

LESSON 3

THE KINGDOM DIVIDES

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: We Can Follow God

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 12

GOD'S BIG STORY: Afraid Israel might split, King Rehoboam chooses his friends' advice over that of wise elders, leading to the very split he wanted to avoid. Jeroboam, leader of the northern kingdom, also listens to unwise advice, which leads to idol worship.

WORD OF WONDER: Come near to God, and he will come near to you. —James 4:8a

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions
- Declaring God's Wonder
- Prayer of Invitation
- Worship: God's Got It, God's Way
- God's Big Story
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- Prayer and Blessing



God Speaks Preschool Spotify playlist



LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: We Can Follow God

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 12

WORD OF WONDER: James 4:8a

Before you start this lesson, I invite you to read 1 Kings 12.

As we lean into learning and teaching how God speaks to us, there might be some pretty cringey moments for each of us as we read this passage—moments when we read God’s Word and say, “You know what? I’d never do that!”

The truth is, at some point all of us have heard God’s voice and then proceeded to do something that goes against His good ways. Maybe we didn’t make golden calves or behave cruelly and inhumanely, but we knew what God wanted us to do and did the opposite.

This passage prompted me to reflect on a few things, and as you prepare for this lesson, I invite you to reflect with me:

Who do you go to for wise counsel?

Is their counsel trustworthy?

Is your first response to serve or to look for who might serve you?

You might not be single-handedly trying to keep a kingdom together, but your choices and the advice you listen to matters. Pray that God increases in the areas you need so you hear Him and serve Him well.

—**Andrae Jones**

Nextgen Pastor

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Two kings, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, were the first to lead the divided kingdom of Israel. King Solomon's son, Rehoboam—the natural-born king—would rule the southern kingdom, and Jeroboam—son of one of Solomon's officials—would rule the northern kingdom.

WHAT?

Big decisions have big consequences, so when Rehoboam neglected to listen to the wise elders, Israel's united kingdom became divided. Because he listened to his young friends, the country broke out in civil war, and 1 Kings records the history of two kings, two capitals, and two religions.

WHERE?

The divided kingdom refers to the southern kingdom—called *Judah*—which continued to be ruled by David's family line and included the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the northern kingdom—called *Israel*—which included the other 10 tribes of Israel.

WHEN?

The kingdom of Israel was established under King Saul, strengthened under King David, and reached the height of its glory under King Solomon (David's son). Solomon, however, turned away from God, making the division of the kingdom inevitable.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Even when the kingdom of Israel divided, God remained faithful to His people and never stopped loving them. Sadly, the northern kingdom, Israel, had only ungodly kings. Judah in the south, however, had several kings who loved and followed God, such as Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah.



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: We Can Follow God

SCRIPTURE: 1 Kings 12

WORD OF WONDER: James 4:8a

Welcome

Slide: Series Welcome Loop

As kids arrive...

Walk around the room and welcome as many kids as possible by showing excitement that they have joined you. Give high-fives, fist bumps, encourage them to sit on the floor in their spots, and ask questions about their week.

Video: Countdown

Welcome kids to worship time. Introduce yourself by name.

Puppet Intro and Curiosity Questions

RESOURCES: Tac the Cat puppet

Tac the Cat: Hi, friends! I was just watching the kids play a silly actions game, and I have something I'm curious about ...

Leader: Well what is it, Tac?

Tac the Cat: Why did the silly actions change sometimes when they got passed down the line?

Leader: That's a good question, Tac. Sometimes one person might say or do something and then say or do it to someone else, and the message might change a little because that person understands it differently. Then that person tells the message or does that thing for someone else, who also understands it differently. We're all different, and we all have our own way of hearing, saying, and doing things. So the action or message can change if more people do it or say it.

Tac the Cat: So does that mean we shouldn't always listen to and do everything that everyone else does? Or what everyone tells us to do?

Leader: That's right, Tac. What if the teacher says we're not allowed to go outside unless it's time to play, but one friend tells another that the teacher said, "OK, go outside right now and play." And that kid does go outside right then ... was that wise to listen to the kid who said it was OK to go outside right then?

Tac the Cat: No, it was not. So how do we know who to listen to and follow?

Leader: That's a great question. We can follow God! And we can listen to and follow leaders who are trustworthy (that means they do the right thing) and who follow God. In fact, we're going to hear a story from the Bible today about two kings who learned the hard way that they need to be careful who they follow and listen to.

Tac the Cat: So if I tell all the kids to do a somersault right now, would they listen to me?

Leader: No, Tac! We're about to get into God's big story, so we need to be ready to listen! Not doing somersaults!

Tac the Cat: Oh, sorry! You're right. Well, kids, I think you should listen to your leader and listen to the story. It sounds like a good one! God is the best leader.

Leader: Thanks, Tac! You're right. It is a good story from the Bible.

Tac the Cat: Now I'm going to go practice my silly faces in the mirror! Bye!

Have you ever been curious like Tac? Have you ever been curious about who you should follow? Allow the kids to respond. **Who is a leader in your life?** Allow the kids to respond. **Who gives you good advice?** Allow the kids to respond. **In God's big story today, we're going to hear about two kings who had a big decision to make but didn't follow God. We'll learn how important it is to follow God.**

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Today's Wonder Truth is **WE CAN FOLLOW GOD**. Today we'll discover how we can follow God!

Declaring God's Wonder

SLIDE: DECLARATION

Thank You, God, that You made me! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Make prayer hands, then point up and then to yourself.

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands on your hips.

Jesus loves me so much. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Spread your arms out wide to your side one at a time, then pull them in for a hug around your chest.

His love for me is big. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your arms up high and wide above your head.

The Holy Spirit leads me, (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Bring your arms down from above, making a path in front of you.

And I can follow You. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

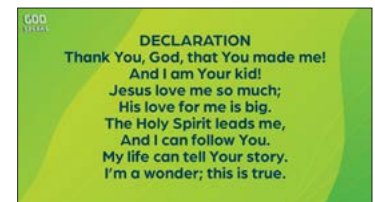
March in place like you're following the leader.

My life can tell Your story. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Hold your hands in front of you like an open book.

I'm a wonder; this is true. (Kids repeat words and motions.)

Put your hands up, shake your fingers, and celebrate ("praise hands").



Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use your own words. Here is an example: **God, we invite Your Holy Spirit to be with us today. Show us Your love. Show us Your wisdom. Help us to listen to Your voice as we make decisions. Show us people who know You to help us and lead us too. We trust You and love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Worship

Today we'll learn that we can follow God and leaders who trust Him. We can praise God for being the best leader!

WORSHIP VIDEOS: God's Got It, God's Way

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible; Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible, and what do I see? (*Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*)

God's big story, waiting for me! (*Point to yourself.*)

Let's start by reading part of God's big story from the book of 1 Kings 12 in the Bible. That's in the Old Testament, which is toward the beginning of the Bible, and includes the time before Jesus came to earth.

VIDEO: GODS BIG STORY

GOD'S BIG STORY SCRIPT

SUPPLIES: toy crowns (2)

Ahead of time, choose two kids to be the two kings in the story. Give them each a crown to wear. Tell all of the other kids to sit in one big group together. When you say that the kingdom split, the group will divide into two groups.

We've learned about David being chosen as the king of Israel. David was the king of Israel for many years. Then his son, Solomon, became king. Solomon led the Israelites—God's people—for a long time. He had great wisdom. Wisdom is knowledge and understanding that comes from God. After Solomon, his son, Rehoboam (RAY-oh-boh-am), was the new king of Israel. Call up your King Rehoboam, and put a crown on his head. Tell him to wave to the other kids.

When Solomon was king, he put a lot of people to work for him. They worked hard for him. So when Rehoboam was the new king, the people wanted that to change. Some people told Rehoboam that his father, Solomon, made them work too hard. They wanted Rehoboam to make their work easier. Encourage the group of kids to look at King Rehoboam and make begging motions ("Please!").

Rehoboam told the people to go away for three days, so he could decide what to do. Rehoboam asked for advice from some of the wise men who worked for his father. Choose a few other kids from the group, and tell them to pretend to huddle up and talk with Rehoboam. **They told Rehoboam to be kind to the Israelites. "Give [the people] what they are asking for," they told him. "Then they'll always serve you" (1 Kings 12:7).**

But Rehoboam didn't like their advice. He ignored it and asked for advice from the young men he grew up with instead. They told Rehoboam that he shouldn't listen to the people. They told him to make them work even harder! After three days, the Israelites came back to Rehoboam. He told them the bad news. Rehoboam was going to make the people work even harder! Encourage the group of kids to act mad and sad.

The people got upset that Rehoboam didn't listen to them. They didn't want to follow Rehoboam anymore. So the nation of Israel split into two nations. Divide the group of kids into two groups, and have them move apart. **Rehoboam was the king of Judah, the nation in the south. An Israelite man named Jeroboam (jer-roh-BOHM) became the king of Israel.** Call up your King Jeroboam, and put a crown on his head. Tell him to wave to the kids in one group. **Israel was the nation in the north.**

Jeroboam followed some bad advice too. Choose a few kids from Jeroboam's group, and tell them to huddle up and pretend to talk with Jeroboam. **Instead of worshiping God, Jeroboam made fake gods called idols. The people worshiped the idols. The Israelites did not worship God.**

God wanted the kingdom of Israel to be one nation and group of people. God wanted King Rehoboam and King Jeroboam to lead His people closer to Him. Both kings asked for advice. But they both followed bad advice. Both kings led the Israelites away from God. When we follow God, we need to be careful who we listen to. Not everyone will tell us what is true or right. But who will always lead us to what is true? God! We can follow God.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

SLIDE: WONDER TRUTH

Ask the following question to help kids connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is WE CAN FOLLOW GOD. Where did you see our Wonder Truth happen in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.

Even when the kingdom of Israel divided, God was faithful to His people and never stopped loving them. Sadly, the northern kingdom, Israel, had only ungodly kings. Judah in the south, however, had several kings who loved and followed God. The greatest king of all is Jesus—the everlasting King.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish the activity, pray with them and thank God for leading us.

God, thank You for being the best leader. Help us always listen to and follow You, no matter what happens. We love You! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: God loves you! He has given you the Bible, and He has put people in your life to share godly advice with you. May you listen to God's voice this week and always!