



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

Play Stations

SUPPLIES: small toy cars, toy trains, painter's tape, decorative stickers, coloring utensils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: The Kingdom Divides Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet the kids warmly and briefly explain the play stations to them. Invite them to play at any of the stations.

Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help you get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas about what we'll be learning today?

Play Station: Cars and Trucks

Set up: Set out small toy cars and trains. Use painter's tape to create four paths on the floor: a straight line, a zigzag line, a swirly line, and a triangle.

Play: Let the kids play using the cars and trains to follow the tape and pretend it's a road. Encourage them to follow the paths and choose one car or train to be the "leader" that the others follow. You can even let them make their own path with painter's tape.

Play Station: The Kingdom Divides Coloring Sheet

Set up: Print one copy per kid of the coloring sheet and set out the coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw someone they follow.



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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!

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

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

—James 4:8a



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Game: Where Is It?

SUPPLIES: disposable cups (3), table tennis ball

We're learning today that we can follow God and others who know Him. God is the best leader. We don't need to listen to advice of others who don't follow God. We need to pay close attention to God to know what He wants and live the way He wants. Let's do a game where we will pay close attention and try to guess where a ball is hidden. Some people may give you advice, and you have to decide who to listen to.

Place the three cups face down on the table, and hide a table tennis ball under one cup. Slide the cups around to mix up the order. Choose one kid who will pick up a cup to try and find the ball. Before he lifts a cup, have other kids give him advice about which cup they think the ball is under. He can decide who to listen to before picking up a cup. Play several times so other kids can take turns picking up a cup.

When we follow someone, we watch them closely to see what they do. God always makes wise decisions and leads us to do the right thing. Remember, God is the best One to follow. He knows everything and knows what is best for us. Say it with me: "We can follow God!" Encourage the kids to respond.



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Responding in Worship: Follow Wherever I Go

SUPPLIES: painter's tape

Ahead of time, use painter's tape to make five Xs on the floor in different places of the room.

Today we learned we can follow God. It can be easy to follow other people instead of God, but the best leader of all is God. Did you know we can follow God all the time? God is always with us. He goes everywhere we go. Let's go to different places in our room and tell God we'll follow Him anywhere, any time! Stay in a line, follow me, and repeat after me. While we're walking, think about how you can follow God in each place or circumstance.

Start at one side of the room and invite the kids to line up behind you and follow you. Walk toward the first X on the floor.

God, I will follow You wherever I go. Allow kids to repeat.

Walk to the next X on the floor.

God, I will follow You when I don't know what to do. Allow kids to repeat.

Walk to another X on the floor.

God, I will follow You when I'm with my friends or family. Allow kids to repeat.

Walk to another X on the floor.

God, I will follow You when I'm at home. Allow kids to repeat.

Walk to the last X on the floor.

God, I will follow You when I'm all alone and feeling lonely. Allow kids to repeat.

We can follow God every day and everywhere we go. We can trust Him to always be with us and to always lead us. He will help us if we need help. We 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!