

UNIT 13 | SESSION 1

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

1 KINGS 11–13



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: Rehoboam rejected good advice, and his foolish pride led to a divided kingdom. Jesus, the truly wise King, unites all who trust in Him and brings them into His kingdom forever.

STORY POINT: Rehoboam's foolish sin divided the kingdom.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

While King Solomon was known for his wisdom, he did not leave his kingdom better than he found it, for “when he was old, his heart turned to other gods” (1 Kings 11:4). In fact, the kingdom would now be divided because of his unfaithfulness to God. After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king and was confronted with a request from the people: to lighten their labor. Rehoboam sought wise counsel from those who served with his father and asked a group of peers for advice.

King Rehoboam sought wise counsel but then chose to ignore it. The elders that served with his father advised him to be a servant to the people and speak kindly to them. Surely this approach would have reestablished trust. However, Rehoboam disregarded the elders’ input and chose to listen to a young group of friends instead. Their suggestion was to tell the people that he is even more powerful than Solomon and will make their lives more difficult.

This oppression of course is not well received, and the people rebelled against Rehoboam. Rehoboam’s selfish pride resulted in the rest of Israel seeking Jeroboam as their king, and the kingdom was divided just as God said. Rehoboam sought to be served instead of choosing to serve the people.

Service is true leadership. Jesus willingly chose to serve us while we were still far from Him. As Romans 5:8 tells us, “while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

Have you ever completely disregarded sound wisdom or godly advice? Who we listen to matters. As you prepare to teach, pray for God to help you listen to the wise counsel of His Holy Spirit. Remind kids that we can choose to follow God’s ways through faith in Jesus. Pray for boys and girls to know the one true God, and to look to Christ as the ultimate example of true, selfless leadership.



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

- ☐ "Divided" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ cups, 25–30
- ☐ balls, 1–3 per kid



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ "Divided Kingdom" printable, 1 per kid
- ☐ metal brads, 1 per kid

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ red cardstock papers, 1 per kid
- ☐ plastic baggies, 1 per kid

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 Kingdom Divided" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 13, Session 1" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Send Columbus" missions video

Key Passage Activity

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



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** “Who do you know that would make a good king? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Divided” activity page.

| **SAY** “Through today’s Bible story, we will learn how Solomon’s unfaithfulness to God and Rehoboam’s foolish sin led to the kingdom being divided.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: STOP THE DIVIDE

Before the session, create a line of cups across one end of the room. Form the kids into two groups. Assign one group to be the “dividers.” Assign the other group the role of “defenders.” Start the game with the “dividers” at one end of the room, and the “defenders” in front of the cups. At your start the “dividers” will take turns rolling balls, trying to knock down the cups, while the “defenders” try to stop the balls from knocking over the cups. Play as time allows. Then switch groups.

| **SAY** “When a cup was knocked over, the line of cups became divided. Today, we will learn how the kingdom of God’s people became divided. We’ll see how **REHOBAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.**”

☐ OPTION 2: BE A SERVANT



Invite kids to think about what it means to be someone who serves others. Encourage kids to think about examples in the Bible or people they know who serve others in love. Then challenge kids to act out serving scenarios. Consider starting with the examples below. Then create more of your own.

- Setting the table
- Writing a note of encouragement
- Making someone a meal
- Bringing in the trash can
- Giving away toys

Invite volunteers to act out a scenario, while the other kids try to guess the action. Repeat, as time allows.

| **SAY** “In our Bible story, we will see how a king named Rehoboam was given advice to be a servant leader to the people. However, Rehoboam didn’t want to serve others; he wanted people to serve him. We’ll learn how Jesus is the perfect servant King who gave His life to save us from sin.”

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





LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

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’re here! When we meet together, we learn true stories from the Bible about God. Did you bring your Bible today? If so, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one. Invite kids to turn to 1 Kings.]

Do you remember King David and his son Solomon? After Solomon became king, he built the temple and worshiped God. But when he grew old, he started to turn away from following God with all his heart. Because of this, God said that one day, the kingdom would be divided. Today, we will see how God’s words came true. After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king. Through our story, we’ll learn how **REHOBAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM**. [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray and prepare our hearts to hear God’s Word: ‘Dear God, we can always trust You and Your Word. Help us have hearts that hear Your Word and obey it. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ As we study the Bible, we learn big truths about God, people, and the world. Our big picture questions and answers help us learn these truths. Our big picture question is, **How many gods are there?** The answer is, **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.** Let’s say the answer again: **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.**

In our story today, we will see that King Rehoboam refused to serve the people he ruled and expected them to serve him instead. Jesus is the only perfect King. He came to serve people by laying down His life for our sins. He alone is the one true God who deserves our worship. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “ God’s people, the Israelites, wanted a king. So, God appointed kings to rule over His people. We’ve learned about King Saul, King David, and King Solomon. King David followed God and ruled over God’s people. David’s son, Solomon, followed God at the beginning of his reign, but he eventually turned away from following God with all his heart. Today, we will see how Rehoboam, King Solomon’s son, sinned and how his sin led to the division of the kingdom. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to 1 Kings 11–13. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “The Kingdom Divided.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

“Solomon, the King of Israel, started out following God wholeheartedly, but later his heart was turned away from God. He was unfaithful to God by worshiping idols. The Lord was angry with him and said, “Since you have not kept my covenant and laws, I will tear your kingdom in two. One tribe will be given to your son, and the rest of Israel will follow another king.” Later, a servant of King Solomon named Jeroboam was walking down the road when a prophet of the Lord met him. The prophet told Jeroboam that he would be the new king. Solomon tried to kill Jeroboam, but he fled to Egypt, where he remained until Solomon’s death.

After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam (ree huh BOH uhm) became the new king. Jeroboam (jer uh BOH uhm) and the people of Israel came to Rehoboam and said, “Your father Solomon was a very harsh king. We are willing to follow you as our king, if you will be less harsh with us.”

Rehoboam replied, “Come back in three days, and I will give you an answer to your request.” Then Rehoboam brought together the elders who had served his father Solomon. The elders gave Rehoboam very good advice: “Be a servant to the people, and speak kind words to them, and they will be your servants forever.”

Rehoboam did not like what the elders said and rejected their advice. He asked some young men he had grown up with what he should do. These young men said, “Show the people you are in charge! Tell them you are far more powerful than your father Solomon, and their lives will be much harder under your rule.”

When three days had passed, Jeroboam and all the people returned to Rehoboam to hear his reply. He told them, “My father made your work difficult, but I will make your work even more difficult. My father disciplined you; I will discipline you even further.”

When the people heard Rehoboam’s reply, they rebelled against him. All the tribes of Israel, except for the tribe of Judah, came together and made Jeroboam their king. Because of Rehoboam’s foolish and prideful sin, the people of God were now divided into two nations. King Rehoboam was king over Judah, and King Jeroboam was king over Israel.

Christ Connection: Rehoboam rejected good advice, and his foolish pride led to a divided kingdom. Jesus, the truly wise King, unites all who trust in Him and brings them into His kingdom forever. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Invite kids to say “boo” when they hear bad advice or when they hear how people sinned.

Display a map: Display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map and point to the Northern and Southern Kingdoms.



2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “Rehoboam became king after his father Solomon. Why did the people not trust Rehoboam? [Allow responses.] Rehoboam’s father, King Solomon, ordered the people to do hard work and didn’t always treat the people kindly. The people were concerned that Rehoboam may be like his father. They asked Rehoboam to lighten their work.

What two groups of people gave Rehoboam advice? [Allow responses.] First, the elders or older leaders told Solomon to be a servant-king. They encouraged him to be a king who would care for the people and speak kindly to them. But Rehoboam didn’t listen to them. Next, Rehoboam’s friends gave him advice. They told Rehoboam to make the people work even harder. They encouraged Rehoboam to use his power for his own pride.

What happened because of Rehoboam’s sin? [Allow responses.] All the tribes of Israel, except the tribe of Judah, rebelled against Rehoboam and made Jeroboam their king. **REHOBAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** The Northern Kingdom was known as Israel, and the Southern Kingdom was known as Judah.

Rehoboam rejected good advice, and his foolish pride led to a divided kingdom. Jesus, the truly wise King, unites all who trust in Him and brings them into His kingdom forever. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “Rehoboam was a foolish and selfish king. But King Jesus is the wise and serving King. Jesus laid down His life to save people from sin. When we trust in Jesus, we will be with Him forever. Do you have questions about what it means to follow Jesus as your Savior and Lord? ”

(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 1” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. If God knows what we are going to do, why does He give us a choice?
2. How does God help us make wise choices that honor Him?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “Columbus, Ohio, is in the Midwest region of the United States and is home to many college students. But Columbus is also home to many people who have moved there from around the world. Many people who live in Columbus need to hear the good news about Jesus. Only 1 out of 10 people in Columbus are believers. ”

Play the video. Tell kids that the number of churches in Columbus, Ohio, has grown in recent years, but more churches are needed to help share the gospel. Pray for the missionaries working in Columbus, Ohio. Pray for more churches to partner with Columbus’ local churches.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 MINUTES)

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

| **SAY** “ There is no one like our God! He is our perfect King who rules over the whole world. ”

Provide each kid with a Bible and invite them to find 1 Kings 8:60. Read the key passage aloud together. Then point to a world map and discuss how God created the world and made people to know He is the one true God.

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** “ Thank You, Lord, for being the perfect King who loves and cares for us. Help us serve You and others as we follow Your Son, Jesus. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

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





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 books of 1 and 2 Kings record the reigns of the kings of Israel following King Saul and King David.

Consider pointing out the Northern (E5) and Southern (I4) Kingdoms on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Kings 12:8 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “Rehoboam had received good advice from the elders, but he did not listen to them. Rehoboam wanted to make himself great rather than be a king who took care of his people. Thankfully, Jesus is a good and wise King who always takes care of His people. He came to earth to serve others, most importantly by dying on the cross for people’s sin.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Who are wise people we can listen to? Why is the Bible a source of wisdom for us?”

Discuss how God places wise adults in our lives to help us follow God and His ways. Tell kids that pastors share the truth of God’s Word. Parents, teachers, and coaches can give us good advice on how to make wise decisions. Remind kids that the Bible is the Word of God and helps us follow Jesus, the truly wise King.

SAY “What can we do if we make a foolish mistake like Rehoboam?”

Tell kids that foolish choices often come with consequences. However, God is always willing to forgive our foolish sin when we repent and ask Him for forgiveness. Discuss how God wants to help us make wise choices for His glory and our good. When we go to God and confess our sin and ask Him for wisdom, God will give us the wisdom we need.

SAY “Why is Jesus the truly wise King?”

Share how Jesus always did what was right and followed God’s commands perfectly. God has all wisdom, and when Jesus lived on earth, He always obeyed God. Jesus also taught people God’s words and what it looks like to live for Him. As King, Jesus rules with goodness, love, and justice. Jesus showed us that wisdom means laying aside your own interests for the good of others. Instead of being a King who asked people to serve Him, Jesus was willing to lay down His life to serve others. He showed us what it means to trust God in every area and turn away from the temptations of this world.

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: DIVIDED KINGDOM

Print copies of the “Divided Kingdom” printable for each kid. Invite kids to color the crown halves and the two kings. Then guide kids to cut out the crown halves. Using a metal brad, secure the two crown halves through the circle at the bottom of the page with the kings. Encourage kids to take home their “divided kingdom” and use it to retell the Bible story to their families or friends.

SAY “ REHOBOAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM. Because of this, God’s people would be separated into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Sin divides people. And sin separates us from God. But God loves us and sent His Son, Jesus, to bring us back to God. When we trust in Jesus, we are united to God forever. ”

☐ OPTION 2: A DIVIDED HEART



Provide each kid with a piece of red cardstock. Direct each child to draw a large heart on his or her paper. Then lead kids to write the story point, **REHOBOAM’S FOOLISH SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM**, on their hearts. Tell kids to cut their papers into 10 puzzle pieces. Then invite kids to swap puzzles with someone and put the hearts back together. Repeat as time allows. Provide kids with plastic baggies to take their puzzles home.

SAY “ We learned that God first said He would divide the kingdom because Solomon’s heart did not fully follow God. Solomon had a divided heart and began to follow the idols of his wives. When we follow other things before God, our hearts are divided too. Sin separates us from God. But God made the way for our hearts to be forgiven and have the desire to follow Him with all of our hearts. When we trust in Jesus, we are brought back to God and the Holy Spirit gives us the power to love Him above everything else. ”

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.