

MAKING OF A KING



WE'RE TEACHING THIS

Every good story has a hero. Think about it. Superman. Luke Skywalker. Katniss Everdeen. They aren't just random characters. They're larger than life. Maybe they're not perfect, but they're *exciting* and they're *brave*. And that's what keeps us interested. That's why we cheer for them. Believe it or not, the Bible is full of heroes like that. They don't have capes and light sabers, but they are heroes who fought giants, built arks, became spies, defeated armies, and saved the day over and over. One of the most famous ones is named David—or maybe you know him as King David. Like many others, David's life was exciting, *epic* even. And at first glance it can feel like we have zero in common with him. Even on our most exciting days our lives don't exactly feel *heroic*. But as we take a closer look at the journey of this shepherd boy turned king, we see it wasn't always a royal fairytale. In fact, as we discover the twists and turns of his road to the throne, his life begins to look more like ours than we ever imagined.

THINK ABOUT THIS

By Sandra Stanley

Remember when you were a kid and you couldn't wait to grow up? There were probably a lot of reasons, but many of them boiled down to one idea: *When I grown up, I'll be in charge. No one can tell me what to do.* It was a nice idea, but that's not exactly our adult reality, is it? In fact, sometimes feels like growing up has left us answering to more people, not less. And what's worse is when not all these authority figures are exactly *ideal* for the job. Maybe you've experienced...

- The police officer who is out of line.
- The governor you *totally* disagree with.
- The boss who seems clueless.
- The homeowners' association president/tyrant.
- The in-laws who *think* they're in charge

Nothing is more frustrating. And in moments like that it can be tempting to employ our go-to response. Maybe you tend to lash out, argue, or respond with harsh sarcasm. Or maybe for you it's more tempting to ignore them or sneak around their rules. Either way, when it comes to a clash with authority, there is often more on the line than we realize.

Overwhelmingly, research suggests that our teenagers' behavior is more influenced by what they see us do than what they hear us say is best.

In his article, *I Spy Daddy Giving Someone The Finger: Your kids will imitate you. Use it as a force for good*, Dr. Allen Kazdin, former president of the American Psychological Association, says, "Brain research has demonstrated that there are special cells called mirror neurons. When we watch someone do something, our mirror neurons become active in the brain as if we ourselves were engaging in the same behavior we are observing."

(http://www.slate.com/articles/life/family/2009/01/i_spy_daddy_giving_someone_the_finger.html)

In other words, **when watching our behavior, our teenagers' brains react and grow new connections that tell them to do the same.** That's why, even with the most difficult and undeserving authority figures, it may still serve us well to treat them with respect. In doing so, our teenagers' brains will form connections that remind them to do the same.

This week, pay attention to your interactions with your boss, coworkers, government workers, and even your own parents or in-laws. Now, imagine what you would say if you overheard your teenager responding to people in charge the same way you do. Because, if the research is true, there's a good chance that one day they will.

TRY THIS

There will always be people in charge who frustrate us. That's true for our students as well. In fact, sometimes we are the ones who frustrate them. So, modeling respect for authority is a huge deal. But that doesn't mean we have to be stoic. This week **try mentioning to your student one situation where you are frustrated by authority and how you're dealing with it.** Say something like...

- Sometimes it's hard not to give my boss piece of my mind. He can be really offensive, but I won't let his rude tone force me to act the same way.
- I really disagree with the politicians who are in charge right now. Some of their policies make no sense to me. I'll respect their office, but I'll vote differently next time.
- It's really hard for me to be nice to grandma when she acts like she's in charge. I know I'm grown and I don't have to listen to her, but I'm still doing my best to treat her well because she is my mother.

When we acknowledge our own struggles, it gives us credibility with our students. They see that we are still fighting for relationships even when it isn't easy. And that may just be what gives them the courage to do the same.