio here.

Once David hears that Israel has decided to make him their king again, David does not respond directly to the northern tribes. Instead, David sends a message to two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, and instructs them to deliver a message to the elders, or chief leaders of the tribe of Judah. You will remember Zadok and Abiathar from previous stories. In David's message to the elders, the king informs Judah that all the other tribes of Israel are ready to welcome him back as king.

The king reminds the elders that the people of the tribe of Judah are the king's brothers, or relatives, because they all share the same ancestor, Judah. Then the king invites the tribe of Judah to go with him back to Jerusalem. The king probably selects the people from the tribe of Judah to come with him back to Jerusalem, instead of the other tribes, because they are the king's relatives. These people have a closer family connection to David than the other tribes of Israel.

Then David tells the elders of Judah to give his nephew, Amasa, a special message from him. Amasa is the son of David's sister, Abigail. Because Amasa is one of David's close family members, David chooses Amasa to be the new commander of his army. David makes a solemn promise to make Amasa the new commander over all his army instead of Joab. You will remember that Amasa was previously the commander of Absalom's army. It is possible that David chose to make Amasa the commander of his army to unite both armies together again under his leadership. In addition, David might have wanted to punish Joab because of the death of David's son Absalom.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss a time when a ruler needed to use wisdom to choose the people who served under him. Talk about some of the things that might influence a ruler to choose one person instead of another. Pause the audio here.

With the words of his message, David convinces all the men of Judah to welcome him back as king, along with all the people who were with David. All the men of Judah agree and send a message to the king telling him to return with all his servants, or men.

King David begins his journey back towards Jerusalem and arrives at the Jordan River. The men of Judah arrive at Gilgal to meet the king and bring him across the Jordan River. Gilgal is a town near Jericho on the west side of the Jordan River. You will remember Gilgal from other stories, where important events took place, such as when Joshua set up a memorial and when the people made Saul their king. Gilgal is an important place for the Israelites, which is likely why the men from Judah met the king there.

Along with the men of Judah came some men from the tribe of Benjamin, Saul's tribe. You will remember that Shimei, the son of Gera, from the tribe of Benjamin, lives in Bahurim. In a previous story, Shimei made himself

an enemy of King David because he cursed and threw stones at David as David fled from Absalom. Shimei is a relative of Saul, the man who was king over Israel before King David.

Shimei takes 1,000 men from the tribe of Benjamin with him to meet the king. Included amongst the 1,000 Benjamite men is Ziba, the chief servant of Saul's household. In a previous story, Ziba gave donkeys, food, and wine to David and the people with him when David ran away from Absalom.

Now, Ziba takes his 15 sons and 20 servants with him to meet the king. All of the men rush to the Jordan River where King David is. It is not clear why Shimei, Ziba, and the Benjamite men are in a hurry to meet King David, but it seems like they all want to show their loyalty to the king.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss some of the reasons why it might be difficult for a ruler to trust some people, even if they appear to be loyal. Pause the audio here.

Once the men arrive at the Jordan River, they cross over at the ford, where the water is shallow. The men who cross the Jordan River want to help the king and his family with whatever the king might ask them to do.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:8b-18a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: All of Absalom's supporters previously ran away to their homes and are now discussing amongst themselves what to do about King David, now that Absalom is dead.

In the second scene: David hears that the northern tribes of Israel are ready to welcome him back as king. King David sends a message to Zadok and Abiathar, and instructs them to talk to the elders of Judah.

In the third scene: The men of Judah respond to King David.

In the fourth scene: The king travels from Mahanaim to the Jordan River, where men from the tribe of Judah, Shimei and his men, and Ziba with his sons and servants come to meet him.

The characters in this passage are:

- The men of the northern tribes of Israel
- King David
- Zadok and Abiathar, the priests
- The elders of the tribe of Judah
- Amasa
- The men of the tribe of Judah
- Shimei, the son of Gera
- 1,000 men of the tribe of Benjamin
- Ziba
- Ziba's 15 sons
- Ziba's 20 servants
- And King David's household

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The storyteller continues the story about King David from the previous story, but begins this story from a different perspective. The storyteller begins by describing what was happening throughout the land of Israel whilst David's men returned from battle to Mahanaim and King David was mourning the death of his son.

The storyteller introduces this story with a reminder that Absalom's supporters had run away to their homes throughout the land of Israel about the same time as David's men had returned to Mahanaim, and whilst David mourned Absalom's death. You will remember from a previous story how Absalom's supporters ran away to their homes after David's men killed Absalom and Joab blew the horn to end the battle. This introduction connects the story about what happened to King David with what was happening throughout the land of Israel.

In the first scene, all the people throughout the land of Israel, except the tribe of Judah, are arguing amongst themselves. The people are discussing what to do about King David now that Absalom is dead. The people are talking about how King David rescued them from the hand, or power, of their enemies, which is special language to say that King David protected the Israelites from the people who wanted to cause them harm. The people repeat this phrase to recognise that King David has been a strong and courageous leader for them. The people say specifically that David has saved them from the Philistines, who are also enemies of Israel.

In contrast to the good things the people say about King David, they also say that David ran away from his own son, Absalom. This shows that the people think David is no longer a strong and courageous leader because he ran away from his own son. It is as if they were saying amongst themselves, "We remember a time when David was very brave and saved us from our greatest and most powerful enemies. Yet David is not so brave anymore. Even David's own son chased him away."

The people talk about how they previously anointed, or chose, David's son Absalom to be their king in place of David. Usually, in that culture, Yahweh would anoint someone for the special task of being the king of Israel. It is important to make clear in your translation that it was not Yahweh who anointed Absalom to be king over Israel, but the people.

Because the people rejected David, and Absalom died, they no longer have a king to rule over them and protect them from their enemies. The people are thinking about these things amongst themselves and discussing what to do. The people decide that they should ask David to be their king again. So the people ask a question that they do not expect anyone to answer. The question is really a way of them saying they have decided what to do. By asking, "Why do you say nothing about bringing the king back?" they are really saying, "We want to ask David to come back and be our king again."

It is not clear how, or when, David hears about what the northern tribes of Israel want to do. But in scene two, David sends a message to two priests, Zadok and Abiathar, in Jerusalem. You will remember that Zadok and Abiathar had stayed in Jerusalem when David ran away. In his message, David says he has heard what the northern tribes have been saying. David tells Zadok and Abiathar to speak to the elders, or chief leaders of the tribe of Judah. In this message, David asks why Judah is the last tribe to welcome the king back to his palace. When David says "the king," he is referring to himself as the king. It might be clearer in your translation to say something like, "I hear that all the northern tribes of Israel are ready to welcome me back as their king. Therefore, why are you the last tribe to think about welcoming me back?" or "Why have you still not welcomed me back?" David does not really mean for them to answer the question. David is actually inviting the elders of Judah to welcome David back.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss how you will translate David's message to the elders of Judah in your language. Pause the audio here.

David says that the people of the tribe of Judah are his brothers, relatives, his own "flesh and blood." This is special language to say that the people of the tribe of Judah and David all share the same ancestor. David repeats himself to remind the elders of Judah that they have a closer family connection to King David than all the other tribes of Israel. It is like David is saying, "Because you and I are family, I want you to be the tribe to come back with me to my palace." By repeating the question, "Why should you be the last to welcome me back?" the king is showing how much more he wants Judah to bring him back than the northern tribes of Israel.

David then tells the priests to give a personal message to his nephew Amasa. David begins the message to Amasa with a question, which is not really a question that David wants Amasa to answer. David is making a statement to remind Amasa that he is David's bone and flesh, or flesh and blood. This is special language to say that Amasa is a member of David's family.

Stop here and, as a group, talk about what words or phrases you will use to say that Amasa is David's relative. Stop the audio here.

David makes a solemn promise to Amasa. David says that he will make Amasa the commander of his army instead of Joab. David says, "God do so to me and more," which is special language to say that David is calling on God to punish him if David does not do what he promises to do. David says this to show Amasa that he really means to do what he says he will do. It is like David is saying, "May God strike me dead if I do not keep my promise to you, Amasa."

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will translate David's strong promise to Amasa.

Pause the audio here.

In the third scene, the words of David's message make the heart of all the men of Judah as one man. This is special language to say that David's words convince all the people of Judah to join together and support David. The men of Judah send a message back to King David, telling David to come back with all his people.

Stop here and, as a group, talk about a time when you saw people in your community do something as one united group of people. Discuss how you will show that all the men of Judah united as if they were one man after hearing David's words. Pause the audio here.

In the fourth scene, King David begins his journey back towards Jerusalem and arrives at the Jordan River. King David remains on the east side of the river. The men of Judah arrive at Gilgal, on the west side of the Jordan River, to meet the king and bring him across the Jordan River. At the same time, Shimei hurries from Bahurim to meet King David with the tribe of Judah. Shimei takes 1,000 men from the tribe of Benjamin with him. It is important to note that the storyteller does not say David invited Shimei to come to him, only that Shimei went.

Ziba, the chief servant of Saul's household, or family, is among the 1,000 Benjamite men. Ziba takes along with him 15 of his sons and 20 of his servants. All of these people go quickly to the Jordan River to meet the king. It is not clear why Shimei and the Benjamite men rush to meet the king, but it is important to say in your translation that they went quickly.

The men cross over the ford, or the shallow part of the Jordan River, to bring the king and his household back to Israel so they can continue their journey towards Jerusalem. It is not clear exactly who crossed the Jordan River. It is most likely that the men of Judah, and the 1,000 Benjamite men, including Shimei and Ziba, all

crossed the Jordan River together to bring King David and all his household back over. King David's household includes his sons, daughters, wives, concubines, and servants. The men go to do the king's pleasure, which is special language that means the men were helping the king in whatever way he needed them to.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:8b-18a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- The men of the northern tribes of Israel
- King David
- Zadok and Abiathar, the priests
- The elders of the tribe of Judah
- Amasa
- The men of the tribe of Judah
- Shimei, the son of Gera
- 1,000 men of the tribe of Benjamin
- Ziba
- Ziba's 15 sons
- Ziba's 20 servants
- And King David's household

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The Israelites who supported Absalom had run away to their homes. Throughout the northern tribes of Israel, people were discussing amongst themselves what to do now that Absalom was dead.

The people speak about how King David had previously saved them from the Philistines and other enemies, but now, David had run away to escape from Absalom. The people say that they previously anointed Absalom to rule over them, but now, Absalom is dead. Then the people decide to ask David to be their king again.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the people from the northern tribes of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- Now that Absalom is dead, we do not have a king to rule over us and protect us anymore. We need to agree on a solution to this problem; or
- We have acted foolishly. David was a good king, and we rejected him. We should ask David to come back; or
- Yahweh has killed Absalom, whom we chose to be king. We should make David our king again because he is the man Yahweh chose to be king over Israel.

Continue the drama.

King David sends a message to the priests, Zadok and Abiathar, to inform the elders of the tribe of Judah that the northern tribes are ready to bring David back as their king. In David's message, David reminds the elders that the tribe of Judah has a closer family connection to the king than the northern tribes. Therefore, David invites the tribe of Judah to welcome David back to his palace as king.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It will not be easy to restore unity amongst my people, but at least I now know that the northern tribes are willing to take me back as their king; or
- Yahweh is good to me. I trust in Yahweh, and he takes care of me. Yahweh even changes the attitudes of the people who rejected me so that they want to welcome me back; or
- The men of Judah are my close relatives. I want them to have the honour of bringing me back to my palace as king; or
- The northern tribes might be willing to bring me back, but they betrayed me by anointing my son Absalom to be their king in my place. I will not give the northern tribes the honour of bringing me back. I will recognize Judah's loyalty to me by inviting them to accompany me back to Jerusalem.

Continue the drama.

David continues his message to the elders of Judah. In the message, David makes a solemn promise to make Amasa the new commander, or chief leader of his army, instead of Joab.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I cannot trust Joab anymore. Joab directly disobeyed me by causing Absalom to die in the battle; or
- Although Amasa was the leader of Absalom's army, I think that if I put him in charge of my army, it would help unite my people again.

Continue the drama.

David's message convinces all the men of Judah to unite together and support David's return as king over all Israel. The men of Judah send a message back to David telling him to come back with all his servants. So the king journeys from Mahanaim west toward the Jordan River, and the men of the tribe of Judah go to Gilgal to meet the king and bring him back over the Jordan River.

Ask the person playing the men of Judah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The people might answer things like:

- King David is our relative. It is right that we should go with David back to his kingdom; or
- Yahweh has defeated King David's enemies again. We have no doubt that Yahweh has chosen David to be king over all Israel!

Continue the drama.

Shimei, the son of Gera, and 1,000 Benjamite men quickly travel from Bahurim to join the men of Judah and go with them to meet King David. Ziba, one of Saul's servants, is part of the group of Benjamite men who go to the Jordan River to meet King David. Ziba takes 15 of his sons and 20 of his servants with him.

Ask the person playing Shimei, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We must go quickly if we want to join Judah and bring King David back; or
- I will take 1,000 men with me for protection. I am worried that David's men will want to kill me because I cursed the king when he was fleeing from Absalom; or
- I previously cursed the king because I thought Yahweh was punishing him for the harm David had done to my relatives, those from Saul's family. Now I can see that Yahweh has not given the kingdom to Absalom, so my life may be at risk.

Continue the drama.

The men cross the shallow part of the Jordan River to bring back the king's household and to help the king with whatever he needs.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:8b-18a in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Absalom's supporters ran away to their homes after the battle with David's men in the forest of Ephraim. Then the people throughout **Israel** argued about whether or not to make David their **king** again. Israel is the territory where the Israelites lived. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about king and Israel, and use the same descriptions for king and Israel as you have used previously. In this passage, Israel refers to the northern tribes of Israel, which are all the tribes except for Judah.

The people said that King David rescued them from the **hand**, or power, of the Philistines. Be sure to translate the idea of rescuing from the hand of the Philistines in the same way you have previously.

The people previously **anointed**, or chose, Absalom to be king, but Absalom died. Refer to anoint in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same word or phrase for anoint as you used previously.

David sent a message to the **priests**, Zadok and Abiathar. David asked the priests to speak to the **elders** of the tribe of **Judah**. Priests were people who worked in the Israelite place of worship. Elders are people with authority within a community of people. Elders are usually heads of families. Use the same words for Judah, priests, and elders as you have used previously. Judah, priests, and elders are all in the Master Glossary.

David asks the tribe of Judah why they are the last to bring David back to his **house**, or **palace**, which is the special place where a king lives. Here, David is referring to his palace in Jerusalem. Use the same word for palace, or king's house, as you have used previously.

David calls the people of the tribe of Judah his own **relatives**, or brothers. David says that the people of Judah are his own "**flesh and blood**." Translate "flesh and blood" and relatives, or brothers, in the same way as you have previously.

David told the elders of Judah to inform his nephew Amasa that he would set Amasa as the new **commander** of his army in place of Joab. A commander is an officer, or chief leader, within an army. Use the same word for commander as you used previously.

David won over the hearts of the men of Judah. If you use the word **hearts** in your translation, you can use the same word you used previously. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about heart.

Ziba is a **steward** in Saul's household. You will remember that a steward is in charge of an entire household for his master. Use the same word for steward as you used previously in earlier stories about Ziba.

The men of Judah, Shimei and his men, along with Ziba and his sons and **servants**, crossed the **ford** of the **Jordan River** to bring the king's **household** back to Jerusalem. A ford is a place in a river where the water is shallow enough for people to easily cross from one side to the other. A household includes all the people living in a house, both family members and servants. Use the same word or phrases for servants, ford, household, and Jordan River as you used previously. Servant, household, and Jordan River are in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 19:8b–18a

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 19:18b-23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 19:18b-23 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:18b-23 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:18b-23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This story continues from the previous story. The men of Judah, Shimei, and 1,000 Benjamites rushed to meet King David at the Jordan River. This story explains why Shimei hurried to meet King David. Shimei admits his past wrongdoing and asks for forgiveness. King David responds with kindness.

You will remember Shimei, the son of Gera, from a previous story. Shimei is the man who cursed, or said he wanted bad things to happen to, King David, when David was fleeing Jerusalem to escape from his son Absalom.

This story begins just before King David is about to cross the Jordan River. Shimei and the others have crossed over the Jordan River to be on the east side with King David and his men. Shimei bows down before the king to show honor and respect. Shimei speaks to the king with a humble attitude, calling the king his lord and referring to himself as the king's servant.

Shimei asks the king to forgive his wrongdoing. Shimei asks the king to forget the bad things he previously did to offend the king. Shimei asks the king not to keep a record of Shimei's offenses in his mind.

People do different things in different cultures when they repent for something they have done wrong. Here, Shimei bows down before King David, shows an attitude of humility, and tries to restore his relationship with the king. Shimei explains why he is the first person from all the northern tribes of Israel to meet the king. Shimei says it is because he knows how badly he behaved, and wants to make things better. Some versions of the Bible say Shimei was the first of all the "house of Joseph" to meet the king. Although the "house of Joseph" often refers to the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh, sometimes the Israelites said the "house of Joseph" to refer to all the northern tribes of Israel.

Stop here and, as a group, talk about some things people in your culture do when they want someone to forgive them and not punish their wrongdoing. Pause the audio here.

Abishai says that he thinks Shimei should die. Abishai is King David's nephew, the son of King David's sister, Zeruiah. Abishai is one of the chief leaders in David's army. You will remember that in a previous story, David divided his army into three groups and put Abishai as the leader of one of the groups. You will remember when Shimei cursed King David as King David was running away from Jerusalem, Abishai wanted to kill Shimei immediately. But David told Abishai to leave Shimei alone. Now, Abishai says again that Shimei should die because Shimei wished that bad things would happen to Yahweh's anointed king, King David.

Stop here and, as a group, tell a story about a time when someone wanted to hurt another person to take revenge for the bad things that person had done to someone they love. Pause the audio here.

In response, King David rebukes or corrects the sons of Zeruiah. This includes both Abishai and Joab. David says he does not want to hear their opinion about Shimei. David tells Abishai and Joab they are like enemies to David because they are not thinking the way David does. Abishai and Joab want revenge, but David wants peace. David does not want anyone to die. Instead, David wants the day to be a celebration because David is king again.

Then the king makes a solemn promise, or oath, to Shimei. King David says Shimei will not die for his wrongdoing. In many cultures, the king, or chief ruler, has the authority to pardon someone. This means that the person will not receive the punishment they deserve for their wrongdoing. Another way to say this is that the king showed mercy.

Stop here and discuss as a group the idea of mercy, which is to not punish someone even though they deserve it. Talk about some examples from your culture of people who did not receive what they deserved because a leader showed mercy.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:18b-23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: Shimei bows down before King David and asks the king to forgive him.

In the second scene: Abishai says that Shimei should die for his wrongdoing, but David disagrees. David says no one will die that day.

In the third scene: The king promises to allow Shimei to live.

The characters in this passage are:

- Shimei, the son of Gera
- King David
- Abishai, the son of Zeruiah
- Joab, another son of Zeruiah
- The leaders of the tribe of Judah
- And 1,000 men of the tribe of Benjamin

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This story begins on the east side of the Jordan River, after Shimei and the Benjamite men crossed over to help the king. In the first scene, David is about to cross the Jordan River, from the east side to the west side, at a point where the water is shallow. Shimei falls down, or bows, before King David. Shimei does not really fall down like a man stumbles and falls. Shimei gets down on the ground and puts his face to the ground to show that he respects King David. It is possible that Shimei interrupts King David as he is about to cross the Jordan River. Then Shimei speaks to the king in a humble way. Shimei recognises the king as his lord, or master, and himself as the king's servant. There is a strong contrast between Shimei's attitude towards the king in this story and his attitude in a previous story when he cursed, or insulted, the king as the king fled from Absalom. It is important to make sure you show this change of attitude in your translation.

Shimei pleads with the king. Shimei asks his lord, King David, "not to hold him guilty," which is special language to say that Shimei asks the king to forgive him. Then Shimei asks the king to "forget the wrong," meaning the bad things Shimei did to the king when the king fled from Absalom. Shimei also asks the king not to "take these things to heart," which is special language meaning that Shimei hoped the king would not continue to remember the bad things Shimei had done. These three phrases have very similar meanings. It is like Shimei is saying, "Lord, please forgive me for the wrongs I have done to you. Please forget the wrongs I have done to you. Please do not remember, or feel offended by the wrongs I have done to you." Shimei uses repetition as he speaks to King David to show how much he wants the king to forgive Shimei.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what phrases you will use in your language to show that Shimei asks for forgiveness from the king. How will repeating the phrase help you show how serious Shimei is? Pause the audio here.

Shimei continues by confessing, or telling the king that he understands how greatly he has sinned against the king. Shimei says he went to meet the king before any of the other people from the house of Joseph because Shimei knows that he has sinned. Shimei is not from the tribe of Joseph, but Shimei uses that name to refer to the northern tribes of Israel. This implies that Shimei came to the king to make peace. We see now why Shimei rushed to meet the king in the previous story.

David's nephew Abishai responds before the king says anything to Shimei. This suggests that Abishai spoke very quickly. Abishai may have even interrupted the king. Abishai thinks Shimei should die for cursing the king whom Yahweh anointed, or chose to be king over Israel. In these stories, Yahweh's anointed king always refers to King David. Abishai asks the king if he should kill Shimei, but Abishai is not really asking. Abishai is telling the king what he thinks should happen.

Although only Abishai spoke to the king, David responded to both Abishai and Abishai's brother, Joab. David answers Abishai and Joab before David speaks to Shimei. David asks three questions that he does not expect anyone to answer. David says, "What have I to do with you, that you should be an opponent to me?" and "Shall anyone be put to death in Israel this day?" and "Do I not know that I am this day king over Israel?" This is how David tells Abishai and Joab that he does not agree with their opinion. Abishai and Joab wanted to show their

loyalty and defend King David, but David says that Abishai and Joab are like enemies to David. David is saying he does not agree with Abishai and Joab's advice. You can use questions in your translation, or you can use statements like, "This has nothing to do with you, Abishai and Joab, and I do not agree with you anyway! I am king over Israel again, so no one will die today."

Stop here and, as a group, discuss whether you will use questions or statements to say what King David said to Abishai and Joab. Which is easier for people in your community to understand? Pause the audio here.

Then the king speaks directly to Shimei. The king gives Shimei a solemn oath, or promise, that Shimei will not die for his wrongdoing.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:18b-23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Shimei, the son of Gera
- King David
- Abishai, the son of Zeruiah
- Joab, another son of Zeruiah
- The leaders of the tribe of Judah
- And 1,000 men of the tribe of Benjamin

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Before King David crosses the Jordan River, Shimei bows down before him and begs the king to forgive him for the bad things Shimei did to the king when the king left Jerusalem. Shimei knows he has done wrong. Shimei tells the king that this is why he made sure he was the first person to greet the king when he returned to Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Shimei, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel panicked. What will happen to me now that David is to be king over Israel again? I said and did things that the king will probably want to punish me for; or
- I feel like a fool. I should have waited to see what Yahweh was going to do with David. I just assumed Yahweh was going to take the kingdom of Israel away from David; or
- I hope the king will not give me the punishment I deserve. I hope the king will treat me mercifully, as I cannot take away my sin.

Continue the drama.

Then Abishai responds by saying he thinks Shimei should die because Shimei cursed the king whom Yahweh anointed.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Abishai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel outraged that Shimei would ask King David to forgive him! Does Shimei really think that he is important enough for the king to be merciful towards him? or
- The only right thing for the king to do is to punish Shimei for his sin! We should have killed Shimei when we had the chance, when we left Jerusalem; or
- The king should make an example of Shimei, to show all the people what will happen to them if they dare to curse the king again!

Continue the drama.

David replies to Abishai and Joab by telling them that David does not want to hear their opinion. King David asks why Abishai and Joab are opposing him. David reminds Abishai and Joab that he is king over Israel again and that no one will die that day.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Abishai and Joab need to accept their position and know when they should and should not speak! or
- These nephews of mine are too zealous for me! Abishai and Joab do not understand that I will show mercy to whomever I choose to show mercy; or
- Today is a day for rejoicing because Yahweh has made me king over Israel again. I will not allow this day to be overshadowed by more death.

Continue the drama.

Then King David promises Shimei that he will not die.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Shimei, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am forever grateful because the king has shown mercy to me! or
- I trust the king, and I know the king will keep his promise.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:18b-23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Shimei fell down, or **bowed**, before the **king** as the king was about to cross the Jordan River. A king is a ruler over a territory or nation. Use the same words for bow and king as you used previously. Refer to bow and king in the Master Glossary for more information.

Shimei calls David his **lord**, or master, and calls himself David's **servant**. Use the same words for lord and servant as you have used previously, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about lord and servant.

Shimei knew he was **guilty** of doing bad things toward the king on the day when the king left Jerusalem. To be guilty of doing something wrong means that a person is at fault and is accountable for their actions.

Stop here and, as a team, discuss what word or phrase you will use for guilty. If you have translated guilty in another book of the Bible, use the same word you used previously. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about guilt. Pause the audio here.

Shimei said he went to see the king before all the other men of the northern tribes of Israel because he knew how much he had **sinned**. To sin is an act of rebellion against God. Use the same word for sinned as you used previously, and remember that sin is in the Master Glossary.

Abishai said Shimei should die because he **cursed Yahweh's anointed** king. Cursing someone is the opposite of blessing someone. Cursing is wishing that something bad will happen to someone else. Yahweh is God's personal name. When Yahweh chose a king, a prophet would pour oil over, or anoint, the man to show that Yahweh had set him apart for the special task of being king. Refer to curse, Yahweh, and anoint in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same words for curse, Yahweh, and anoint as you used previously.

But King David said Abishai was behaving like an enemy towards David, or like someone who strongly opposed David and wanted to harm him.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what word or phrase you will use for **enemy**. If you translated enemy in another book of the Bible, use the same word as you used previously. Pause the audio here.

King David does not want anyone in **Israel** to die that day. Use the same word for Israel as you have used previously, and refer to Israel in the Master Glossary for more information.

Then the king made an **oath**, saying that Shimei would not die for his wrongdoing. An oath is a strong promise. Use the same word or phrase for oath that you used in previous passages, and refer to the Master Glossary for more information about oath.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 19:18b–23

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 19:24–30

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 19:24–30 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:24–30 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:24–30 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This story continues from the previous story when King David began to travel back to Jerusalem. This story is about a meeting between Mephibosheth and King David.

The storyteller introduces this story by saying that Saul's grandson, Mephibosheth, went to meet King David. You will remember Mephibosheth from a previous story, when King David invited Mephibosheth to become part of David's household and to eat at David's table for the rest of his life.

In this story, Mephibosheth goes to the Jordan River to meet the king. Mephibosheth has not taken care of his feet, trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes since the day the king left Jerusalem, until he came back safely. A beard is the facial hair that grows on men's faces. In that culture, people would show they felt deep sorrow by not taking care of themselves as they normally would. It was a way to show that their feelings of sadness are much greater than their concern for personal cleanliness.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss some things that people in your culture do when they feel worry or sadness. Pause the audio here.

When King David sees Mephibosheth, David asks why Mephibosheth did not go with him when he left Jerusalem. As a member of King David's household, which included family members and servants, David probably expected Mephibosheth to show his loyalty by going with David.

Mephibosheth speaks respectfully to the king by calling David his lord, or master, and by referring to himself as David's servant. Mephibosheth explains that his own servant, Ziba, deceived or betrayed Mephibosheth, but it is not clear at that moment exactly how Ziba betrayed Mephibosheth.

Mephibosheth continues and says that he intended to have his servants saddle or prepare a donkey for him to sit on so that Mephibosheth could go with the king. A saddle is what a person sits on when riding a donkey. A donkey is a work animal that carries people or heavy loads.

Mephibosheth says he is lame, or crippled, to show that he needed his servants to help him get the donkey ready. A lame person cannot walk or run like other people because they have problems with their feet or legs. Ziba probably betrayed Mephibosheth because he did not help Mephibosheth get a donkey ready for him to travel on.

Stop here and look at a picture of a donkey with a saddle. Pause the audio here.

Mephibosheth says that Ziba even slandered or lied to the king about Mephibosheth. You will remember a previous story when Ziba delivered donkeys and food to King David whilst David was running away from Absalom. In that story, Ziba told King David that Mephibosheth had betrayed David by staying in Jerusalem to wait for Israel to give the kingdom back to Mephibosheth's family. This story does not say how Mephibosheth knows what Ziba said about him to King David. However, it is likely that Mephibosheth also knows that, as a result of what Ziba said, David gave all of Mephibosheth's property to Ziba.

Stop here and, as a group, tell a story about a time when someone lied about another person. Talk about any consequences that happened because of the lies. Pause the audio here.

Mephibosheth says King David is like an angel of God. An angel is a spiritual being that God made. Angels live in the presence of God and sometimes deliver special messages to people from God. You will remember a previous story when a woman from Tekoa told King David that he was like an angel of God when she said that David was able to tell the difference between right and wrong. King David is not really an angel. When

Mephibosheth says King David is like an angel, Mephibosheth means that he trusts King David to make wise decisions.

Mephibosheth understands how much kindness and generosity King David has shown to him. Mephibosheth knows how, in that culture, new kings often killed former kings and their families. Mephibosheth is a descendant of Saul, who was the previous king of Israel, but King David has not treated Mephibosheth according to that tradition. Instead, King David has shown Mephibosheth great honour by allowing him to eat at the king's table. In that culture, kings and their officials or other members of the household may have sat on the ground together and eaten around a low, flat table. Eating together was a very important symbol of unity. When people ate together, they showed that they were friends or had a good relationship. Mephibosheth realises that King David has already given him so much more than he could have hoped for, so Mephibosheth chooses not to bother the king by asking for anything else.

Stop here and, as a group, compare some things a person who feels grateful might do or say with some things an ungrateful person might do or say. Pause the audio here.

King David responds and says it is not necessary to keep discussing the matter because David has decided what to do. King David previously gave everything Mephibosheth owned to his servant Ziba. Now, King David says Mephibosheth and Ziba must share equal parts of the land that Mephibosheth owned. It is not clear why David makes this decision. Perhaps it is because David does not know whether or not to believe Ziba or Mephibosheth, or perhaps King David just wants to keep peace between everyone as he comes back to rule Israel.

Mephibosheth replies to King David and says that he is happy to let Ziba take all the land because the land does not matter to Mephibosheth as much as King David's well-being. Mephibosheth is content just by knowing King David has returned home safely.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when someone stole something from someone else. Tell how the person had a chance to get their property back, but they no longer wanted it.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:24–30 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three scenes.

In the first scene: Mephibosheth goes to see King David. The storyteller says that Mephibosheth had not taken good care of himself since the day David fled from Jerusalem until the day David returned safely.

In the second scene: King David asks why Mephibosheth did not go with David when he ran away from Jerusalem, from David's son Absalom.

In the third scene: David divides Mephibosheth's land equally between Ziba and Mephibosheth.

The characters in this passage are:

- Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson
- And King David

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

It is not clear where the first scene takes place. However, based on the order of events of this story and the next few stories, most Bible scholars believe the story happens at the Jordan River. This story is closely connected to the previous story. Most likely, Mephibosheth has come down to the Jordan River when King David crosses over.

Scene one is an introduction to the story. Mephibosheth came down to meet the king. This implies that Mephibosheth left Jerusalem and went to where King David was, at the Jordan River. You will remember a previous story when Ziba told King David that Mephibosheth stayed in Jerusalem when King David ran away.

The storyteller describes how Mephibosheth has not cared for his feet, trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes, from when the king left Jerusalem until that moment. These are all things a person might do to show they feel great sadness about something, like when a person is mourning the death of someone they love. This is important information to include in your translation because it shows how much Mephibosheth loves the king. It is not clear, but it is likely that Mephibosheth still looked untidy when he met King David.

Stop here and discuss how you will translate this portion of the passage. If people in your culture do not show mourning in this way, you may need to explain why Mephibosheth stopped taking care of himself after the king left. Pause the audio here.

In scene two, Mephibosheth presents himself to the king, and the king asks Mephibosheth directly why he did not go with David when David left Jerusalem. King David's question shows that he expected Mephibosheth to go with David. The question also implies that not going with the king at that moment was a sign of disloyalty.

Throughout this passage, Mephibosheth speaks respectfully to King David. Mephibosheth never uses the king's name, David, to speak to him, but always calls David "my lord" or "master" and refers to himself as David's servant.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss how you will show that throughout this conversation, Mephibosheth shows that he is David's servant. Pause the audio here.

Mephibosheth replies to the king's question and explains why he did not go with the king. Mephibosheth begins by saying that his own servant, Ziba, deceived or betrayed him. This suggests that Ziba was the reason why Mephibosheth did not go with the king. Mephibosheth implies that he did want to go with the king, but he could not because he is lame and cannot walk well on his feet. So Mephibosheth needed someone to help him saddle, or prepare a donkey for him to travel on.

It is not clear what happened to Mephibosheth, but the story suggests that Ziba did not help him prepare a donkey, and so Mephibosheth could not go with the king. Then Mephibosheth says Ziba slandered, or said things that were not true, about Mephibosheth to King David. Mephibosheth is talking about a previous event. In that story, Ziba told King David that Mephibosheth stayed in Jerusalem because he hoped to get back Saul's kingdom.

Then Mephibosheth briefly interrupts his own explanation. Mephibosheth says that David is like an angel of God. This is special language that means Mephibosheth thinks David is very wise. Mephibosheth asks King David to do what seems good to David, or to do whatever the king thinks best. Mephibosheth is saying something like, "I know Ziba told lies about me, and I know about your decision to give everything I own to Ziba. But I also know that you, my lord and king, are very wise. I am sure you will make the best decision."

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what words or phrases you will use to say Mephibosheth thinks King David is like an angel of God. Pause the audio here.

Mephibosheth says that his grandfather Saul's descendants only expected King David to kill them, yet King David has given Mephibosheth a place of honour amongst the people who eat at the king's table. Mephibosheth asks a question that he does not expect anyone to answer. By saying, "What right have I to cry to the King?" Mephibosheth is saying, "I have no right to ask the king for anything more than he has already given me."

It is important to notice how often Mephibosheth repeats the phrase "my lord the king" and refers to himself as the king's "servant" throughout this passage. This shows how much Mephibosheth respects and honours King David.

King David also replies to Mephibosheth with a question that he does not expect anyone to answer. By saying, "Why speak anymore of your affairs?" King David is saying he does not want to speak about the subject anymore. King David decides to split Mephibosheth's land equally between Mephibosheth and Ziba.

Mephibosheth's response shows how much he sincerely loves King David. Mephibosheth tells the king to give everything to Ziba. Mephibosheth says this because he is happy just to know that King David has returned safely.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:24–30 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Mephibosheth, Saul's grandson
- King David

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Mephibosheth went before King David. Mephibosheth had not taken care of his feet, trimmed his beard, or washed his clothes since King David left Jerusalem. King David asks Mephibosheth why he did not go with him when he left Jerusalem.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want to give Mephibosheth the opportunity to explain why he betrayed me by staying in Jerusalem; or
- Ziba told me that Mephibosheth betrayed me, but I can see from Mephibosheth's appearance that he has not taken care of himself since I left. People only do that as a sign of mourning. Perhaps Ziba was lying to me, and Mephibosheth does love me.

Continue the drama.

Mephibosheth explains why he did not go with the king when he left Jerusalem. Mephibosheth says that Ziba betrayed Mephibosheth and did not help him get a donkey ready to travel on. Then Mephibosheth says that Ziba lied to King David about Mephibosheth.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Mephibosheth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so happy to see the king alive! or
- I feel grateful to have the opportunity to defend myself before the king and explain why I could not go with him; or
- I hope the king believes me. I wish I had been able to go with the king, but now I just want to make sure the king knows the truth.

Continue the drama.

Mephibosheth says King David is wise, like an angel of God, and says the king should do whatever the king thinks best. Mephibosheth says his family did not expect King David to allow them to live. However, King David showed great kindness to Mephibosheth by allowing him to eat at the king's table. Mephibosheth says he has already received so much from the king that Mephibosheth will not ask the king for more.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Mephibosheth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- The king is wise and will do what is right; or
- My grandfather Saul was David's enemy, and yet King David has treated me so well. I am forever grateful to the king; or
- My lord, the king, has shown such kindness to me. I am not worthy to ask any more from the king.

Continue the drama.

The king ends the conversation by deciding to give equal shares of Mephibosheth's land to Mephibosheth and Ziba.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I can see now that I probably made a bad decision by giving everything Mephibosheth owns to Ziba. I felt so distressed when I ran away from Jerusalem, and so grateful to Ziba for helping me and my people. Yet I might have been too quick to make my decision, especially without speaking to Ziba's master, Mephibosheth, first; or
- Everything Mephibosheth has said and done today shows me how genuinely loyal he is. I will not leave Mephibosheth with nothing. I will give Mephibosheth some land.

Continue the drama.

Mephibosheth replies, telling the king to give everything to Ziba, because he is happy that the king has returned safely.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Mephibosheth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so happy King David has returned safely. I do not care about the land! or
- King David has treated me better than anyone. I felt very sad when the king left because I did not know if I would ever see him again. It is enough for me to know that King David is well. I do not need anything else; or
- The land is not as important to me as seeing King David again!

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:24–30 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Mephibosheth goes to meet **King** David. A king is a person who rules over a territory or nation. Use the same word for king as you used previously.

Mephibosheth had not taken care of his feet, trimmed his **beard**, or washed his clothes since the day King David left Jerusalem. A beard is the area of facial hair that grows around a man's mouth and on his cheeks. Use the same word for beard as you used previously.

Mephibosheth says he is the **servant** of David, his **lord**. A servant is someone who works for someone else. A lord, or master, is someone who has authority over a servant. Refer to servant and lord in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same words for servant and lord as you used previously.

Mephibosheth wanted his servants to **saddle a donkey** so that Mephibosheth could travel out of Jerusalem with King David. A donkey is a work animal that carries people or heavy loads. Refer to donkey in the Master Glossary for more information. A saddle is what a person puts on top of a donkey to sit on when riding the donkey. Use the same words or phrases you previously used to say that someone saddled a donkey.

If needed, stop here and look again at the picture of a donkey with a saddle on it. Pause the audio here.

Mephibosheth needed help to saddle his donkey because Mephibosheth was **lame**. A person who is lame is someone who has a disability, or a problem with their feet or legs, which means the person cannot walk properly. Use the same word or phrase for lame as you used previously.

Mephibosheth said Ziba slandered him to King David. To slander someone is to say things about that person that are not true, with the purpose of making other people think badly of that person.

Stop here and, as a group, discuss what word or phrase you will use for **slandered**. Pause the audio here.

Mephibosheth said that King David was like an **angel** of God, which means that Mephibosheth thought King David was very wise. An angel is a supernatural, spiritual being that God created. Refer to angel in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same word for angel as you used previously.

God is the most powerful spiritual being that exists. God created everything. Refer to God in the Master Glossary for more information. Use the same word for God as you used previously.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 19:24–30

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (18914601 KB)

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2 Samuel 19:31–39

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 19:31–39 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:31–39 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:31–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last few stories, David has talked to two different men about the way these men treated David. Now, in this story, David talks to a third man, Barzillai. David wants to reward Barzillai for the way Barzillai helped David. Barzillai, who is an old man, just wants to return home to live peacefully, so Barzillai politely refuses David's reward.

Remember that when David and his household left Jerusalem, they crossed the Jordan River to the town of Mahanaim. Several wealthy men brought food and supplies to help David there. Barzillai was one of those men. As David now returns to Jerusalem, Barzillai comes to meet David again. Barzillai plans to cross over the Jordan River with David and then send David on his way. It was polite to travel with someone for part of their journey, especially someone you wanted to honor.

Barzillai is a Gileadite, which means he is from the region of Gilead. Barzillai lives in Rogelim, which may be a town to the east of Mahanaim. Barzillai is a wealthy man, so he was able to give David lots of supplies. Barzillai showed that he was loyal to David when Barzillai provided supplies for the army as David was running away from Absalom.

David wants to reward Barzillai, so David invites Barzillai to travel all the way to Jerusalem with David. David will give Barzillai a place to live near David, perhaps even in David's palace. David wants to provide anything Barzillai needs, such as food, clothes, and money. This is how a king would honor someone in that time.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how does a king or leader reward his people for the way they help him? Pause this audio here.

However, Barzillai politely responds that there is no reason for David to do these nice things for Barzillai. David could give Barzillai good food and provide entertainment, such as men and women singers who sing beautiful songs. However, Barzillai is old. Barzillai cannot taste food well or hear very well. Barzillai would not enjoy the good things that David could give him. Barzillai says he will not live for many more years. There is not much David could give to Barzillai before Barzillai dies. Barzillai does not want to be a burden to David.

Barzillai calls himself David's servant, which is a respectful and humble way to refer to himself. Barzillai agrees to travel across the Jordan River with David, but says Barzillai does not deserve this reward. Instead, Barzillai politely asks that David let Barzillai return home to live the rest of his life. Then, once Barzillai dies, people can bury Barzillai in Barzillai's parents' tomb, which is near Barzillai's home. A tomb is a place where people bury a dead person. A tomb was often a cave in a rock or the side of a mountain. A family could have a tomb in which they buried all their dead family members.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people want to live the end of their lives? Where do these people often want to live? How do you bury people in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Barzillai does offer that David could do something else to reward Barzillai. Barzillai introduces Kimham, who may be Barzillai's son. Barzillai says that Kimham can travel with David back to Jerusalem. Then David can do kind things for Kimham instead. In that time, when an older person was unable or unwilling to do what the king requested, it was normal for the person to offer that his son do something for the king instead.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when your parent could not do something, such as attend an event that someone invited your parent to, and so you did it for them. How did people treat you there? What are some other actions that a child can do on behalf of their parent? Pause this audio here.

David accepts Kimham in place of Barzillai and promises to help Kimham in any way Barzillai wants. David shows honor to Barzillai when David accepts Barzillai's request. David also honors Barzillai when David repeats that David will do whatever Barzillai desires.

So David, Barzillai, Kimham, and all the people with David cross the Jordan River. The king kisses Barzillai, probably on the cheek, as a sign of affection or respect. David asks God to bless Barzillai. Then Barzillai returns home.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people say goodbye to each other? What are some actions that you do to show respect or honor to someone? Discuss kissing in your culture. When is it acceptable or polite to kiss? Which people kiss and with whom?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:31–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two scenes.

In the first scene: As David travels home, Barzillai comes to go with David for part of the way. David offers to reward Barzillai for providing for David and David's people. Barzillai politely refuses the reward for himself. Barzillai offers that David could reward Kimham instead. David agrees.

In the second scene: David, Barzillai, Kimham, and all the people with David cross the Jordan River. David says goodbye to Barzillai, and Barzillai returns home.

The characters in this passage are:

- Barzillai the Gileadite
- King David
- The people who travel with David
- Male and female singers
- Barzillai's parents
- And Kimham

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This passage is the next part in the story of how David returns to Jerusalem. David has been at the Jordan River for the last few stories, as David met with Shimei and Mephibosheth. Now David has a conversation with Barzillai. Barzillai has traveled from his home in Rogelim in the region of Gilead to meet and travel with David. Barzillai probably joined David's group well before they arrived at the Jordan River. David and all the people with him are still at the ford or the shallow crossing place to the east of the river, across from the town of Gilgal.

Stop here and look at a map of Israel as a group. Find the region of Gilead, the town of Gilgal, and the Jordan River. Pause this audio here.

The first scene begins when the storyteller introduces Barzillai and gives us more information about Barzillai. The storyteller tells us where Barzillai is from and how he joined the king to travel. The storyteller says Barzillai was very old, then tells us Barzillai's age to emphasize how old Barzillai is. The storyteller also reminds us how Barzillai helped King David earlier when David was at Mahanaim. David wants to reward Barzillai and tells Barzillai to come to Jerusalem with David. Then David can provide Barzillai with a good place to live near the king and pay for anything Barzillai needs.

Stop here and look at a map of Israel as a group. Find Jerusalem and Mahanaim. Pause this audio here.

Barzillai refuses David's offer very humbly and politely. To do so, Barzillai asks a series of questions. Barzillai does not expect David to answer these questions. Instead, Barzillai asks these questions to emphasize that these things are true.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you emphasize that something is true? Discuss how you want to translate Barzillai's questions. You can also translate these questions as statements. Pause this audio here.

Barzillai asks these questions to say that Barzillai will surely not live many more years, so there is no reason for Barzillai to go with David to Jerusalem. Barzillai says that this day he is 80. Barzillai does not mean that this day is his birthday, but rather that Barzillai has already become 80. David will not be able to give much to Barzillai before Barzillai dies. And Barzillai will not be able to enjoy what David gives him. Barzillai says Barzillai cannot tell the difference between good and bad activities, food, or drink. Barzillai means that he no longer enjoys many activities and cannot taste food and drink well. Barzillai says he cannot hear men and women who sing. Barzillai can still hear, since he talks to the king, but Barzillai means that he cannot hear well, and so songs do not entertain him anymore.

Barzillai does not want to be a burden to David, who is Barzillai's master and king. Instead, Barzillai just wants to serve his king. Barzillai shows this when he calls himself David's servant and asks to cross the Jordan River with David so that he can honor David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what is a humble way to refer to yourself when you talk to an important leader? Pause this audio here.

Barzillai wants David to let Barzillai return home to live. There is something David can do for Barzillai, though. David can show kindness to Kimham, who is probably Barzillai's son. Barzillai introduces Kimham as David's servant, which is a normal and respectful way to present someone to a person in authority. Barzillai just asks that David treat Kimham in a way that David considers good. David agrees to take Kimham and treat Kimham well.

In the second scene, David, Barzillai, Kimham, and all the other people with David cross the Jordan River. The people probably cross at a place where the river is wide and shallow. Once they are on the other side of the river, David respectfully says goodbye to Barzillai by kissing him on the cheek and blessing him, or wishing that God would cause good things to happen to Barzillai. Barzillai returns home.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:31–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Barzillai the Gileadite
- King David
- The people who travel with David
- Male and female singers
- Barzillai's parents
- And Kimham

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Barzillai, the man from Gilead, came from the town of Rogelim to travel with King David and cross the Jordan River with him. Then Barzillai would go back home. Barzillai was an old man—80 years old—and very wealthy. While David was in Mahanaim, Barzillai had brought food to King David and the people with David.

King David said to Barzillai, "Come with me to Jerusalem and live with me there. I will provide for you."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am thankful for the way that Barzillai provided supplies for me and the people with me; or
- I want to honor Barzillai to show everyone in Jerusalem that Barzillai helped me; or
- I want to care for Barzillai like he cared for me.

Continue the drama.

But Barzillai answered King David, "I do not have many years left to live. There is no reason for me to go with you to Jerusalem. I am 80 years old now, and I cannot tell the difference between what is enjoyable and what is not. I cannot taste what I eat or drink. I cannot hear the men and women when they sing. I am your servant, so I do not want to be a burden to you, my master and my king. Just let me go a little way over the Jordan River with you. You do not need to reward me in this way. Let me, your servant, return to my home, so I may die there, near my father and mother's tomb. But here is your servant, Kimham. Let him accompany you, my master and my king. Give him whatever you think is good."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Barzillai, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am honored that the king would want to reward me. I did not help the king in order that he would reward me; or
- I like my home and do not want to have to adjust to a new place. Jerusalem is a big city and is too loud for me; or
- I want to show the king that I appreciate his offer.

Continue the drama.

King David replied, "Yes, Kimham will go with me, and I will help him in any way you would like. And I will do for you anything you want."

So all the people crossed the Jordan River with the king. King David kissed Barzillai and asked God to bless Barzillai. Then Barzillai returned to his own home.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I understand why Barzillai wants to return home. I too want to return to my home; or
- I will treat Kimham with respect in order to honor Barzillai; or
- If Barzillai ever needs me, I will be glad to help him.

Ask the person playing Kimham, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am amazed that I get to go live in Jerusalem with the king! or
- I did not expect to move to Jerusalem. This will be a big change for me; or
- I am glad that the king wants to honor my father. My father is an honorable man, and I respect him. I will obey my father and go to Jerusalem with the king.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:31–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David is the **king**. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for king as you used in previous passages.

Barzillai joins David to cross the **Jordan River**. The Jordan River is a long river that runs through Israel from north to south. For more information on the Jordan River, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for the Jordan River as you used in previous passages.

Barzillai calls himself David's **servant**. A servant is a person who does work for someone else. This is a respectful way to refer to oneself. For more information on servant, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for servant as you used in previous passages.

Barzillai calls David **lord** or master. A lord is someone who is a master over other people, who has full authority, and who deserves for people to give him respect. For more information on lord, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for lord as you used in previous passages.

Barzillai wants to die in his own town near the **tomb** of his father and mother. A tomb is a place where people bury a dead person. This could be a natural cave in a rock, or it could be a hole that people cut out of rock. A family could have a tomb in which they buried all their dead family members. Inside the tomb could be shelves for the different bodies. For more information on tomb, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for tomb as you used in previous passages.

David **blesses** Barzillai. When a human speaks a blessing over another person, they pray that God will do good things for this other person. People would often bless each other when they said goodbye. For more information on bless, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for bless as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 19:31–39

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (12587107 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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2 Samuel 19:40–43

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 19:40–43 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:40–43 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:40–43 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last story, King David finished his conversation with Barzillai on the east side of the Jordan River and then crossed the river. This story is about who crossed the river with David and how that caused trouble

between the different groups of Israelites. The Israelites from the northern tribes argue with the Israelites from the tribe of Judah about who should have had the honorable task to cross over the river with the king.

This passage begins with a reminder that King David crossed the Jordan River to go to the town of Gilgal with Kimham. Now we hear that all of the soldiers, or troops, from Judah and half of the soldiers of Israel crossed with David. It was an honorable job to travel with or protect the king as the king traveled. Remember that here, Israel refers to the northern part of the land of Israel, where 10 of the tribes live. Judah refers to the big Israelite tribe of Judah in the south.

Soon, the Israelite soldiers from the north come to complain to David. These soldiers are not happy that all the soldiers of Judah had the honor to cross over the river with David, while only half the soldiers of Israel were there. The Israelites say it is like their kinsmen from Judah kidnapped David so as not to share the privilege to travel with the king with all of the men of Israel.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture or history, what group had the responsibility to escort or protect a leader as the leader traveled? Pause this audio here.

The men of Judah protest that the men of Judah acted in a reasonable way. First, the men of Judah say that they traveled with David because David is their relative. David belongs to the tribe of Judah. But still, the men of Judah say that they have not taken advantage of their relationship to the king. The men of Judah have never eaten food that the king had to pay for. David has never given gifts to people of Judah. So the men from Israel have no reason to be angry with the men of Judah about this.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what responsibilities or privileges do the relatives of a leader have? How should these relatives act in an appropriate way? Pause this audio here.

The men of Israel are not happy with this answer either. The men of Israel think they should have more privilege because they are the larger group. There are 10 tribes in the northern part of Israel, and only one tribe of Judah, so they think they have ten times as much right to the king as the men of Judah do. You will remember that although there are 12 total tribes in Israel, the men from the tribe of Levi are the priests and helpers in the place of worship, and they live in cities throughout the land of Israel. The northern Israelites are not counting the Levites in this conversation, because the Levites live both among the northern tribes and in Judah.

The men of Israel also think they are more loyal than Judah. The men of Israel say that they were the ones who spoke first about bringing back King David to Jerusalem. The Israelites say that the men of Judah have ignored and shamed the Israelites.

The men of Judah reply even more harshly than the men of Israel. In the next story, this tension between the two groups continues. The Israelites and the people from Judah were already divided, as we have seen in this story and will continue to see in later stories. One day, the division between the north and south will become so bad that they will eventually split into two kingdoms.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are some different tribes or people groups in your area? Which ones get along and which ones do not? Why do you think they act in this way?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:40–43 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has two scenes.

In the first scene: The storyteller gives more information about who crossed the Jordan River with David.

In the second scene: The men of Israel argue with the men of Judah.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Kimham
- The troops of Judah
- And half the troops of Israel

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember that at the end of the last passage, David crossed the Jordan River and said goodbye to Barzillai. Now, in the first scene of this passage, the storyteller repeats what happened and gives more information about who crossed with David. This information was not important to David's story with Barzillai, but it is important to this part of the story.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, when you tell a long story, when do you choose to tell information that will be important for the next part of the story? As an activity, tell a story about a time when you talked to several people while you did another activity, such as travel to and from a market. Pay attention to when you choose to give information that is important to each conversation. Pause this audio here.

David crossed over the Jordan River to the town of Gilgal. David crosses with Kimham and all the soldiers from Judah, but with only half the soldiers from Israel. Israel had a larger army, so it is possible that only half crossed with David because it would have been difficult for such a large group to cross all at once. Or perhaps David did not tell the soldiers from Israel in time for them to get to the Jordan River. You will remember that although the storyteller says that it was Judah's people and Israel's people who crossed over the river with David, these people were soldiers from the two areas who crossed over with David.

Stop here and look at a map of Israel as a group. Find the town of Gilgal. Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, all the men of Israel come to the king and complain. This is not all the men in the land of Israel, but all the soldiers or fighting men from Israel who were with David at this time. It is likely that not all the men spoke, just a few leaders or representatives from the group of Israelites.

The men of Israel ask David a question, but they mainly want to complain about what the men of Judah did. The men of Israel call the men of Judah their brothers, which is another way to say kinsmen or relatives. Remember that the tribes of Israel are all descendants of one family. The men of Israel say it is like the men of Judah stole or kidnapped the king.

Though the men of Israel speak to David, the men of Judah answer. The men of Judah explain that the king is their relative. The men of Judah ask why the men of Israel are angry. Then the men of Judah ask two questions that they do not really expect anyone to answer. The men ask if they have eaten any of David's provisions, or if they have taken any valuable things for themselves from King David. The men of Judah want to show that they really did not benefit in any way because they traveled with King David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how would you emphasize that something is really true? Discuss how you want to translate the men of Judah's second and third questions here. Pause this audio here.

The men of Israel reply that they have 10 shares in the king. This may mean that because there are 10 tribes in the north of Israel, the Israelites have 10 times more of a right to interact with David than Judah. The men of Israel ask why the men of Judah have treated the men of Israel with hate or have ignored the men of Israel. Then the men of Israel also ask a question they do not expect anyone to answer. They ask, "Were we not the first people to talk about bringing King David back?" The men of Israel ask their question to emphasize that they were the ones who spoke first about a plan to bring the king back to Jerusalem.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: The men of Israel also ask a question to emphasize that something is true. Discuss how you want to translate the men of Israel's second question here. Pause this audio here.

The men of Judah then speak even more harshly or forcefully to the men of Israel.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:40–43 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has two scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Kimham
- The troops of Judah
- And half the troops of Israel

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The king had crossed over the Jordan River to Gilgal with Kimham, as well as with all the troops of Judah and half the troops of Israel.

Soon, all the men of Israel complained to the king and said, "The men of Judah stole the king and did not give us the honor to help you, your household, and all the people with you across the Jordan River."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am surprised that the men of Israel would speak to me like this; or
- I did not intend to dishonor the Israelites when I let the men of Judah help me; or
- The Israelites are really upset with the men of Judah. I will let them discuss this problem.

Continue the drama.

The men of Judah replied, "We did this because the king is closely related to us. The king is from our tribe! Why are you angry with us? The king has not paid for our food, nor has he given us anything."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the men of Judah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- David is from our tribe, so of course we would protect David. It is our responsibility; or
- I am insulted that the men of Israel think that we try to keep all the honor for ourselves. We have acted in an honorable way. We did not do this to get anything from the king! or
- The Israelites should not bother the king like this! We will handle this so the king does not have to.

Continue the drama.

The men of Israel reply, "We have 10 times as many claims on King David as you have, because there are 10 tribes in our region of Israel. Why do you look down on us? Do not forget that we were the first to suggest that we bring the king back!"

But the men of Judah spoke even more harshly than the men of Israel.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the men of Israel, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am angry that the men of Judah think they are more important than us! We want to talk to the king, but the men of Judah answer us instead! or
- We have more tribes in our region, so we should have more honor; or
- The men of Judah are different than us. They think and act differently. I do not like the men of Judah and how they have spoken to us.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 19:40–43 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David is the **king**. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for king as you used in previous passages.

The troops or men of **Israel** argue with the men or troops of **Judah**. These are the men who can fight from the regions of Israel and Judah. At this point, Israel is one country, which includes the people of the tribe of Judah. But the Israelites from the 10 tribes in the north sometimes argue and fight with the tribe of Judah in the south. So people called the southern part of the land of Israel "Judah" and the northern part "Israel." For more information on Israel and Judah, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for the regions of Judah and Israel, or northern Israel, as you used in previous passages.

The king crossed over the **Jordan River**. The Jordan River is a long river that runs through Israel from north to south. For more information on the Jordan River, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for the Jordan River as you used in previous passages.

The men of Israel call the men of Judah their brothers. Here, the Israelites use the word brother to mean relatives, since the different tribes all descend from the same family.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **brother** or **relatives**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The men of Judah helped the king and the king's **household** to cross the river. A man's household included his wife, children, unmarried daughters, and any married sons and their wives and children. This could also include any relatives or servants who also lived with them. For more information on household, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for household as you used in previous passages.

*Speaking the Word**Speaking the Word*

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 19:40–43**Audio Content**

[webm zip](#) (10793285 KB)

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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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2 Samuel 20:1–22

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 20:1–22 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:1–22 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:1–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last story, David was returning to his home in Jerusalem after his son Absalom died. Men from both Judah and Israel were traveling with David and arguing about which of them was closer to David.

While they argued, a rebellious man named Sheba, the son of Bikri, blew a trumpet that people made from a ram's horn. Sheba was from the tribe of Benjamin, like King Saul. Sheba said the northern Israelites had no relationship with David, the son of Jesse. Sheba called them to leave the group and return to their own tents rather than joining David and the men of Judah.

In response to Sheba's call, the men from the 10 tribes of northern Israel deserted David and followed Sheba instead. But the men of Judah stayed with King David and followed him all the way from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

Stop here and look at a map of Israel as a group. Notice that the tribe of Benjamin is in the northern part of Israel, and also notice where the Jordan River and Jerusalem are. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and look at a picture of a ram's horn. The Israelites blew the ram's horn to call troops together for battle or to stop them from fighting at the end of a battle. Pause this audio here.

Then King David returned to his house, the palace, in Jerusalem. David took the 10 concubines he had left behind to care for the palace while David was away. David put the concubines in a different house and placed guards over them. David provided for the concubines, but he no longer slept with them. The concubines lived like widows in that house for the rest of their lives until they died. Remember that while King David was away, Absalom had sex with David's 10 concubines, so it would be shameful for David to have sexual relations with them again.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: We do not know if David's concubines agreed to have sexual relations with Absalom or if Absalom forced them. How would a man in your culture respond if his concubine or wife had sexual relations with another man? Pause this audio here.

Remember, King David made Joab and Abishai's cousin, Amasa, the commander of David's army in place of Joab. David told Amasa to call the men of Judah together within three days and then return to him. But Amasa did not return within the three days King David had told him.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do people in your culture count days? In Hebrew culture at this time, the current day was considered day one, the next day was day two, and so on. Pause this audio here.

So David spoke to Joab's brother Abishai and said that because Amasa had not yet returned with the men from Judah, Sheba the son of Bikri would now do more harm to Judah than Absalom had done. David told Abishai to take David's soldiers and go after Sheba before Sheba and his followers got into fortified cities and escaped from David's army. Fortified cities had strong walls around them, so it would be difficult to capture the men. So Joab's men and the Kerethites and Pelethites marched out from Jerusalem under Abishai's command along with all of David's best warriors. Remember that we have heard about the Kerethites and Pelethites earlier in the second book of Samuel. The Kerethites and Pelethites were foreign men who were King David's bodyguards.

Stop here and tell a story about the men who protect the highest leader of your country. Pause this audio here.

When they were at the large stone that is in Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. It seems like Amasa came from the north to meet David's men, who came from the south. Joab was wearing his military clothing, and over that he wore a belt around his waist with a sword in its sheath. As Joab stepped forward to greet Amasa, Joab's sword dropped from its sheath. Joab greeted his cousin Amasa with a friendly greeting that was typical between family members.

Amasa was not on guard against the sword in Joab's hand, so Joab stabbed Amasa in the stomach, and Amasa's insides spilled out on the ground. Amasa died without Joab stabbing him a second time. Then Joab and his brother Abishai left Amasa's body on the ground and went on after Sheba.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when a man betrayed his relative after appearing to be friendly with him. Pause this audio here.

One of Joab's young men stood beside Amasa's body and shouted to Amasa's troops, "Anyone who is for David and his man Joab, come and follow Joab!" As the troops passed by, they all stopped to see Amasa's body in the middle of the main road, covered in blood. When the soldier who had shouted saw that everyone stopped, he moved Amasa's body into the field and threw a piece of clothing over it, so the men would not keep stopping to look at the body. Then all the men followed Joab to pursue Sheba.

And Sheba traveled through all the tribes of Israel to the city of Abel Beth Maakah, and all the members of Sheba's clan, the clan of Bikri, gathered together and followed him into the city. Sheba's position was not strong. Sheba did not have many men with him, and they entered Abel Beth Maakah to wait until David's men came to attack them.

Joab had more men. Joab's men came and attacked the city by building a dirt ramp against the city wall. While they were attacking the wall, a wise woman called from the city wall and told the men to bring Joab so she could speak to him.

Joab came to the part of the wall close to the woman, and she made sure he was actually Joab before begging him to listen to her. Then the woman spoke humbly to Joab and told him that their ancestors had a proverb that Abel Beth Maakah was a place to get wise advice. The woman told Joab she was one of the peaceful and faithful people in Israel, and she asked him not to destroy their important city. Joab told the woman he did not want to destroy the city. Joab only wanted Sheba because Sheba had rebelled against King David. The woman promised that the people of the city would throw Sheba's head over the top of the wall to Joab. Then she went to the people of the city with her wise advice, and they cut off Sheba's head and threw it to Joab. Then Joab blew the trumpet, or horn, and his men all went back to their own homes, and Joab returned to King David in Jerusalem. This story began with Sheba blowing a horn and telling the men of northern Israel to return to their own homes, and it ends with Joab blowing a horn and telling the men of Judah to return to their own homes.

Stop here and look at a map that includes Abel Beth Maakah. This was a city with a strong wall around it near the city of Dan in the far northern part of Israel. What do people in your area do to make their cities safe from attackers? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when someone used wise words to save your people from attackers and to avoid a bigger fight. Do you have any stories about a time when a woman saved your people this way?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:1–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: The men of Israel and Judah are traveling with King David back to Jerusalem when Sheba blows the ram's horn and tells all the northern Israelites to leave David and return to their own tents.

In the second scene: King David returns to Jerusalem and places his concubines in a separate house. Then David calls Amasa and tells him to gather the men of Judah together and report back to David within three days. Amasa goes out but does not return within three days. At the same time, Sheba and the men from his tribe, the Bikrites, travel through all of Israel to the city of Abel Beth Maakah in the far north.

In the third scene: King David tells Abishai that Sheba will do them more harm than Absalom did, and he commands Abishai to take David's fighting men and go after Sheba before Sheba can escape to a fortified city.

In the fourth scene: Joab and his men follow Abishai out of Jerusalem in search of Sheba. When they get to the great stone in Gibeon, the men meet Amasa. Joab greets Amasa kindly, but then stabs him in the stomach so that Amasa dies quickly. One of Joab's men calls all those who side with Joab to follow him, but the men all stop to stare at Amasa's body in the middle of the main road. Joab's man moves Amasa's body into a field and covers it with a piece of clothing so the men continue to follow Joab without being distracted.

In the fifth scene: All the men with Joab attack the city of Abel Beth Maakah by building a ramp of dirt against its wall and battering it. A wise woman calls to Joab from the wall, and they agree that if she throws Sheba's head to Joab, he will stop attacking the city. The woman persuades the people of the city to throw Sheba's head to Joab, so Joab blows the ram's horn and tells his men to stop attacking and return to their tents in Judah. And Joab returns to King David in Jerusalem.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Sheba
- Joab
- Amasa
- Abishai
- 10 concubines
- Kerethites
- Pelethites
- Men of Judah
- Men of Israel
- David's mighty men
- Joab's man, who calls everyone to follow Joab
- The Bikrites
- The people who live in Abel Beth Maakah
- And the wise woman

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

King David was traveling home from his battle against Absalom and Absalom's men. Men from Israel and Judah were traveling with David. Sheba, a rebel and troublemaker, blew the ram's horn. Sheba used special language and said, "You have no portion in David, and no inheritance in the son of Jesse." Sheba was telling the Israelites that they should not feel any loyalty to King David. Sheba called them to leave David and return to their own tents. The men of Israel left David, but the men of Judah loyally continued traveling with him from the Jordan River to Jerusalem.

Stop here and tell a story of a time when a group of men tried to separate themselves from their tribe or country. How did the men talk about their reasons for leaving the rest of their people? Pause this audio here.

King David took the 10 concubines he had left behind to care for the palace and placed them in a separate house because they all slept with, or had sexual relations with, his son Absalom on the rooftop while David was away. The concubines lived the rest of their lives in that separate house as widows, because David never slept with them again.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Widows are women whose husbands have died. How do widows live in your community? Why do you think the storyteller calls these women widows, even though King David has not died? Pause this audio here.

King David called Amasa to come to him and instructed Amasa to call the men of Judah together and report back to David within three days. Amasa went to gather the men of Judah, but Amasa did not return within three days.

Then David called Abishai to come to him and said, "Now Sheba the son of Bikri will do us more harm than Absalom did. Take your lord, or master's, men and chase him, or he will find fortified cities and escape from us." Fortified cities were cities with strong walls and guards all around them, so they were hard to attack. King David is speaking about his own soldiers and mighty men when he says, "your lord's men."

Stop here and tell a story about a time when a king spoke about something that belonged to him. Pay attention to the words the king uses to talk about the things he owns. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and tell a story about a king's fighting men. Pay attention to the words you use to talk about those men. Pause this audio here.

While all of this was happening in Jerusalem, Sheba and the men of his clan, the Bikrites, traveled all through Israel until they reached Abel Beth Maakah in the far northern part of Israel. Then Sheba and the men went into the city for protection.

Back in Jerusalem, Joab's men and the Kerethites and the Pelethites, and David's special group of mighty men, went out of Jerusalem under Abishai's command to find Sheba. All of these men were part of King David's royal bodyguard. When they reached the large stone of Gibeon, Amasa came to meet them. We do not know any details about the large stone, but it seems to be a stone that every traveler on that road knew about.

Stop here and explain how to travel from your village to the next village. What are some well-known landmarks on that journey that every traveler knows? How do you talk about the landmarks? Pause this audio here.

Joab was wearing soldier clothing. Over his clothing, Joab wore a belt with a sword in its sheath, or holder, fastened on his thigh. As Joab went forward, the sword fell out. Joab greeted Amasa, "My brother, is it well with you?" Amasa was Joab's cousin, but they used the term "brother" for many different male relatives. Joab also took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him on the cheek. Since this was a typical, friendly greeting, Amasa was not on guard against the sword in Joab's hand. We do not know if this is the same sword that fell out as Joab walked forward or if it is a different one. If it is the same sword, we do not know if it fell into the folds of Joab's garment or if it fell on the ground so that Joab had to stoop to pick it up. Joab stabbed Amasa in the stomach, and Amasa's intestines spilled out on the ground. The intestines are the inside parts of the body. Amasa died from Joab stabbing him just one time. Then Joab and his brother Abishai continued to chase Sheba. Although the storyteller does not say it, Joab's and Abishai's men continue to go with them to chase Sheba.

Stop here and look at a picture of a soldier wearing soldier clothing with a sword in a sheath strapped to his thigh. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and tell a story of two cousins who meet each other and exchange a friendly greeting. What do they do? What do they say? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about the inside parts of a person's body in the person's stomach area? Pause this audio here.

One of Joab's men stood beside Amasa's dead body and called to all the soldiers, both the men who came with Joab and the men who came with Amasa. The man said that whoever favored Joab and King David should follow Joab. The man meant that those who were loyal to Joab and David should follow Joab. The men started to follow Joab, but each man would stop when he saw Amasa's dead body lying in the main road. Joab's man moved Amasa's body into the nearby field and covered it with a piece of clothing so the men would not keep stopping.

When Joab, Abishai, and their men reached Abel Beth Maakah, they attacked the city by building a ramp of dirt against the wall and battering the wall with a long, heavy pole to break it down. We know that Abishai is there also, but from this time on in the story, we only hear about Joab. Most of the Israelites would have known Joab as the commander of David's army, so that may be why the wise woman calls for Joab specifically.

Stop here and look at a picture of a siege ramp made of earth. How will you describe this siege ramp in your translation? Pause this audio here.

A wise woman called to Joab's soldiers from the city wall. The woman might have called from the top of the city wall or from an opening in the wall. The woman got the soldiers' attention by calling them twice to listen to her. The woman asked for Joab, and when Joab came, she again told him to listen. The woman spoke to Joab humbly, calling herself his servant. Joab responded politely by telling the woman he was listening to her.

Stop here and look at a picture of a city wall that has openings in it. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and tell a story of a time when a respected elderly person spoke to a leader in the community to make a request. How does the elderly person get the leader's attention? What does the elderly person say and do? How would the leader respond politely? Pause this audio here.

The wise woman told Joab that there is an old proverb, or wise saying, about Abel Beth Maakah. People used to say, "Get your answer at Abel" because the people of the city had a reputation for being wise, faithful, and peaceful. The woman calls her city a "mother in Israel" because the people of the city seek unity in Israel.

Stop here and share a story about a city that has a reputation for having wise and peaceful people in it. How will you describe that Abel Beth Maakah is like a "mother in Israel"? Pause this audio here.

The wise woman asks Joab, "Why would you swallow up the inheritance of Yahweh?" The woman uses the special language of swallowing the city up to mean that Joab is trying to destroy the city. "The inheritance of Yahweh" was special language that referred to the land of Israel as a whole. Abel Beth Maakah belongs to Yahweh because it is part of Israel. The woman is asking Joab why he would want to destroy a part of Yahweh's Israel.

Joab replies to her question with strong language. Joab says, "Far be it from me" to say that it is not true at all that Joab wants to destroy the city.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How would you respond to someone who accused you of planning something terrible that you were not really planning to do at all? How do you strongly defend yourself from a lie? Pause this audio here.

Joab explains that he only wants to capture Sheba, the son of Bikri, from the land of Ephraim, because Sheba has lifted up his hand against King David. This is special language to say that Sheba rebelled against King David, and so King David must punish Sheba. Joab uses the same special language that Ahimaaz used when he spoke to King David about Absalom's rebellion. By using the same language, Joab is showing that Sheba's rebellion and Absalom's rebellion are similar.

Stop here and tell a story about a man who rebelled against a king. How do you talk about the man's rebellion? What words or phrases do you use? Pause this audio here.

The wise woman replies to Joab using special language to emphasize her promise that the people of the city would throw Sheba's head over the wall to Joab. Then the woman convinces the people of the city to follow her wise plan, and they do throw Sheba's head over the wall to Joab as the wise woman promised.

This story ends in a similar way to how it began. The story started with Sheba blowing the ram's horn and commanding the Israelites to go to their own tents, and it ends with Joab blowing the ram's horn and telling the men of Judah to return to their own tents. Then Joab also returns to King David in Jerusalem.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:1–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Sheba
- Joab
- Amasa
- Abishai
- 10 concubines
- Kerethites
- Pelethites
- Men of Judah
- Men of Israel
- David's mighty men
- Joab's man, who calls everyone to follow Joab
- The Bikrites
- The people who live in Abel Beth Maakah
- And the wise woman

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

King David is traveling back to Jerusalem with men from both Israel and Judah. Sheba, a rebel, blows a ram's horn and tells all the men of Israel to desert David and return to their own tents in Israel.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Someone is already betraying me again before I even reach home; or
- I will have to fight again so that this rebellion does not spread; or
- I am tired. I wonder if I will ever be able to rest from rebels or if I will always be fighting.

Continue the drama.

David sends Amasa to gather the men of Judah to follow after Sheba and return to him within three days. Amasa goes out to obey David's orders, but Amasa does not return within three days.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel anxious about why Amasa has not returned yet; or
- I wonder if Amasa has taken my men and joined Sheba in rebellion against me; or
- Now I am in even more trouble than I was in when Absalom rebelled against me.

Continue the drama.

Sheba and the men of his clan, the Bikrites, travel all through Israel until they reach Abel Beth Maakah.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Sheba, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I thought I would be able to get more men to join me in my rebellion; or
- This city is so far from Jerusalem. Maybe we will be safe here; or
- I hope the people of this city will protect us, because we are much weaker than David's army.

Continue the drama.

Joab and his brother Abishai meet Amasa at the great stone in Gibeon, and Joab greets his cousin Amasa with a friendly greeting. Then Joab stabs Amasa in the stomach and kills him without having to stab him a second time.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing one of David's soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am shocked that Joab just tricked his cousin and murdered him; or
- If Joab would do this to his own cousin, I am very afraid of what would happen to me if I make Joab angry; or
- I feel pity for Amasa.

Continue the drama.

Joab and Abishai and all of David's soldiers reach the city of Abel Beth Maakah and build a ramp of earth against the wall to attack the city.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing a Bikrite, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We are not strong enough to fight King David's men; or
- I regret following my relative Sheba into this rebellion; or
- I am afraid of these mighty men.

Ask the person playing a resident of Abel Beth Maakah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am confused! What did we do to cause David's army to attack us? or
- These men are so strong, they will quickly destroy our loved ones; or
- How can we save our city?

Continue the drama.

Then a wise woman called from the city wall, "Listen! Listen! Tell Joab, 'Come here, that I may speak to you.'"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the wise woman, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We cannot win this battle with strength, but maybe we can win it with wisdom; or
- I have nothing to lose by begging their leader for mercy; or
- We must do all we can to save our great city. Peace and unity in Israel are so important.

Continue the drama.

When Joab comes to the wise woman, she tells him to listen to her. The wise woman explains that the people of Abel Beth Maakah are peaceful and faithful. The people are like a mother in Israel. The woman asks Joab, "Why would you want to swallow up Yahweh's inheritance?" Joab assures the woman that he does not want to harm the city, but that he is chasing after Sheba. Sheba is trying to rebel against King David. The woman says to Joab, "Someone will throw Sheba's head over the wall."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This woman is wise and deserves my respect; or
- Maybe we can kill Sheba without destroying the whole city; or
- I am willing to wait and see if this woman keeps her word. If she does not, we can continue our attack.

Continue the drama.

The woman went to the people in the city, and they decided to cut off Sheba's head. The people threw Sheba's head over the wall. So Joab blew the ram's horn, and all the men of David's army returned to their own homes. And Joab returned to Jerusalem to the king.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David's soldier, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am relieved that we did not have to continue to fight; or
- I am thankful my friends and I did not lose our lives in this battle; or
- I am happy that we defeated Sheba. Others will learn from this not to rebel against my king.

Ask the person playing someone who lives in Abel Beth Maakah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am relieved that my family is safe now; or
- I am thankful to the wise woman for making peace with Joab's army; or
- I am proud of my city for once again being peaceful.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:1–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Sheba, the son of Bikri, a troublemaker, blew the **trumpet**, or **horn** and said, "We have no portion in David." The Israelites would blow into a ram's horn to call their troops together for battle or to signal them to stop fighting. Use the same word for horn as you have used in previous passages.

Stop here and look at a picture of a ram's horn. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss what word or phrase you will use to describe Bikri as a **troublemaker** or rebellious man. Think about people in your culture who like to rebel or cause trouble. What words do you use to describe them? Pause this audio here.

Sheba told the men of **Israel** that every man should go to his tent. But the men of **Judah** remained with David from the **Jordan River** to **Jerusalem**. Use the same words or phrases for Jordan River, Jerusalem, Israel, and Judah as you have used in previous passages. Jordan River, Jerusalem, Israel, and Judah are in the Master Glossary.

King David returned to his **palace**, or special house where the king lived. Use the same word or phrase for palace as you have used in previous passages.

And the king took the 10 **concubines** whom he had left to care for his palace and put them in a house under guard and provided for them, but he no longer slept with them. The concubines were like **widows**, or women whose husbands had died. Concubines were women whom a man would sleep with like a wife, but they did not have the same rights as wives. Use the same words or phrases for concubines and widows as you have used previously.

David tells Abishai to take his **lord's**, or master's, men to chase Sheba. Use the same word or phrase for lord as you have used previously. Lord is in the Master Glossary.

Joab also chased Sheba with David's mighty men, or brave warriors. This was a special group of David's strongest and bravest warriors, or fighting men.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you describe David's **mighty men**? Pause this audio here.

King David warned that Sheba would look for **cities** to hide in. Use the same words for king and cities as you have used in previous passages. King is in the Master Glossary.

The wise woman calls herself Joab's **servant** to show respect to Joab. The woman asks Joab why he is trying to swallow up **Yahweh's** inheritance. Use the same words or phrases for servant and Yahweh as you have used previously, and remember that servant and Yahweh are in the Master Glossary.

The wise woman says that the people in her city are full of **peace**, and they are **faithful** to follow Yahweh. In other words, the people continue to follow Yahweh all the time. Use the same word or phrase for faithful or trustworthy as you have used in previous passages. Use the same word or phrase for peace as you have used in previous passages. Peace is in the Master Glossary.

The wise woman says that Abel Beth Maakah is part of Yahweh's **inheritance**, or the land that Yahweh had promised and given to his people of Israel. Use the same word or phrase for inheritance that you have used previously when it means the land of Israel.

Joab says that Sheba has **lifted up his hand** against David. Describe when someone "lifts their hand," or rebels against their king, in the same way here as you have done previously.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 20:1–22

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 20:23–26

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 20:23–26 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:23–26 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.

2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:23–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the previous story, we saw three different men lead King David's army at different times. First, King David commanded Amasa to gather his army and find Sheba, the rebel. Then David commanded Abishai to lead the army. Finally, Joab commanded the army and led them to attack Abel Beth Maakah and kill Sheba.

Now the storyteller pauses David's story and gives us a list of the men who did important jobs for King David. The storyteller gives us a similar list earlier in this book. Some people think they are two different lists, even though some names are the same. This second list comes later in David's reign, and it shows that King David gave some important jobs to different men after Absalom's rebellion. Lists like this are important because they show that this is a real history and not a pretend story.

This list showed that Joab now commanded Israel's whole army.

Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, commanded the Kerethites and Pelethites, who were King David's royal bodyguard. The names Kerethites and Pelethites show the families from which the royal bodyguard descended. You will remember that these two groups of people are descended from non-Israelites, but they have been loyal to David for a long time, and over time, they became David's special guards who protected him.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Who protects your most important leader? Pause this audio here.

Adoniram was in charge of the forced labor, or the men who worked against their will. Adoniram is called Adoram in some translations. Most people think he is the same person who was called Adoniram in the first list. The men who worked against their will were probably foreign soldiers that the Israelites had captured in battles, but they might have included Israelite men who were forced to work against their will. The men who worked against their will often did the work for the king's royal building projects, like highways, temples, and palaces. Yahweh had warned the Israelites that if they got a king, the king would force their men to work for the king.

Jehoshaphat, the son of Ahilud, was the recorder. The recorder's job was probably to talk with the king and report the king's decisions to the people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What happens to men whom your army captures during battle? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about the person who speaks with your leader and tells the people what your leader said? Pause this audio here.

Sheva was the secretary. Sheva is a different person from Sheba from the previous story. The first list of important men has a different name for the secretary. We do not know if that was another name for Sheva or if someone else was the secretary before Sheva. The secretary probably wrote down important things for the king, and he may have traveled to speak to other leaders or give messages on behalf of the king. The secretary may have also assisted the recorder or had a similar job to the recorder.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about the person who writes important things down for your king or leader? Pause this audio here.

Zadok and Abiathar were priests. Many translations also call Ira the Jairite one of David's priests, but he was probably more like a royal advisor or confidential counselor to David. Ira is probably a descendant of Jair, who was a son of Manasseh.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:23–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has one scene.

In the first scene: The storyteller lists the men who did important jobs for David. This is the second list like this in this book. Some of the names are the same on both lists, but some are different.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- Benaiah
- Kerethites
- Pelethites
- Adoniram

Men whom the king forces to work for him: Jehoshaphat, Sheva, Zadok, Abiathar, and Ira. As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting: Joab's name is first in this list. Joab is the commander of the whole Israelite army. Joab is probably the most powerful man in the list. Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Who is the most powerful man in your nation under the top leader? What kinds of things does that man usually do? When you list important government officials, what order do you list them in? Pause this audio here. Benaiah commands the king's royal bodyguard. The men in the king's bodyguard are descended from the Kerethites and Pelethites. The storyteller calls Benaiah the son of Jehoiada. Often, storytellers mentioned the name of someone's father so that everyone would know which person they were talking about. Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you call the men who guard the highest leader of your people? The storyteller does not state that the Kerethites and Pelethites are King David's special bodyguard. Will you state that information? If so, what word or phrase will you use for the royal bodyguard? Pause this audio here. Adoniram was the commander of the men who worked against their will. No one had this job in the first list of important leaders that we heard earlier in 2 Samuel. It is most likely that these men were foreign soldiers that the Israelite soldiers captured in battle, but some of them may have been Israelite men whom King David forced to work for him against their will. Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about men who work for your leader against their will? What kind of people work for your leader against their will? Are there different ways to talk about those people if they are from other nations or if they are from your own people? What word or phrase will you use here? Pause this audio here. Jehoshaphat was the recorder. Jehoshaphat probably wrote down important things for the king, and also talked with the king and told the people the king's decisions. Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about the person who talks to the king and tells the people the king's decisions? What word or phrase will you use for "recorder"? Pause this audio here. Sheva was the secretary. The secretary probably wrote down important things for the king and assisted the recorder. Sheva may have also visited other important leaders and spoke for the king to them. The secretary may have assisted the recorder. Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you talk about the person who writes down important things for the king and who the king sends to other leaders in order to talk for him? What word or phrase will you use for "secretary"? Pause this audio here. Zadok and Abiathar were priests. Ira was also one of David's priests, or royal advisors. Because Ira is not a Levite, it is

more likely that he advises David in important matters than that he is a priest who offers sacrifices. Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:23–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has one scene.

The characters in this passage are:

- Joab
- Benaiah
- Kerethites
- Pelethites
- Adoniram
- Men whom the king forces to work for him
- Jehoshaphat
- Sheva
- Zadok
- Abiathar
- And Ira

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Joab was the commander of the whole Israelite army. Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, was over the Kerethites and Pelethites, David's royal bodyguard.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am happy that I am in charge of the army again; or
- I was worried when David asked Amasa and Abishai to lead his army, but now I am relieved to be in charge again; or
- I am the best army commander. I deserve this important job.

Continue the drama.

Adoniram was in charge of forced labor, and Jehoshaphat was the recorder.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing a man whom the king forces to work for him, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I hate working for the king; or
- I want to go back to my homeland instead of working in this foreign country!

Continue the drama.

Sheva was the secretary. Zadok and Abiathar were priests. Ira was also one of David's priests.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 20:23–26 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Stop here and listen again to your translation of 2 Samuel 8:15–18, where a similar list first appeared. Use the same words or descriptions for **army commander**, **recorder**, **secretary**, and **priests** that you already used for that list. Pause this audio here.

Joab was in charge of **Israel's** army. Use the same word for Israel as you have used in previous passages. Israel is in the Master Glossary.

Zadok and Abiathar were **priests**, and Ira the Jairite was also David's priest, or royal advisor. Use the same word for priest that you have used in previous translations. Look up priest in the Master Glossary for more information.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe Ira the Jairite. Will you call him a priest or a **royal advisor**? Remember that a royal advisor is someone who gives a king or leader advice about how to govern his area.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 20:23–26

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 21:1–14

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 21:1–14 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:1–14 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This event happens while David is king of Israel, but we are not sure when. We know this happens after David promises that he will protect Saul's grandson Mephibosheth, but sometime before the events in the previous stories. The lands of Israel and Judah have a famine for three years. A famine is a time when people are very hungry. People even die because there is not enough food in the land to feed everyone. The people of Israel believed that famines were punishments from Yahweh for being disobedient in some way.

King David prays to Yahweh for advice. Yahweh tells David that the famine is a punishment because King Saul was guilty of killing many Gibeonites. Saul did not pay for his guilt while he was living, and now Yahweh still counts Saul's guilt against Saul's family.

When David learns this, David calls the Gibeonites to come to him. The Gibeonites are not Israelites. The Gibeonites are the surviving people from the Amorites. The Amorites, or Hivites, lived in the land before the Israelites took the land. When Joshua led the Israelites into the land, he made a promise to the Gibeonites to let them live. The Gibeonites lived in the city of Gibeon in the land of Benjamin. However, Saul had later killed many of them because Saul wanted Israel to control all of the land. Yahweh considered Saul's actions murder because he broke the promise Israel had made many years before.

Stop and look at the map that includes Gibeon in the land of Benjamin. Pause this audio here.

David asks the Gibeonites what he should do for them to atone for, or take away Israel's sin against them, so they will bless, or be kind, to Yahweh's people again. The Gibeonites reply that silver and gold will not take away Saul's guilt or his family's guilt. The Gibeonites also say they have no right to kill an Israelite unless David gives them permission. David understands that they are saying the only thing that will take away the guilt will be the death of another man.

David asks what the Gibeonites want him to do for them. The Gibeonites say Saul tried to kill all of them so they would not remain in the land of Israel. Since it was Saul who tried to kill the Gibeonites, the Gibeonites ask David to give them seven of Saul's descendants to kill. In Israel, the number seven is also a symbol of a complete or total amount. Saul probably killed more than seven Gibeonites, but the Gibeonites request this symbolic number of deaths in return. David says he will give the Gibeonites seven descendants of Saul.

But King David spares, or keeps back, one of Saul's grandsons named Mephibosheth. David does this because David had made a promise before Yahweh to Mephibosheth's father, Jonathan. But David takes another man named Mephibosheth, who is Saul's son by his concubine, Rizpah. David also takes Rizpah's other son, Armoni. Rizpah is the daughter of Aiah. David also takes the five sons of Saul's daughter, Merab. The father of Merab's sons is Adriel, the son of Barzillai from Abel Meholah. David gives these seven descendants of Saul to the Gibeonites.

The Gibeonites kill Saul's descendants in Saul's hometown of Gibeah, where the Israelites worship Yahweh. It is not clear how they kill the men, but afterward, they hang the men's bodies on wooden poles. The Gibeonites kill all seven men together. The Gibeonites leave the men's bodies hanging rather than burying them. The Gibeonites do this during the first days of the barley harvest, which is the first grain harvest in April.

Stop and look at the map that includes Saul's hometown of Gibeah as a group. Look at a photo of barley grain in a field. Pause this audio here.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: How do the leaders in your community punish someone who has murdered another person? Pause this audio here.

Usually, people would bury someone's dead body before evening, but this was different. Since the Gibeonites killed these men because of Saul's guilt, the people did not show the typical honor to their bodies, but left them hanging until God sent rain to show that he was no longer angry. This would mean that birds and wild animals could come and eat the bodies, which the Israelites believed was a disgraceful thing to do to bodies.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: What do people in your culture do with the dead bodies of loved ones in order to show them honor? Pause this audio here.

Rizpah, the daughter of Aiah, takes rough cloth that people made from goat or camel hair and spreads it for herself on the rock where her sons are hanging. People used this cloth to make sacks for storing barley and wheat. In Israel, people often wear this rough cloth when they are mourning the death of a loved one in order to show their sadness. This cloth is very uncomfortable. Rizpah lays this rough, thin cloth on the rock to rest on, so she can stay near the bodies of her dead sons during the day and the night.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: How do people in your language group store grains? Pause this audio here.

Stop and look at a picture of sackcloth together as a group. Pause this audio here.

Rizpah stays with her sons' bodies from the beginning of the harvest until rain falls upon their bodies. Rizpah does not allow the birds to peck at her son's bodies during the day or the wild beasts to eat them at night. Rain would usually have started falling in September or October, but God might have sent it sooner to end the famine now that David had paid for Saul's guilt.

Stop and tell a story of a time when a mother or father did something very unusual and difficult to protect the body of their dead child. Pause this audio here.

When someone tells King David what Saul's concubine Rizpah has done, David goes and takes the bones of Saul and Saul's son Jonathan from the men of Jabesh in the region of Gilead. These men had secretly taken Saul's and Jonathan's bones from the Philistines on the day the Philistines killed Saul on Mount Gilboa. The Philistines had dishonored Saul and Jonathan's bodies by hanging them on a public wall for everyone to see. The men of Jabesh had secretly taken their bodies so that the Philistines could no longer dishonor them. David brings Saul and Jonathan's bones to Jerusalem. David's men also gather the bones of Saul's descendants whom the Gibeonites had hanged. David's men bury their bones with Saul and Jonathan's bones in Zela in the land of Benjamin, in the tomb of Saul's father, Kish. This is the way that the Israelites honored the dead bodies of people and their families. When David does this, he is honoring the men who died and the family of Saul. David's men do all that David commands, and after that, God answers their prayer to end the famine in Israel.

Stop and look at the map that includes Jabesh in the region of Gilead. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when a parent finally received comfort, or their children finally received honor, after the death of their child.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: David asks Yahweh why there has been a famine in the land for three years. God tells David it is because of Saul's guilt for killing the Gibeonites after Israel had promised to let them live many years ago.

In the second scene: David calls the Gibeonites and asks them what he can do to take away Israel's guilt against them. The Gibeonites ask for permission to kill seven of Saul's descendants since Saul tried to destroy their people and remove them from Israel. David gives them permission to kill seven of Saul's descendants.

In the third scene: The Gibeonites kill seven of Saul's descendants on a hill or mountain in Saul's hometown. The Gibeonites shame the men by leaving their bodies hanging rather than burying them. Rizpah stays on the rock with only a piece of rough fabric to lie on, so she can protect the bodies from birds and animals. Rizpah stays until God sends rain on the land.

In the fourth scene: Someone tells David what Rizpah did. David and his men travel to Jabesh Gilead to get the bones of Saul and Jonathan and bring them back to the tomb of Saul's father, Kish. They place their bones along with the bones of the seven men into the tomb to give them an honorable burial. After David's men do everything he commands, God answers Israel's prayers to end the famine in the land.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- David
- Gibeonites
- Rizpah
- Mephibosheth
- Armoni
- 5 sons of Merab
- The men of Jabesh Gilead
- Israelites
- And David's men

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

During David's reign as king, there is a famine for three years. The special language here emphasizes that the famine is three years long, one year after another, without a break.

David prays to Yahweh, or seeks Yahweh's face, to ask why Yahweh has sent a famine on the land. David really wants Yahweh to answer David. The Israelites sometimes talk about prayer as seeking Yahweh's face. It is similar to someone trying to come before a king on his throne and make a request to the king.

Stop and tell a story of a time when you prayed to God to ask for his advice. What words do you use to talk about this? How will you say that David seeks Yahweh's face, or asks for Yahweh's advice? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh tells David he sent a famine because of Saul's blood-stained house. Yahweh means that Saul had not paid for his guilt of killing the Gibeonites. Yahweh still considers Saul's household, or his family, guilty. The Gibeonites were Amorites, or Hivites, who were in the land of Canaan when the Israelites took it. The Israelites promised not to kill the Gibeonites, but Saul broke that promise when he tried to get rid of the Gibeonites by killing many of them.

David asks the Gibeonites how David can take away Israel's guilt against them, so the Gibeonites will again bless Yahweh's people and be in a good relationship with Israel. The Gibeonites say that a payment of money will not be enough—they would need to kill Israelites. However, the Gibeonites cannot kill an Israelite without David's permission. David understands that the Gibeonites are saying only the death of other men will take away Israel's guilt. David asks the Gibeonites what he should do for them. David is not really asking a question.

David is telling the Gibeonites he understands their request and will give his permission. The Gibeonites ask for seven descendants of "the man" who tried to destroy them. Everyone knows they are talking about Saul. Then they call Saul, "the chosen of Yahweh." It is true that Yahweh chose Saul as king, but Saul did not act like it when Saul killed the Gibeonites.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Think about the fact that the Gibeonites needed to kill Israelites in order to be in a good relationship with the Israelites again, like a form of payment or removal of the Israelites' guilt. How will you talk about this idea of "atonement"? How will you talk about the way the Gibeonites ask David to give them descendants of Saul that they can kill to pay for this guilt? Pause this audio here.

David agrees to give the Gibeonites seven of Saul's descendants to kill, but David does not give them Jonathan's son Mephibosheth because of David's oath to Jonathan to take care of Jonathan's family. David does give them another descendant named Mephibosheth, the son of Saul's concubine Rizpah. David also gives them Rizpah's other son, Armoni, along with five sons of Saul's daughter Merab.

The Gibeonites kill Saul's descendants in the town where Saul grew up, just as Saul killed their relatives in the land where they lived. The Gibeonites kill all seven men together and hang their bodies on top of a hill so everyone can see them. No one is sure what it means to hang dead bodies like this, but most likely the Gibeonites pushed a sharp wooden pole all the way through each body of the seven men, and then stuck the poles in the ground with the bodies hanging on them. The Gibeonites leave the dead bodies of Saul's descendants hanging "before Yahweh." This special language probably means that Yahweh approved of the Gibeonites killing these men. They did all of this at the beginning of the barley harvest in April.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about the Gibeonites hanging the dead bodies of the men on the poles and leaving them outside? Pause this audio here.

Rizpah spreads a thin, rough cloth for herself on the rock where her sons are hanging. Rizpah stays with the bodies from the time they are killed until rain falls upon them when God ends the famine. Rizpah does not allow the birds to peck at the bodies during the day or the wild animals to eat them during the night. It is not clear when God sends the rain. Rizpah might have guarded the bodies for many days or weeks, perhaps as long as six months!

Stop here and look at a picture of sackcloth again as a group. Remember that Rizpah had only this cloth to rest on, and she was staying on a rocky hill or mountain. Pause this audio here.

Someone tells David what Rizpah, Saul's concubine, has done to protect the bodies of her sons. Then David goes to Jabesh Gilead, where the people keep the bones of Saul and Jonathan. The men of Jabesh Gilead had secretly taken their bones from the public area of Beth Shan, where the Philistines had hung their bodies on the day they killed Saul on Gilboa. David brings Saul and Jonathan's bones and the bones of Saul's seven descendants to Zela in Benjamin. David buries them in the tomb of Saul's father, Kish. Most likely, David commands his men to do these things, and David does not do them alone. After David's men do all that he commands them, God responds to the Israelites' prayers to end the famine.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- David
- Gibeonites
- Rizpah
- Miphibosheth
- Armoni
- 5 sons of Merab
- The men of Jabesh Gilead
- Israelites
- And David's men

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David prays to Yahweh to ask why there has been a famine in the land for three whole years.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am very worried for my people, because they are starving; or
- This famine has been going on for a long time. God must be angry with us for something; or
- I need to hear why God has sent this famine, so I can help my people.

Continue the drama.

Yahweh tells David that the famine is a punishment against Saul's family because Saul killed the Gibeonites after the leaders of Israel had promised to let them live many years before. David calls the Gibeonites to speak with David and asks them what he can do to remove Israel's guilt against the Gibeonites.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing a Gibeonite, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am amazed the king has called us to talk with him, because we are like slaves here; or
- I am so thankful. I did not expect to ever get justice for what Saul did to my relatives; or
- I wonder how I should answer the king. I am afraid to ask for what I think would be fair.

Continue the drama.

The Gibeonites ask for permission to kill seven of Saul's descendants, and David gives them permission. David does not give them Jonathan's son Mephibosheth, but he gives them Saul's son Mephibosheth, whose mother is Rizpah. David also gives them Rizpah's other son Armoni, and five sons of Saul's daughter Meriba.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Saul's son Mephibosheth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so afraid! or
- Why did my father kill the Gibeonites and bring this guilt on our family? or
- Why was I chosen from among Saul's descendants to die this way? I wonder if it is because my mother was a concubine rather than a wife?

Continue the drama.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Rizpah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so sad! My heart is breaking! or
- I regret that I was Saul's concubine, because now I must lose my sons; or
- I am desperate! I will do anything to protect my sons from being dishonored!

Continue the drama.

Rizpah spreads a rough cloth on the rock, so she can stay near the bodies of her sons and protect them from hungry birds and animals. Rizpah stays there until God sends rain to end the famine. When someone tells David what Rizpah has done, David travels to Jabesh Gilead to get the bones of Saul and Jonathan. David places their bones and the bones of the seven men in the tomb of Saul's father, Kish, so they have an honorable burial.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Rizpah made a great sacrifice to protect the honor of her sons; or
- I have not treated Saul and Jonathan with as much honor as Rizpah has treated her sons; or
- I will give Saul and Jonathan and these seven men an honorable burial to take away their shame.

Ask the person playing Rizpah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel like Yahweh finally sees my pain; or
- I hope that no mother ever has to go through anything like this.

Continue the drama.

After David's men do all that he commands them, God answers Israel's prayers to end the famine in the land.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing an Israelite, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Now God will have mercy on us; or
- I wish Saul had not broken our promise by killing the Gibeonites. I am sad for Saul's family; or
- I am so relieved that God has sent us rain and will end our famine. My family has been starving, and I was losing hope.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:1–14 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

When David is king, the land has a famine for three whole years, one year after the other.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **famine**. A famine is a time when there is very little food in an area, so that people do not have enough to eat. The people might even be starving and dying because they do not have enough to eat. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David prays to Yahweh to ask why there is a famine. Use the same word or phrase for **Yahweh** as you used in previous passages. For more information about Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

Yahweh tells David that the famine is a result of Saul's **blood**-stained house. Saul's family is still guilty of the murder of the Gibeonites. The Israelites often used the idea of blood on someone's head or house as a way to show that someone was guilty of murder, since blood represented life. If you use the word for blood to mean guilt here, use the same word as you used previously for this idea, and see blood in the Master Glossary for more information.

The Gibeonites were not a part of **Israel**. Use the same word or phrase for Israel as you used in previous passages. Israel is in the Master Glossary.

David asks the Gibeonites, "How shall I make atonement, that you may **bless** the inheritance of Yahweh?" Use the same word or phrase for bless as you have used previously, and refer to bless in the Master Glossary for more information. The "inheritance of Yahweh" refers to the people of Israel themselves, because the people of Israel are Yahweh's special people. When the Israelites atone for their sins with Yahweh, Yahweh covers or removes their sins, and they can be in right relationship with Yahweh again. In this case, David wants to cover or remove Israel's guilt with the Gibeonites and be in right relationship with the Gibeonites again.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you will use for **atonement** and **inheritance of Yahweh**. Look up atonement in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The Gibeonites say to King David, "Let seven of Saul's **descendants** be given to us, so that we may hang them before Yahweh at Gibeah of Saul, the chosen of Yahweh." Use the same word or phrase for descendants as you have used in previous passages. Refer to descendants in the Master Glossary for more information.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **hang**. Review what you discussed in step three. Pause this audio here.

The king spares Mephibosheth, son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, because of the **oath** before Yahweh between David and Jonathan, the son of Saul. Use the same word or phrase for oath as you have used previously, and look up oath in the Master Glossary for more information.

The Gibeonites kill the seven men at the beginning of **barley** harvest, which was probably in April. Use the same word or phrase for barley as you used in previous passages in 2 Samuel.

Stop here and look at the photo again of a field of barley grain, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Rizpah is Saul's **concubine**. Rizpah spread **sackcloth** on the ground. Sackcloth is a rough cloth that people made from goat or camel hair. Use the same words or phrases for concubine and sackcloth as you have used in previous passages.

David and his men put the bones of the seven men in the **tomb** of Saul's father, Kish. Use the same word or phrase for tomb as you have used previously, and refer to tomb in the Master Glossary for more information.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 21:1–14

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (15682140 KB)

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2 Samuel 21:15–22

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 21:15–22 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:15–22 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:15–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

This story does not follow right after the previous story. It is not clear when these events happen, but they probably happen before David's affair with Bathsheba. This is a story about how mighty men from David's elite group of soldiers kill four of the strongest Philistine fighters.

One time, while David is king of Israel, the Philistines fight against Israel again. David goes down with his army and fights against the Philistines. And David becomes very tired while he fights the Philistines.

Stop and tell a story of a group of people who have fought with your people many times. Pause this audio here.

Ishbi-Benob, a descendant of the giants, plans to kill David. Ishbi-Benob has a spear that people made of bronze, whose metal tip weighs about 3.5 kilograms. This is half as heavy as Goliath's spear tip, but it still shows that Ishbi-Benob is unusually strong. Ishbi-Benob also has a new sword. Ishbi-benob is probably descended from Rapha, the tribal father of the Rephaim. The Rephaim are the giants that we hear about in the books of Genesis and Joshua.

Stop and look at a picture of a spear. Pause this audio here.

But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, rescues David and kills Ishbi-Benob. Then David's fighting men swear to David that David must never again go with them to fight in battles. David and his family are too important to Israel for him to risk dying in battle. The men call David the lamp of Israel. The people of Israel used oil lamps to help them see in the dark. People made lamps out of clay that they burned in an oven to make them hard. Light is a symbol for wisdom and life and God's blessing, and the Israelites often compared their kings to a lamp. David is valuable to Israel the way a lamp is valuable to a person on a dark night. The men might also be thinking of the lamps on the lampstand in Yahweh's tabernacle, because those lamps are always burning, day and night.

Stop and look at a picture of an oil lamp. Pause this audio here.

After this, the Philistines battle with Israel again in Gob. This time, Sibbekai from Hushah kills Saph, another descendant of the giants. Sibbekai is one of David's 30 mighty men. We do not know the location of Gob, but it is probably near Gezer.

Stop and look at a map that includes Hushah and Gezer as a group. Pause this audio here.

Again, the Philistines battle against Israel in Gob. This time, Elhanan, the son of Jair, from Bethlehem, kills Goliath the Gittite from Gath. Goliath's spear is like a beam that people used for weaving. This Goliath is a different man from the Goliath whom David killed. It is also possible that this is actually the brother of Goliath, but we are not sure.

Stop and look at a map of Bethlehem as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop and look at a picture of a weaver's beam. Pause this audio here.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: How do people in your language group make fabric? What tools do they use? When you see that Goliath's spear is like a weaver's beam, what do you think about his weapon and his strength? Pause this audio here.

The Israelites have another battle in Gath. The Israelites probably fight the Philistines again. The other army has a huge man who loves to fight. This man has six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, so 24 fingers and toes in all. It is common to see extra fingers or toes on giants or people with extra strength. This man is also descended from the giants. When this man insults Israel's army, Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimeah, kills him.

[Stop here and look at a map that includes Gath. Pause this audio here.]{.mark}

These four Philistine giants are descended from Rapha, one of the giants in Gath, but David's brave warriors kill them. It is also possible that these giants are part of a special group of fighting men who are devoted to a false god.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:15–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: The Philistines war against Israel, and David becomes very tired while fighting. Ishbi-Benob, a descendant of the giants, tries to kill David, but Abishai rescues him. David's men swear that David must never again fight with them in battle, because it will be terrible for Israel if David dies.

In the second scene: After this, the Philistines war against the Israelites again in Gob. Sibbekai kills Saph, another descendant of the giants.

In the third scene: Again the Philistines war with Israel at Gob. Elhanan kills Goliath the Gittite whose spear was like the beam of a weaver.

In the fourth scene: The Philistines war with Israel again at Gath. Another descendant of the giants has six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. When this man insults Israel, Jonathan, David's nephew, kills him.

In the fifth scene: The writer gives a summary: David and his army killed four Philistine giants.

The characters in this passage are:

- Philistines
- David's army
- David
- Ishbi-Benob
- Abishai
- Sibbekai
- Saph
- Elhanan
- Goliath
- A huge man with 12 fingers and 12 toes
- And Jonathan

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

One time, the Philistines war against Israel again. David goes down with his servants, or fighting men, to fight against the Philistines. Although the storyteller calls David's men "servants," these men are fighting men in David's army. David is probably living in Hebron or Jerusalem, which are both on top of a high hill or mountain. The Philistines live in a lower place near the coast, so David and his army travel downhill from Hebron or Jerusalem to the Philistine area. Israelites often describe their journeys as going up to higher land or down to lower land. David becomes very tired as he fights the Philistines.

Stop here and tell a story about someone traveling from your city to another city. What words do you use to talk about the direction you go as you travel? Pause this audio here.

Stop and look at a map that includes Jerusalem as a group. Pause this audio here.

Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of the giants, tries to kill David. Ishbi-Benob's spear tip weighs almost 3.5 kilograms. Ishbi-Benob has a new sword. But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, rescues David and strikes down, or kills, Ishbi-Benob with his sword.

David's fighting men swear to David that he must never again go with them into battle. David's men are telling him very strongly that they do not want David to fight in war again. The men use special language here to emphasize that he and his family are too important to Israel to risk his life. The men compare David to a lamp that gives light. If someone kills David, the men of Israel are also worried that David's descendants might not become kings either.

Stop and look at a picture of an oil lamp. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are some of the special titles of honor that you give your top leader? When his servants talk to your top leader, how do they speak about him? Do they use any special language? Pause this audio here.

The Philistines war with Israel again at Gob. Then Sibbekai from Hushah kills Saph, one of the descendants of the giants.

The Philistines war with Israel again in Gob. Elhanan, the son of Jair, from Bethlehem, kills Goliath the Gittite. Goliath's spear is like the beam of a weaver.

Stop here and tell a story about a battle that your people had with their enemies. How do you talk about the men who fought? Do you tell where the men are from? Do you tell whose sons they are? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and look at a picture of a weaver's beam. In your translation, how will you talk about the fact that Goliath's spear is like the beam of a weaver? If you do not have weaving beams in your culture, you may need to describe the spear and say that it is a long, heavy stick. Pause this audio here.

The Israelites go to war again. The other army has a huge man, a descendant of the giants. This man has six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot. This man has 24 fingers and toes in all! When this man insults the men of Israel, Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimeah, kills him.

Stop here and talk about how you will talk about the 24 fingers and toes in all. Remember that there are 12 fingers on his two hands, and 12 toes on his two feet. How do you talk about fingers and toes on your hands and feet in your language? Pause this audio here.

These four Philistine giants, who are descended from Rapha of Gath, fell at the hands of David and his men. When someone falls "at the hands" of someone else, they die because of the hands, or power, of the other person. In this case, David does not personally kill any of the giants. However, David's men kill them, and therefore David gets credit also for the victory.

Stop here and talk about how you will describe that these four giants fell at the hands of David and his men. In other words, David and his men won the victory and killed the four giants. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:15–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Philistines
- David's army
- David
- Ishbi-Benob
- Abishai
- Sibbekai
- Saph
- Elhanan
- Goliath
- A huge man with 12 fingers and 12 toes
- And Jonathan

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

The Philistines go to war with Israel again. David and his army fight against the Philistines. And David becomes very tired.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so tired, I feel like I will faint; or
- I am too tired to defend myself anymore; or
- I might die in this battle because I am too weak to fight.

Continue the drama.

Ishbi-Benob, one of the descendants of the giants, who had a very heavy spear tip and a new sword, tries to kill David. But Abishai, the son of Zeruiah, rescues David and kills Ishbi-Benob. Then David's men swear to David that he must no longer go with them into battle, or he might die, and David's and his family's rule over Israel will end.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing one of David's soldiers, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so thankful that Abishai saved King David; or
- It is scary that King David almost died; or
- Israel would suffer so much if we lost our king. God blesses us through King David.

Continue the drama.

After this, the Philistines war with Israel again in Gob. Then Sibbekai from Hushah kills Saph, one of the descendants of the giants.

And the Philistines war again with Israel in Gob. This time, Elhanan, the son of Jair, from Bethlehem, kills Goliath the Gittite. Goliath's spear is large, like a weaver's beam.

And the Philistines war again with Israel in Gath. They have a huge soldier who has six fingers on each hand and six toes on each foot, 24 fingers and toes in all. This soldier is also descended from the giants. This soldier insults Israel's army, and Jonathan, the son of David's brother Shimeah, kills this giant.

These four giants are descended from Rapha in Gath, but David and his army kill them.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David's fighting men in the army, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so proud to be in David's army; or
- We have defeated these giants who have super strength because God favors King David; or
- People will fear us now that we have killed these men who are so huge and strong.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 21:15–22 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

There was a battle between the Philistines and **Israel**. Use the same word or phrase for Israel as you have used in previous passages. Refer to Israel in the Master Glossary for more information.

Ishbi-Benob's spear tip weighed 300 **shekels** of bronze, which is about 3.5 kilograms. Use the same word or phrase for shekel as you used in previous passages, and refer to shekel in the Master Glossary for more information.

Ishbi-Benob had a new **sword**. Use the same word or phrase for sword as you have used in previous passages.

David's soldiers swear to David, saying, "Never again will you go out with us to battle, so that the lamp of Israel will not be extinguished." When someone swears, they make an **oath** or a strong promise. Use the same word or phrase for swear or make an oath as you have used in previous passages. Refer to oath in the Master Glossary for more information.

The people of Israel used oil lamps to help them see in the dark. People made lamps out of clay that they burned in an oven to make them hard. People could also cut lamps out of stone.

Stop here and look at a picture again of a lamp. Discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **lamp** of Israel. Refer to "oil lamp" in the Master Glossary for more information.

The four giants were the **descendants** of Rapha. Use the same word or phrase for descendants as you have used in previous passages. Refer to descendants in the Master Glossary for more information.

The four giants fell "at the hands of, or by the power of" David and his men. When someone falls "at the hands" of someone else, they die because of the hands, or power, of the other person.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will talk about someone dying **at the hands**, or by the power, of someone else. If you have translated this idea in another book of the Bible, use the same phrase here.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 21:15–22

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (11521869 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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2 Samuel 22:1–4

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 22:1–4 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:1–4 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.

2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

NOTE: This passage is a song, which is Hebrew poetry. We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Module 1" before continuing with "Step 2: Setting the Stage." Stop here, if needed, and review the translation decisions your team has made regarding the translation of poetry. Pause this audio here.

In this passage, David begins a long song to celebrate what Yahweh has done throughout David's life. David sings this song to Yahweh as a prayer to thank Yahweh for the way Yahweh has protected and helped David. Israelites often made prayers to give thanks after God heard their prayers and helped them.

Stop here and tell a story about a time when someone wrote a song to celebrate something very good happening to them. Who did the person address the song to? How is a celebration song different than other songs? Pause this audio here.

Stop and discuss this question as a group: How do people pray in your language? How do people structure their prayers similarly or differently from celebration songs? Pause this audio here.

David sings to Yahweh because Yahweh has rescued David from the hands of David's enemies. Here, David uses the word "hand" to represent a person's power, so David is saying that Yahweh saved David from David's enemies. David spent much of his time as king struggling against many enemies, including Saul. Saul was not the last of David's enemies, but Yahweh's victory over Saul was amazing and powerful. Yahweh protected David while David was hiding from Saul in rough and dangerous places, and then Yahweh made David king in Saul's place!

At the beginning of the song, David declares that Yahweh is David's faithful protector. David uses special language to describe the way Yahweh protects. First, David calls Yahweh his rock. The Israelites often compared God to a rock, where a person can find protection from enemies. The land of Israel has many steep and rocky places that are almost impossible to climb. David often hid among the rocks when Saul was chasing David. But while David took refuge, or found a safe place to hide in rocks, David knew that it was Yahweh who really protected him. Yahweh protected David like a hiding place protects a person from whoever is looking for them.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your land, what are some places where you could hide from an enemy, like caves or trees? Which is the best or safest hiding place? Pause this audio here.

Then David calls Yahweh his fortress. A fortress is a strong and safe place where enemies cannot enter, usually like a city with high, strong, and thick walls. Yahweh protected David like a safe city protects a person from an enemy's attack. David fought several enemies who attacked Israel while David was king. David says that Yahweh is his deliverer, or the one who saves David!

Stop here and look at a picture of a fortress. Discuss what safe or strong cities look like in your land. Pause this audio here.

David says that Yahweh is David's shield. A shield is a broad piece of wood, metal, or leather on a wooden framework that a soldier would carry to protect himself from an enemy's weapons. David fought in many battles, and Yahweh protected David like a shield protects a soldier.

Stop here and look at a picture of a shield. In your culture, what are some things that keep soldiers safe in battle? What are some things that your culture uses as symbols of protection? Pause this audio here.

David says that Yahweh is the horn of David's salvation, or the horn that saves David. People would often use the word horn to represent strength. An animal like an ox can defend itself and kill any attackers with its horns. Yahweh protects David like an animal's horn helps the animal defend itself.

Stop here and look at a picture of an animal's horn. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are some things that your culture uses as symbols of strength and power? Pause this audio here.

David calls Yahweh his stronghold. This is another safe place. A stronghold can either be a natural place, like a cave, or a strong place that people make, like a fortress. David also calls Yahweh his refuge, which is another place where people can go to escape from danger. Yahweh protects David like a stronghold or a refuge keeps people safe. To make this even clearer, David says that Yahweh is David's savior, who saves David from violent people. David is really emphasizing that Yahweh protects David in every way!

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what are some familiar things that people use to talk about what God is like? Pause this audio here.

When David was in danger, he called on, or prayed to Yahweh, for help. As soon as David did, Yahweh saved David from David's enemies. David says that Yahweh is worthy of praise, or that everyone should praise Yahweh because Yahweh saves people. Yahweh can save people from any kind of danger, like illness, physical attacks, other people, or death.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three sections.

In the first section: the storyteller says that David sang this song after Yahweh saved David from David's enemies

In the second section: David sings that Yahweh is David's protector.

In the third section: David says that as soon as David prayed for help, Yahweh saved David from David's enemies.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Yahweh
- And David's enemies, including Saul and violent people

Stop here and review as a group: We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Modules 2 & 3" before continuing with "Step 3: Defining the Scenes." If your team has completed the introduction to poetry, remind one another of the special ways that poets use language. What are the most common ways that poets use language in Hebrew poems? Pause this audio here.

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This passage is near the end of this book. In these times, people often put a long poem or song near the end of a story or a book. The first book of Samuel begins with a song to thank Yahweh, and here, near the end of the second book of Samuel, is another song of thanks! These books begin and end with people praising Yahweh!

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what are some ways that people begin and end stories or books? Pause this audio here.

David often wrote songs like these, and the storyteller may have included this song here to show that David was a songwriter. The storyteller is also showing what David's relationship with God was like as the storyteller comes to the end of David's story. You can find this song in another book of the Bible, in Psalm 18. That version of the song is slightly different, as people probably changed the words a little to sing the song together, but the meaning of the song is the same. This song is about Yahweh as a deliverer or savior. This passage is the first part of a longer song.

Sometimes in this song, David declares to other people what Yahweh is like and what Yahweh has done. Sometimes in this song, David sings to Yahweh. David is praising Yahweh in both ways.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What are some songs in your language where you talk to or about different groups of people? How would you switch from talking to Yahweh and then talking about Yahweh in your prayers or songs? Pause this audio here.

In the first section, the storyteller introduces the song. While some translations say that David spoke the words of this song, this means that David sang this song to Yahweh. It is not clear exactly when David first created or sang this song, but it was after Yahweh had delivered or saved David from Saul. David is thinking about his life and remembering what has happened.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when someone was remembering and sharing important things that happened in their life. When did they do this? How did they do this? Who was listening to them, or who were they speaking to? Pause this audio here.

The song begins in the second section. This song has nine stanzas. Poets create a stanza in a song or poem by grouping several lines and companion phrases together to create larger sections. The lines in the stanza usually have a similar idea or part of the story. Just like in many other Hebrew songs, David creates this song by using parallel or companion phrases. In a companion phrase, a poet will say one thing in one line and then, in the next line or lines, add to what they said. Sometimes the poet will repeat what he just said. Sometimes the poet will add more information or say something opposite. This passage is one stanza of the song, and this stanza has three sets of parallel or companion phrases.

The first set of parallel lines is the first three lines. David uses many words that mean similar or the same things to emphasize that Yahweh is a good savior who protects in many good ways. These are words that David often calls God in David's songs. Instead of saying that Yahweh is just "a deliverer," David says that Yahweh is "my deliverer" or "my fortress" to show the close relationship David had with Yahweh.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Hebrew poetry repeats an important idea several times in order to emphasize it. How do you emphasize an important idea in your language? Pause this audio here.

Many of these words are special language that David is using to show how Yahweh is a good protector like a rock, a fortress, a shield, a horn, and a stronghold. These are all things that David would need if he were fighting or hiding from his enemies, so they help us understand how Yahweh protects David. But when David says that Yahweh is David's deliverer and savior, David is saying exactly what David means.

Stop here and discuss as a group what beautiful language or comparisons poets use in your language to describe people. Discuss how you are going to translate how David describes Yahweh. You can keep the exact translation and say, "Yahweh is my rock," if that is clear in your language. You can also use similar comparisons in your language. Or you can also include the meaning and say, "Yahweh guards me like a rock or fortress protects people," if that is clearer. Pause this audio here.

In the next group of companion phrases, David says in the first line that Yahweh is David's savior. Yahweh is like a safe place, where people can escape from danger. In the second line, David gives more information and explains who Yahweh saves David from. By being all of these things, Yahweh saves David from violent people.

In the third section, David sings the main idea or theme of the song. In this set of companion phrases, David says in the first line what David did: he called out or asked Yahweh to help David. In the second line, David explains what happened as a result: Yahweh saved David. That is why Yahweh is worthy of or deserves people's praise!

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: When you are singing a song, how do you show what the song is about? When do you do this? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:1–4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three sections.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Yahweh
- And David's enemies, including Saul and violent people

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David sang to Yahweh the words of this song when Yahweh saved David from the power of all David's enemies, including Saul. David sang:

"Yahweh guards me like a rock and a fortress protects people;

Yahweh is my deliverer.

My God is like a rock that defends me, where I hide for safety."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I remember how dangerous my life was when I was running from Saul. Though I was scared sometimes, I knew that Yahweh would protect me; or
- There have been many times when I have needed protection from enemies. I think about the many times that Yahweh has protected me, and I remember that he will protect me better than anyone or anything else can; or
- I am so thankful for what Yahweh has done. I want to create something beautiful for Yahweh and celebrate him!

Continue the drama.

David sang:

"Yahweh defends me like a shield, and is the power that saves me.

Yahweh is my place of safety, my refuge, and my savior.

You, Yahweh, save me from violent people!

As soon as I called on Yahweh for help,

He saved me from my enemies."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am singing out loud so that other people can hear this song too. Then those people can learn how Yahweh has protected me and how reliable Yahweh is, too. I hope they praise Yahweh as well! or
- When I feel afraid, I immediately pray to Yahweh for help, and he saves me! I am so amazed at what Yahweh does;

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I care for David and want to keep him safe; or
- I love it when my people have a good relationship with me and sing and talk to me. I am happy when I hear these songs and their beautiful language; or
- Sometimes, people sing to me with beautiful songs, but sometimes it is hard for them to find words to describe what they are feeling and thinking. Either way, I hear their words and want them to talk to me.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:1-4 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David sings this song to **Yahweh**. The name Yahweh was a very personal name for God that showed the close relationship that God had with the people of Israel. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages.

David uses three words to say that Yahweh is David's safe place. David says that Yahweh is David's fortress and stronghold. A fortress is a large, strong building or group of buildings that has walls around it and that people can use to defend themselves from their enemies. A stronghold is also a safe place. This can either be a natural place, like a cave, or a strong place that people make, like a fortress. Yahweh is also David's refuge. A refuge is a way of escape or a place where people can go to escape from danger.

Stop here and discuss as a group what words or phrases you want to use for **fortress**, **stronghold**, and **refuge**. Use the same word or phrase for stronghold that you have used in previous passages. For more information on stronghold, look at the Master Glossary. If you have already translated these words in another book of the Bible, use the same words that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh is David's deliverer and savior. Both of these words mean someone who rescues or saves people from a difficult or dangerous situation.

Stop and discuss as a group what words you will use for **deliverer** and **savior**. You may need to use the same word in your language if you only have one word or phrase to describe someone who rescues someone else from a dangerous situation. For more information on savior, refer to the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

David says his **God** is his rock. This word for God is a general word for God. For more information on God, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for God as you used in previous passages.

David says that Yahweh is David's shield. A shield is a broad piece of wood, metal, or leather on a wooden framework that a soldier would carry to protect himself from an enemy's weapons. One side would have straps or a handle so the soldier can carry it. Use the same word or phrase for shield as you used in previous passages.

David says that Yahweh is the horn of his salvation. People would often use the word for an animal's horn to represent strength. An animal like an ox can defend itself and kill any attackers with its horns. Yahweh protects David like an animal's horn helps the animal defend itself.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word you will use for **horn** here. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh is David's salvation. Salvation is the way someone rescues a person from a dangerous or difficult situation. Whenever the Israelites were in a dangerous situation, like when enemies attacked them, the Israelites called out to God to save them. The Israelites wanted God to help them and to protect them. If God would not save the people, the people would die. In this case, this is not the same as eternal salvation, or the way that Jesus saves believers.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **salvation**. Look up salvation in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David says that Yahweh is worthy of or deserves praise. When people praise God, those people speak out loud good things about God and to God because they recognize that God is good and awesome and that God deserves great honor. People thank God for the good things he has done and the blessings he will give.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **praise**. For more information on praise, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 22:1–4

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (14611463 KB)

- [FIA Step 1](#)
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- [FIA Step 3](#)
- [FIA Step 4](#)
- [FIA Step 5](#)
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- [FIA Step 1](#)
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2 Samuel 22:5–20

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 22:5–20 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:5–20 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:5–20 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

NOTE: This passage is a song, which is Hebrew poetry. We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Module 1" before continuing with "Step 2: Setting the Stage." Stop here, if needed, and review the translation decisions your team has made regarding the translation of poetry. Pause this audio here.

David continues his song to Yahweh, whom David said everyone should praise. One reason David praises Yahweh is that Yahweh has saved David from David's enemies.

To begin this passage, David sings about a time when he was in danger and could have died. David talks about dying or death as if it were a dangerous sea or river where David could drown. David says it felt like waves and torrents, or strong streams of water, which were swirling around and overwhelming David. David also talks about death as if it were a person. David says death was like a hunter with a net who was trying to trap people, or with ropes trying to tie people up. David uses the words destruction, the grave, or Sheol to mean death. The Israelites believed Sheol was the dark place beneath the earth where both good and evil people from all nations went when they died. David is saying that something was trying to destroy and kill David!

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What do you call the place where people go after they die? What is it like? Pause this audio here.

When David was in distress or in trouble, David called out to Yahweh, David's God, for help. Though Yahweh was in his temple, Yahweh heard David. This temple is Yahweh's heavenly temple, or the place where Yahweh lives, not the temple building that people will later build on earth. David says that his cry or prayer for help came to Yahweh's ears. Yahweh does not have a body like people do, but in this time, people would sometimes use a body part to represent a person as a whole. Yahweh could hear David's voice, or the sound of David speaking.

Then David describes how Yahweh responded. Yahweh was angry at David's enemies and came to rescue David. David describes Yahweh's rescue like an earthquake, a huge fire, and a mighty storm. Yahweh can and does cause the earth to react like this when he comes to his people, just like when Yahweh spoke to the Israelites at Mount Sinai. But when Yahweh rescued David during David's life, Yahweh probably did not cause the earth and the sky to act like this. David is using special language to describe how incredible Yahweh's rescues were. It was just as amazing as if the earth shook! And it was very clear that Yahweh was the one who rescued David, so to show this, David uses words that are similar to when Yahweh appeared at Mount Sinai.

David says the earth and the foundations of the heavens shook. Here, "heavens" is another word for the sky. In those times, people believed that the sky was like a dome and that distant mountains held up the sky. Those mountains were foundations or strong, stable places that support things. But Yahweh caused even the earth and the strong foundations to shake!

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how do people talk about the sky? Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: What areas or things in nature would you describe as strong, stable, or safe areas? Tell a story about a time when you saw one of those strong things or places shake or no longer be stable, like a strong tree that fell, or a big rock that cracked or slid down a slope, or even an earthquake! How did you feel when you saw this happen? Pause this audio here.

Then David describes Yahweh's anger like a volcano or a huge fire. A volcano is a mountain that shakes and fire comes from the top of it. Big fires have smoke, flames, and burning coals, which David describes as coming from Yahweh. Again, David uses nostrils and mouth to represent Yahweh. Yahweh's anger was so strong, it was like a devouring fire, or fire that destroys things.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, pretend you are lighting a fire. Describe what you do to get the fire started. What does the fire look like when it first starts? How does it change as the fire burns hotter? Think of the biggest fire you have ever seen and describe it to each other. Discuss how amazing or terrifying the fire was. Pause this audio here.

Next, David describes Yahweh's anger like a storm. David says that Yahweh spread apart the sky like a person opens a curtain. In this time, people often described the sky as like a tent or a spread-out curtain. The dark rain clouds of the sky were like a carpet under Yahweh's feet. Though the sky and the clouds in it are huge and amazing, they are just like a curtain and a carpet for Yahweh!

Yahweh mounted or rode a cherub and caused the wind to carry Yahweh and the cherubim where Yahweh wanted to fly, just like wings help a bird fly. A cherub or several cherubim are winged creatures that guard the heavenly throne of Yahweh. The cherubim could have been pulling a chariot, or carrying Yahweh or Yahweh's throne, but it is not clear how exactly Yahweh rode the cherubim. It is not clear because Yahweh covered himself in the storm so that people could not see him. David describes Yahweh as if Yahweh were in the middle of the storm clouds, which were like Yahweh's canopy or tent covering.

Stop here and look at a picture of a cherub as a group. Pause this audio here.

But Yahweh was not completely hidden so that no one knew he was there. Yahweh's presence is so bright and beautiful that even though there were clouds hiding Yahweh from sight, there was still brightness and burning coals blazing or shining out of the clouds. Some translations say that bolts of lightning came out of the clouds. The storm could have bright lightning that struck the earth and caused fires and burning coals.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what stories do people have about times when gods appeared or were angry? How would people describe a god's power and anger? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh spoke loudly, and it sounded as loud as thunder. People would often describe God's voice like thunder. David also calls Yahweh the "Most High" here, meaning the God who is the greatest god. Yahweh sent lightning bolts like an archer shoots arrows from his bow. In those times, when people saw lightning or heard thunder, they believed that God or a god was working. Yahweh scattered and routed his enemies, which means that Yahweh destroyed those enemies.

Stop here and look at a picture of a bow and arrows as a group. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh is so powerful that he can cause the water of the seas to move, so that people can see the valleys or the deepest ground underneath the water. Some translations say the channels of the sea, which were the streams or currents at the bottom of the sea. Remember, Yahweh did this when he parted the water of the Red Sea so the Israelites could escape from the Egyptians! Yahweh can also cause the earth to move so that people can see the foundations or the deepest parts of the earth. And this is not even hard for Yahweh! Yahweh commanded the earth or water to move, and it did. It is so easy for Yahweh that he could do it with something as small as air that someone blows out of their nose. Sometimes, when people are angry, they blow air or breathe out of their nose in a strong or sharp blast of air, so people would use this phrase to describe someone who is angry.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, take some water and pour a little into a bowl or on a flat surface. Blow on the water and see how the water moves. Now imagine the biggest sea or river near you. What would happen if you blew on those waters? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh reached down and lifted David out of deep waters. Remember that David described death like dangerous waters earlier in the song, so here, these deep waters represent the danger David was in. David explains more in the next few verses and says that Yahweh rescued David from his powerful enemies and foes, who were too strong for David to defeat alone.

Those enemies had confronted or attacked David on the day of David's disaster. This was not a specific day, but rather a period of time when David was in danger. However, Yahweh was David's support, like a strong staff that David could lean on to support himself. David imagines the dangerous place David was in like being in a tight, small space that he cannot get out of. But when Yahweh rescued David, it was like Yahweh brought David into an open place where he could feel free, without enemies surrounding David. Yahweh did this because Yahweh delighted in or was pleased with David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when you were in a dangerous place, but then you went to a safe place. Describe both of those places. If someone has never been to either the dangerous or safe place, what would you compare those places to in order to show that one place was dangerous and one was safe?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:5–20 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the sections, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four sections.

In the first section: David sings about a time when David was in danger and could have died.

In the second section: David called to Yahweh, and Yahweh heard David.

In the third section: Yahweh was angry and came in a powerful way to help David. Yahweh defeated David's enemies.

In the fourth section: Yahweh saved David. Yahweh brought David into a safe place because Yahweh was pleased with David.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Yahweh
- And David's enemies

Stop here and review as a group: We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Modules 2 & 3" before continuing with "Step 3: Defining the Scenes." If your team has completed the introduction to poetry, remind one another of the special ways that poets use language. What are the most common ways that poets use language in Hebrew poems? Pause this audio here.

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

This part of the song has four sections. Pay attention to the companion phrases that David uses throughout this passage. Most of the time, in the second line of a companion phrase, David emphasizes or adds more information to what he said in the first line.

In the first section, David talks about a time or several times in the past when David was in danger of dying. David uses two sets of companion phrases. In the first two lines, David compares death to deep water that is moving quickly. In the second two lines, David compares death to a hunter with snares, or traps, and ropes who is waiting to catch someone. David also uses lots of words that mean the same or similar things. The words death, destruction, the grave, and Sheol all mean the way David could have died suddenly, because of sickness, or from enemies attacking David. The waves, torrents, ropes, and snares are all things that can capture, overwhelm, and destroy people.

Stop here and look at a picture of a snare as a group. In your language, how would you describe things that can capture, overwhelm, and destroy people? What are the different ways that you refer to death or the way a person is in danger of dying? Pause this audio here.

In the first set of companion phrases, David compares death to waves and strong currents, or movements, of water. In the first phrase, death was like waves swirling, surrounding, or encompassing David. In the companion phrase, death was like strong currents that rolled over or overwhelmed David. In the next set of phrases, David compares death to someone hunting and capturing him. In the first phrase, death was like cords or ropes that were entangling, tying up, or wrapping around David. Death was like a snare or trap that confronted or met David. David talks about death for four lines to show how dangerous this time was. David is saying that he really would have soon died because of the danger David was in.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when you were in a dangerous situation. Pay attention to the way you emphasize that this was very dangerous.

Then discuss as a group how you talk about death or dangerous situations where you could die in your language. What do you compare death or those situations to? Pause this audio here.

In the second section, David describes his response to the danger. In the first line of a companion phrase, David says he called out to Yahweh for help. In the second line, David calls Yahweh his God to again show the relationship between Yahweh and David. Then, in the next companion phrase, David shows that Yahweh heard David. In the first line, David says that Yahweh heard David's voice, or could hear David speaking. David makes this even more specific in the second line. David says that his cry or the words David was speaking came to Yahweh's ears. Yahweh could hear David just as clearly as you can hear someone clearly when they are speaking right next to your ear.

David refers to Yahweh's ear and later Yahweh's nostrils, mouth, feet, and voice as well. Sometimes in Hebrew poetry, poets use one part of something to represent the whole thing. An ear does not hear by itself. When David says Yahweh's ears, David is talking about Yahweh, who has the ability to hear David. Although Yahweh does not have a physical body, David continues to use the parts of a physical body to describe Yahweh's actions.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss whether you ever use a phrase like an ear hearing something in your language. Discuss how you want to translate the times when David talks about a part of Yahweh doing something. Since these parts represent Yahweh as a whole, you could also choose to say that Yahweh hears David's cry. Pause this audio here.

In the third section, David describes how angry Yahweh was at David's enemies. David uses special language to describe how amazing and terrifying it is when Yahweh comes to help his people. First, David describes an earthquake in three companion lines. In the original language, David used words that started with the same sound when talking about how the earth moved. David uses three different words to describe how the earth and the foundations of the sky shook. You will remember that the people in those times believed that distant mountains held up the sky. It is these foundations, or mountains, that shake.

Stop and discuss as a group what words you want to use for the way that the earth and the mountains, or the foundations of the sky, shook. Pause this audio here.

Stop and discuss as a group the following question: In the original language, David used words that started with the same sound. What are some creative ways to describe things in your language? Pause this audio here.

The next companion phrase has three lines where David describes a fire or something huge that was burning. First, there was smoke, then fire, then coals that can burn and stay hot for a long time. Notice here how David says that smoke came from Yahweh's nostrils and that fire and burning coals came from Yahweh's mouth. In the original language, people would say someone burned like a fire to say that that person was angry. David is showing that Yahweh was very angry when David says that the smoke, flames, and burning coals of a big fire came from Yahweh!

Stop and discuss as a group: In your language, how do you describe someone when they are very angry? What amazing or terrifying thing could you compare them to? Pause this audio here.

The next five pairs of lines describe how Yahweh came in the middle of a huge rain and thunderstorm. David sings about the clouds and the wind, the darkness of the rain clouds, and the thunder. Yahweh controls all these. Yahweh also controls the earth and the way it shakes, as well as fire and the way it burns. Sometimes, Yahweh causes earthquakes, fire, and storms when he is angry or when Yahweh comes to help his people. Sometimes Yahweh works in different ways. But Yahweh's anger and Yahweh's presence are as terrifying and powerful as earthquakes, fires, and storms, which is what David seems to be saying here.

David sings about how Yahweh defeated David's enemies. Yahweh is so powerful that he can destroy or defeat any enemy with just his voice. Yahweh can command the lightning to strike like arrows. Yahweh can command the water in the sea to part and the earth to open up giant cracks or holes. Whatever David was facing was impossible to escape from, just like it would be impossible to escape from the bottom of a sea or deep underground.

But it was not impossible for Yahweh! In the fourth section, David describes how Yahweh saved David. While David was in a situation that was just as dangerous as being in the deep water of the sea, Yahweh could still save David. It was like Yahweh pulled David out of those deep waters that Yahweh just parted. While David's enemies were too powerful for David to defeat, Yahweh was more powerful and supported David. Yahweh brought David to a safe place because Yahweh was pleased with David.

Stop and discuss as a group: Think of someone you are pleased with, or someone who makes you happy, like a close friend or a family member. What wonderful or good things would you do to help that person? What would you say if someone asked you why you did those things? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:5–20 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four sections.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Yahweh
- And David's enemies

As a group, act out or recite the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out or recite the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out or recite this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David sang:

"Death, like ocean waves, surrounded me;

death's flooding waters almost swallowed me.

The grave was like ropes wrapped around me;

traps that kill were around me.

When I was in danger, I called out to Yahweh.

Yes, I called out to my God for help.

He heard me from his heavenly place,

He listened to me when I called out for help."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- When I was in danger, there was nothing I could do to save myself. I was just as helpless as if I were in a deep sea and could not see the shore; or
- I remember how scared I felt when I was in danger. I needed someone to come save me; or
- Even though there were many dangerous and confusing things happening all around me, I knew that I should call out to Yahweh for help. I knew Yahweh heard me and cared for me.

Continue the drama.

David sang:

"Then the earth shook and swayed back and forth,
the foundations of the sky trembled.
They trembled because Yahweh was angry.
Yahweh breathed out smoke from his nostrils;
Yahweh spat out hot fire from his mouth,
and burning coals blazed too.
Yahweh parted the sky like a curtain and came down,
dark storm clouds were beneath his feet.
Mounted on a mighty angelic being, he flew,
soaring with the wind like a bird with its wings
He wrapped darkness around him like a tent covering—
the darkness of the rain clouds in the sky.
A great brightness shone around Yahweh,
and burning coals blazed from him.
Yahweh spoke like thunder from heaven,
the Most High God spoke and his voice was loud.
He caused the lightning to flash
and made his enemies scatter.
It was like he shot arrows
to make them run away.
The bottom of the ocean appeared,
the earth shook to its foundations
at Yahweh's commands,
at the blast of his breath."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I love David, so I am angry when people hurt or attack him. Of course I will come to defend David; or
- The people who attack David think that they can hurt and defeat David. Those people think that they and their gods are stronger than I am. I will show those people that I am a powerful God who protects his people; or
- I know what David is feeling, and I can see that he is afraid. I will show David how powerful I am so that he can trust that I will always be powerful enough to save David.

Continue the drama.

David sings:

"Yahweh reached down from high and rescued me;

He lifted me out of deep waters.

He rescued me from my powerful enemies,

from those who hated me and were too strong for me.

My enemies attacked me at a time when I was in distress,

but Yahweh supported me.

He led me to a place of safety.

He rescued me because he has been pleased with me."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I was so relieved when Yahweh saved me. I told everyone what Yahweh did and created this song to celebrate; or
- I definitely was about to die until Yahweh rescued me. The way Yahweh saved me was so amazing that I knew it was Yahweh who did this; or
- I love Yahweh and have a good relationship with him. I trust Yahweh and know that he will take care of me.

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I love David and have a good relationship with him. I can see how David trusts me, and I am happy with the way that David acts. I take care of David because I love him; or
- Though David's enemies are more powerful than David, no one is more powerful than I am.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:5–20 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David says the grave or Sheol was like a cord or a rope around David. When people in this time spoke about what happened to people after they die, they said that people went into the "grave," or "Sheol." People pictured Sheol as a place that is somewhere underneath our own world. Sometimes people use the word "Sheol" as another way to speak about death.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Sheol**. Look up Sheol in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David says death is like a trap or snare, which is an object people make to catch animals.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **snare**. Look at a picture of a snare. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David called out to **Yahweh** for help. The name Yahweh was a very personal name for God that showed the close relationship that God had with the people of Israel. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages.

David calls Yahweh his **God**. This word for God is a general word for God. For more information on God, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for God as you used in previous passages.

David says that Yahweh hears David from Yahweh's temple or sanctuary. Usually, the temple means the place on earth where people worship God, the holy place, which David's son builds. Since people have not yet built this temple, and since David later describes Yahweh coming down from where he heard David's prayer, David is referring to the place where God lives, or heaven.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **temple** or **sanctuary**. Look up temple, sanctuary, and heaven in the Master Glossary for more information. You may use any of your words for these ideas in your translation. Pause this audio here.

In this song, David uses the word **heaven** to mean the visible sky: the place where birds are flying, where we can see clouds, and where we can see stars at night. For more information on heavens or sky, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word for heavens or sky as you used in previous passages.

David says Yahweh mounted the cherubim. A cherub, or several cherubim, is a type of angel. Cherubim seem to especially guard sacred, or holy, places. So there were pictures and images of cherubim in the temple and in the tabernacle. In these pictures, the cherubim have the body of a lion, the wings of a bird, and the face of a human.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **cherub** or **cherubim**. Refer to the Master Glossary for more information about cherubim.. Pause this audio here.

David calls Yahweh the Most High, which was El-Elyon in the original language. El-Elyon means "the most high God." When people use this name for God, they remember that God is the most powerful of any being.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **Most High**. Look up El-Elyon in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh sends lightning like a person shoots **arrows**. Arrows are pointed pieces of wood that people shoot from a bow. People used bows and arrows in hunting and warfare. Use the same word or phrase for arrow as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 22:5–20

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (19129710 KB)

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2 Samuel 22:30–46

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 22:30–46 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:30–46 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:30–46 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

NOTE: This passage is a song, which is Hebrew poetry. We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Module 1" before continuing with "Step 2: Setting the Stage." Stop here, if needed, and review the translation decisions your team has made regarding the translation of poetry. Pause this audio here.

David has been singing a song to Yahweh, and he continues that song in this passage. In this passage, David sings that with Yahweh's help, David is confident that he can accomplish anything, no matter how difficult. Yahweh has shown that David can do this when Yahweh caused David to defeat his enemies and rule as king.

First, David sings about the strength and courage Yahweh gives to David so that David can fight battles. With Yahweh's help, David feels strong and courageous enough to move forward to attack a troop or a group of warriors. David feels strong enough to scale or climb over a wall. This would be important when David attacks the people in a city with a strong wall around it!

Yahweh's help is the best because Yahweh and his way of living are perfect. Everything Yahweh does is right. Yahweh's word is flawless. When David says Yahweh's word, or what Yahweh says, is flawless, David is comparing Yahweh's word to metal that people put in a fire to clean the metal from any flaws or impurities. This metal would be the strongest and one that people could depend on. David is saying that when Yahweh says he will do something, Yahweh always will do it. People can depend on Yahweh's promises.

Stop here and discuss as a group: As an activity, think of someone you know who does what they say they will do. How would you describe this person? What strong or dependable thing would you compare that person to? Pause this audio here.

Like David sang at the beginning of this song, Yahweh is like a shield. Just like a shield protects people, Yahweh protects everyone who takes refuge, or who asks Yahweh for protection. David strongly declares that the only true God is Yahweh and that Yahweh is the Rock. Yahweh protects people like a rock or a hiding place protects a person from whoever is looking for them.

Stop here and look at a picture of a shield as a group. Remind each other what words or phrases you used to talk about how Yahweh is like a shield, refuge, and rock earlier in the song. Pause this audio here.

David then sings that Yahweh is his strong refuge, or like a place where people can go to escape from danger. Some translations say instead that Yahweh makes David strong. Though David does sing about that later, David is probably singing here about how Yahweh makes David safe. Notice that David then says that Yahweh keeps David's way secure. It is like David is on a path through rough and dangerous land, but Yahweh has made the way or the direction David is walking to be secure or safe, so that David does not stumble or fall. Yahweh makes David as safe and fast as a deer, or an animal that can run and jump on steep and rocky land without falling and hurting itself. Yahweh causes David to stand securely in high places. This can mean that David is safe even when in high, dangerous places, or that David is in high places where he is safe from his enemies.

Stop here and look at a picture of a deer as a group. What is a fast animal in your area? What is an animal that lives in or is able to safely cross a dangerous area? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh trains David's hands for battle, which means Yahweh prepares David to be ready to fight. Yahweh strengthens David so that David can use his arms to bend a bronze bow. Bronze is a combination of copper and tin. A bow is a weapon that people would shoot arrows with. Usually, people make a bow by bending a piece of wood and attaching a strong string between the ends. If people use a strong piece of wood, the bow is very strong, and it becomes harder to pull the string back. If someone used a piece of bronze instead of wood, or wood covered in bronze, this bow would be very heavy and the strongest kind of bow. Only a very strong man would be able to use it! The picture of a bronze bow is probably an exaggeration to show how well Yahweh trains David for battle. David is saying that Yahweh trains and prepares David so that David can use even the strongest weapons.

Stop here and look at a picture of a wooden bow as a group. What are some strong weapons in your culture? What are some weapons that people need to practice very carefully to use? What kind of people can use these very strong or powerful weapons? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh's salvation, or the way Yahweh saves David, helps protect David like a shield. Yahweh has made David a great man because Yahweh answers David's prayers for help. Again, David sings about how Yahweh has made David's way or path safe. Yahweh provides a broad or wide path for David to use his feet to walk on. Remember how David sang earlier in the song that Yahweh brings David into an open place, which is safe. Just like that safe place, this path is not narrow between trees where enemies can hide or beside steep, dangerous cliffs. Instead, it is broad and safe.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Describe your favorite roads or paths to walk on. Why are they the best roads or paths? Now describe a bad or dangerous road. What makes that road dangerous and bad? Pause this audio here.

Because Yahweh helps David in all these ways, David completely defeated his enemies. David chased after and found his enemies. David fought his enemies until he completely destroyed or killed all his enemies. David's enemies cannot get back up and keep fighting, nor can they go home to get more soldiers for another battle. David says his enemies fall beneath his feet. In this time, people would often stand near or even on their enemy to show that they had defeated their enemy.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, how would a warrior or an army show that they had defeated their enemies? How would you describe an enemy who is no longer dangerous or powerful? Pause this audio here.

David knows that he did not defeat his enemy by himself. David sings that Yahweh gave David strength for the battle. Yahweh humbled and humiliated David's enemies when David's enemies were before or in front of David. Yahweh caused David's enemies to show their backs, or turn around and run away during the battle. Some translations say that Yahweh placed David's foot on his enemies' necks. In David's time, when someone defeated their enemy, they sometimes showed that by placing their feet on their enemies' necks. In either case, both translations mean that Yahweh caused David to win.

No one came to help David's enemies. Soldiers who lost a battle would sometimes cry out for mercy to the winning soldiers' god. But Yahweh did not answer David's enemies or help them. Instead, David beat his enemies so completely that they were as helpless or powerless as dust. David's enemies were as unimportant and trampled as the mud in the streets. David is insulting his enemies when David compares them to dust or mud. David has shamed and completely defeated his enemies.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what are some things you would compare someone to in order to insult them and say they are helpless, powerless, or unimportant? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh has delivered or rescued David from people's attacks. These people could be other people groups who attack David, or David's own people, the Israelites. Remember, there were several times during David's life when Israelites would rebel against David, including David's own son. Each time, though, Yahweh rescued David and kept David as the head or ruler of nations. As the king of Israel, David ruled over a great empire that included other people groups. David sings that, "People whom I had not known now serve me." This is another way of referring to foreigners. These people serve David, which means that David rules over them as king.

These foreigners are afraid of David. They cringe or bow down in fear and great respect before David. These people have heard that David is a powerful king. If David comes with his army to attack them, the people are sure they will lose! So, foreigners come to David to tell him that they accept David as their ruler. These people agree to obey David so that David does not come and attack their people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time in your history or a nearby nation's history when there was a powerful king that all the other nations respected and feared. How did the other nations and people groups treat that great king? How did they show that they were afraid of or respected that great king? Pause this audio here.

The foreigners have lost heart, or have withered like a plant when it is dying. People would use the word heart for the place where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen. Someone who has lost heart does not feel brave or courageous in their heart, or in the place where they feel. Similarly, someone who withers loses all courage. The foreigners are sure that David is more powerful than they are, so they come out from their strongholds, or the places where they go to hide from their enemies. The people have come out to surrender to David before David breaks into their strongholds. Yahweh really has caused David to be strong!

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:30–46 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the sections, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three sections.

In the first section: David sings that Yahweh has given David strength and has prepared David to fight.

In the second section: David sings that he is able to defeat his enemies with God's help.

In the third section: David sings that Yahweh has made David king over many nations.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Yahweh
- David's enemies
- And other nations, people groups, or foreigners.

Stop here and review as a group: We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Modules 2 & 3" before continuing with "Step 3: Defining the Scenes." If your team has completed the introduction to poetry, remind one another of the special ways that poets use language. What are the most common ways that poets use language in Hebrew poems? Pause this audio here.

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Remember all the amazing stories throughout David's life of how David defeated his enemies? David sings that it is Yahweh who enabled David to win, who saved David, and who defeated David's enemies. David is probably referencing general times in his life as well as specific stories. David also repeats things he has said earlier in his song, such as when David says Yahweh is his rock, his shield, and his refuge.

In the first section, pay attention to the way that David uses companion lines, or connects two or three lines together. In this passage, David often gives more information about the first line in the second line or third line. In the first companion phrase, David sings about two ways that Yahweh has helped David to fight. David can now attack a troop of soldiers or a city with a strong wall. David is praising Yahweh for what Yahweh has done

and telling other people what Yahweh is like. Sometimes David talks to Yahweh, and sometimes David speaks about Yahweh.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss how you want to translate the way that David talks to and about Yahweh. Discuss what you have decided to do in the earlier parts of David's song. Pause this audio here.

David explains that Yahweh is the best person to prepare David. Yahweh knows the best way to do everything, and Yahweh is always able to do what he says he will do. Notice how David says God's way is perfect and Yahweh's word, or what Yahweh says, is flawless. Perfect and flawless mean just about the same thing. David uses both God and Yahweh to refer to Yahweh. Both here and throughout this passage, David often uses several words that mean the same thing to emphasize what David is saying.

David calls Yahweh "this God." David means that Yahweh is the true God, or the God David worships. David asks two questions about Yahweh as a way of declaring something strongly. David does not expect anyone to answer his question, but if they did, they would say, "No one is God except Yahweh!" David calls Yahweh "the Rock," as if it were a name or a title. David is basically saying that Yahweh is the best rock or protector.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, pretend you are about to go to a sports game and you are speaking to your friends about how great your team is. Come up with a few different ways to strongly declare that your team is the best team! Discuss how you want to translate the way that David asks a question to strongly declare that Yahweh is the true God. Pause this audio here.

In this section of the song, David sings about many things that would be impossible if anyone tried to do these things alone. However, nothing is impossible for Yahweh! David sings, "Yahweh causes me to do these things." Yahweh caused David to do many amazing things during David's life, but here, David is not necessarily talking about a specific time when Yahweh did this. David is singing that these are things that Yahweh continually does for David!

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: As an activity, describe someone you know well. Talk about the things that person normally does or the ways that person always acts. Pause this audio here.

Throughout this section, David sings about how Yahweh makes David strong and ready for battle. David compares the dangerous times or places David was in to being in high places like a mountain or a cliff. However, Yahweh keeps David secure and safe even in the dangerous mountains. It is like David is walking on a broad path, and David's feet are as strong and sturdy as an animal that can easily climb mountains.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, what dangerous area would you compare a dangerous time or place to? How would you describe a person who could safely walk in those areas? Which of the animals that you discussed in step two could you compare that person to? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh helps or strengthens David's feet, hands, arms, and ankles. Sometimes in Hebrew poetry, people use one part of something to represent the whole thing. David's feet are not swiftly walking by themselves. When David talks about his body parts, David is talking about his whole self and focusing on which part of his body Yahweh has strengthened or helped.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss whether you ever say something like, "he trains my hands to fight," in your language. Discuss how you want to translate the times when David talks about Yahweh helping a part of David to do something. Since these parts represent David as a whole, you could also choose to say that Yahweh trains David to fight instead of "Yahweh trains David's hands." Pause this audio here.

In the second scene, David begins a new section, and he now sings about times in the past when Yahweh caused David to defeat his enemies, often in battle. David begins by saying what David did, then explains that Yahweh caused this victory. David is not telling a story and describing events in the order in which they happened. Instead, David is rejoicing in all the ways Yahweh has helped David win. David uses quite a few words to say that David beat his enemies in battle and killed them. David says he crushes, destroys, beats, pounds, and tramples his enemies. David is emphasizing that Yahweh gives power to David to completely defeat David's enemies, not just win a small battle or conflict.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss what words and phrases you will use for the different ways that David says he defeated his enemies. Pause this audio here.

David calls his enemies several names. David calls them his enemies, adversaries, and foes. These are different ways of talking about the same people, and all these words describe people who attack or are against David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss what words and phrases you will use for David's enemies. Pause this audio here.

In the last section, David sings about how Yahweh has made David king over many people. The foreigners or people from other nations do not serve Yahweh, so they do not have courage and strength like David does. Instead, these people cringe because David has forced them to serve him. These people lose heart, so they are no longer brave and come trembling from their strong places. Yahweh causes the foreigners to go to David and choose to serve and obey David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how would you describe the way that people show great respect and fear before a powerful ruler? How would you describe the way that someone is no longer brave and full of courage? Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:30–46 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three sections.

The characters in this passage are:

- David
- Yahweh
- David's enemies
- And other nations, people groups, or foreigners.

As a group, act out or recite the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out or recite the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out or recite this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

David sings:

"When you help me, I can rush forward to attack a group of soldiers;

Because you help me, I can climb over city walls.

As for the God I worship, He does everything right;

Yahweh always does what he says he will do.

No one else but Yahweh is God;
 No one except our God is the Rock who protects people.
 It is God who is my strong refuge,
 He removes barriers from my way.
 He makes me as sure-footed as a deer
 And makes me secure even when I am on high, dangerous places.
 He teaches me how to fight.
 He even enables me to be strong like someone who can bend a metal bow.
 You, Yahweh, save my life like a shield saves people;
 You made me strong by answering when I prayed to you.
 You bring me to a broad path so no one can catch me,
 And so that I won't stumble."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am amazed! Even though I can see dangerous things happening around me, Yahweh keeps me safe; or
- Yahweh is powerful and strong, and he is choosing to prepare and train me himself. I am honored. With Yahweh's help, I feel ready for anything that may happen; or
- I am so thankful that Yahweh has treated me like this! I want to sing and tell everyone about what Yahweh has done. I want other people to worship and follow Yahweh like I do!

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I ask the Israelites to live in a certain way because I know the best way to live. I am ready to help them live in this way! or
- I know David is not stronger than all of his enemies. I love David and will protect him; or
- I create people's bodies. I cause people to be strong and able to use their hands and arms to fight. I cause people to be able to use their feet and ankles to walk.

Continue the drama.

David sings:

"I chased my enemies and destroyed them;
 I did not stop until I had completely destroyed them.
 I struck my enemies and they fell; they could not get up again,
 so they died at my feet.
 You caused me to be strong for the battle,
 You made my foes bow down before me,
 You made my enemies turn around and run away.
 I destroyed those who hated me.
 They looked for someone to save them, but there was no one.

They even cried to Yahweh for help, but he did not answer them.

I smashed my enemies to dust, which the wind blows away.

More than that, I trampled on them like mud on the path."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David's enemies, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am so afraid! Even though we are stronger than David, David is defeating us! Some powerful god must be helping David; or
- I do not want to die. Maybe if I promise to do things for David's God, David's God will be happy and stop David from killing me.

Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I cause people to win or lose battles. I know that David's enemies were not acting in a right way when they attacked David. I will show this by causing David to win; or
- I want everyone to see the way that I treat people who obey and love me. I want everyone to see the way that I protect David in battle. I want everyone to worship and love me as their God.

Continue the drama.

David sings:

"You rescue me from people who attack me;

You keep me as the leader of nations.

People I don't even know now serve me.

Foreigners crouch in fear before me

As soon as they hear of me, they obey me.

They lose all their courage

and come trembling with fear out of their hiding places."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the foreigners, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I have heard stories about the amazing things David has done. If David can do all that, he can surely defeat our people in a battle. I must do something to keep David happy so he will not attack us; or
- We believe that people's gods choose if those people are powerful or strong. The god of David and his people must be very powerful; or
- I am terrified! Not even our strongest places will keep us safe from David! We must go out and beg David to let us serve him so that he will not kill us!

Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am amazed when I see leaders and people from other nations choose to come serve and obey me. I was not even planning on attacking their land; or
- I am relieved to hear that other nations are afraid and do not want to attack us. Now the Israelites can live peacefully, without being afraid; or
- Yahweh has given me an important and big job to rule over all these different peoples. I am glad that Yahweh is preparing me and giving me strength. I really need Yahweh's help to rule!

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 22:30–46 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David says that Yahweh helps him attack against **troops** or **soldiers**. Use the same word or phrase for troops or soldiers as you have used in previous passages.

David calls Yahweh his **God**. This word for God is a general word for God. For more information on God, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for God as you used in previous passages.

The name **Yahweh** was a very personal name for God that showed the close relationship that God had with the people of Israel. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages.

Yahweh's **word** is flawless, or perfect. The word of God means everything that God tells people. For more information on word, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh's word or promises as you used in previous passages.

Yahweh **shields** people or protects people like a shield does. A shield is a broad piece of wood, metal, or leather on a wooden framework that a soldier would carry to protect himself from an enemy's weapons. Use the same word or phrase for shield as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and look again at the picture of a shield, if needed. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh shields all who take **refuge** in Yahweh. A refuge is a way of escape or a place where people can go to escape from danger. To take refuge in someone means to go to someone who will help you escape from danger. Use the same word or phrase for refuge as you used in previous passages.

Yahweh makes David as fast and steady as a deer. A deer is a wild animal that lives in forests and mountains. Deer are fast and can run over rough and steep land.

Stop here and look at a picture of a deer as a group again, as needed. Discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **deer**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

With God's help, David can bend a **bronze** bow. Bronze is a combination of copper and tin. For more information on bronze, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for bronze as you used in previous passages.

A **bow** is a weapon for shooting arrows. People usually make a bow with a curved piece of wood and join the ends together with a tight string. When shooting an arrow, a person would pull the string and bend the wood. A bow that people make of bronze could be a piece of wood covered in bronze or a piece of bronze instead of the wood. This would be a very strong bow that would be hard to bend! Use the same word or phrase for bow as you used in previous passages.

Stop here and look at a picture of a bow as a group again, as needed. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh's **salvation** protects David like a shield. Salvation is the way someone rescues a person from a dangerous or difficult situation. This is not the same as eternal salvation, or the way that Jesus saves believers. For more information on salvation, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for salvation as you used in previous passages.

Some translations say that **foreigners** lose heart when they hear of David. Some translations say that foreigners wither like a dying plant when they hear about David. Use the same word or phrase for foreigners as you have used previously, and remember that foreigners is in the Master Glossary. If you choose to say that the foreigners lose heart, then remember that the heart is a muscle inside our body that keeps our blood flowing, but in the Bible, people use the word heart for the place where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen. People would feel brave or courageous in their hearts. So someone who loses heart no longer feels courage or bravery in their heart.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you want to translate the way that people lose **heart** or courage. Remember your conversation from step 3. Look up heart in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this phrase in another book of the Bible, use the same phrase that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

The foreigners come out of their **strongholds**. A stronghold is a safe place. This can either be a natural place, like a cave, or a strong place that people make, like a city with walls. Use the same word or phrase for stronghold as you used in previous passages. For more information, look up stronghold in the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 22:30–46

Audio Content

[webm zip](#) (20711628 KB)

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2 Samuel 23:1–7

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 23:1–7 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:1–7 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

NOTE: This passage is a poem. We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Module 1" before continuing with "Step 2: Setting the Stage." Stop here, if needed, and review the translation decisions your team has made regarding the translation of poetry. Pause this audio here.

In this passage, we hear David's final words. These are probably not the last words that David speaks before he dies, but David's last poem or his last declaration as king. David declares that God made David king and contrasts what God says about just rulers with what evil people deserve. David says that God has done good things for David and his family and will continue to do so.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, when a person knows they will soon die, what important things does that person try to say or do? How do other people respectfully listen or respond? Pause this audio here.

The passage begins as David explains what he will say. David will say an oracle or an inspired saying, which is a message from God. David then introduces himself in an official way. First, David says his father's name to show what family David belongs to. Remember that Yahweh has said that kings would come from the tribe of Judah. David shows that he is a valid king because he is the son of Jesse, and people will understand that David is from the tribe of Judah. Then David describes his role: David is the person that God exalted, or put in the important and high position of king. David calls God the "Most High," or the most powerful God. David also says that God anointed David. You will remember the story in 1 Samuel when Samuel anoints David as the next king of Israel. Remember that to anoint someone means to pour sweet-smelling oil on that person's head to show that God chose that person for a special purpose. Here, God chose David to be king. David calls God the God that Jacob worshiped. Jacob is the Israelites' ancestor, whom the Israelites respect and who fathered the ancestors of the 12 tribes of Israel. This is the God that the Israelites have worshiped for hundreds of years!

Finally, David says that he is the hero, or the sweet songwriter of the songs of Israel. This can mean that David is the person who sings beautiful songs in Israel or that people in Israel sang songs that David created, both of which are true. However, people often used the word song to mean strength or "strong protector," which they used to refer to God. So some translations say "the man that Israel's protector loved." God certainly loved David and enabled him to sing lovely songs of praise to celebrate the way God showed his love to David. David is showing that God is the one who has caused David to be a strong king and that God really did give this message to David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Pretend you are leaving an important message for people to repeat and share for many years. How would you describe yourself so that people would know who this message is from? How would you show that you have authority or a good reason to talk about what you say in your message? Pause this audio here.

Then David says that the Spirit of Yahweh speaks through David, or has told David what to say. The Spirit of Yahweh is the power that comes from Yahweh and gives messages to people. The Spirit has given David words to speak from Yahweh. David calls Yahweh the God that the Israelites worship, as well as the Rock of Israel or the God who protects the Israelites.

David repeats what God has said to David. God talks about what it is like when someone rules over people in a righteous way or in the right way. The right way to rule is in the fear of God, which means to show proper respect for God by doing what God wants. When someone does this, that person is as pleasant and helpful to his people as the sunlight is after rain. In that time, people often compared good rulers to the sun. God compares a righteous ruler to the light of the sunrise in the morning, when there are no clouds in the sky. The ruler is wonderful, like the way light from the sun sparkles on wet grass after rain. Just like the sun helps grass grow, the ruler helps his people in a good and beautiful way.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a leader who ruled in a fair and good way. What would you compare that leader to in order to show how wonderful and helpful they were? Pause this audio here.

David declares that David and his house, or family, are in right standing with God. David has acted like the righteous ruler that God has described. God said that only one who fears God or is under God's authority can be a good ruler. When David said earlier that God chose him to be king, David was showing that God has power and authority over David. David also knows that God is pleased with David because of how God treats David. God made an everlasting covenant, or a strong promise to David, that David's descendants would always rule as king. God clearly explained and arranged this promise and is keeping it. Because of this, David knows he can trust God to completely save David and to give David what David desires. God is bringing David's salvation to fruition or completing it so it has good results, just like God brings trees to fruition so they grow fruit!

God confirms that David is a good and just ruler when he treats David in this way. David also knows this because God treats the wicked or worthless people in a different way than how God has treated David. David says worthless men or people are like thorns. People do not use thorns for anything, and the thorns hurt people who touch them. People have to use things like an iron tool or the wooden pole of a spear to get rid of thorns. Another way to deal with these thorns is to burn the thorns where they lie on the ground. Both thorns and bad people are good for nothing, so people or Yahweh should destroy them.

Stop here and look at pictures of a spear and thorny plants as a group. What dangerous and worthless plants do you have in your area? What would you use to move those plants aside? How do you get rid of those plants? Pause this audio here.

In David's time, people often compared wicked people to thorns or weeds. In your language, what do you compare wicked or bad people to? Pause this audio here.

God has not treated David like the wicked people because David has feared God and ruled in a just way. As David nears the end of his life, he strongly declares his trust in how God will treat David's family after David dies.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the sections, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has three sections.

In the first section: David introduces himself and the poem.

In the second section: David repeats God's message about rulers who rule in the right way.

In the third section: David declares that he and his family are in right standing with God because of the good way God treats David. This is different from what wicked or worthless people deserve.

The characters in this passage are:

- David, the son of Jesse
- Yahweh, the God of Israel
- The Spirit of Yahweh
- A righteous ruler
- David's family and descendants
- And evil people

Stop here and review as a group: We recommend that your team complete the "Introduction to Poetry Modules 2 & 3" before continuing with "Step 3: Defining the Scenes." If your team has completed the introduction to poetry, remind one another of the special ways that poets use language. What are the most common ways that poets use language in Hebrew poems? Pause this audio here.

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

Like the previous passages, this is another poem or song, and David divides it into three sections. In the original language, people would often speak in different ways in poems or songs. In this poem, when David introduces himself, he speaks about himself and calls himself by his name. Then, when David talks about how God spoke

to and through him, David says, "God spoke to me." David quotes God's words, then talks about how God treated David and his family. Finally, David speaks in a general way about wicked people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, when you are singing a song or creating a poem, how do you talk about or introduce yourself? What are some different ways that people speak or sing in these songs? Pause this audio here.

It is not clear exactly when David spoke these words or to whom David said them. It was towards the end of David's life, and this is the last poem or official declaration that David made. People would remember and pay attention to this, so David chose to declare that God was the one who caused David to rule. David declares that God treated David in a good way because David had ruled in a righteous way, unlike a wicked man.

In the first section of this passage, the storyteller announces that these are the last words or poem of David. Then David speaks. David introduces himself in some companion phrases. In these pairs of lines, David both repeats himself and gives more information in each line.

First, David says that this is "the oracle of David, son of Jesse." In the second line, David repeats that this is the oracle or special message from God, to show how important this message is. It is not just something David came up with, but what God told David. In the second line, David also explains more about who David is. David is the man God exalted or chose to be king. In the next line, David says this again in a different way. God anointed David, or chose David for a special and important role. Finally, in the last line, David says that David is the one whom God loves, which is why God has anointed and exalted David. Some translations say here that David is the hero, or the sweet psalmist or songwriter of Israel. We are not sure which translation is the best, but in any case, we know that both Yahweh and the people of Israel love David, and that David writes wonderful songs about Yahweh for the Israelites to hear and sing. David is emphasizing how amazing it is that God has exalted, anointed, and loved David.

In the second section, David repeats God's message about rulers who rule in the right way. In a companion phrase, David says twice that the Spirit of Yahweh gave David words to speak to emphasize that the Spirit of Yahweh really did this. In the second line, David says the Spirit of Yahweh's words are on David's tongue. David is saying that the Spirit of Yahweh told David the words that David uses his tongue to speak.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Discuss whether you ever say something like, "His words were on my tongue," in your language. Discuss how you want to translate this here. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh, Israel's God, spoke, and the Spirit of Yahweh gave or told the words to David. David says twice that God spoke to David to emphasize that God really did speak to him. David calls God two more titles: the God that the Israelites worship and the Rock or protector of the Israelites.

Stop here and discuss as a group: David compares God to a strong rock, because God is strong and protects his people. How will you translate that God is the Rock, or protector, of Israel? Pause this audio here.

Then David quotes what God said in two companion phrases. In the first line, God talks about the ruler who rules in a right way. God explains in the second line that the right way is in the fear of God. To fear God means to treat God with deep respect and awe.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Talk about someone you respect so much that you are almost afraid of that person. What kind of descriptions do you use? Discuss what words or phrases you will use to show this deep respect. Pause this audio here.

This kind of ruler is very good and helpful to his people. David uses three companion phrases here to explain what God says. The second and third phrases take the meaning deeper or complete the thought. God says that a good ruler is like a light in the morning. In the second phrase, God deepens this thought by saying that a good ruler is like the sun on a cloudless morning. Then in the third phrase, God says that a good ruler is like the sun shining on the grass after the rain. God uses beautiful language to create a description of a good ruler. This is the end of the message from God.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how do you show that you are quoting someone else? How do you show that you have finished repeating what that person said and are now saying your own words? Discuss how you want to translate the way that David quotes God's words here. Pause this audio here.

In the third section, David first talks about how God has treated David because David has acted in the right way. To do so, David asks two questions that he does not expect anyone to answer. First, David asks if his house is in right standing with God. Here, David is really saying that he is very certain that his house, or he and his family, are in right standing with God because God made a special promise, or covenant, to David and his family. If David was ruling in the wrong way, God would not treat David in this way. Because David has seen how God is keeping his promise to David, David is sure that God will continue to keep that promise to David's descendants. In David's second question, David asks if God is causing David to prosper and giving David what he desires. David asks this because he is certain that God is doing these things.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your language, how would you show that you are very certain of something? Pause this audio here.

David says that God causes David to prosper, or God brings David's salvation and desires to fruition. If something comes to fruition, it starts to succeed and produce the results that people hoped for, just like a tree that grows fruit. David means that God is completely saving and providing for David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Tell a story about a time when someone planted and took care of a plant until it grew fruit. How would you describe someone who caused something to happen and took care of every step, just like the person who grew the plant? Pause this audio here.

David says that wicked or worthless people who do not fear God deserve something different.

David knows that these people are like thorns that people cast aside or throw away. Since thorns are prickly, people must use a strong tool or weapon, like a spear, to gather the thorns up so that people can burn them. Unlike the just ruler who is good and lovely to his people, wicked people are worthless as thorns that people burn.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:1–7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has three sections.

The characters in this passage are:

- David, the son of Jesse
- Yahweh, the God of Israel
- The Spirit of Yahweh
- A righteous ruler
- David's family and descendants
- And evil people

As a group, act out or recite the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out or recite the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out or recite this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

These are David's last words. David said:

"This is the saying of David, Jesse's son,

The oracle of the man that God exalted,

The man whom the God of Jacob chose,

The man who was the sweet songwriter of Israel.

"The Spirit of Yahweh has told me what to say;

Indeed, the Spirit of Yahweh told me the words to speak.

The God of Israel spoke;

Israel's Protector said to me:

'When a person rules over people in the right way,

When a person rules in the fear of God,

That ruler is like the sunrise on a day without clouds,

That person is like sunshine after a rain that causes the grass to grow.'"

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I know that the Israelites respect David and will listen to him. I will send my Spirit to give David the words to say so that the Israelites can know the right way to act; or
- I care about the Israelites and want their rulers to take care of the people well and rule them in the right way; or
- I do not want people to be confused or uncertain about the right way of living. I will remind them and speak to them again and again. I want people to learn this.

Continue the drama.

Then David said:

"My family is in right standing with God. I know this because

God has made an agreement with me that will last forever.

He arranged everything well, and he will never break his promise.

He always saves me and provides everything I desire.

"But wicked people are worthless like thorns, which people throw away.

But people cannot pick thorns up with their hands because thorns are dangerous.

Whoever touches thorns uses an iron tool or the shaft of a spear.

People completely burn thorns wherever thorns are."

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am amazed by the way God has treated me. God has made me king and promised good things to me. God has protected and saved me and the Israelites. God is so kind to me! or
- I want all the Israelites to know what God is like, so I will tell them how God has treated me and my family. Then the Israelites can rejoice and love God just like I do! or
- I want my descendants and other leaders to know how to rule in the right way. If they rule in the wrong way, they can hurt a lot of people and themselves!

Ask the person playing God, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I want rulers to act in a righteous way, just like I want all people to act in a right way. People who act in a wrong way hurt themselves and others, just like thorns. I do not want my people to act in that way; or
- I want to keep David's family as the rulers so that they can care for and do good for the Israelites. Eventually, one of David's descendants will rule and care for all people. I already know how I will send Jesus to be everyone's good and righteous ruler; or
- I love David and have shown him kindness and support throughout his life, even when David made mistakes or had to face difficult things.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:1-7 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David says that this is his oracle or inspired saying, which means a message from God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **oracle**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David says that God **exalted** David. To exalt someone can mean to choose someone and put them in a high or important role. Use the same word or phrase for exalt as you used in previous passages.

David says that the God of Jacob **anointed** David. To anoint someone means to pour sweet-smelling oil over that person to show that God has set this person apart for a special purpose. For more information on anointed, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for anointed or "anointed one" as you used in previous passages.

David calls Yahweh the **God** that Jacob worshiped. This word for God is a general word for God. For more information on God, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for God as you used in previous passages.

David says either that God, the Strong One of Israel, loves David very much, or that David is the beloved or sweet songwriter or psalmist of Israel.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will say this line in your translation. Pause this audio here.

The Spirit of Yahweh spoke through David. The Spirit of Yahweh is the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of Yahweh is the power that comes from Yahweh. The Spirit of Yahweh gave messages from God to people, which the people then shared with others.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **the Spirit of Yahweh**. You should not use the same term as you use for the Holy Spirit in the New Testament. However, this is the same thing as the Holy Spirit, so look up Holy Spirit in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated

"the Spirit of Yahweh" in another book of the Old Testament, use the same phrase that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh is God's personal name. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages.

David calls Yahweh the Rock of Israel, or the protector of Israel.

Stop here and discuss as a group what phrase you will use for **Rock of Israel**. Pause this audio here.

God talks about the person who rules in the **righteous** way. Someone who is righteous is behaving in the right way. God is righteous because everything that God does is right and good. Only a righteous person can have a good relationship with God. For more information on righteous, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for righteous as you used in previous passages.

God says that the righteous way to rule is in the fear of God. Here, fear of God means to have reverence, honor, and respect for God. People show this fear by obeying God because of the respect they have for God, not because they are afraid of cruelty from God.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **fear of God**. Look up fear of God in the Master Glossary for more information. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David says that his **house** is in right standing with God. People often used the word house to mean a family or family line, especially a royal family. For more information on house, refer to household in the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for house as you used in previous passages.

God has made an everlasting **covenant**, or a covenant that lasts forever, with David. A covenant is a solemn promise or agreement between two people. This is God's promise that David's house or family line will rule forever. For more information on covenant, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for covenant as you used in previous passages.

God is completing David's **salvation**, or saving David from his enemies. Salvation is the way someone rescues a person from a dangerous or difficult situation. This is not the same as eternal salvation, or the way that Jesus saves believers. For more information on salvation, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for salvation as you used in previous passages.

God is treating David differently from **wicked** or worthless people. Wicked means the same as evil. Evil is the opposite of good. When people stop obeying God, they begin to do evil actions. For more information on wicked, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for wicked as you used in previous passages.

People use an iron tool or the wooden pole of a **spear** to gather thorns. A spear is a weapon with a long wooden shaft and a pointed tip. People would either thrust or throw this weapon at other people. Use the same word or phrase for spear as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 23:1–7

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 23:8–17

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 23:8–17 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:8–17 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.

2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:8–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this section of King David's history, the storyteller takes time to remember fondly David's mighty men from throughout David's life. David specially chose and trained his mighty men. These men were a group of soldiers who took their orders directly from the king. David's mighty men consisted of two groups: the top military officers, whom David called "The Three," and the next level of important soldiers called "The Thirty."

The three top military leaders were Josheb-Basshebeth, Eleazar, and Shammah. David writes of some brave acts these mighty men have done in the past. First is Josheb-Basshebeth, who is described as a Tahkemonite. Another way to say this is Hakmonite since Josheb-Basshebeth was a descendant of a man named Hakmon. Josheb-Basshebeth is the chief, or the highest leader, of the group of three. Josheb-Basshebeth was best known for defeating 800 men during one battle with only his spear. This was a type of weapon with a wooden staff and a sharp metallic end that people used to stab other people.

Stop here and look at a picture of a spear as a group. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you rank fighting men in your culture? Tell a story of a mighty man of war from your culture. Pause this audio here.

The second man of "The Three" was Eleazar, who was the descendant of Dodai and Ahohi. Eleazar was with David fighting the Philistines at Pas Dammim. We know from this story in 1 Chronicles that Pas Dammim was most likely an area located to the west of Bethlehem toward the Philistine coast. When all the Israelite soldiers ran away in defeat, Eleazar stood strong with David and challenged the Philistines by continuing to fight. Eleazar fought so hard that his hand clung to his sword. This means Eleazar gripped the handle of the sword so firmly and for such a long time that his muscles became tense and he physically could not release his grip on the sword. Yahweh used Eleazar that day to bring a great victory to Israel. The rest of the Israelite soldiers who had run away in defeat only returned to take the weapons and valuables from the bodies of their dead enemies.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about yourself or someone else who had to work on something or do something for so long that their muscles cramped. Why did the person work so hard to keep doing that activity? Pause this audio here.

And finally, there was Shammah, the son of a man named Agee, who was a Hararite. When the Philistines came to Lehi and wanted to destroy a plot that people had planted with lentils, Shammah stood firm and did not leave his position. While all the rest of the Israelites ran away, Shammah defended the plot of lentils against the Philistines until Yahweh gave him a great victory. Lentils are the flat seeds of a small pea-like plant. People use lentils to make soup.

Stop here and look at a picture of a field of lentils and a picture of dry lentils as a group. Pause this audio here.

The storyteller now changes his focus to talk about a different event. This event happens during harvest time, which means it is a hot and dry part of the year. Three of David's 30 mighty men came to visit David while he was staying in the cave of Adullam. It is unclear whether these are the same three leaders as before or different mighty men. We know Adullam was around 20 kilometers west of Bethlehem. The Philistines had set up camp in the Valley of Rephaim and had control of Bethlehem, the city where David was from.

Stop here and look as a group at a map of Adullam, the Valley of Rephaim, and Bethlehem. Pause this audio here.

David is in the stronghold. A stronghold is a well-protected place that is high up. Here, it most likely refers to the cave David was staying in. While in the cave, David longingly wishes that he could have a drink of water from a well by the gate of the city of Bethlehem. A well is a hole in the ground where people can find water naturally. When the three men hear that David wants a drink of water, they travel to Bethlehem, break through the Philistine soldiers staying there, and bring water from the well back to David. Such an action shows that David's soldiers are completely loyal and devoted to David.

When the soldiers give the water to David, even though David really wants to drink the water, David pours the water out on the ground. David pours the water on the ground as a drink offering, or an act of worship and honor, to Yahweh. Israelites often made drink offerings like this in order to honor Yahweh. David thanks Yahweh for bringing the three men back alive and emphasizes that only Yahweh is fit to receive such a costly offering.

And so, these were only some of the great acts of David's mighty men.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:8–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: The storyteller tells us about David's mighty men.

In the second scene: Josheb-Basshebeth fights with his spear and defeats 800 men during one battle.

In the third scene: Eleazar fights beside David, and even when all the other Israelites run away, Eleazar continues to fight until Yahweh gives them victory. When the battle is over, Eleazar's hand is stuck to his sword! The other Israelites come back to gather the weapons from their dead enemies.

In the fourth scene: Shammah stands in a field of lentils. When everyone else runs away, Shammah stays fighting to protect the field against the Philistines. Yahweh gives Shammah victory.

In the fifth scene: Three mighty men visit David in the cave of Adullam. David says he longs for a drink from a well in Bethlehem, even though the Philistines currently control the city. The three men break through the Philistine soldiers and draw water from the Bethlehem well. The men bring the water back to David. David pours the water on the ground as an offering to Yahweh and says he cannot drink it because the cost of the men's lives was too high.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- David
- Josheb-Basshebeth
- Eleazar
- Shammah
- The three mighty men who visit David
- And the Philistine soldiers that David's men defeated

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

It is important to remember that the storyteller is telling about what David's men have done in the past. These are battles that have already happened long before the end of David's life.

The original language for the phrase "The Three" shows that this was a special group of three men that the audience would have known well.

The storyteller describes the next events as separate and as having happened at different times and locations.

It is important to remember that when it says Josheb-Basshebeth killed 800 men at one time, this does not mean at the same moment but during the same battle. Josheb-Basshebeth did this by killing the men with his spear.

The next person the storyteller talks about is Eleazar. When the storyteller says, "and next to him was Eleazar," he does not mean that the person was physically standing beside Josheb-Basshebeth, but rather that Eleazar was the next person the storyteller was going to talk about. Eleazar was the next officer in rank.

People knew of Eleazar for fighting with David when the other Israelite soldiers ran away. Eleazar stayed and fought against the Philistines until Yahweh caused the Israelites to win the battle. Eleazar fought so hard that his hand clung to his sword. This means Eleazar fought so hard and for so long that Eleazar's muscles were tight and he could not physically let go of his sword. The rest of the Israelite soldiers only returned to strip or take away the valuables from their dead enemies. Valuables could include weapons, armor, or money. This does not mean that they took off all the clothes of the dead soldiers.

Stop here and discuss as a group how you will describe how Eleazar's hand stuck to his sword. Pause this audio here.

Now the storyteller starts his description of Shammah in the same way he started his description of Eleazar. Shammah fought against the Philistines in Lehi. After all the other Israelites ran away, Shammah stayed and defended the field of lentils. Shammah fought against the Philistines until Yahweh gave Shammah the victory.

The storyteller then tells of David staying in the cave of Adullah at harvest time. During this time, the Philistines had an outpost, or a group of soldiers, in Bethlehem. This means the Philistine soldiers stayed in and had control of the city. Three of David's larger group of 30 mighty men visit David and hear him say, "Oh, that someone would give me water to drink from the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate!" It is important to remember that David was not asking for someone to get water from the well, but David was saying that he wanted that water even though it was not possible at that time. We do not know if these are the same three mighty men that we have already heard about, or different men.

The three soldiers decide to get the water for David. The men walk the 20 kilometers from the cave to Bethlehem, break through the Philistine soldiers stationed at Bethlehem, draw water from the well, and bring it to David. The three soldiers probably did not actually fight against the Philistine soldiers. The three mighty men most likely were able to sneak past the soldiers at night to reach the well. It is important to remember that the well or cistern was a place where people could get water that collected naturally.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you describe how the three mighty men were able to sneak past the soldiers to get to the well? Pause this audio here.

The soldiers arrive back at the cave with the water for David. When David receives the water, David pours it out on the ground as an offering to Yahweh. David asks, "Shall I drink the blood of the men who went at the risk of their lives?" David is not actually asking if he should drink the blood of his soldiers. Instead, David feels he is not worthy that his soldiers should risk their lives for David's desires. Only Yahweh is worthy of the men risking their lives.

Stop here and discuss as a group: In many cultures, David's actions may seem rude or ungrateful. However, in David's context, David is showing that he did not feel worthy of the men risking their lives for David. How will you accurately translate David's actions? Pause this audio here.

The storyteller clearly finishes this part of the story of David's mighty men by simply stating, "These were the actions of the three mighty men." You will remember that David had more than three mighty men, but these were the three leaders of the mighty men.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:8-17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- David
- Josheb-Basshebeth
- Eleazar
- Shammah
- The three mighty men who visit David
- And the Philistine soldiers that David's men defeat

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out the storyteller telling us about David's mighty men. The storyteller thinks of three men first: Josheb-Basshebeth, Eleazar, and Shammah.

Act out Josheb-Basshebeth fighting soldiers with his spear. By the time Josheb-Basshebeth has finished fighting, he has killed 800 men.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Josheb-Basshebeth, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I cannot believe it. I cannot believe Yahweh allowed me to kill so many men with my own spear! or
- I am proud to fight for David! All glory to Yahweh! or
- I am tired. I do not want to see a battle for many days now.

Continue the drama.

Act out Eleazar fighting the Philistines beside David when the rest of the Israelites have run away. Eleazar continues fighting with David until Yahweh gives them victory. When Eleazar finishes, his hand is stuck to his sword! The other Israelites only come back to take the valuables from the dead soldiers.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I remember how it was to fight at Eleazar's side! Eleazar made me proud.; or
- It is true, Yahweh honors the brave people who trust in his name! or
- I am humbled that Yahweh put such brave men by my side during my time as king.

Continue the drama.

Act out Shammah fighting the Philistines in Lehi. Shammah holds his position and defends a plot of lentils even when everyone else runs away. Yahweh gives Shammah a great victory.

Act out David staying in a cave while the Philistine soldiers have control of the valley and of Bethlehem. Three mighty men come to visit David and hear him say he longs for a drink from the well next to the gate in Bethlehem. The three men break through the Philistine soldiers in Bethlehem to draw water from the well and bring it back to David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the mighty men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- We must get David a drink of water from Bethlehem! or
- It does not matter how dangerous it is. We want our king to have that water! or
- I am determined to bring a taste of home back to David.

Continue the drama.

Act out David pouring out the water that the men give him on the ground as an offering to Yahweh. David says he is not worthy that the men should risk their lives for David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I would love to drink that water, but I am not worthy of their sacrifice; or
- I want to discourage anyone else from trying to please me at the cost of their life; or
- I feel that my soldiers love me, but only Yahweh deserves to be honored in this way!

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:8-17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The storyteller begins this section by naming David's mighty men, or strong warriors. These mighty men are a group of soldiers whom David especially chose and trained. The mighty men were exceptionally strong. These men reported directly to the king and did special assignments for him.

Stop here and discuss again as a group: This is a special group of brave warriors, or mighty men. How will you describe these **mighty men**? You have already translated this phrase in 2 Samuel 20:7, so use the same words here. Pause this audio here.

Josheb-Basshebeth, the chief of the mighty men, fights with his spear and defeats 800 men during one battle. In this case, "chief" does not mean that Josheb was the leader of the mighty men, but rather that he was part of an elite or specially trained group of soldiers who reported directly to the king.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **chief**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

A **spear** refers to a weapon that has a wooden shaft and a metallic, sharp end that soldiers used to stab people. Be sure to use the same word or phrase for spear that you have used in previous passages.

Stop here and look at a picture of a spear as a group. Pause this audio here.

Eleazar was a mighty man who stayed and fought against the Philistines with David when the rest of the men of **Israel** fled. Eleazar's hand stuck to his **sword**. Here, the men of Israel refer to the rest of the army or the fighting men of Israel. Use the same words or phrases for Israel and sword as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

For both Eleazar and Shammah, David says **Yahweh** gave them a great victory. Yahweh is the personal name of the God of Israel. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

Three of the mighty men visit David when he is staying in the **stronghold**, or, in this case, the cave of Adullah. Here, stronghold refers to an area in the wilderness that is safe. In this case, this was a cave near Adullah. Use the same word or phrase for stronghold as you used in previous passages. For more information on stronghold, refer to the Master Glossary.

The Philistines were in their **outpost**, or army base. This is a special camp where an army stays together in temporary tents to prepare for battle. Use the same word or phrase for outpost or army base as you have used previously.

When David's soldiers bring him the water from the **well** in Bethlehem, David asks, "Should I drink the **blood** of the men who went even though their lives were in danger?" Here, blood does not refer to actual blood. This is special language that refers to the soldiers' lives. If you use the word for blood here, use the same word or phrase for blood as you used in previous passages. For more information on blood, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for well as you have used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 23:8–17

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 23:18–23

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 23:18–23 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:18–23 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:18–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

The storyteller continues to remember David's mighty men. As you remember, David especially chose and trained these soldiers, and they reported directly to the king. David's mighty men consisted of two groups: the top military officers, whom David called "The Three," and the next level of important soldiers called "The Thirty." Now, the storyteller tells some stories about men from "The Thirty."

First, the storyteller mentions Abishai, who was the brother of Joab and the son of Zeruiah. If you remember, Zeruiah was David's sister, so Joab and Abishai were David's nephews. People knew both Abishai and Joab as skilled fighters. We know from previous passages that Joab was the commander of the Israelite army, but here, besides being the brother of Abishai, the storyteller does not mention Joab as part of David's mighty men.

Because the words for "The Three" and "The Thirty" are very similar in the original language, it is hard to know what Abishai's position was among "The Thirty." It is clear that people considered Abishai the most famous among the mighty men and that the other men regarded Abishai as a leader. Abishai was just as well-known as "The Three," though people did not consider Abishai one of the three main leaders of the mighty men. One reason people knew Abishai so well is that he killed 300 men during one battle just by using his spear. Abishai then proudly waved around his spear to celebrate his victory. As you remember, a spear was a weapon with a wooden shaft and a sharp metallic end that soldiers used to stab people.

Stop here and look at a picture of a spear as a group. Pause this audio here.

Next, the storyteller remembers Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, who came from the city of Kabzeel. Kabzeel was in the southern part of the territory of Judah. Benaiah was a valiant or very brave man who did many heroic acts. One thing people remembered Benaiah for was killing two very strong champion fighters from the kingdom of Moab, one of Israel's enemies. Another one of Benaiah's brave acts was when he killed a lion in a pit or deep well. It was very cold, and snow, or cold white flakes of frozen water, had fallen from the sky like rain. Most likely, the snow made the lion go closer to the town in search of food. Since lions are large, dangerous hunters with sharp teeth and claws, it was very impressive that Benaiah could kill such an animal.

Stop here and look at a picture of some snow and a lion as a group. Tell a story of someone who did something brave to help the community. Pause this audio here.

Benaiah was also famous for killing a very large and probably handsome Egyptian man from the kingdom of Egypt. While the Egyptian man used a spear, Benaiah fought him with only a staff or a wooden rod. While Benaiah was fighting the man, Benaiah managed to take the Egyptian's spear away from him and kill him with his own weapon. Acts such as these won a name for Benaiah. This means these acts made Benaiah famous, and people knew him just as well as they knew "The Three." The storyteller once again emphasizes that although people considered Benaiah famous among "The Thirty" mighty men, Benaiah was not a part of "The Three." David says that he put Benaiah in charge of his bodyguard. Benaiah is the same soldier the storyteller

mentioned in an earlier passage, who was in charge of David's royal bodyguard, the Kerethites and Pelethites, the special group of soldiers who personally guarded King David.

In the next passage, the storyteller will list the rest of David's mighty men.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:18–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: The storyteller fondly remembers David's mighty men.

In the second scene: Abishai fights against and kills 300 men in one battle using only his spear. People see Abishai as a leader amongst the 30 mighty men.

In the third scene: Benaiah does several amazing things. First, Benaiah fights against and kills two great fighters from Moab. Then Benaiah finds a lion caught in a pit in the snow. Benaiah kills the lion. Finally, Benaiah fights against a great Egyptian man. Even though Benaiah only fights with a staff, he takes the spear from the Egyptian man and kills him with his own weapon.

In the fourth scene: All of the 30 mighty men cheer for Benaiah and David makes Benaiah the leader of David's bodyguard.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Abishai
- Benaiah
- The 30 Mighty Men
- 300 enemies
- Two Moab fighters
- A lion
- And the great Egyptian man

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

It is important to remember that the storyteller is telling about events from the past. These are battles that have already happened long before the end of David's life.

The original language makes it clear that this is a new part of the story about David's mighty men. The storyteller tells about Abishai. Abishai was Joab's brother, and both men were the sons of Zeruiah. It is important to remember that Zeruiah was David's sister. David sees Abishai as the leader of the 30 mighty men. This is different from "The Three" who were separate leaders of the mighty men.

Abishai killed 300 men at one time with his spear. It is important to remember that Abishai did not kill all of these men at the same moment but during the same battle.

Abishai wins or has a name for himself because he defeats the men. When someone wins a name, that person becomes famous because of what he does.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you say that Abishai became famous, and that everyone knew who Abishai was? Pause this audio here.

The storyteller remembers Benaiah and his different brave deeds, or mighty acts.

Stop here and discuss with your group: Remember the story you told in the previous step about a person who did something brave to help his community. How would you describe what that person did? How will you describe that Benaiah did "mighty or brave actions"? Pause this audio here.

The storyteller describes Benaiah as a brave man. First, Benaiah fought against and killed the two "Ariels" of Moab. Scholars translate "Ariel" as "Lion of God" and think this means they were champion fighters in Moab. It may be clearer to say that Benaiah killed the two best fighters in the land of Moab. The Moabites were enemies of the Israelites.

Next, Benaiah finds a lion in a well near a village in the snow. Benaiah fights the lion and kills it.

Finally, Benaiah fights against a large Egyptian man, or a man from Egypt, who has a spear. Some scholars believe that the Egyptian man was also very handsome. In any case, the Egyptian man is very strong. Benaiah only has a wooden staff, but he manages to take the spear from the Egyptian man and kill him with his own weapon. It is important to remember that the spear was a better weapon, but Benaiah still managed to win the fight.

Stop here and look at a picture of a spear and a picture of a wooden staff as a group. Pause this audio here.

The 30 mighty men honor Benaiah, and David puts Benaiah in charge of his bodyguard, or the special group of men who protect David.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:18–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- King David
- Abishai
- Benaiah
- The 30 Mighty Men
- 300 enemies
- Two Moab fighters
- A lion
- And the great Egyptian man

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out the storyteller telling about David's mighty men. The storyteller tells about Abishai fighting against and killing 300 men in one battle using only his spear. The 30 mighty men see Abishai as their leader.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the 30 mighty men, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am impressed that Abishai could kill so many men at one time! or
- I am encouraged. It is clear Yahweh is on our side and that he fights with us; or
- I am challenged. I want to be as skilled as Abishai at fighting.

Continue the drama.

Act out Benaiah doing several amazing things. First, Benaiah fights against and kills two great fighters from Moab. Then Benaiah finds a lion caught in a pit in the snow. Benaiah kills the lion.

Act out Benaiah fighting against a great Egyptian man. Benaiah approaches the Egyptian with only a staff.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Benaiah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- It does not matter how big this man is! I am fighting for King David and Yahweh, and I will win; or
- I will not let my king down; or
- I am confident I can do anything with Yahweh on my side.

Continue the drama.

Act out Benaiah fighting the Egyptian, taking the man's spear, and killing him with his own weapon. Act out all of the 30 mighty men cheering for or honoring Benaiah. David makes Benaiah the commander of David's bodyguard.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing King David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- Benaiah deserves this position; or
- I feel safe and confident with Benaiah leading my bodyguard; or
- I can see how Yahweh is using Benaiah to encourage the other mighty men.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:18–23 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Use the same words or phrases for the titles of "**The Three**" and "**The Thirty**" mighty warriors as you used in previous passages. Remember that scholars are not sure at times if the original language says "three" or "thirty" in this passage. You may want to follow what the translation you listen to says.

Abishai killed 300 men at one time with a **spear**. Be sure to use the same word for spear that you used in previous passages.

Stop here and look at a picture of a spear as a group. Pause this audio here.

Abishai also becomes the **commander** of the mighty men, which means he was their military leader. Be sure to translate commander in the same way as previous passages.

Benaiah killed two warriors from **Moab** and a strong man from **Egypt**. Use the same words for the kingdoms of Moab and Egypt as you have used in previous passages.

Benaiah killed a lion in a snowy pit. Snow is frozen water that looks like cold white flakes that fall from the sky like rain.

Stop here and look at a picture of snow as a group. Discuss what word you will use for **snow**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

A **lion** is a large, dangerous animal that hunts other animals. Lions have sharp teeth and claws. Be sure to use the same word for lion that you used in previous passages.

Stop here and look at a picture of a lion as a group. Pause this audio here.

Benaiah also struck down, or killed, two great fighters from Moab and a large Egyptian man. Benaiah had only a club, or a big stick, when he fought against the man from Egypt.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **club** or **big stick**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

David put Benaiah in charge of his bodyguard. A bodyguard refers to a group of soldiers who personally protected King David.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **bodyguard**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 23:18–23

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 23:24–39

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 23:24–39 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:24–39 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.

5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:24–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

The storyteller has been giving us information about David's mighty men. As you remember, David's mighty men consisted of two groups: the top military officers, whom David called "The Three," and the next level of important soldiers called "The Thirty." Now, the storyteller will name these mighty men.

It is important to note that the names of the mighty men who were a part of "The Thirty" changed throughout David's reign as men died and David replaced them. There were even mighty men, such as Asahel, who were a part of this group much earlier and died before David was king.

In the list, David names each man and then gives a description of that man's father or the town or region where the man was from. We do not know all the details about each of the places the men are from. These are the names of David's mighty men:

- Asahel, the brother of Joab: As you remember, Abner killed Asahel after Asahel continued to pursue and attack Abner.
- Elhanan, son of Dodo from the city of Bethlehem: Bethlehem was a city located in the hill country of Judah. Bethlehem was also the hometown of David.
- Shammah, the Harodite.
- Elikai, the Harodite.
- Helez, the Paltite.
- Ira, son of Ikkesh from the city of Tekoa.
- Abiezer, from the city of Anathoth.
- Sibbekai, the Hushathite: Sibbekai is most likely a different name for Sibbecai, who people knew for killing the giant Saph.
- Zalmon, the Ahohite.
- Maharai, the Netophathite.
- Heled, son of Baanah the Netophathite: Both Maharai and Heled were Netophathites, which means they were from Netophah, a city close to Bethlehem.
- Ithai, son of Ribai from Gibeah in Benjamin: Gibeah was a city in the territory of Benjamin near the border of Judah.
- Benaiah, the Pirathonite: Pirathonite means a person from the town of Pirathon, which was located in the territory of Ephraim.
- Hiddai, from the ravines of Gaash: The ravines, or brooks of Gaash, refer to a body of water that flows continuously. These brooks were located at the base of Mount Gaash, southwest of Shechem.
- Abi-Albon, the Arbathite.
- Azmaveth, the Barhumite.
- Eliahba, the Shaalbonite: The Shaalbonites were a people group who lived in the town of Shaalbim, which was located in the territory of Dan.
- The sons of Jashen.
- Jonathan, son of Shammah the Hararite.
- Ahiam, son of Sharar the Hararite.
- Eliphelet, son of Ahasbai the Maakathite: Eliphelet was from Maakah, which was a Syrian, or non-Israelite, kingdom located southwest of Mount Hermon.
- Eliam, son of Ahithophel the Gilonite.
- Hezro, the Carmelite: Carmelite refers to someone from the city of Carmel, which was located in Judah's territory.
- Paarai, the Arbite: Arbite likely refers to Paarai being from Arba, otherwise known as the city of Hebron.

- Igal, son of Nathan from Zobah: Zobah refers to a foreign, or non-Israelite, nation to the north of Israel.
- Bani the Gadite or the son of Hagri: Gadite means that Bani was from somewhere in the territory of Gad.
- Zelek, the Ammonite: Zelek was from Ammon, or a non-Israelite territory between the Jabbok River in the north and the Arnon River in the south, and from the Jordan River in the west to the eastern desert region.
- Naharai, the Beerothite, the armor-bearer of Joab son of Zeruiah: Beeroth was originally a Gibeonite, or foreign city that Joshua assigned to the territory of Benjamin. Naharai was an armor-bearer, which means he carried extra weapons for Joab, who was the commander of the Israelite army. As you remember, Zeruiah was David's sister.
- Ira, the Ithrite.
- Gareb, the Ithrite: Ira and Gareb were Ithrites and from the city of Jattir. This city was located in the territory of Judah.
- Uriah, the Hittite: As you remember, Uriah was the husband of Bathsheeba and a soldier of David. Uriah died in battle after David ordered Joab to put Uriah where the battle was worst.

Not all of David's mighty men were Israelites. David included many foreigners whom he most likely picked up when he was running away from Saul before David became king.

In this list, David names 32 different men who were a part of "The Thirty," since the sons of Jashen probably refers to at least two men. Added together with "The Three," as well as the names of Abishai and Benaiah, there are 37 men total. As you remember, "The Three" referred to Josheb-Basshebeth, Eleazar, and Shammah, who were David's top three military officers. Abishai was Joab's brother, and many people considered Abishai to be the most famous of the mighty men. Benaiah was also a famous mighty man known for killing two skilled fighters of Moab and a lion.

As we can see by the number of men on the list, the storyteller emphasizes how many good relationships David had throughout his lifetime and how loyal those soldiers were to David.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do you remember lists of names in your culture? When have you heard a list of names similar to this before? Who is in the list? What format is the list in? Why do people have these kinds of lists?

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:24–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has one scene.

In the first scene: The storyteller tells us the names of his mighty men. The storyteller says there are 37 men in total.

The characters in this passage are:

- The storyteller
- And 37 mighty men

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

It is important to remember that David's mighty men consisted of two groups: the top military officers, whom David called "The Three," and the next level of important soldiers called "The Thirty."

It is important to note that the number 37 comes from including the names on the list, plus "The Three," plus the names of Abishai and Benaiah. When the storyteller mentions there are 30 names, it is important to remember that this is not an exact number because the number of men changed throughout David's lifetime.

This list of David's mighty men is different at times from the 1 Chronicles 11:26–47 list of mighty men. Many times, storytellers were from different areas, and they may have pronounced or said names differently. It is also possible that there may have been a mistake in the way one person wrote down the names. In any case, the translators should keep the same names and differences between the two lists. As in any list of names, there will always be differences between different people who write the names down.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: It is important to note the differences between this list of mighty men here and the list of David's mighty men in 1 Chronicles 11:26–41. Discuss with your translation team how you will handle these differences to keep both consistency and accuracy in the list. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Many cultures use songs, poetry, or art to remember long lists of information. Other times, it can be helpful to group certain names together based on where the people were from or who they were related to. Talk to your group about how you will organize, sing, or draw the list of names to best remember them. Pause this audio here.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:24–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has one scene.

The characters in this passage are:

- The storyteller
- And 37 mighty men

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out the storyteller standing and reciting the names of David's mighty men. The storyteller says there are 37 in total.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the storyteller, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- David had many good memories of all of his loyal friends; or
- I am thankful Yahweh provided so many men who stayed by David's side and believed in David; or
- I am sure David missed the mighty men who died.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 23:24–39 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

The storyteller gives the names of "**The Thirty**," or the group of mighty men whom the king specially chose, trained well, and to whom he gave direct orders. Be sure to use the same word or phrase for "The Thirty" as you used in previous passages.

The storyteller refers to Naharai as **the armor-bearer** of Joab. As you remember, Joab was the commander of the entire army of Israel. An armor-bearer was a servant who carried weapons and went into battle with their commander. People chose armor-bearers for their bravery, and armor-bearers were responsible for protecting the commanders they served. Be sure to use the same word or phrase for armor-bearer as you used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 23:24–39

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 24:1–9

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 24:1–9 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:1–9 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last passage, the storyteller listed the names of his mighty men. Now the storyteller tells of a separate event that happened when David decided to take a census of the Israelites.

The storyteller begins by saying Yahweh's anger burned hot again. Yahweh is angry a second time. You will remember the story in chapter 21 when Yahweh was angry with Israel and caused a famine in the land. In this case, we do not know what causes Yahweh to be angry with his people.

Because of Yahweh's anger, Yahweh causes David to bring trouble on the people of Israel. Yahweh tells David to "Go and take a census of Israel and Judah." In 1 Chronicles 21:1–6, the storyteller says it was Satan who caused David to take the census. Since we know Yahweh has power over all supernatural and human forces, it appears Yahweh uses Satan to tempt David to act foolishly as a way for Yahweh to bring judgement on his people. The way David brings trouble on his people is by ordering his army commanders to number, or take a census, of the fighting men in Israel and Judah. As you remember, there were two main areas in the kingdom of Israel. People called the southern part where the tribe of Judah lived, "Judah." People called the northern part "Israel," and this part included the territories of all the other tribes.

Stop here as a group and look at a map of Israel that shows the areas of Judah and all the rest of Israel. Pause this audio here.

It is unclear why Yahweh considered counting the number of fighting men in the kingdom wrong. One possibility is that in Middle Eastern culture, the people saw taking a census as dangerous and likely to bring divine anger. Another reason could be that David was not following Yahweh's specific instructions to Moses for taking a census. In any case, David was not acting rightly and most likely acting from pride instead of trust in Yahweh. The choice to take a census brings Yahweh's judgment on the people.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: How do people react in your culture when leaders want to take a census or count people? Pause this audio here.

David calls Joab, the commander of Israel's army, as well as the other army commanders who were under Joab's authority. David orders the commanders to go from Dan to Beersheba and count all of the eligible fighting men in Israel and Judah. This means Joab would only count men who were physically able to serve in the military. From Dan to Beersheba was another way to say, "Go through all of Israel from one end to the other," since Dan was located in the far north and Beersheba was located in the far south.

Stop here and look as a group at a map of the kingdom of Israel to see where the areas of Judah, Dan, and Beersheba are located. Pause this audio here.

Joab replies respectfully to King David, though he does not agree with David. Joab tells David he hopes Yahweh, David's God, allows David to see his army multiply a hundred times over, or to grow larger. But Joab questions David's desire to take the census when Joab asks why David would do such a thing.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story about a time when someone in your culture disagreed with a leader and told them that they disagreed. Pause this audio here.

But King David's word prevailed, which means David did not change his mind, and David's command remained firm. So, Joab and his commanders left the king and followed David's order to begin counting the fighting men of Israel.

The exact route Joab took to number the Israelites is unclear. But we do know that Joab counted all of the fighting Israelite men in each place that he visited. Joab and the commanders crossed the Jordan River first, which means they were traveling from west to east. The men camped on the south of the city of Aroer, which is in the middle of the Valley of Gad. From there, the men traveled north to Jazer and through the territory of Gilead. It is unclear what location the narrator meant when he says they traveled to the land of Tahtim Hodshi. This most likely refers to Kadesh, a city located in the land of the Hittites. This area lies at the foot of Mount

Hermon. Afterwards, the men traveled further north to Dan. The men then continued their route and began heading back west toward Sidon.

Stop here and look as a group at a map of the kingdom of Israel to see Joab's route through the Jordan River, Aroer, Gad, Jazer, Gilead, Kadesh, Dan, and Sidon. Tell a story about a time when you had to follow a route through several places. Pause this audio here.

Sidon and Tyre were non-Israelite cities on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Tyre was a fortress, which means it was a heavily protected city. It seems Joab and his soldiers passed through many non-Israelite cities that belonged to the Hivites and Canaanites during their return home as they traveled south. Since there were probably Israelites living in these cities, Joab would have needed to count them for the census as well. Finally, Joab heads toward Negev, or the southern wilderness of Judah, where Beersheba was located. The men ended the census in Beersheba before they returned to David in Jerusalem to report the results of the census.

Stop here and look at a map of the kingdom of Israel to see Joab's return route through Sidon, Tyre, and Beersheba as a group. Pause this audio here.

It took Joab and his men 9 months and 20 days, or around 290 days, to complete their route through the territory of Israel and Judah. Joab reported 800,000 fighting men, or men who could handle a sword, in Israel and 500,000 fighting men in Judah.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: Yahweh is angry with Israel. David decides to take a census of Israel's fighting men.

In the second scene: David calls in Joab and his military commanders. David orders the commanders to take a census of all the fighting men in Israel and Judah, from Dan to Beersheba. David wants to know how many fighting men there are. Joab respectfully disagrees with David. Joab says he hopes David will see Yahweh make David's army larger, but Joab asks David why he would want to do such a thing.

In the third scene: David insists on the census. Joab and the commanders leave David and go to take the census. Joab and the commanders take a circular route through Israel traveling as far north as Sidon and as far south as Beersheba before returning to Jerusalem. The journey takes them 9 months and 20 days. Joab and the commanders count all of the fighting men in all the land of Israel and Judah.

In the fourth scene: Joab reports the census numbers to David. There were 800,000 fighting men in Israel and 500,000 fighting men in Judah.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- David
- Joab
- The commanders of David's army
- And the fighting men of Israel and Judah

You may want to stop here and listen to your translation of 1 Chronicles 21:1–6, if you have already translated that passage. The story in 1 Chronicles is similar to the story here. Pause this audio here.

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

The phrase "Yahweh's anger was kindled" is special language that means Yahweh became very angry in the same way that a fire starts to burn. Yahweh tells David, "Go and take a census of Israel and Judah." It is important to note that in the parallel passage of 1 Chronicles 21:1-6, it is Satan who influences David to take the census. Since we know Yahweh has power over all supernatural and human forces, it appears Yahweh uses both Satan and David to bring judgement on the people of Israel. As you know, Judah was a large tribe and territory in the south of the kingdom of Israel.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How will you talk about Yahweh's anger burning like a fire against the people of Israel, and therefore Yahweh causes David to take a census of his soldiers, or fighting men? Pause this audio here.

David calls for Joab and his commanders and orders them to count all of the fighting men in Judah and Israel, "from Dan to Beersheba." It is important to remember that "from Dan to Beersheba" was another way to say from one end of the land to the other, or all of the kingdom. This is because Dan was located in the far north, and Beersheba was located in the far south.

Joab respectfully disagrees with King David. Joab calls David "my lord or master, the king" as a way to show respect to David as a higher authority. Joab says he hopes David will live long enough to see Yahweh multiply David's army a hundred times over. Joab does not actually want Yahweh to multiply the current number of soldiers by 100, but rather Joab hopes Yahweh will make David's army much larger. Though Joab says "people," Joab is referring to army soldiers since that is whom he is about to count.

Joab then asks David why he is happy to do such a thing. Joab does not expect David to answer his question. Instead, Joab asks David why David wants to do this thing as a way to tell David that Joab thinks David is doing a wrong thing.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How can you make it clear in your language that Joab does not agree with what David is doing? Pause this audio here.

It is important to note that when Joab says, "May Yahweh, your God...," Joab is emphasizing David's responsibility to Yahweh. Joab knows that David is not following Yahweh's commands about taking a census.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: Remember the story you told earlier about a time when someone in your culture disagreed with a leader and told the leader that they disagreed. What phrases do you use to ensure you are respectful when you disagree? Pause this audio here.

Joab and the commanders "go out from the presence of the king," or leave David's side. The commanders most likely prepare for their trip and then leave to count the fighting men of Israel.

Joab traveled east first, then north, then west, and then south. Joab and the commanders cross the Jordan River and head east to start their journey, starting in Aroer, which was in the middle of a dry valley in the territory of Gad. Then they head north to Jazar, the region of Gilead, Kadesh, and finally they head west and go as far north as Sidon on the coast. From Sidon, the men travel south to Tyre and pass through many other non-Israelite cities that belonged to the Hittites and Canaanites. Finally, they travel as far south as Beersheba in the southern wilderness of Judah.

Stop here and look as a group at a map of the kingdom of Israel to see Joab's entire route to take the census. Describe how Joab went from one town to the other. Notice which words your group used for the directions that Joab went. You could even draw the map on the ground, and then point to or walk from place to place following Joab's journey. Pause this audio here.

Joab's journey lasted 9 months and 20 days. This was around 290 days total.

Stop here and discuss as a group: How do you count months in your culture? Pause this audio here.

Joab and the commanders travel back to Jerusalem to report the census numbers to King David. Joab says the Israelite fighting men totaled 800,000, and the fighting men in Judah totaled 500,000. Remember, these were men who were physically able to go to war. The men Joab counted would have been brave, capable of fighting in a war, and able to handle a sword well.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- David
- Joab
- The commanders of David's army
- And the fighting men of Israel and Judah

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out Yahweh being angry with Israel. Then act out David having the idea to take a census of the fighting men in Israel and Judah.

Act out David asking Joab and the other army commanders to talk with David. David tells the men to go through all the tribes of Israel, from Dan to Beersheba, to number the fighting men of Israel and Judah.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Joab, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- This does not sound right. Is this something Yahweh wants for Israel, or is it just what David wants? or
- How do I discourage David from doing this? There is no reason to count the people. We know Yahweh will give us victory, no matter how many men we have; or
- I must say something to get David to change his mind.

Continue the drama.

Act out Joab respectfully disagreeing with David. Joab says he hopes David will see Yahweh, his God, make David's army larger, but Joab asks David why he would want to do such a thing. Act out David refusing to change his mind. David insists the men go out and take the census.

Act out Joab and the commanders leaving David and, after some time, leaving to take the census. Joab and the commanders go throughout all of Israel. The men travel as far north as Sidon and as far south as Beersheba before they return to Jerusalem. The journey takes the men 9 months and 20 days. Joab and the commanders counted all of the fighting men in all the land of Israel and Judah.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing the army commanders, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel tired. That took longer than we thought it would; or
- I feel surprised. We have more people than I thought. I hope this was worth it to David; or
- I respect Joab. Joab is a good leader who followed David's orders even though he did not agree with them.

Continue the drama.

Joab reports the census numbers to David. Joab tells David there are 800,000 fighting men in Israel and 500,000 fighting men in Judah.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel proud. Israel has really grown during my reign as king; or
- I feel secure. With this number of people, we can defeat anyone! or
- Joab took a long time! I was beginning to worry something had happened to Joab.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:1–9 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

You may want to stop here and listen to your translation of 1 Chronicles 21:1–6, if you have already translated that passage. Pay attention to the words and phrases you used in that passage. The story in 1 Chronicles is similar to the story here. Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Once more, **Yahweh**'s anger is kindled against Israel. Yahweh is the personal name of the one true God of the Israelites. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

When someone's anger is kindled, it means something or someone has made that person very angry. In this case, we do not know what exactly makes Yahweh angry, only that **Israel** is responsible. Be sure to use the same word or phrase for "anger was kindled" as you used in previous passages. Here, Israel refers to God's chosen people, the Israelites, or the descendants of Jacob. Use the same word or phrase for Israel as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

Yahweh causes David to want to take a census or to count the people of Israel and **Judah**. In this case, David wants to count the number of men who are able to go to war. Use the same word or phrase for Judah as you used in previous passages. For more information about Judah, refer to the Master Glossary.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for **census**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Joab talks to David with his **army commanders**. The commanders were men who were leaders of different parts of the Israelite army. The commanders were all under the authority of Joab and David. Be sure to use the same word for army commanders as you have used in previous passages.

Joab tells David that he hopes Yahweh, David's **God**, makes David's army bigger. Yahweh is God's personal name. God refers to the most powerful spirit being who created all things. Be sure to use the same words for Yahweh and God as you used in previous passages. For more information on God, refer to the Master Glossary.

Joab refers to David as my **lord**, the **king**. The title lord refers to someone who is a master and has full authority over other people. King refers to someone who rules over a country. Joab uses these two titles to show great respect to David, even though Joab disagrees with David's decision. Use the same words or phrases for lord and king as you used in previous passages. For more information on lord and king, refer to the Master Glossary.

Joab goes east first and crosses the **Jordan River**. Use the same word or phrase for Jordan River as you have used in previous passages. Jordan River is in the Master Glossary.

One of the places Joab passes through is the city of Aroer. Aroer is in the middle of a dry river valley in the territory of Gad.

Stop here and discuss as a group what word or phrase you will use for a **dry river valley**. If you have already translated this word in another book of the Bible, use the same word that you have used there. Pause this audio here.

Joab also passes through the **fortress** of Tyre. Here, a fortress refers to a city with strong walls around it to protect it from enemies. Use the same word for fortress as you have used in previous passages.

Joab then passes through the Negev **Wilderness**. The Negev was a large desert or wilderness in the south of Judah. A wilderness is a dry place where few people live because there is no water. For more information on wilderness, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for wilderness as you have used previously.

Eight hundred thousand men in Israel and five hundred thousand men in Judah could handle a **sword**, which means that they could fight in a battle. Use the same word or phrase for sword as you have used in previous passages.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 24:1–9

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 24:10–17

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 24:10–17 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:10–17 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:10–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last passage, Yahweh was angry with his people. So Yahweh caused King David to take a census in Israel and Judah. David sent his army commander, Joab, throughout the land to count all of the fighting men. After nine months, Joab returned and reported the census numbers to David.

Later, after counting the people, David's heart strikes him. This is special language that means David feels a strong emotion of guilt because he had ordered Joab to count the people. David speaks or prays to Yahweh. David tells Yahweh that David has sinned greatly, or done something very wrong, by counting the people. David calls himself Yahweh's servant and asks Yahweh to take away his guilt or forgive him for the wrong he has done. David admits that he has acted very foolishly.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story of a time when someone felt very guilty about something they did. Pause this audio here.

David gets up the next morning. The night before, Yahweh had given the prophet Gad a message to give to David. Gad was David's seer, or the prophet who stayed in David's palace. Yahweh used prophets to speak on his behalf to his people. Yahweh tells Gad to go to David and to give him a message. Gad goes to find David, then repeats Yahweh's message. David must choose from three different forms of punishment: either there will be seven years of famine or lack of food in the land, three days of horrible disease in the land, or David's enemies will chase David for three months. Gad tells David to think about these options and then make a decision so that Gad can give David's answer to Yahweh.

David tells Gad that David is deeply distressed. In other words, David is in a very difficult position, and it is hard for David to decide. David tells Gad that David wants his life and the lives of Israel to fall into the hands of Yahweh. This is another way of saying that David wants Yahweh to choose what will happen, because David knows Yahweh is full of mercy. When Yahweh is merciful, Yahweh pities people, helps them, and forgives them. David does not want to fall into the hands of people, or to let other people have power over David, because David knows people are not as merciful as Yahweh is.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story of a time when someone from your culture was deeply distressed because of a decision they made. Pause this audio here.

So Yahweh chooses to send the plague, or the horrible disease, on the people of Israel from that morning until the appointed time, or the time Yahweh decided. It is unclear if this was for the full three days or for a shorter time, only that Yahweh was in control of how long the disease lasted. During this time, 70,000 people died throughout the whole land of Israel.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Tell a story of a time when a widespread disease killed many people where you live. Who or what did people say caused the disease? Who or what had the power to stop the disease? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh uses an angel to bring destruction, or the disease, on the people. Angels are supernatural beings who are messengers of Yahweh that carry out what Yahweh wants. But as the angel is stretching out his hand, or using his power, to destroy the city of Jerusalem, Yahweh decides to stop punishing the people. Yahweh commands the angel to "stay his hand" or to stop using his power to harm the people because enough people had already died.

Stop here and discuss with your group: What do people in your culture believe about angels? How is that different from how people describe angels in Scripture? Pause this audio here.

When the angel stopped his destruction, the angel was by the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, just outside the city of Jerusalem. As you may remember, a threshing floor was a hard, level surface located outside of towns where blowing winds could separate the grain seeds from the husks. Jebusites were a group of non-Israelite people who lived in Jerusalem.

Stop here and look at a picture of people working on a threshing floor. Pause this audio here.

When David sees the angel destroying David's people, David cries out to Yahweh. David says the punishment is a result of David's sin and because David has done wrong. David says the Israelites are as innocent as sheep.

Since sheep follow the shepherd, David is saying the people only followed David like sheep follow a shepherd, and they are not responsible for David's wrongdoing.

Stop here and look at a picture of sheep with a shepherd. Pause this audio here.

David asks, "What have they done?" to emphasize that the people are not responsible for the wrongdoing. David does not think it is fair that the Israelites have to experience punishment for something David did. So David asks Yahweh to only show Yahweh's anger toward David and David's family.

In the next passage, we will see Yahweh's response to David.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:10–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has five scenes.

In the first scene: David feels very sad for ordering the census. David prays to Yahweh and says, "I have sinned greatly in what I have done.... Now please, O Lord, take away the guilt of your servant, because I have acted very foolishly."

In the second scene: The next morning, David wakes up. The night before, Yahweh had given a message to Gad for David. Yahweh tells Gad that Yahweh is giving David three choices of punishment.

In the third scene: Gad goes to David and gives David Yahweh's message. Gad says David must choose between three different forms of punishment. Gad asks if David would rather have seven years of famine in the land, three days of disease in the land, or three months when David's enemies chase David. David is deeply distressed. David asks Yahweh to choose David's punishment because David knows Yahweh is full of mercy. David says he does not want to fall into human hands.

In the fourth scene: Yahweh chooses to punish David with a horrible disease. Yahweh sends an angel to use his power to kill the people of Israel with the disease until Yahweh decides to stop. Seventy thousand people die from the disease throughout the land.

In the fifth scene: When the angel is at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, Yahweh tells the angel to stop the destruction because enough people have already died. When David sees the angel, David cries out to Yahweh to stop the destruction because the people are as innocent as sheep. David asks Yahweh to only punish David and his household.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- David
- Gad
- The angel
- The people of Israel
- And Araunah the Jebusite

You may want to stop here and listen to your translation of 1 Chronicles 21:7–17, if you have already translated that passage. The story in 1 Chronicles is similar to the story here. Pause this audio here.

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

It is important to remember that David has just ordered a census and received a report from Joab of all the fighting men in Israel. Now, David's heart strikes him. This is special language that means David feels a lot of guilt over what David has done.

David prays to Yahweh and says he has sinned greatly and acted foolishly. David says, "Take away the guilt of your servant." Here, David is referring to himself as a servant of Yahweh since Yahweh is David's master. David wants Yahweh to forgive David for counting the people.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Think about David's situation and the story you told in the previous step about a time when someone felt very guilty for something they did. What kinds of words or phrases did you use to talk about this? Pause this audio here.

The next morning, David wakes up. Some time before David wakes up, the word of Yahweh comes to Gad, David's seer. The "word of Yahweh" refers to when Yahweh speaks a message. This means Yahweh speaks a message to Gad so that Gad can give that same message to David. Gad was David's seer, or prophet, who lived in David's royal palace.

Gad goes to David and gives Yahweh's message to David. Gad says David must choose between three different punishments from Yahweh. Gad asks if David would rather have seven years of famine in the land, three days of horrible disease in the land, or three months when David's enemies chase David. Gad says David must think about his answer and let Gad know what David has chosen so that Gad can tell the one who sent him. Gad is referring to Yahweh as the one who sent Gad.

David is deeply distressed. In other words, David has a very hard decision to make, and David is worried about what to choose.

Stop here and discuss as a group: Remember the story you told in the previous step about someone who was distressed. Discuss how you will describe this feeling in your language. Pause this audio here.

David asks Gad to let David and Israel fall into the hands of Yahweh and not into the hands of man. It is important to remember that "into the hands" of someone is special language. If someone or something is in the hands of someone else, then it means that person has power or control over that person or situation.

David says he wants to fall into the hands of Yahweh, or the power of Yahweh, because David knows Yahweh is full of mercy. This is another way to say that people know Yahweh helps and forgives people.

As a result of David and Gad's conversation, Yahweh chooses to send a horrible disease on the people. Yahweh does this by sending an angel to Israel to spread the disease and kill people. An angel is a supernatural being who is a messenger of Yahweh. Angels live in heaven with Yahweh, so this angel would have come from heaven to do this in Israel.

The disease begins to spread the same morning David and Gad talk, and it lasts until "the appointed time." It is possible that the appointed time was at the end of three days, although it may have been for less time since Yahweh chooses to end the punishment. During this time period, 70,000 people die throughout Israel.

You will remember that the phrase "from Dan to Beersheba" is another way to say "throughout all the land of Israel from the far north to the far south."

When the angel stretches his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy the city, Yahweh decides to stop the punishment because seeing the people suffer made Yahweh sad. The storyteller describes the angel as stretching out his hand as a way to talk about the angel's power to cause disease and death.

Stop here and discuss with your group: Imagine the angel is just about to kill more people in Jerusalem. The angel starts to stretch out his hand to kill the people, but Yahweh stops the angel. How will you describe this scene? Pause this audio here.

Yahweh tells the angel, "Stop! It is enough." This happens when the angel is at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. This threshing floor was located just outside the city of Jerusalem.

As David watches the angel strike the people down, or make people very sick, David repents, or is very sad because he has done wrong things. David prays to Yahweh and says that he, David, is the one who has sinned

and done wrong. David uses two ways to say that he has sinned. David says he has sinned and that he has done the wrong thing. David uses repetition to emphasize that he is the only person whom Yahweh should blame.

David compares the people to sheep and says that the people are innocent and not responsible for the punishment. This is another way to say that David is like a shepherd and that David led his people into wrongdoing.

David asks, "What have they done?" not because David wants an answer but to emphasize that the people are blameless. David asks for all of Yahweh's anger to fall on David and his household, or immediate family. This means David only wants Yahweh to punish David and his family for David's wrongdoing and no one else.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:10–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has five scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- David
- Gad
- The angel
- The people of Israel
- And Araunah the Jebusite

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out David feeling guilty for ordering the census. David prays to Yahweh and says, "I have sinned greatly.... Now please, O Lord, take away the guilt of your servant, for I have acted very foolishly."

Act out David waking up the next morning. At the same time, Yahweh gives a message to Gad for David. Yahweh tells Gad that Yahweh is giving David three choices of punishment.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Gad, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel sad. Sin never affects only one person. If David chooses famine or disease, we will all suffer; or
- I am upset. David felt like he had to know how powerful his army was. Now the people will suffer because of David's pride; or
- I pray Yahweh shows David mercy.

Continue the drama.

Act out Gad going to David and giving David Yahweh's message. Gad says David must choose between three different forms of punishment. Gad asks if David would rather have seven years of famine in the land, three days of disease in the land, or be chased by his enemies for three months.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel distressed. What have I done? Now my people will suffer because of my sin; or
- There is no good option, but surely, I cannot run away from my enemies again. Anything but that; or
- Yahweh is just. I deserve Yahweh's punishment. I will let Yahweh choose what I must endure.

Continue the drama.

Act out David feeling deep distress. David says he wants Yahweh to choose his punishment because David knows Yahweh is full of mercy. David says he does not want to fall into human hands.

That morning, Yahweh chooses to punish David with a horrible disease. Act out Yahweh sending an angel to use his power to kill the people of Israel with the disease until the appointed time. The angel kills 70,000 people with the disease.

Act out the angel arriving at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite, just outside the city of Jerusalem. Yahweh tells the angel, "Stop! It is enough." The angel stops destroying people.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Yahweh, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- David is truly sorry. I will turn away my anger from my people; or
- I am very sad because of the effects of sin on my people; or
- I know this is necessary to change David's heart. David cannot see what I see.

Continue the drama.

Act out David seeing the angel destroying people. David cries out to Yahweh that the people are as innocent as sheep. David asks Yahweh to only punish David and his household.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am in agony. The people did nothing wrong. It was all my fault! or
- I feel guilty. If only I had trusted Yahweh more with my kingdom; or
- I feel desperate. I will do anything to stop Yahweh's punishment, even if it means seeing my family suffer.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:10–17 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

You may want to stop here and listen to your translation of 1 Chronicles 21:7–17, if you have already translated that passage. Pay attention to the words and phrases you used in that passage. The story in 1 Chronicles is similar to the story here. Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

David's **heart** struck David after he counted the people, or **fighting men**. This phrase means David felt deep remorse or guilt. In Hebrew, "heart" is special language for the place where a person's thoughts, feelings, and decisions happen. If you use the word for heart in your translation, use the same word or phrase for heart as you used in previous passages. For more information on heart, refer to the Master Glossary. Use the same word or phrase for fighting men as you used in the previous passage.

David says to **Yahweh**, "I have **sinned** greatly." Yahweh is God's personal name that shows the close relationship between God and Israel. When someone sins, they disobey God or act in rebellion toward God. Use the same words or phrases for Yahweh and sin as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh or sin, refer to the Master Glossary.

David admits his wrongdoing to Yahweh and asks Yahweh to "take away the iniquity of your servant." Iniquity is sin, or the guilt that we have when we sin. David is asking Yahweh to forgive him because David has done a foolish thing. A foolish thing is the opposite of a wise thing.

Stop here and discuss with your group: What word will you use for **iniquity**? Discuss whether it would be better to use the same word that you used for "sin" or a word that means "guilt," which is when someone judges that someone has done something wrong. Pause this audio here.

Stop here and discuss with your group: What word or phrase will you use for **foolish thing**? Remember that foolish is the opposite of wise, so for more information, you can refer to wisdom in the Master Glossary. Pause this audio here.

David calls himself Yahweh's **servant**. David shows that Yahweh has authority over David and that David serves Yahweh as his master. Use the same word or phrase for servant as you used in previous passages. For more information on servant, refer to the Master Glossary.

The next morning, the word of Yahweh comes to Gad. The "word of Yahweh" refers to everything that God tells people. In this case, Yahweh is giving a specific message to Gad to give to David. Use the same word or phrase for "word of Yahweh" as you used in previous passages. For more information on "word of Yahweh," refer to **Word** in the Master Glossary.

Yahweh gives a message to Gad, who was David's seer or **prophet**. A prophet is someone who gives messages from Yahweh to the people. Use the same word or phrase for prophet as you used in previous passages. For more information on prophet, refer to the Master Glossary.

One of the options for David's punishment is **famine** in the land for seven years. Famine refers to a severe lack of food in the land, usually due to no rain. Use the same word for famine that you used in previous passages.

Another option for David's punishment is three days of **plague** in the land. A plague is a horrible disease. Use the same word or phrase for plague that you used in previous passages.

When David hears the options for Yahweh's punishment, David does not choose. Instead, David says, "Let us fall **into the hands** of Yahweh and not into the hands of man." If someone or something is in the hands of someone else, then it means that person has power or control over that person or circumstance. Use the same word or phrase for "in the hands of" as you used in previous passages.

David describes Yahweh as being full of **mercy**. When someone shows mercy, that person is being good, kind, and compassionate. When Yahweh is merciful, Yahweh shows pity, helps, and forgives. Use the same word or phrase for mercy as you used in previous passages. For more information on mercy, refer to the Master Glossary.

So Yahweh sends a horrible disease on all the land of **Israel**. Here, Israel refers to the territory where the Israelites lived. The disease affects people all throughout the land, from Dan in the far north to Beersheba in the far south. Use the same word or phrase for Israel as you used in previous passages. For more information on Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

Yahweh sends an **angel** to Israel to cause the disease to spread and kill people. An angel is a supernatural being who gives messages and performs tasks on Yahweh's behalf. Use the same word or phrase for angel as you used in previous passages. For more information on angel, refer to the Master Glossary.

The angel comes to a stop by the **threshing floor** of Araunah the Jebusite. Threshing floors were outdoor workplaces located just outside of cities. These were flat, hard areas where people used the blowing winds to separate wheat grains from the husk. Be sure to use the same word or phrase for threshing floor that you have used in previous passages.

David said that he, the **shepherd**, is the person who has done the wrong thing. Use the same word or phrase for a shepherd, or someone who takes care of sheep, as you have used previously. For more information about shepherd, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 24:10–17

Audio Content

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2 Samuel 24:18–25

Hear and Heart

Hear and Heart

In this step, hear 2 Samuel 24:18–25 and put it in your hearts.

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:18–25 three times, in three different translations, if possible.

Pause this audio here.

Now, as a group, discuss the following questions:

1. What do you like in this passage? Pause this audio here.
2. What do you not like or not understand in this passage? Pause this audio here.
3. What does this passage tell us about God? Pause this audio here.
4. What does this passage tell us about people? Pause this audio here.
5. How does this passage affect our daily lives? Pause this audio here.
6. Who do you know who needs to hear this passage?

Setting the Stage

Setting the Stage

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:18–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In the last passage, Yahweh sent an angel to spread a plague, or horrible disease, in Israel that killed 70,000 people. Yahweh used the disease to punish David for counting all of the fighting men in Israel. Yahweh told the angel to stop the punishment just as the angel reached the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

As you remember, David was sorry for his disobedience, and David asked Yahweh to forgive David. David prayed and asked Yahweh not to punish the people but to punish only David and his family. Yahweh now responds by sending the prophet Gad to speak to David again. A prophet is a messenger of Yahweh who speaks to people on Yahweh's behalf. Gad tells David that Yahweh wants him to raise up, or build, an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah. As you know, a threshing floor was a piece of land that was flat and hard, where people used the blowing wind to separate the wheat grains from the husk. Araunah was not an Israelite, but a Jebusite, which means he was a part of the people who lived in Jerusalem before David moved there.

Stop here and, as a group, look at a picture of people working on a threshing floor. Pause this audio here.

Yahweh wants David to build an altar on the threshing floor to honor Yahweh. An altar was a place where people made sacrifices to Yahweh. An altar was like a table or a platform that people made using earth or large stones. People placed gifts such as animals, food items, or sweet-smelling spices on the table and then burned them as an offering to Yahweh.

Stop here and look as a group at a picture of an altar. Pause this audio here.

So David goes to the threshing floor to build an altar just as Yahweh commanded him through the words of Gad. Araunah sees that David is traveling towards him with David's servants. Here, the word servants does not refer to domestic servants, but to David's government officials or soldiers.

Araunah goes out to meet David and bows his face to the ground to show respect to the king. Araunah asks David why David has come. Araunah refers to himself as David's servant and calls David my Lord, or master, to show his loyalty and respect to David as an authority. David tells Araunah that he has come to buy the threshing floor so that he can build an altar there to honor Yahweh. David says that building the altar will end the plague, or terrible disease, in Israel.

Stop and discuss this question with your group: Tell a story about a time a leader came to take a piece of land for religious purposes. How did the leader ask for the land? How did the owner of the land respond? Pause this audio here.

Araunah tells David that he can have the threshing floor and make whatever offerings David wants to Yahweh. David does not have to pay for it. Araunah even offers to provide oxen for the burnt offering as well as threshing boards and ox yokes for wood. At this time, people used oxen, or male cows, to thresh wheat, or separate the husks from the grain. The oxen pulled heavy wooden boards, or threshing boards, over grain that people had spread out. People used a yoke, which is a wooden bar, to fasten one or two animals to something heavy that they needed to pull, like a wagon or plow.

Stop here and look at a picture of oxen wearing yokes and pulling threshing boards as a group. Pause this audio here.

Araunah offers the oxen to David as animals that David can burn on the altar as a burnt sacrifice to Yahweh. Araunah also offers the threshing boards and the ox yoke as wood for the fire. Araunah speaks to David with great respect and calls David, "Oh King." Araunah says he hopes Yahweh will accept David's sacrifice and that it will please him.

But David says he will not accept Araunah's offer. Instead, David wants to pay Araunah for everything. David does not want to offer a burnt offering to Yahweh that costs him nothing. David wants to pay Araunah for the threshing floor and everything that comes with it. In David's culture, David had to pay for the land, even though Araunah offered it to him, because he would have then been in debt to Araunah, and it would not have been a true sacrifice for David.

So David buys the threshing floor and oxen for 50 shekels of silver. A shekel is a unit of measurement that weighs around 11.4 grams. It is important to note that in the same story in 1 Chronicles 21:18–30, the storyteller says David paid 600 shekels of gold for the threshing floor. Since gold is far more valuable than

silver, this would have been a much higher price. Though the exact amount is unclear, we do know that David paid at least 50 shekels of silver and most likely more for the threshing floor.

Stop here and discuss this question as a group: In your culture, what things do people prefer to buy or work for instead of receiving them as a gift? Why do people insist on paying for these things? Pause this audio here.

So, David buys the threshing floor and then builds an altar to honor Yahweh. David offers burnt offerings, or animals that he completely burns on the altar, as a gift to Yahweh. David also offers peace offerings on the altar. A peace offering is when someone kills an animal as an offering to Yahweh, then eats the meat as part of a meal that celebrates fellowship or a good relationship with Yahweh. The narrator ends the story by saying Yahweh heard the prayers for the land of Israel and brought an end to the disease because of them. This most likely refers to David's prayers for Israel in the last passage.

The storyteller ends the book with a story that reminds us that even though David did wrong things during his time as king, Yahweh continued to bless David because David admitted when he was wrong and came back to follow Yahweh.

So the book of 2 Samuel comes to an end. Remember that the story of David continues in 1 Kings.

Defining the Scenes

Defining the Scenes

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:18–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will define the scenes, characters, and setting of this passage. Then the group will visualize this passage.

This passage has four scenes.

In the first scene: Gad comes to David and says Yahweh wants David to build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah. David obeys.

In the second scene: Araunah is working on his threshing floor when he sees David and David's soldiers approaching. Araunah goes out to meet the men and bows down to David. Araunah asks David why he has come. David says he wants to build an altar on the threshing floor to stop the horrible disease in the land.

In the third scene: Araunah offers to give David the threshing floor, his oxen, the threshing sledges, and the yoke so that David can make an offering to Yahweh. But David refuses and says he does not want to give Yahweh an offering he did not pay for. David pays Araunah 50 shekels of silver.

In the fourth scene: David builds the altar on the threshing floor and uses the oxen to make burnt offerings and peace offerings. David and his men celebrate that Yahweh heard their prayers for Israel and brought the disease to an end.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- Gad
- King David
- David's soldiers
- Araunah
- And oxen

You may want to stop here and listen to your translation of 1 Chronicles 21:18–22:1, if you have already translated that passage. The story in 1 Chronicles is similar to the story here. Pause this audio here.

As a group, pay attention to these parts of the passage's setting:

It is important to remember that David has just asked Yahweh to forgive David and stop punishing the people for David's disobedience. David asked Yahweh to punish only David.

It is also important to remember that Gad was a prophet who specifically served as Yahweh's messenger to King David.

Gad goes to David and gives him a message from Yahweh. Yahweh tells David to raise, or build, an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. It is important to remember that an altar is a rock table where people make sacrifices or offerings to Yahweh. As you remember, the threshing floor of Araunah was where Yahweh stopped the angel of destruction from destroying Jerusalem.

David obeys Gad's instructions and goes to the threshing floor, following Yahweh's command. It is important to remember that David did not travel alone but with his government officials or soldiers.

The threshing floor is located just outside the city of Jerusalem. David and his soldiers have to walk up a hill to arrive. Araunah is working on the threshing floor when he sees David and his soldiers coming up the hill. This means Araunah needed to look down to see King David approaching.

Araunah runs to meet King David and bows with his face to the ground. Araunah respectfully asks why King David has come. David says he has come to buy the threshing floor and to build an altar so that the horrible disease in the land will stop. David refers to Yahweh being the one who will bring an end to the disease.

Araunah tells David to take whatever he wants and to offer to Yahweh what is good in his eyes. This is special language that means David should offer to Yahweh what seems good to David.

Araunah says David can use the oxen as a burnt offering and the wood from the threshing boards and the yoke for the fire.

Araunah says, "Everything, O king, Araunah gives to the king." Araunah uses repetition and David's title as king to emphasize his respect for David. Araunah says he hopes Yahweh accepts David, or is pleased with David.

King David does not accept the gifts but instead says he will buy Araunah's threshing floor and oxen for a price. David says he will not give a burnt offering to Yahweh that did not cost David anything. David pays Araunah 50 shekels of silver for the threshing floor and oxen.

David builds an altar on the threshing floor and then kills the oxen as burnt offerings. David, and most likely the people around him, enjoy a peace offering meal and celebrate fellowship or a good relationship with Yahweh.

The storyteller gives us a summary and tells us Yahweh heard David's prayer for the land and made the horrible disease come to an end.

Now, the group should storyboard, draw, or use objects to visualize the passage and the action in it.

Embodying the Text

Embodying the Text

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:18–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will dramatize the passage.

This passage has four scenes.

The characters in this passage are:

- Yahweh
- Gad
- King David
- David's soldiers
- Araunah
- And oxen

As a group, act out the passage twice. You should act out the passage in your own language.

First, act out the passage without stopping. Pay attention to the dialogue, flow, plotline, and chronology of the passage. Make sure you do not skip acting out the difficult or important parts of the passage. Help each other remember every part of the passage.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage.

The group should act out this passage a second time. At certain points in the drama, pause the drama and ask the person playing the character, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person playing the character should answer what they would be feeling or thinking if they were that character. Then continue the drama.

Pause this audio here and act out the passage a second time.

The following is an example of the drama and possible responses.

Act out Gad going to David and telling him that Yahweh wants David to build an altar on the threshing floor of Araunah. David listens to Gad and obeys Yahweh's command. David takes some officials or soldiers with him and goes to the threshing floor.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I feel grateful. I am so glad Yahweh is responding to my prayers; or
- I feel eager. I will do whatever Yahweh asks to make this right again; or
- I feel humble. Yahweh is merciful.

Continue the drama.

Act out Araunah working at his threshing floor when he sees David and his soldiers approaching. Araunah goes out to meet them and bows down to David.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Araunah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am surprised. Why is the king of Israel coming to my threshing floor? or
- I feel nervous. I hope I have not done anything to anger the king; or
- I am unworthy. I do not deserve to be in the presence of the king.

Continue the drama.

Act out Araunah asking David why he has come. David says he wants to build an altar on the threshing floor to stop the horrible disease in the land. Araunah offers to give the threshing floor, his oxen, the threshing sledges, and the yoke to David so that David can make an offering to Yahweh. But David refuses and says he does not want to give Yahweh an offering he did not pay for. David offers Araunah 50 shekels of silver to buy the threshing floor and oxen.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing Araunah, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am impressed. David truly honors his God; or
- I am surprised. I thought David would take what I offered him; or
- I hope this brings an end to the horrible disease.

Continue the drama.

Act out Araunah accepting David's offer. David builds an altar on the threshing floor and uses the oxen to make burnt offerings and peace offerings. David and his men celebrate that Yahweh heard their prayers for Israel and brought the disease to an end.

Pause the drama. Ask the person playing David, "What are you feeling or thinking?" The person might answer things like:

- I am thankful to be at peace with Yahweh again; or
- I am humbled that Yahweh accepted my offerings; or
- I will always remember this threshing floor as a special place.

Filling the Gaps

Filling the Gaps

Listen to an audio version of 2 Samuel 24:18–25 in the easiest-to-understand translation.

You may want to stop here and listen to your translation of 1 Chronicles 21:18–22:1, if you have already translated that passage. Pay attention to how you translated the key terms in that passage. The story in 1 Chronicles is similar to the story here. Pause this audio here.

In this step, the group will discuss key terms and words in this passage.

Yahweh tells David through Gad that David needs to build an **altar**. An altar is a place where people make sacrifices to Yahweh. An altar is like a table or a platform that people made of earth or large stones. People placed gifts such as animals, food items, or sweet-smelling spices on the table, then burned them as an offering to Yahweh. Use the same word or phrase for altar as you used in previous passages. For more information on altar, refer to the Master Glossary.

Gad says the altar will be to **Yahweh**, or that David will build it to honor Yahweh. Yahweh is God's personal name that shows the close relationship between God and Israel. Use the same word or phrase for Yahweh as you used in previous passages. For more information on Yahweh, refer to the Master Glossary.

David must build the altar on the **threshing floor** of Araunah the Jebusite. Threshing floors were flat, hard areas where people used the blowing wind to separate the wheat grains from the husk. Be sure to use the same word or phrase for "threshing floor" that you have used in previous passages.

Jebusite means that Araunah was not an Israelite but someone who lived in the Jerusalem area before the Israelites conquered it. Be sure to use the same word or phrase for Jebusite that you have used in previous passages.

Araunah looks down and sees the **king** coming to him. A king is someone who rules over a country. In this case, David ruled over Israel. Use the same word or phrase for king as you used in previous passages. For more information on king, refer to the Master Glossary.

David was traveling with his **servants**. In this case, servants refer to David's soldiers or armed men and not to a servant who worked in his household. In this case, the word for servant shows that this person serves others, but is not a slave. One way to translate this is to say David's men or David's military officials. If you do use the word servant, use the same word or phrase for servant as you used in previous passages. For more information on servant, refer to the Master Glossary.

David wants to buy the threshing floor and make an offering to bring an end to the **plague**, or horrible disease. Use the same word or phrase for plague as you used in previous passages.

Araunah comes to David and **bows** down. Araunah calls David "my **lord**" and refers to himself as David's **servant**. The title "my lord" refers to someone who is a master and has full authority over other people. Araunah recognized that David had authority over him, so Araunah referred to himself as David's servant. Use the same word or phrase for bow, lord and servant as you used in previous passages. For more information on bow, lord, or servant, refer to the Master Glossary.

Araunah says, "May Yahweh your **God** accept you." God refers to the most powerful spiritual being, the God who created everything. Use the same word or phrase for God as you used in previous passages. For more information on God, refer to the Master Glossary.

Araunah says David can have his threshing floor and oxen as **burnt offerings**. When a person brings God a burnt offering, that person kills an animal and burns this animal completely on an altar, which is a special place meant for bringing gifts to God. Use the same word or phrase for burnt offering as you used in previous passages. For more information on burnt offering, refer to the Master Glossary.

David offers to pay 50 **shekels** of silver for the threshing floor. A shekel is a unit of measurement weighing around 11.4 grams, so David gave Araunah around 570 grams of silver. If you use the term shekel, use the same word or phrase for shekel as you used in previous passages. For more information on shekel, refer to the Master Glossary.

After paying for the threshing floor, David builds an altar and **sacrifices** burnt offerings and **peace or fellowship offerings** on the altar. A peace or fellowship offering is when someone kills an animal as an offering to Yahweh, then eats the meat as part of a meal that celebrates a good relationship with Yahweh. Use the same word or phrase for offering as you used in previous passages. For more information on sacrifices and peace or fellowship offering, refer to the Master Glossary.

The storyteller tells us Yahweh responded to **prayer** and stopped the disease from spreading in **Israel**. Prayer is when someone communicates with Yahweh. Israel refers to the land where the Israelites, or descendants of Jacob, lived. Use the same word or phrase for prayer and Israel as you used in previous passages. For more information on pray or Israel, refer to the Master Glossary.

Speaking the Word

Speaking the Word

Listen to an audio version of the passage in the easiest-to-understand translation.

Pause this audio here.

In this session, retell the passage, as a group, in your own language.

First, the whole group should practice telling the passage in your own language. Remember to include the things you decided in previous steps, like chronology, words, phrases, emotions, or anything else you discussed.

One group member should tell a few sentences of the passage and pause. Another group member should tell the next part of the passage and pause. Do this until the group has retold the whole passage. The group members can correct each other in this step.

Pause this audio here.

Next, each member of the group should tell the whole passage without interruption at least one time. A group member can use random objects, motions, or their storyboard to help them remember the passage.

Pause this audio here.

Next, the group can decide whose version of the passage you like the most. You may decide that you liked the way one group member told one scene but you liked the way a different group member told another scene.

Pause this audio here.

Finally, the group can put together a final version of the passage that everyone agrees on. Each group member should practice telling this final version of the passage.

2 Samuel 24:18–25

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