

OUTWARD APPEARANCES VS. INWARD QUALITIES

ILLUSTRATION / DEMONSTRATION

PREPARATION:

Make a paper crown out of gold-colored construction paper, big enough for a man's head. (It would be good to come up with a purple robe and a golden scepter too, if possible!) Also, make copies of the "Words to Treasure" feature on page 320 of the *NIV Adventure Bible* to pass out to kids after the sermon.

DURING THE CHILDREN'S SERMON:

Invite three men from the congregation to stand in front of the church (try to pick ones of different heights, if possible; it'd be great to have one who is much taller than the rest). Tell the children that you need their help to select one of the men to play the part of "the king." Have the kids vote and pick one of the men. Then put the paper crown on that man's head (and give him the robe and scepter too, if you have them). After that, ask the children how they decided who should be the king. What criteria did they use?

SCRIPTURE READING

Opening the *NIV Adventure Bible* to 1 Samuel 16, tell the children, "Now that we've seen how we would pick a king, let's find out how God chose one! Listen to this passage from the book of 1 Samuel, chapter 16, verses 1–13."

The LORD said to Samuel, "How long will you mourn for Saul, since I have rejected him as king over Israel? Fill your horn with oil and be on your way; I am sending you to Jesse of Bethlehem. I have chosen one of his sons to be king."

But Samuel said, "How can I go? Saul will hear about it and kill me."

The LORD said, "Take a heifer with you and say, 'I have come to sacrifice to the LORD.' Invite Jesse to the sacrifice, and I will show you what to do. You are to anoint for me the one I indicate."

Samuel did what the LORD said. When he arrived at Bethlehem, the elders of the town trembled when they met him. They asked, "Do you come in peace?"

Samuel replied, "Yes, in peace; I have come to sacrifice to the LORD. Consecrate yourselves and come to the sacrifice with me." Then he consecrated Jesse and his sons and invited them to the sacrifice.

When they arrived, Samuel saw Eliab and thought, "Surely the LORD's anointed stands here before the LORD."

But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Then Jesse called Abinadab and had him pass in front of Samuel. But Samuel said, "The LORD has not chosen this one either." Jesse then had Shammah pass

by, but Samuel said, "Nor has the LORD chosen this one." Jesse had seven of his sons pass before Samuel, but Samuel said to him, "The LORD has not chosen these." So he asked Jesse, "Are these all the sons you have?"

"There is still the youngest," Jesse answered, "but he is tending the sheep."

Samuel said, "Send for him; we will not sit down until he arrives."

So he sent and had him brought in. He was ruddy, with a fine appearance and handsome features.

Then the LORD said, "Rise and anoint him; he is the one."

So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the Spirit of the LORD came upon David in power.

FEATURE READING / MESSAGE

Turning to page 320 in the *NIV Adventure Bible*, say to the children, "God has a quite different approach to choosing kings, doesn't he? This shows that God thinks a lot differently than we do about what's important when it comes to people. Listen to this "Live It!" article in the *Adventure Bible* called 'What Is Important About You?' It suggests a little activity you can try later at home to remind you of how God evaluates people."

When Samuel saw the first of Jesse's sons, he thought he knew who Israel's next king would be. But he was looking at the wrong thing—at the outside or physical appearance of the person. What part of a person is important to God?

Cut a heart from red construction paper. Make it large enough to cover your face if you tape the heart to a mirror. On the heart write something that God thinks is important in a person who loves him, like "helpful," "caring," "honest," or "friendly."

Put up the heart where you will see it, to help you remember that what is really important about you is the kind of person you are on the inside.

APPLICATION

Ask the children, "How do you choose your friends? Your heroes? Your role models? Your mentors? Why not begin to choose people the way God does? Ignore the person's outward appearance (including his or her wealth, clothes, house, and possessions). Start looking at his or her heart. Here's a tip: If you find it a little hard to look into someone's heart, ask God to help you. He's good at it! God will help you decide whether the person you're considering as a friend, hero, role model, or mentor is the right one to choose. And don't forget—when God looks at you, he's not as concerned about your physical appearance or other outward things as he is about what kind of qualities you have in your heart!"

Read the "Words to Treasure" feature on page 320 in the *NIV Adventure Bible*. Then pass out copies of it to the kids, challenging them to memorize the Scripture verse it contains.

Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.

—1 Samuel 16:7