**Topic: Revenge**

**Bible Passage: David spares Saul’s Life: 1 Kings 24**

**Activity: When? Where? Why? & How?**

Divide preteens into small groups. Give each group a large sheet of butcher paper with the word “REVENGE” written on it. Ask each group to write a definition for “REVENGE” on their butcher paper. Next, ask preteens to brainstorm scenarios when they would likely be tempted to seek revenge. (i.e.—someone steals from them, someone hits them, says nasty things about them, makes a joke about them)

**After the activity, say:** Let’s hear some of the definitions that you wrote for the word “REVENGE.” (Take responses from groups) What about some situations when you might be tempted to get even? (Take responses from groups)

We all have a tendency to be jealous at time. Maybe a friend gets a better grade than you or a teammate wins the game on a last second shot—if we’re not careful, we can become jealous and seek revenge. When we try to get even, we destroy our friendships.

How should we respond when we’re tempted to get even? This situation reminds me of a story about King Saul and David. They had a great relationship but jealousy and revenge almost killed them…literally!

David had served King Saul faithfully. David became a hero when he went up against Goliath and won. He continued to serve God and King Saul, and the people continued to love him more and more. Eventually, Saul started to be jealous of David’s popularity. Saul was afraid the people would love David more than him. God was blessing David, and Saul just couldn’t take it. He became so jealous that he started to have some crazy thoughts. He was thinking about killing David!

One time, Saul asked his son, Jonathan, to kill David. Jonathan was a friend of David, so he warned David about Saul’s plan. David ran and hid while Jonathan talked to his dad. He begged Saul to not kill David because David was such a loyal servant, so Saul changed his mind. David came back to King Saul, and everything was cool, at least for a little while.

One day as David was playing his harp for King Saul, Saul got jealous and angry. Like a crazy man, Saul threw his spear and tried to kill David. It was close, but Saul missed. David ran for his life and hid from the jealous King. He hid in the hills and the caves, but Saul gathered his men and went after David!

As Saul and 3,000 men hunted for David, they decided to take a break just outside of a cave. It just happened to be the same cave that David was hiding in. This is where the story gets really cool!

As David was hiding in the cave, Saul had to…well, the Bible says that he had to relieve himself. That means he had to use the restroom. So, Saul walked into the cave to have some privacy, but he didn’t know that David was hiding in the exact same cave! This was David’s chance. He could sneak up on Saul and kill him. That would end this fight once and for all! This was David’s chance to take revenge on the crazy King.

As Saul was doing his business, David snuck up behind him without making a sound. But instead of killing Saul, David cuts off the bottom corner of his coat. Then, David sneaks back to his hiding spot and waits for Saul to leave the cave.

After Saul had left the cave, David came out and began to speak. Listen to the words he said to Saul:

10 This day you have seen with your own eyes how the LORD delivered you into my hands in the cave. Some urged me to kill you, but I spared you; I said, ‘I will not lift my hand against my master, because he is the LORD’s anointed.’

11 See, my father, look at this piece of your robe in my hand! I cut off the corner of your robe but did not kill you. Now understand and recognize that I am not guilty of wrongdoing or rebellion. I have not wronged you, but you are hunting me down to take my life.

12 May the LORD judge between you and me. And may the LORD avenge the wrongs you have done to me, but my hand will not touch you. 13 As the old saying goes, ‘From evildoers come evil deeds,’ so my hand will not touch you.

David could have had his revenge in the cave by killing Saul. Saul had done many things to try and hurt David, but David responded with love and respect instead of revenge.

Proverbs 25:21-22 says, “21 If your enemy is hungry, give him food to eat; if he is thirsty, give him water to drink. 22 In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head, and the LORD will reward you.” Instead of revenge, we need to show kindness and compassion to others. When we do this, it helps them to see their own wrong actions. Look at what King Saul said when he heard what David had done:

**Read 1 Samuel 24:16-19**

16 When David finished saying this, Saul asked, “Is that your voice, David my son?” And he wept aloud. 17 “You are more righteous than I,” he said. “You have treated me well, but I have treated you badly. 18 You have just now told me of the good you did to me; the LORD delivered me into your hands, but you did not kill me. 19 When a man finds his enemy, does he let him get away unharmed? May the LORD reward you well for the way you treated me today.

Saul’s heart was changed because of David’s action. David did not try to get even with Saul. Instead, he chose to show love and compassion to Saul. How do you think God wants you to respond? Does he want you to seek revenge like Saul? Or do you think God would want you to show kindness and compassion like David? When you’re tempted to get even, trust God to show you ways to show compassion instead.

**Break into small groups and discuss the following questions:**

* Why was Saul trying to kill David?
* How did David respond to Saul?
* When David spared Saul’s life, what was Saul’s response?
* What should your response be when tempted to get even?
* When are you most tempted to “get even?”
* What is it about those situations give in #5 that upset you?
* How does the Bible command us to respond to an “enemy?” Read Proverbs 25:21-22.
* How does God want us to respond to “getting even?” Read the following Bible verse and discuss the answer:
* Matthew 5:38-39
* Romans 12:19
* Hebrews 10:30
* Proverbs 20:22
* Leviticus 19:18
* Proverbs 25:21-22

**Small Group Activity: Wrong Way vs. Right Way**

Divide preteens into small groups with the sheets of butcher paper used in the opening activity. Instruct groups to review the scenarios listed earlier regarding when they would seek revenge. For each scenario, have preteens list a better response that would show compassion to others. If time allows, ask groups to share their responses with other groups.