

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

1 KINGS 11-13



CHRIST CONNECTION: Rehoboam made a bad choice, and the kingdom split into two groups. But Jesus, our good King, showed us how to be kind and love others. He gave His life for us.

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

KEY PASSAGE: May all people know the LORD is God. There is no other! 1 Kings 8:60

STORY POINT: Rehoboam's 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 counsel from those who served with his father, and he also asked a group of his peers for advice.

King Rehoboam received wise counsel but then chose to ignore it. The elders who served with his father advised Rehoboam to be a servant to the people and speak kindly to them. Surely this approach would have established trust. Rehoboam, however, disregarded the elders' input and chose to listen to a young group of friends instead. Their suggestion was to tell the people Rehoboam was even more powerful than Solomon and would make their lives more difficult.

The people didn't appreciate their new king's aggressive posture toward them, and they rebelled against him. Rehoboam's selfish pride resulted in all of Israel except for those living in the cities of Judah to seek Jeroboam as their king. The kingdom was divided, just as God said it would happen.

Rehoboam sought to be served instead of choosing to serve the people. True leadership, however, stems from service. 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 preschoolers 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 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

Find the crowns

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ "Crowns" printable
- ☐ shallow bin, large
- ☐ shredded paper



LEARN

Compare whole and divided

- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Tell the Bible story

- ☐ "The Kingdom Divided" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- ☐ index cards, 4
- ☐ craft sticks, 4
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Move apart or together

- ☐ masking tape

Spell with play dough

- ☐ index cards, 1 per child



LIVE

Missions activity

- ☐ "Send Columbus" mission video
- ☐ United States map

Snack and transition

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



BONUS

Play a "follow the king" game

- ☐ toy crown

Say the key passage phrase

- ☐ Key Passage Phrase Marker

Cut in two

- ☐ large, shallow bin
- ☐ chenille stems
- ☐ plastic straws
- ☐ paper tubes

Decorate thrones

- ☐ child-sized chairs, 2
- ☐ cardboard pieces
- ☐ glue sticks
- ☐ paper, various colors
- ☐ stickers
- ☐ decorative tape



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, story point, 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 classroom. 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.

FIND THE CROWNS

Print and cut apart the “Crowns” printable. Hide the crowns in a large, shallow bin and cover with paper shreds. Invite children to find the hidden crowns. Place the Big Picture Question Poster nearby and discuss as children find the crowns. Repeat play as time allows.

SAY “Hi! I’m so glad to see you today! There are special items hidden in our bin that will give you clue about today’s Bible story. Our big picture question and answer asks, ‘**How many gods are there? There is one true God.**’ We will hear today that Rehoboam was the king of Israel. Israel was one kingdom, but **REHOBAM’S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM**. Rehoboam made a bad choice, and the kingdom split into two groups. But Jesus, our good King, showed us how to be kind and love others by giving His life for us.”

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





LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 COMPARE WHOLE AND DIVIDED

Print the Bible Story Picture Poster and cut it into 12 pieces. Greet the preschoolers in group time. Display the puzzle pieces and work together to complete the puzzle. Discuss God's people being 12 tribes, or families, that were gathered by God into one kingdom.

SAY “What am I holding? [Allow responses.] That's right, a puzzle piece! Our puzzle has 12 pieces. Puzzles are a lot of fun, but what happens if we lose a piece? [Allow responses.] Right! It's more difficult to see the whole picture and not as much fun to complete. In the Bible, we learn that Rehoboam made a bad choice when he became king. **REHOBAM'S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** The kingdom that God had put together was no longer whole but divided into two parts. God's people were now two kingdoms. Listen carefully to learn how Rehoboam's sin led to the divided kingdom.”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to 1 Kings 11–13. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

SAY “King Solomon was in charge of all the people in Israel. But Solomon stopped listening to God, and that made God sad. God told Solomon, “Since you didn't listen to me, your kingdom will be split.”

After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became the new king. But the people didn't trust Rehoboam. They liked a man named Jeroboam. The people told Rehoboam, “Solomon made life hard for us. If you are nice to us, we will be happy to have you as our king.”

Rehoboam talked to some wise men who used to help his dad. The wise men said, “If you are kind and help the people, they will follow you.”

But Rehoboam asked his friends, and they told him, “Be even tougher than your dad!”

When the people came back, Rehoboam said, “If you thought my dad was tough, I'm going to be even tougher!”

The people didn't like that, so they made Jeroboam their king instead. Now there were two kings: Rehoboam was the king of Judah, and Jeroboam was the king of Israel.”

Christ Connection: Rehoboam made a bad choice, and the kingdom split into two groups. But Jesus, our good King, showed us how to be kind and love others. He gave His life for us.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Write Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Israel, and Judah on four separate index cards and attach them to the ends of large craft sticks. Display the Bible Story Picture Poster and hold up the craft sticks as you review each portion of the Bible story. Ask for volunteers to hold each craft stick as you review.

SAY “Rehoboam was the new king of Israel. His advisors told him to be a kind king. But he did not listen to them. He chose to do the wrong thing. Some of God’s people chose Jeroboam to be their king instead. They decided to follow Jeroboam and became a new kingdom. **REHOBAM’S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** There were now two kingdoms, but **there is one true God.** Rehoboam made a bad choice, and the kingdom split into two groups. But Jesus, our good King, showed us how to be kind and love others by giving His life for us.”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “She’ll Be Coming ‘Round the Mountain”:

May all people know the LORD is God,
May all people know the LORD is God,
There is no other,
There is no other,
May all people know the LORD is God.

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at 1 Kings 8:60. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the verse aloud, explaining to the children that God wanted Israel’s kings to obey and honor Him as the one true God. But **REHOBAM’S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** Form the children into two groups. Lead each group to repeat the key passage phrase separately. Then, say the key passage phrase all together.

SAY “God’s people had a new king. The king promised to be unkind to the people. **REHOBAM’S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** Our key passage phrase tells us that the LORD is God. There is no other!”

6 PRAY

Pray, asking God to help us tell others that He is the one true God.

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





LOVE

THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 CHOOSE FOOLISH OR WISE



Draw a happy face on one sheet of paper and a sad face on a separate sheet. Tape the papers on opposite walls within easy view of preschoolers. List actions that are wise or foolish. Encourage children to listen carefully to each action you list and move to the face that matches their choice.

SAY 🗨️ In our Bible story, King Rehoboam was a new king. He received advice on how to be a good king from others. Some foolish friends told him to be even tougher than his father had been. The wise rulers told him he should be kind to the people and help them. Rehoboam listened to the wrong people. **REHOBAM'S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** 🗨️

2 MOVE APART AND TOGETHER

Adhere a long strip of masking tape to the floor and lead preschoolers to stand in a line along the length of it. Explain that whenever you say “together,” the entire group will stand on the tape and say “Jesus brings people together!” When you say “apart,” children should move off the tape and spread out throughout the room. Tell boys and girls that when they are apart, they should make sad faces. Call out the words “together” and “apart” as children move. Vary your speed as you lead the game.

SAY 🗨️ You all looked sad when you were away from each other. God’s people were separated into two kingdoms because of Rehoboam’s sin. How do you think the people felt? [Allow responses.] **REHOBAM'S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** Sin separates people from God, but Jesus died on the cross and rose again to take the punishment for our sins. When we trust in Jesus, He makes us right with God so we can be with Him forever. 🗨️

3 SPELL WITH PLAY DOUGH

Write Jesus on index cards, one per child. Provide each child with an index card and ball of play dough. Demonstrate how to roll out the play dough to form the letters on the card. Allow time for children to form each letter.

SAY 🗨️ We used our play dough to spell the name Jesus. Our Christ Connection says, ‘Rehoboam made a bad choice, and the kingdom split into two groups. But Jesus, our good King, showed us how to be kind and love others by giving His life for us.’ **REHOBAM'S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** He was a bad king. Jesus gave his life for us. He is our good King. 🗨️

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 COMPLETE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE PUZZLES



Write the key passage phrase on sheets of paper, one per four or five children. Cut apart the page, creating a puzzle for each group. Display a copy of the complete key passage phrase for children to reference at each table group.

SAY “Our key passage phrase says, ‘May all people know the LORD is God. There is no other! 1 Kings 8:60.’ **How many gods are there? There is one true God.**”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY

Point to the state of Ohio on a map of the United States. Show the “Send Columbus” missions video. Pray for the missionaries working in Columbus, Ohio. Pray for more churches to partner with the churches and missionaries telling people about Jesus in Columbus, Ohio.

SAY “Columbus is the largest city in Ohio. The number of churches in Columbus, Ohio, has grown in recent years, but more churches are needed because so many people live there.”

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 “Rehoboam made a bad choice, and the kingdom split into two groups. But Jesus, our good King, showed us how to be kind and love others. He gave His life for us.”

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 PLAY A “FOLLOW THE KING” GAME

Gather children together in a large circle and be seated. Choose one child to stand in the center of the circle and play the king. Place a crown on the king's head. Encourage the king to create a simple patting or clapping pattern for the children to follow. After a few rounds, choose a new child to be king. Repeat as time allows.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to 1 Kings 11–13. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story.

THE KINGDOM DIVIDED

- King Solomon stopped listening to God. God said, “Since you didn’t listen to me, your kingdom will be split.”
- After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became the king. But the people liked a man named Jeroboam. The people told Rehoboam, “Solomon made life hard. If you are nice to us, we will be happy to have you as our king.”
- Some wise men told Rehoboam, “If you are kind and help the people, they will follow you.” But Rehoboam’s friends said, “Be even tougher than your dad!”
- Rehoboam told the people, “I’m going to be even tougher than my dad!” The people didn’t like that, so they made Jeroboam their king instead.
- The kingdom split. Now there were two kings: Rehoboam was the king of Judah, and Jeroboam was the king of Israel.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “She’ll Be Coming ‘Round the Mountain”:

May all people know the LORD is God,
May all people know the LORD is God,
There is no other,
There is no other,
May all people know the LORD is God.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at 1 Kings 8:60. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage phrase. Say the key passage phrase while bowing or curtsying to a king.

5 PRAY

Pray, asking God to help us listen to Him and be wise.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 FIND YOUR KINGDOM



Cut two colors of construction paper into squares. Direct children to spread out across the room. Provide each child with one colored square. Encourage children to form two kingdoms by finding all the children with their matching color and gathering together.

SAY “ You found all the people with your matching color. We have two groups or kingdoms. Rehoboam was king but followed foolish advice. He was unkind to the people. **REHOBAM’S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** Now, God’s people were divided into two kingdoms and had two kings. ”

7 CUT IN TWO

Gather materials easy for children to cut into two pieces such as scrap paper, play dough, chenille stems, drinking straws, cardboard tubes, and so forth. Place the items in a large, shallow bin. Invite children to sit with you and use blunt-tipped scissors to cut the materials into two pieces.

SAY “ When Rehoboam became king, God’s people were a part of one kingdom. Eventually, the people grew tired of Rehoboam being unkind and not being a good king. Some of the people created a new kingdom with a new king named Jeroboam. Now there were two kingdoms: Israel and Judah. **REHOBAM’S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM.** ”

8 DECORATE THRONES

Set two child-sized chairs across from each other. Cut cardboard pieces and tape them to the chairs to add a high back or other throne-like features. Invite boys and girls to decorate the thrones with markers and other crafting materials. Write the names Israel and Judah on the thrones. Invite children to take turns sitting on the two thrones. Instruct children to call out and respond to the big picture question and answer as they play out being a king.

SAY “ What fancy thrones! After **REHOBAM’S SIN DIVIDED THE KINGDOM**, Rehoboam became the king of Judah, and Jeroboam became the king of Israel. God’s people were no longer one nation. If only Rehoboam had remembered how good God had been to them. Let’s say our big picture question and answer: **How many gods are there? There is one true God.** The one true God wants to bring His people together to be part of His kingdom forever, so God sent His Son, Jesus. All who trust in Jesus will be with God forever. ”

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