

ISRAEL'S EVIL KINGS

1 KINGS 14-15; 2 CHRONICLES 12-13



KEY PASSAGE: 1 Kings 8:60

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How many gods are there? There is one true God who alone deserves worship.

CHRIST CONNECTION: The first kings of Israel led the people to disobey God and to worship idols. Israel's kings suffered the consequences of their sin. We all sin when we disobey God and worship other things. Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sin and bring us back to God.

STORY POINT: Israel's kings did evil in God's sight and worshiped idols.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

When we hear the word idolatry, we might think about the golden calf in Exodus 32. While today's story includes King Jeroboam crafting two physical golden calves, it points to the invisible idolatry of the heart. What is idolatry? Idolatry is a sin in which we love and value something else above God.

Rehoboam had been cruel to God's people, and because of his harsh treatment, ten tribes rejected him as king and sought out Jeroboam to be king of Israel. Rehoboam's domain in Judah was smaller but held an important status because it was the location of the temple.

Jeroboam feared the people would eventually abandon him and return to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. Taking matters into his own hands, Jeroboam led the people to break the law of Moses and worship two golden calves. God was angry with Jeroboam and sent the prophet Ahijah to tell Jeroboam that he had behaved wickedly, that God was going to bring disaster upon his house, and that there would be a new king over Israel.

After Jeroboam, Israel had other evil kings—Nadab and Baasha. Like Jeroboam, they led Israel to turn away from God and worship idols. All three of these kings were eventually judged for their sin.

The first three kings of Israel led the people to disobey God. We all sin by disobeying God. Like Israel's kings, we may turn to other things above the Lord. Is there anything that has become an idol in your heart? As you prepare this week, remember the gift of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that paid the price of our sin. Likewise, remind kids that Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sinful idolatry and bring us back to God. Pray for boys and girls to grasp the weight of our sinful choices to worship other things and the depth of Christ's love to provide salvation.



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

- ☐ "What's Idolatry?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ magnets, 1 per group
- ☐ magnetic items, 1 per group
- ☐ paper plates, 1 per group

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ small paper cup
- ☐ large, heavy books



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ index cards, 1 per kid

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "Walk In Obedience" activity 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

- ☐ "Israel's Evil Kings" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster
- ☐ dry erase board and marker (optional)

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 13, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Aaron Taylor and Ohio Map Photos" printable

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ index cards



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 “When was a time someone may have asked you to do something you knew was wrong? How did you respond?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “What’s Idolatry?” activity page.

SAY “When you unscrambled the words, you learned that idolatry is a sin of the heart where someone loves and values something more than God. Today, we will see that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS.**”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: PULLED TOWARD SIN

Form kids into groups of three or four. Distribute a paper plate, a magnet, a pen, and a magnetic object (like a screw or paperclip) to each group. Lead groups to draw a path on their plate, any direction or length they want. Then guide kids to take turns placing the magnetic object at the start of the path. Lead kids to hold the magnet under the plate and move the magnet so that the object follows the path. Allow all kids to have a turn, then lead groups to switch plates and try again. Repeat as time allows.

SAY “The Bible tells us that our hearts are deceitful and wicked. Like these magnetic paths, we are naturally pulled toward sin and follow the path of our sinful desires. Today, we will see how God’s people followed their sinful desires. **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS.** But with Jesus there is good news! Jesus can change our hearts to follow His ways where we experience His forgiveness, goodness, and love.”

☐ OPTION 2: CRUSHED UNDER PRIDE



Perform a demonstration to help kids see the effects of pride. Place a small paper cup on a table. Tell kids the cup represents a person. Begin placing large, heavy books one at a time on top of the cup. Tell the kids the books are “pride.” Eventually, the cup will collapse and be crushed by the weight of the books. Discuss how pride always leads to destruction because pride sets itself up against the one true God.

SAY “Today, we will see how Israel’s evil kings led God’s people to sin by worshiping idols. The kings were prideful and led the people to turn away from God because of their own pride. They wanted people to follow them and their ways. But there is only one true God who is worthy of our worship and devotion. Following idols or the ways of this world will only lead to ruin. But when we follow God and His Son, Jesus, we find true happiness and life.”

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]. I’m looking forward to studying the Bible together. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to 1 Kings.]

Last week, we saw how the kingdom of God’s people was divided into the Northern Kingdom and the Southern Kingdom. The Northern Kingdom was called Israel, and the Southern Kingdom was called Judah. Today, we will learn more about the kings of Israel. We’ll see that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS.** [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s go to God in prayer: ‘Dear God, thank You for helping us understand that You alone are to be worshiped because You are the One true God. Help us have hearts that desire to follow You and turn away from idols. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ Our big picture question is, **How many gods are there?** Do you remember the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.**

God commands His people to worship Him alone because only He is worthy of worship. Everything else will disappoint us because they are not everlasting, perfectly true, fully good, and mighty to save. Today, we will see how Israel’s evil kings led the people to disobey God’s command and worship false gods. But their foolishness can help us remember to worship God alone. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “ King Solomon was the last king of the united kingdom. Solomon began his reign following the Lord faithfully, but he eventually allowed his heart to worship idols. After Solomon died, his son, Rehoboam, became king. Last week, we learned that Rehoboam’s foolish sin divided the kingdom. Today, we will see how this division caused many problems and how **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS.** ”



LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to 1 Kings 14–15; 2 Chronicles 12–13. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Israel’s Evil Kings.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

ISRAEL’S EVIL KINGS

“When God’s people split into two separate kingdoms, King Jeroboam became king over Israel in the north. Unlike King David, **Jeroboam did not keep God’s commands and follow Him with all his heart**, doing what is right. **Jeroboam acted wickedly and made false gods for the people to worship.**

God was angry with Jeroboam. He sent the prophet Ahijah to tell him: “You have behaved wickedly, and **I am going to bring disaster on you. There will be a new king over Israel.** The new king will completely destroy the house of Jeroboam.

Then the kingdom of Israel went to war with the kingdom of Judah. The king of Judah said to the people of Israel, “You have left the LORD your God! **You worship golden calves**, and you banished the priests of the LORD and made new priests. But **we continue to worship God.** We make offerings to Him every morning and every evening. **We are obeying the commandments of the LORD, but you are not. Do not fight against us, because you will not win!”**

God was with the people of Judah because of a promise He had made to King David, and they defeated Jeroboam and the army of Israel. Then the Lord struck Jeroboam, and he died.

After Jeroboam died, his son Nadab became king of Israel. Unfortunately, Nadab was just as evil as his father. Another man named Baasha (BAY uh shuh) attacked and killed Nadab and all his family, just as God said through the prophet Ahijah. Baasha became the new king of Israel. Baasha followed the same pattern as the evil kings who came before him, leading the people away from God to worship idols.

Christ Connection: The first kings of Israel led the people to disobey God and to worship idols. Israel’s kings suffered the consequences of their sin. We all sin when we disobey God and worship other things. Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sin and bring us back to God. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Point back: Remind kids about how Israel worshiped the golden calf after God had rescued them from Egypt. Discuss how Jeroboam’s idolatry was similar and how he even lied and said, “Israel, here are your gods who brought you up from the land of Egypt.”

List the kings: Write the names of the kings on a dry erase board.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ Jeroboam ruled as king of Israel in the north, but the temple was in the city of Jerusalem in the kingdom of Judah. The temple was where God’s people would go to pray to Him and offer sacrifices. What did Jeroboam do that was evil in God’s sight? Look at 1 Kings 14:9. **[Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 14:9 aloud.]** Jeroboam rebelled against God’s command and made gods for the people to worship. Jeroboam’s prideful heart was afraid that God’s people would go to Judah to worship at the temple and decide to follow Rehoboam as king.

Jeroboam’s sin had great consequences. What were the consequences? Look at 1 Kings 14:10. **[Ask a volunteer to read 1 Kings 14:10 aloud.]** God would bring disaster on the house of Jeroboam, and the kingdom would be taken away from him. We saw this come true when Jeroboam’s son, Nadab, became king. Baasha killed Nadab and became king in his place. Pride will always come with disaster.

How did the kings of Israel disobey God? **[Allow responses.] ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS.** In fact, none of the kings of Israel walked with the Lord and followed His ways. In the books of 1 and 2 Kings, we learn that all 20 kings who reigned over Israel were wicked and turned away from the Lord. From Jeroboam to the last king, Hoshea, all chose to disobey God and His commands. Israel’s kings suffered the consequences of their sin. We all sin when we disobey God and worship other things. Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sin and bring us back to God. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ We may not make golden calves like Jeroboam, but we all sin and turn away from God. But God loves us and sent Jesus to take the punishment our sin deserves. When we repent of our sin and trust in Jesus, we are made right with God and saved from eternal punishment. ”

(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 13, Session 2” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. If you have a friend who follows a different religion and thinks many gods exist, is it wrong to tell her about God?
2. Why is telling others about Jesus the best news they could hear?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Aaron Taylor and Ohio Map Photos” printable. Point to Ohio on the map. Tell kids that Aaron Taylor is the church planter and teaching pastor of Living Hope Church in Columbus, Ohio. The church, started in 2018, has been sharing the good news about Jesus with people in the area. Aaron and his church began two local nonprofits and a new ministry center called the Finding Hope Center.

SAY “The center is a place where families who need help can receive household items like mattresses, bedding, and furniture. The center often helps single moms, immigrants, refugees, and others at no cost. They want to be a place for families to receive needed materials while also providing hope as they tell them about Jesus. Over time, the Finding Hope Center has been able to partner with other organizations like Send Relief to expand their reach and meet the needs of families in their community.”

Pray for Aaron and his wife, Elizabeth, and their two daughters as they serve at Living Hope Church. Pray for the ministries of Living Hope Church and the Finding Hope Center.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud 1 Kings 8:60 together.

SAY “Our key passage reminds us that God alone is the one true God. When we are tempted to love other things, this passage can help us remember that only God is to be worshiped.”

Form kids into groups of two or three and distribute a set of index cards to each group. Lead kids to write one word of the key passage on each card. Then direct kids to scramble the cards out of order. When you say “Go,” challenge kids to work together to quickly organize the cards into the correct order. The first team to arrange their cards correctly wins. Repeat as time allows.

Lead kids to sing “There Is No Other (1 Kings 8:60).” 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 “Dear God, only You deserve to be worshiped. Thank You, Lord, for providing Jesus as our Savior. Thank You that He turns our hearts back to You when we sin. In Jesus’ name, 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 Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Kings 12. Explain that the temple Solomon built was in Jerusalem in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Remind kids that Jeroboam ruled in the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

Consider pointing out Bethel (G4), where Jeroboam built one of the golden calves, on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Kings 12:27-30 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ Jeroboam became worried that the people would leave his kingdom of Israel and go to the temple in Judah. To solve this problem, Jeroboam created idols for the people to worship without leaving Israel. Jeroboam led the people to turn away from God. Jeroboam’s pride became an idol in his life, and he missed what was really important about worship. Worship wasn’t about a place: worship is about who our hearts love most. **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.** God is to be loved and praised above all else. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What was true about all of Israel’s kings? ”

Remind kids that all of Israel’s kings were evil and led the people to turn away from God. The kings did not remind the people of God’s laws and lead the people in justice. Israel’s kings worshiped idols and did not care for the poor, oppressed, and suffering. God eventually judged the Kingdom of Israel for their sin. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Kings 17:13.)

SAY “ What are ways people try to make themselves great, like Jeroboam? ”

Answers will vary. Remind kids that Jeroboam wanted to remain the great king of Israel, so he built the golden calves to keep people in Israel. Discuss how we can seek to build our own “kingdoms” on this earth rather than live in God’s kingdom. Tell kids that in pride we may want the praise of others, fail to repent of sin, and think we have all the answers. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Jer. 9:23-24.)

SAY “ Why is God better than any idol or anything else in this world? ”

Discuss how God is not only our Creator and King who deserves all worship, but He is also our Rescuer. Tell kids that they were made to know God and be loved by Him. Explain how without God’s plan to send Jesus into the world, die on the cross, and rise again, people would remain dead in their sins. God is better than anything because He alone gives us eternal life and everlasting joy. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 48:17.)

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: BEWARE THE IDOL



Invite kids to sit in a circle. Provide each kid with a blank index card but give one kid a card with the word *idol* written on it, making sure to place the *idol* card face down. Tell kids not to turn over their card. Choose one kid to be *It*. When *It* taps someone on the head, kids will turn over their card. If the card is blank, *It* will continue tapping heads. When the *idol* card is revealed, the kid with the card will try to tag *It*. If *It* returns to the kid's empty spot without getting tagged, the other kid becomes *It*. If not, the kid remains *It*. Play again, shuffling the cards so no one knows who has the *idol* card.

SAY “ Today, we learned that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS**. When the ‘*idol*’ was revealed whoever was *It* ran away. The Bible teaches us to flee from idols (1 Cor. 10:14). Through Jesus, we can turn away from idols and worship the one true God. God will help believers love Him more than anything else. ”

☐ OPTION 2: BIBLE CUP STACK

Form kids into groups of two or three. Distribute 10 cups and a permanent marker to each group. Assign each group consecutive books of the Bible, making sure each group has a different set. For example, one group may have Genesis through 2 Samuel, while another group has Matthew through Ephesians. Lead kids to write the Bible names on their cups and arrange the cups out of order. When you say “go,” groups will stack their cups in the correct order. The first group to stack their cups correctly receives a point. Lead groups to switch cups and play again. The group with the most points wins.

SAY “ The Bible reminds us that **there is one true God who alone deserves worship**. When we know God’s Word, we are better equipped to recognize idols and be reminded of what is true. I encourage you to make reading God’s Word a habit in your life. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for Jesus who saves us from sin and helps us turn away from idolatry. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Walk In Obedience” on the activity page.