



Abigail Makes Peace

(based on 1 Samuel 25)

David was on the run from King Saul who wanted to have him killed. David had nowhere to go, so he lived in some caves in the hills. About six hundred men came to live with him.

There was a rich man called Nabal (NAY-buhl) who lived in the Maon (MAY-aaN) wilderness. He owned a huge flock of sheep and goats, which he kept in the hills. Sometimes thieves would raid the flocks. But David and his men chased away the bandits and stopped them from stealing Nabal's sheep.

One day, David heard that Nabal was visiting the men who looked after his sheep. David sent some of his men to take a message to the wealthy farmer. When they arrived, they greeted Nabal politely.

"When your shepherds camped near us we looked after them," the messengers reminded Nabal. "We stopped thieves from stealing your sheep. Since we helped you, would you share some of your food and drink with us?"

Nabal was rich, and he had plenty of food to share, but he did not want to give anything to David and his men.

"Who *is* this David?" Nabal answered rudely! "This country is full of thieves and robbers. I see no reason to share my food and drink with a band of runaway nobodies."

The messengers returned to David and told him everything Nabal had said. David was furious. He told his men to get their swords and follow him. A massive army of angry men followed David and set out for Nabal's camp.

Meanwhile, one of Nabal's workers ran to tell Nabal's wife, Abigail, what had happened. "David and his men looked after the sheep and us," the man explained. "Now Nabal has been rude to them and will not share his food and wine. There's going to be big trouble with David if we don't do something to stop it."

Abigail sprang into action. She ordered her servants to pack their donkeys with two hundred loaves of bread, two large clay jars of wine, the meat from five sheep, a large sack of roasted grain, one hundred handfuls of raisins, and two hundred handfuls of dried figs. Then she set out with her helpers to meet David.

As soon as Abigail saw David, she got off her donkey and bowed down. "Please, sir," she begged. "Please accept these gifts I bring and forgive my husband."

David listened to Abigail. He gave thanks to God that she had come and stopped the trouble between him and Nabal.

"You are a wise and kind woman. You have prevented a terrible and violent thing from happening," he explained. "Don't worry; I will do as you have asked."

David and Abigail departed in peace.



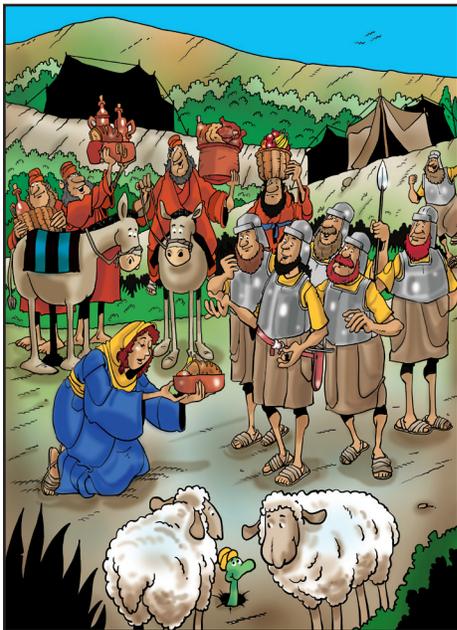
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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Enjoy the story of compromise in *Click, Clack, Moo, Cows that Type* by Doreen Cronin (Atheneum Books for Young Children, 2000) or watch the YouTube video “Click, Clack, Moos, Cows that Type” (bit.ly/CowsThatTypeVideo, 3:36).
- Watch for instances when your children head off trouble, and commend them for it.



Responding to God's Grace

- David was a good neighbor to Nabal. What are ways people can be good neighbors to one another? Some suggestions are not littering, being considerate of noise levels, and waving when you see your neighbors.
- Go to the library and find children's books about peace. Choose one or two books and read together. Or, go to YouTube.com and do a search for “children's books about peace.” Watch a story about peace.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Watch the YouTube video “Mister Rogers' Neighborhood: Opening Theme” (bit.ly/NeighborhoodOpening). Wonder together what it means to be a neighbor.
- Invite each person to write their name down the left-hand side of a piece of paper. Then have them write words or phrases that begin with each letter about how they can be a good friend. Help one another if anyone gets stuck.
- Pray this prayer:

God, help me to be a peacemaker. Amen.