

The Wisdom of Solomon

1 Kings 3

Characters: Leader (you); Fake Mother; Real Mother; Solomon; Israelites (everyone else)

Costumes: Crown (keep to use again in Lessons 4, 6, 8, 10, 11, and 13)

Props: A baby doll; play sword; highlighter marker

Prepare: Print Leader Notes, Script, and Review Questions for yourself. Highlight your parts.

Collect props and the crown.

Leader Notes

This drama activity lets all children participate; it is not a performance. Encourage children to relax and enjoy participating.

As Leader, you introduce the skit, narrate, and direct the activity. Help students know where to move or what to do, as needed. Use the Review Questions after the skit to help students understand the Scripture.

If time allows, repeat the activity with students playing the same or different parts. Students often relax and enjoy doing the activity again. Children, especially those with language-processing delays, learn a lot from repetition.

Before you start, recruit a boy and 2 girls as helpers. Tell the boy he will play Solomon. Give him the crown and ask him to stand by you. Privately tell him that he should answer no to every question you ask him.

Privately tell the girls they will act out the parts of a Real Mother and a Fake Mother arguing over a baby. Do not reveal their identities to the rest of the students. Privately say that when you signal them, they should say, back and forth, "It's my baby!" and "No, it's my baby!" three times and then stop. Give the baby doll to the Fake Mother. Seat the girls near you.

Tell all characters that when you point at them, they should repeat your words.

Seat children around you. Tell them they are Israelites, who help figure out what happened.

Script

The Wisdom of Solomon; 1 Kings 3

LEADER: King David had a son named Solomon. After David died, Solomon became king. One night, God came to Solomon in a dream and said, "Ask for whatever you want Me to give you."

Wow! God was going to let Solomon have anything he wanted! What do you think Solomon asked to receive? Allow guesses, which might include money, cars, and other possessions. Help students think of qualities too, such as athletic ability, good health, and great eyesight.

Solomon could have asked for riches, victory in war, or even a very long life, but he didn't. Instead, he praised God for all the kindness the Lord had shown him. Then Solomon asked God to give him wisdom to be a good king and to tell right from wrong.

The Lord was very pleased with Solomon's request. What do you think the Lord did then? Allow guesses, which might include that God gave Solomon what he asked or that God said no.

Not only did God give Solomon great wisdom, but He also gave Solomon all of the things he could have asked for and didn't—riches and honor. What an awesome God we have! *(Leads ISRAELITES to clap and thank God.)*

Well, it wasn't long before Solomon used wisdom to make a very important decision. *(Asks BOTH MOTHERS to stand in front of SOLOMON.)*

In those days, people came to the king to settle their disputes, like judges in a courtroom. On this day, two women came to Solomon. One woman's baby had died during the night. Instead of burying her son, she switched her dead baby with the other woman's living baby. *(Signals MOTHERS to argue. When done, continue.)*

(To ISRAELITES) **What do you think about that?** Collect several responses; then lead ISRAELITES to respond based on what people said. For example, you might fake cry, boo, or say "Oh my!"

What a dilemma! What a problem! How in the world was Solomon going to prove which woman was the baby's real mother?

Solomon, can you run a DNA test to see who the real mother is?

SOLOMON: No!

LEADER: Oh, that's right, they didn't have DNA tests that long ago. How about doing a more simple blood test?

SOLOMON: No!

LEADER: Oh, you're correct that they didn't have blood tests either. How about seeing whom the baby looks like?

SOLOMON: No!

LEADER: Oh, of course, you probably can't tell little babies apart if you never saw them before.

(To ISRAELITES [students]) **So how will Solomon settle this dispute? Israelites, do you have any ideas?** *Let ISRAELITES make suggestions. As they do, ask others to evaluate the "wisdom" of each suggestion by asking, "What would happen then?" or "How would that help?"*

Solomon asked for a sword. *(Gives play sword to SOLOMON.)* **He said** *(points at SOLOMON to repeat phrases),* **"Cut the baby in half / and give each mother / one half of the baby".**

Oh my goodness! You don't think Solomon would really kill that poor innocent little baby, do you? *Let ISRAELITES respond; then ask them to raise their hands to vote yes or no.*

I think Solomon had a better idea. Remember, his wisdom came from God.

When Solomon said to cut the baby in half, one mother said *(points at REAL MOTHER to repeat phrases),* **"Don't kill him; / give him to the other woman!"**

But the other mother said, *(points at FAKE MOTHER to repeat phrase),* **"Go ahead and kill him!**

(Points at SOLOMON to repeat phrase.) **Give me the baby.** *(Tells FAKE MOTHER to hand baby to SOLOMON.)*

Solomon knew that the real mother would not let her child die, and he gave the baby to her. *(Tells SOLOMON to hand the baby to the REAL MOTHER.)* **The real mother loved and cared for her baby.** *(Tells ALL HELPERS to sit.)*

There were no cell phones, Internet, or television in those days, but it didn't take long for all of Israel to hear about Solomon's amazing solution. And they gave him great respect because they knew that God had given Solomon the wisdom to administer justice throughout the kingdom.

Review Questions

Understand the Bible account and make life applications

The Wisdom of Solomon; 1 Kings 3

Ask questions to check children's understanding of the skit and Bible account.

If you could be one person in this true story from the Bible, who would you be? Answers vary.

Where did Solomon get his wisdom? It was a gift from God.

What gifts does God give us, whether we ask for them or not? God gives us many gifts. He gives us grace through Christ Jesus—forgiveness of sin, eternal life, the promise of heaven, help to resist temptation, peace, and so on. He also gives us the Bible, our church, and our pastor and teachers. He daily blesses us with food, clothing, and shelter and gives us people to care for us and to be in our families.

Where do we hear God's love and grace in this story? Solomon showed grace by giving the child back to his own mother. God showed grace to Solomon by giving him the gift of wisdom. God shows grace to us by forgiving our sins for Jesus' sake and in all the gifts He gives us every day as part of His loving care.

Solomon Builds the Temple

1 Kings 5–6

Characters: Leader (you); 5 Readers; Measurers (everyone else)

Costumes: None

Props: A measuring tape or yardsticks; a few pieces of cedar (blocks or balls to prevent moths are available at home-goods stores); some gold objects (such as jewelry); bag to carry props; chairs (optional); highlighter markers

Prepare: Print Leader Notes, Script, and Review Questions for yourself. Highlight your parts.

Make 5 Scripts for readers. Highlight Scripts or have students do so during preparation time. Set up chairs for readers if you like.

Collect and carry props in a bag.

Leader Notes

This drama activity lets all children participate; it is not a performance. Include preparation time as part of the activity so that everyone sees and hears the plans. Encourage children to relax and enjoy participating.

As Leader, you introduce the skit and direct the activity. Help students know where to move or what to do, as needed. Use the Review Questions after the skit to help students understand the Scripture.

If time allows, repeat the activity with students playing the same or different parts. Students often relax and enjoy doing the activity again. Children, especially those with language-processing delays, learn a lot from repetition.

If possible, do the activity in a large area, at least 30 × 30-foot, such as a large meeting room or your sanctuary.

Recruit 5 Readers. Give them Scripts to read through. Give them highlighters to mark their parts, if you did not do it.

Gather students in a large circle. Intersperse Readers around the circle. Do not stand 2 Readers beside each other if you can avoid it.

Script

Solomon Builds the Temple; 1 Kings 5–6

LEADER: Today, we find out about the temple that King Solomon, David's son and successor, built to worship and honor the Lord.

READER 1: David became king during a time of war, and fighting continued until David defeated all of the Lord's enemies.

READER 2: Because David was known as a man of war, the Lord said David could not build His temple.

READER 3: When David's son Solomon became king, Israel experienced peace.

READER 4: Solomon's name even means "the peaceful one."

READER 5: Because Israel had peace, God instructed Solomon to build a temple for His name.

LEADER: Build a temple for God's name? What does that mean? Let students share ideas. Help them know that names have meanings and tell about someone. A name can include reputation, fame, or memory.

A temple for God's name means a building that tells about Him, calls people to remember Him and His works, reminds people who the Lord is: "The LORD is slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, forgiving iniquity and transgression, but He will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, to the third and the fourth generation" (Numbers 14:18).

READER 1: In the temple, a house of worship, the Israelites honored and remembered the name of the Lord, the one true God.

READER 2: In the temple, God served His people and offered them His Word and forgiveness.

READER 3: For 400 years before this, God served His people through a tabernacle, a movable tent built by Moses according to God's instructions.

READER 4: They kept the ark of the covenant, a special golden box, in the Most Holy Place of the tabernacle tent.

READER 5: God was present in the ark of the covenant. From the ark, the Lord forgave and spoke to His people.

LEADER: Who remembers what was inside of the ark of the covenant? Help students know the ark contained tablets of the Ten Commandments, Aaron's staff, and manna from the desert. These are signs of God's work for His people.

READER 1: Now that Israel was at peace, they didn't need to move the tabernacle from place to place.

READER 2: God said it was time to build a permanent house for His name.

READER 3: So Solomon built the Lord's temple with some very special materials.

LEADER: The most important material that Solomon used was cedar. Does anyone know what cedar is or where we get it? Allow answers; then explain. Cedar is a type of evergreen tree that smells good. (*Pass around cedar samples to smell.*)

READER 4: Some of you may have a cedar chest in your home where you store blankets. Cedar protects the blankets, makes them smell good, and keeps away moths.

READER 5: Solomon got his cedar from the most famous forests in the world, in Lebanon.

READER 1: These trees belonged to the country of Tyre, so Solomon and King Hiram, the king of Tyre, worked out a trade.

READER 2: Solomon gave Hiram food for his people, and Hiram gave Solomon cedar.

READER 3: The outside of the temple was built with stone, but Solomon lined the inside walls with cedar, from ceiling to floor.

LEADER collects cedar pieces before going on.

READER 4: Then Solomon set apart a special area in the temple that was twenty cubits long, twenty cubits wide, and twenty cubits high.

LEADER: Does anyone know how long a cubit is? Allow answers; then explain. People in the Old Testament used cubits to measure. A cubit was about eighteen inches, the length of a man's arm from elbow to fingertips.

READER 5: A foot is twelve inches, so twenty cubits is about thirty feet.

LEADER: Now, I need everyone's help to measure out this special area that Solomon set apart in the temple. Let's mark a space here that's thirty feet wide and thirty feet long.

MEASURERS mark off a 30 × 30-foot area with measuring tools. EVERYONE lines up along those measurements, side by side, all the way around the square. If there aren't enough children for a continuous line, have ONE PERSON stand at each corner and then fill in with the OTHERS.

LEADER: *(Standing in the middle of the space)* **This was the size of the inner sanctuary, called the Most Holy Place.**

READER 1: **The golden ark of the covenant sat in this place.** *(LEADER shows gold samples.)*

READER 2: **The golden ark had two golden cherubim, or angels, on top that faced each other.**

READER 3: **The walls of the temple were also covered in gold, and gold chains held the curtains that separated this room from the rest of the temple.**

LEADER: **There were two more gold-covered items here. Do know what they were? Allow guesses; then explain.** **Solomon made a pair of very large cherubim, or angels, ten cubits high with wings that were ten cubits long, from tip to tip.**

Can someone tell me how big the wings measured in feet? About fifteen feet tall and fifteen feet wide, from wing tip to wing tip. They literally stood from wall to wall.

MEASURERS mark off 15 feet to show how large the cherubim were, and then sit down.

READER 4: **Solomon finished the temple in just seven years.**

READER 5: **The temple was a special place of worship for the Israelites, just as our own sanctuary is a special place of worship today.**

LEADER: **It doesn't matter whether a church is gold or plain, or big or small; where two or three are gathered to praise God, the Lord is there, and it is beautiful!**

Review Questions

Understand the Bible account and make life applications

Solomon Builds the Temple; 1 Kings 5–6

Ask questions to check children's understanding of the skit and Bible account.

Let's see what you remember. How long was a cubit? Eighteen inches, or the length from a man's elbow to fingertips.

Why did Solomon (not David) get to build the temple? The wars were over, and it was a time of peace and stability when a permanent temple could be built.

What kind of wood did Solomon use to line the temple walls, and where did he get it? Cedar wood from the forests of Lebanon.

What other materials did Solomon use for the temple? Stone, pine, gold.

Where do we hear God's love and grace in this story? Finally, God's people were at peace. The wars were over. This truly was a gift of love from God. God also gives us His gift of peace through His Son, Jesus Christ. Before we knew Jesus, our Savior, our sin put us at war with God. Jesus reconciled us with God through His death and resurrection. Jesus brought peace to all who believe in Him and call on His name. We joyfully thank and worship our triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.