

THE ISRAELITES WANTED A KING

1 SAMUEL 8-10



CHRIST CONNECTION: God's people chose Saul to be king. When we sin, we choose ourselves instead of God. Jesus came to save us from our sins so we can follow God. God is our good and kind King.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Who is our King? Jesus is our King.

KEY PASSAGE: The LORD rules over everything. Psalm 103:19

STORY POINT: Israel 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 God 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 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 care for His creation.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30–40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60–65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Follow the path

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ painter's tape



LEARN

Tell the Bible story

- ☐ "The Israelites Wanted a King" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Make a puppet

- ☐ paper bags, 1 per child
- ☐ yarn, 3-inch piece per child

Find donkeys

- ☐ sand
- ☐ sand toys
- ☐ large container
- ☐ toy donkey or horse figures, 4 or 5



LIVE

Missions activity

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

Snack and transition

- ☐ hand sanitizer (optional)
- ☐ "Complete the Picture" activity page, 1 per child
- ☐ Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker

Sort jewels

- ☐ plastic jewels
- ☐ bowls

Dress as royalty

- ☐ dress-up clothing
- ☐ crowns
- ☐ scepters



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the room. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

FOLLOW THE PATH

Use painter's tape to outline a path from the doorway into the room. Weave the path around furniture in the room, ending at a Bible. Place a copy of the Bible Story Picture Poster inside the Bible. Post the Big Picture Question Poster near the entrance to the room. Greet preschoolers as they enter the room and point out the Big Picture Question Poster. Invite preschoolers to hop along the path to the Bible to see who Israel wanted to be their king. Meet the preschooler at the end of the path and encourage her to open the Bible to reveal the Bible Story Picture Poster.

SAY “ I am so glad you are at church today. Our big picture question asks, **Who is our King? Jesus is our King.** The path ends at the Bible, where we learn that **ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING.** ”

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





LEARN the Bible Story

1 FIND JEWELS

Cut colored construction paper into jewel shapes. Hide paper jewels around the room in plain sight. Encourage preschoolers to find a jewel and bring it to group time. Assist children as needed so that everyone brings a jewel to the group to show others. Invite preschoolers to place the jewels at their seats so they are not distracted.

SAY “Jewels remind me of a king or queen. The leaders in Israel told Samuel that they wanted a king to be their leader. **ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING.**”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 8–10. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

THE ISRAELITES WANTED A KING

SAY “God’s servant, Samuel, was getting old. Samuel gave his two sons the job of being judges in Israel. Sadly, Samuel’s sons were not good judges.

The leaders in Israel talked to Samuel. “We want a king,” they said.

Samuel talked to God about it. God said, “They don’t want Me to be their king. Tell them a human king is not a good idea.”

So, Samuel told the people, “A king will take your sons to be in his army. Your daughters will have to work for him. He’ll take your best things to keep for himself. It won’t be good.”

But the people didn’t listen. They said, “We want a king!”

One day, Samuel met a big, strong man named Saul. Saul was looking for his father’s missing donkeys. God said to Samuel, “Saul should be the king.” So, Samuel poured oil on Saul’s head to show he would be king someday.

Later, Samuel called God’s people together. They looked for Saul, but he was hiding. When they found him, they shouted, “Hooray for the king!”

Saul became the king in Israel.

Christ Connection: God’s people chose Saul to be king. When we sin, we choose ourselves instead of God. Jesus came to save us from our sins so we can follow God. God is our good and kind King.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Invite preschoolers to place their jewels on the Bible Story Picture Poster as they answer a question about the story. Suggested questions: Who did Israel want to be their leader? (a king) Who was Israel's first king? (Saul) What did the people shout? (Hooray for the king!)

SAY “Israel wanted a king to be their leader. **ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING.** Samuel poured oil on Saul's head to show that he would be the king. When we sin, we choose our own way instead of God's way. Jesus came to save us from our sins so we can follow God. God is our good and kind King.”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”:

The LORD rules over everything, everything, everything.

The LORD rules over everything.

Psalm 103:19

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 103:19. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Encourage preschoolers to do the following motions when saying the key passage phrase: The LORD (point upward) rules over everything (spread both arms wide) Psalm 103:19. Say the key passage phrase together several times.

SAY “**ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING**, but the Bible says. ‘The LORD rules over everything.’ Psalm 103:19.”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for being our good and kind King.

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





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 PLAY A "WHO IS THE KING?" GAME



Write Saul on two pieces of construction paper in large letters. Write Jesus on three pieces of construction paper in large letters. Arrange the papers on the floor. Ask "Who is the king?" and invite a preschooler to toss a beanbag onto the papers. If the beanbag lands on one of the Saul papers, lead preschoolers to respond, "Saul was the first king of Israel." If the beanbag lands on one of the Jesus papers, lead preschoolers to respond, "Jesus is our King!"

SAY 🗨️ The leaders in Israel told Samuel they wanted a king. Samuel warned the people that a human king would take their sons to be in his army and their daughters to work for him, but the people did not listen. Samuel poured oil on Saul's head to show **ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING**. Our big picture question asks, **Who is our King? Jesus is our King**. Jesus is our good and kind King. He rules over everything. 🗨️

2 MAKE A PUPPET

Before the session, cut crown shapes out of construction paper. The crowns should be the width of the paper bags. Place paper bags, crowns, yarn, markers, and glue on a table. Invite preschoolers to make paper bag puppets resembling kings and queens. Demonstrate how to draw a face on the bottom flap of the bag. Encourage preschoolers to glue the yarn on the puppet like hair and decorate the puppet with the markers. Glue a crown on the top. Encourage preschoolers to have their puppets say the big picture question and answer, **Who is our King? Jesus is our King**.

SAY 🗨️ You made a puppet that looks like a king or queen. The people of Israel wanted a human king even though Samuel told them it was not a good idea. **ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING**. When we sin, we choose ourselves instead of God. Jesus came to save us from our sins so we can follow God. God is our good and kind King. **Who is our King? Jesus is our King**. 🗨️

3 FIND DONKEYS

Place donkey or horse animal figures in a large plastic container. Fill the container about one-third full with play sand. Place sand toys near the container. Invite children to use their hands or the sand toys to find the donkeys hidden in the sand. Encourage preschoolers to hide the donkeys again in the sand after they have found them all.

SAY 🗨️ You found all of the donkeys hidden in the sand. One day, Samuel met a big, strong man named Saul. Saul was out looking for his father's missing donkeys. The people of Israel had told Samuel they wanted a human king even though Samuel told the people it was not a good idea. Samuel poured oil on Saul's head to show that **ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING**. 🗨️

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 CREATE A CROWN MURAL

Cut a large sheet of paper into the shape of a crown. Write the key passage phrase on the crown. Use painter's tape to adhere the crown to the wall at the eye level of the children in your class. Invite preschoolers to decorate the large crown with washable markers and assorted stickers.

SAY “ I like the way you decorated the crown. What do you think of when you imagine a king or queen? [Allow responses.] Yes! A king or queen often wears a crown. **ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING.** Our key passage phrase says, ‘The LORD rules over everything.’ God is our good and kind King. He is the ruler over everything. ”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Remind preschoolers that the good news about Jesus is too good to keep to ourselves! God wants us to tell others about Jesus. A follower of Jesus who is sent to tell others about Jesus is called a missionary. Point to the country of Thailand on a world map. Mention that in today's missions video, preschoolers will see large statues called idols that people worship. Show the “Temples of Thailand, Part 1” missions video. Pray for Dr. Derbyshire and his staff as they tell their patients in Thailand about Jesus.

SAY “ Many people live in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. There are busy streets and tall buildings. But few people in Bangkok know about Jesus. Thailand is filled with friendly people and is often referred to as ‘The Land of Smiles.’ Smiling is a way the people show they care about others. ”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION

Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “ God's people chose Saul to be king. When we sin, we choose ourselves instead of God. Jesus came to save us from our sins so we can have forgiveness and life with God forever. God is our good and kind King. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 LOOK FOR SOMEONE



Invite preschoolers to pretend like they are looking for someone as they come to group time. Demonstrate how to pretend to wear binoculars by creating circles with your hands and placing them over your eyes, or how to use your hand to shade your eyes as you look far away. Tell children that God's people looked for Saul.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 8–10. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story.

THE ISRAELITES WANTED A KING

- Samuel was getting old. He gave his two sons the job of being judges in Israel.
- Samuel's sons were not good judges, so God's people said, "We want a king!"
- Samuel warned the people that having a king was not a good idea, but the people did not listen.
- Samuel met a man named Saul. God said Saul should be the king.
- Saul tried to hide, but the people found him. "Hooray for the king!" they said. Saul became the king in Israel.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb":

The LORD rules over everything, everything, everything.
The LORD rules over everything.
Psalm 103:19

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 103:19. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Encourage preschoolers to pretend to place a crown on their heads as you repeat the key passage phrase several times. Tell children that Saul became the king of Israel, but the Lord rules over everything.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God that Jesus is our good and kind King.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 FIND SAUL

Draw and cut out a simple figure that resembles Saul. To make the game more difficult, draw a smaller figure. Hide the figure somewhere in the room. Invite preschoolers to help you find the paper Saul. Give clues to assist children in finding the paper Saul. Once he has been found, encourage preschoolers to say, "Hooray for the king!" Invite children to hide their eyes while another preschooler hides the paper Saul again.

SAY “ You found Saul. **ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE THEIR KING.** They wanted a king even though Samuel told them it was not a good idea. Samuel told the people that a human king would take their best things to keep for himself and make their sons be in his army. Samuel poured oil on Saul’s head to show he would be king someday. Later when Samuel called God’s people together, Saul was hiding. When the people found him, they shouted, ‘Hooray for the king!’ ”

7 SORT JEWELS

Place plastic jewels and small bowls on a table. Demonstrate how to sort the jewels by color and place the groups of jewels into the bowls. Older preschoolers may want to count how many jewels they have of each color and compare which group has the most or least amount.

SAY “ You did a great job sorting all the jewels. We think about jewels when we think about kings and queens. The people of Israel wanted a king. Samuel tried to tell them that it would not be a good idea, but the people still wanted a king. **ISRAEL CHOSE SAUL TO BE KING.** Samuel poured oil on Saul’s head to show that he would be king someday. When we sin, we choose ourselves instead of God. Jesus came to save us from our sins so we can follow God. God is our good and kind King. ”

8 DRESS AS ROYALTY

Place dress-up clothes including dresses, sport jackets, scarves, capes, jewelry, and props such as crowns and scepters out for preschoolers to explore. Encourage children to try on the clothes and look at themselves in a mirror.

SAY “ These clothes remind me of clothes a king or queen would wear. The leaders in Israel talked to Samuel and told him they wanted a king. Samuel warned the people that having a king was not a good idea, but the people did not listen. God said that Saul should be the king, so Samuel poured oil on his head to show he would be king someday. ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.