



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

LESSON 3 FOR LEADERS THE KINGDOM DIVIDES

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

Curiosity Activity: Silly Actions

We're going to hear a story about two kings who followed the advice of others, and we'll learn that we should follow God. He is the best leader! Let's play a game where we follow a leader and see how well we all follow and copy a silly action from a leader.

Gather the kids to sit or stand in a line. Tell the kids that the line will go backward (the leader is at one end and each kid going down the line is facing someone's back). Tell them to watch closely as you tap the next person in line to turn around and watch you do a silly action (see below for ideas) to the next person in line. Then that person will tap the next person, who will turn around and watch him do the same silly action. They will keep tapping the next person and doing the same silly action until the action has moved all the way down the line. When it gets to the end of the line, the person at the end will do it for the leader. Try to figure out how the silly action changed as it went down the line.

Use the following ideas for silly poses or actions:

- Do three jumping jacks and then spin in a circle.
- March in place with big, exaggerated movements, then touch your head with both hands.
- Do "Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes" while jumping up and down.
- Pretend to blow up an invisible balloon, and then pretend to bounce it in the air.
- Pretend to lift heavy weights and then fall down as if too tired to go on.

We all follow and learn from others. In this game, you followed and copied someone by copying the silly action. When we follow someone, we may try to do things the leader does. Today we're going to hear about the most important leader we can follow. Can you take a guess? Allow kids to answer. **We'll learn that we can follow God!**



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LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **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.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? ***The Bible***

Ask: Why is the Bible special? ***Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.***

Tell the Bible Story

The Big Picture Bible, page 90

King Solomon's Sin Divided the Kingdom

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Who were the two kings in today's story?** (*Jeroboam and Rehoboam*)
- **What happened to the kingdom of Israel?** (*It split into two kingdoms.*)
- **Who asked for advice for a decision?** (*both kings; Jeroboam and Rehoboam*)
- **What decisions did you have to make this week?**
- **Who could you ask to help you make good decisions?**
- **God can help us make wise decisions. What's a wise decision you have made this week?**
- **Has anyone ever given you wise or good advice?**
- **What do you need God to help you with this week?** (If kids need help, offer ideas such as: listening to parents, getting along with a sibling, not being scared, being kind.)

Leader Tip: Don't be surprised if young kids say silly or off-the-wall things when asked how they need God's help, and don't jump in to correct them. Their thinking is egocentric (they see the world through their own point of view) and concrete. Encourage and affirm all answers!

God is a wise leader, and we can follow Him. He wants us to ask Him for help and tell Him everything. He will lead us and give us other wise leaders who can help us make decisions and point us to Him. Let's talk to God now in prayer!

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and to thank God for His help and wisdom in our lives.

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

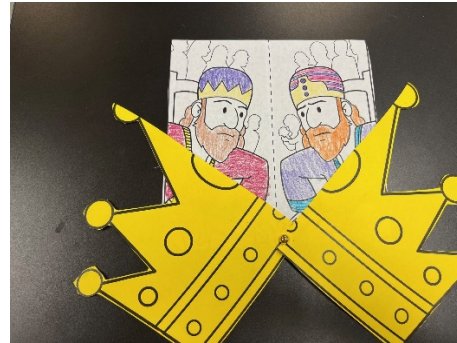
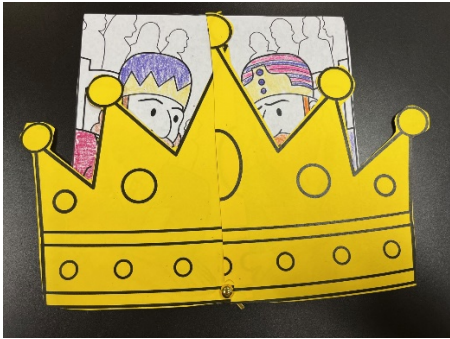
Come near to God, and he will come near to you.

—James 4:8a

LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Craft: Divided Kingdom

SUPPLIES: cardstock crown, cut in half (1 sheet per kid), 2 kings sheet (1 per kid), coloring utensils, jewels



We're going to make a craft to help us tell today's story. It starts with two kings. Does anyone remember their names? Allow the kids to respond. They were Jeroboam and Rehoboam. Jeroboam got some good advice and some bad advice. Which did he listen to? Allow the kids to respond. The bad advice. Then the kingdom of Israel split into two! Rehoboam didn't follow good advice either and he didn't worship God. Neither king listened to God or followed Him. We can listen to God and think, say, and do what God wants us to do. We can follow God! Let's make a craft to help us remember that!

Give each kid a cardstock crown and a 2 kings sheet and invite them to color and decorate. Then they can use a brad to attach the 2 parts of the crown together. When the 2 parts of the crown are separated, it will reveal the first 2 kings of the divided nation.

Take this home to help you remember our story of 2 kings today. Remember that we can follow God.



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LESSON 3 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Game: Follow the Leader

In our story today, we learned about two people who didn't follow God or listen to advice from people who followed God. God wanted the kingdom of Israel to be one nation and one group of people. God wanted both kings to lead His people closer to Him but both kings followed bad advice. They led the Israelites away from God. When we follow God, we need to be careful who we listen to. We can follow God! Let's play a game where we all get to take turns leading and following.

Have the kids form a line (or two lines, if you have a lot of kids.) The first kid will be the leader. The kids will march around the room doing whatever action or motion the leader does. To make it more challenging, the leader can say one thing (Example: "Clap your hands") and do something else (such as patting your head) and tell the kids in the line to only do what the leader does, not what the leader says. Every 20–40 seconds, switch leaders and let someone else lead the group. Every time you switch leaders, invite all the kids to say, "I can follow God!"

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!