

THE ISRAELITES WANTED A KING

1 SAMUEL 8-10



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 103:19

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is our King? Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The Israelites rejected God as King and chose Saul to be their king. When we sin, we also reject God's rule in our lives as King. Jesus, the King of kings, died for our sin and rose again so we could be forgiven.

STORY POINT: Israel rejected God as King and chose Saul to be their king.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

As the time of the judges came to an end, God's people grew discontent with the leadership of Samuel's sons. The elders of Israel, desiring to be more like the nations surrounding them, commanded Samuel to appoint a king to rule over them. In His perfect wisdom, God would give His people over to their desire for an earthly king. Yet, God revealed how Israel's desire for an earthly king ultimately showcased their rejection of Him as their one true King.

What were the spiritual implications of the Israelites' desire for a king? How does Christ fit into the narrative?

The Israelites once again found themselves in a season of discontentment—unhappy with their circumstances, as well as God's provision and leadership in their lives. Like their ancestors before them, they forgot how He freed them from slavery and preserved and provided for them as His chosen people. Rather than seeking the Lord with hearts of worship, the Israelites placed their focus on the nations around them. They did not trust in the faithfulness of God to continue providing for them.

Consider the ways we are tempted to place our hope in earthly things rather than on the things above (Colossians 3:2). The people rejected God as their King, and we fall into the same pattern when we seek the things of the world in place of the God who created it.

Lead boys and girls to see how Israel had a divided heart toward God and how Christ came to free us from the power of sin that separates us from Him. When we trust in Jesus by faith, He gives us new hearts that worship Him alone as King. Pray for children's eyes to be opened to the love Christ has shown us through His life, death, and resurrection—freeing us to follow the God who rules and reigns with all power and with all care for His creation.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Create a Crown" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ paper crown
- ☐ music



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ Story Point Posters, 2 copies per group

Reflection and Prayer

- ☐ Bible story coloring page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "The Israelites Wanted a King" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ felt board (optional)

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 10, Session 1" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Temples of Thailand, Part 1" missions video
- ☐ world map

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "The LORD Is Over All (Psalm 103:19)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

| **SAY** “What is something you have begged for? Maybe a new toy or time with friends.”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Create a Crown” activity page.

| **SAY** “Today, we will see how **ISRAEL REJECTED GOD AS KING AND CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING**. This means they didn’t want God to be their king, but instead wanted a human king.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: PASS THE CROWN



Direct kids to sit down in a circle. Give one kid in the circle a paper crown. Challenge kids to pass the crown around the circle as soon as the music begins. When the music stops, the kid holding the crown should place it on his head, stand up, and give a direction to the other kids. For example, he may say, “hop on one foot.” Continue until all the kids have had at least one chance to wear the crown.

| **SAY** “Kings have the authority to tell people what to do. Some kings may use their power for good, while others may use their power for bad. In our story, we’ll see that Israel wanted to have a king like other nations. **ISRAEL REJECTED GOD AS KING AND CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING**. When the people chose Saul to be king, we’ll learn how the prophet Samuel warned the people about all the power an earthly king can have.”

☐ OPTION 2: I WANT!

On a dry erase board, write down a list of items kids may want. Examples include, video games, books, phone, clothes, shoes, candy, art crafts, sports equipment, bike, skateboard, etc. Read the list aloud, inviting kids to give a thumbs up if they would choose to have that item. Then challenge kids to make a choice of having only one item from the list. Discuss why they choose their specific items.

| **SAY** “Was it hard to choose only one item? Today, we will learn how Israel wanted something the other nations around them had: a king. Israel had a choice to make. They could either choose an earthly king. Or they could choose to follow God as King. What do you think they chose to do? [Allow responses.] **ISRAEL REJECTED GOD AS KING AND CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING**.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m so glad you are here. Today, we will be reading from the Old Testament. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, we’ll be in the book of 1 Samuel.

God’s people were living in the land of Canaan, just as God had promised to give them. But instead of worshiping God, they began to follow the gods of the nations around them. The people wanted a king like the people living by them. We’ll learn that **ISRAEL REJECTED GOD AS KING AND CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and prepare our hearts to hear God’s Word: ‘Lord, thank You for Your Word. Help us learn how You are a good and perfect King. Help our hearts choose to follow You and Your ways. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “We can always trust God’s Word because it is absolutely true. As we study the Bible, we also learn big truths about God, people, and the world. Our big picture question is, **Who is our King?** The answer is, **Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.**

Today, we will see that Israel rejected God and wanted an earthly king to be their leader. They chose a man named Saul as their king. When we sin, we reject God’s rule as King in our lives, just like the Israelites rejected God as King. God sent His Son, Jesus, to die for our sin, so that we can be forgiven. Jesus is the one true King and is King over all earthly kings. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “God helped Israel take over the land of Canaan, but some of the surrounding nations were still left in the land. As Israel lived in Canaan, they began to worship the false gods of these nations. As a consequence to their sin, God allowed the nations to rule over His people. When the people cried out to God, He sent judges to rescue them.

Let’s review our timeline by remembering some of the judges God sent to rescue His people. [Point to the stories of The First Judges, Deborah Led Israel, Gideon Led Israel, and Samson and the Philistines.] Eventually, the Israelites decided they wanted a king to rule over them, just as the other nations had. Today, we’ll see how **ISRAEL REJECTED GOD AS KING AND CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING.** ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 7:15–10:27. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Israelites Wanted a King.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE ISRAELITES WANTED A KING

“When Samuel grew old, he made his sons judges over Israel. Sadly, Samuel’s sons did not follow his example. They were bad leaders of God’s people.”

The elders of Israel went to Samuel and said, “You are old, and your sons do not walk in your ways. Give us a king to be our ruler, just as all the other nations have.”

Samuel prayed to the Lord. God said, “They have not rejected you; they have rejected me as their king. Listen to them, but also warn them about the power a king has over the people he rules.”

Samuel went to the people and said, “Here are the things a king will do. He will take your sons to join his army. He will take your daughters to serve in his house. He will take your best fields and give them to his servants. He will take a tenth of your crops and your flocks. You will cry out for help, but the LORD will not answer you.”

The people refused to listen to Samuel. “No! We must have a king over us,” they said.

God told Samuel, “Listen to the people, and appoint a king for them.”

Now, there was an impressive young man named Saul who was a head taller than everyone else in Israel. One day, his father’s donkeys wandered off, and Saul was sent to find them. After looking for several days, Saul’s servant recommended they ask Samuel for help.

Before Saul met Samuel, God told Samuel that He would send him a man to rule over His people. God said this man would save His people from the Philistines. When Samuel saw Saul, the Lord said, “This is the man who will be king over my people Israel.” Samuel took a flask of oil and anointed Saul as the future king. Saul then returned home and said nothing to his family about it.

Later, Samuel called all the people together. One by one, the tribes, clans, and families of Israel came before Samuel, and Saul was selected as king. They searched for him everywhere and could not find him. Then the Lord said, “There he is, hidden with the supplies.”

When the people saw how tall and impressive Saul was, they shouted, “Long live the king!” Samuel appointed Saul as king, and then he sent all the people home.

STORYTELLING TIPS

Make a list: On a dry erase board, write down ways an earthly king can use his power. Then write down how God rules with words such as *kind, all-powerful, forgiving, just, merciful, generous, etc.*

Make a felt board: Use a felt board to tell the story. If a felt board is not available to you, print off pictures and display them on a dry erase board as you tell the story.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

Christ Connection: The Israelites rejected God as King and chose Saul to be their king. When we sin, we also reject God's rule in our lives as King. Jesus, the King of kings, died for our sin and rose again so we could be forgiven. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Samuel was a prophet of the Lord who spoke to the people on behalf of God and who also spoke to God on behalf of the people. What did the people of Israel tell Samuel they wanted? [Allow responses.] The people of Israel wanted a king like the other nations. But the kings of other nations were not good and loving like God. The earthly kings used their power however they wanted. God is a kind King who uses His power for our good.

Who did the people reject as their King? [Allow responses.] God told Samuel that the people rejected Him as their King. God warned the people of some of the things that can happen with having a human king, but the people did not listen. God told Samuel to listen to Israel and appoint a king over them. Even though the people chose an earthly king, God was still in charge. He is the King of everything, and He was faithful to be with His people.

Who did the people choose as their King? [Allow responses.] **ISRAEL REJECTED GOD AS KING AND CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING.** The people were impressed by Saul and how tall he was. He looked like a king. But Saul would never be a perfect king like God. The people sinned when they rejected God. When we sin, we also reject God's rule in our lives as King. Jesus, the King of kings, died for our sin and rose again so we could be forgiven. **Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world.** ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ The Bible tells us that we have all sinned, but God sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. When we accept Jesus as Savior, we turn from sin and trust Him as the King of our lives. I'd love to share more about how you can trust in Jesus. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 10, Session 1” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why was Jesus known as King?
2. Have you accepted Jesus as the King of your life? Do you worship Him alone? Why?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “Over 15 million people live in Bangkok, the colorful, busy capital city of Thailand. [Point to Bangkok on a world map.] Thailand is often referred to as “The Land of Smiles.” Smiling is a way the people show politeness, care, and forgiveness. Even though Thai people show kindness to others, many of them do not know about Jesus. In this growing city, less than three percent of the people are Christians.”

Play the missions video. Explain how missionary Doug Derbyshire helps people as a medical doctor in Bangkok, Thailand. Tell kids that Dr. Derbyshire’s clinic serves as a hub for telling people throughout the country about Jesus. Sometimes Dr. Derbyshire’s clinic helps and medical teams from the United States host mobile clinics, which allow them to help many in many different areas and tell them about Jesus. Pray for Dr. Derbyshire and his staff as they tell people in Thailand about Jesus. Pray that many Thai people will learn about Jesus.”

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 103:19 together.

SAY “Our key passage reminds us that God is King over everything. We can trust Him and follow His good commands.”

Play a game similar to musical chairs. Place a chair for each kid in a circle and label one chair the “throne.” Play music and lead kids to say the key passage aloud. When you stop the music, the kid who sits in the “throne” chair is the winner of that round. Repeat as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “The LORD Is Over All (Psalm 103:19).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “God, thank You for being a good and perfect King who rules over everything. Help us follow Your Son, Jesus, and trust in Him to be saved. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles, and display the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 10. Explain that the book of 1 Samuel is in the Old Testament and tells us about the time when Israel stopped being led by judges and began being led by kings.

Consider pointing out the location of Israel (F10) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 10:19 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ God told the people that He is the One who has saved them from all their troubles and hardships. No earthly king rescued God’s people from slavery in Egypt. No earthly king helped God’s people when their enemies attacked them. God had always been in charge and was faithful to save His people. But God’s people chose an earthly king over God. Even though Saul would be their king, God ruled over King Saul.

We all sin and choose to be our own rulers. But God sent Jesus, the King of kings, to die for our sin and rise again so we could be forgiven. King Jesus makes us right before God and helps us follow Him as our King. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ How do we try to be rulers over our lives? Why is this dangerous? ”

Tell kids that when we choose to turn away from God and do what we think is best, we are acting like our own rulers. Any disobedience to God is sin, whether we don’t listen to His command to obey our parents or we tell a lie. Following our own way is dangerous because it leads us away from God and toward eternal death.

SAY “ Why is God the perfect King? ”

Remind kids that Samuel warned the Israelites about the ways a king could use his power for his own selfish reasons. Share how God is the perfect King because everything He does is for His glory and our good. Everything He does is right. God rules the world with love, justice, and mercy. He uses His power to save us from our sin and give us eternal life through faith in Jesus.

SAY “ How can Jesus become our King? ”

Discuss how Jesus can be King of our lives by trusting in Him as our Savior. The Bible tells us that everyone has sinned and needs to be saved from their sins. God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and rise again, taking the punishment our sin deserved. When we tell God that we have sinned and turn from that sin, God forgives us. Then God helps our hearts want to follow Jesus and obey Him.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: STORY POINT MEMORY

Print two copies of the Story Point Poster for each group of three or four kids. Cut each copy into 12 cards, one word per card. Lead groups to lay their cards, face down, in four rows of six. Kids will take turns turning over one card and then another to see if they get a match. If a match is found, the kid receives another turn. If not, the cards return to their place. Whoever has the most matches wins that round. Play several rounds as time allows. Then invite kids to volunteer to say the story point from memory.

SAY “ ISRAEL REJECTED GOD AS KING AND CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING. When we sin, we also reject God’s rule in our lives as King. Jesus, the King of kings, died for our sin and rose again so we could be forgiven. Jesus is our King forever, and He rules over the world. ”

☐ OPTION 2: OLD OR NEW?



Lead kids to line up in the center of the room. Explain that when you call out a book of the Bible, kids should determine if the book is in the Old Testament or the New Testament. If the book is in the Old Testament, kids will take a step to the left. If the book is in the New Testament, kids should take a step to the right. After each round, kids should line back up in the center. For an added challenge, consider calling out a name that is not a Bible book. If the name is not in the Bible, kids remain in place.

SAY “ Our story today was found in the book of 1 Samuel, which is in the Old Testament. The Bible is God’s true Word and helps us know Him. As we study the Bible, we learn how He is Creator and King. Whether we are in the Old Testament or the New Testament, all of the Bible teaches us that God’s plan as King was to save people from their sin. God sent Jesus to be our forever King who forgives our sin. ”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.