

BC18

Age 5-6

Solomon

Bible Verses: 1 Kings 3:1-28, Galatians 5:22,23, Proverbs 3:13-18

This meeting plan covers Solomon's request to God for wisdom and his subsequent wise counsel in the case of the two women and their babies. Through it, it is hoped the children will see how important wisdom is to both a king like Solomon and to us.

Leader's notes

We recommend that, at the end of the session, leaders give their young people a "Take Away" question, found at the end of the plan.

Encourage the young people to think about the questions, and use them in your discipleship sessions or cell groups, or bring their ideas back next week.

There is a fantastic children's book called 'You Choose' that my boys ask me to look at with them over and over again. It's simply a series of very detailed pictures with a question at the top: How do you like to travel? Where would you go if you could go anywhere? What would you want to have in your very own house? What's best to eat? The possibilities are limitless and the outcomes change every time we read it.

Society today is not dissimilar to this book – we have so many choices about what we wear, eat, do... Sometimes we find ourselves giddied by the sheer amount of stuff on offer!

As the King of Israel, Solomon would have had plenty of choices to hand as well. A powerful man who could have had anything he desired. Imagine then such an illustrious figure having a dream in which God offers him anything he wants. What should he choose? Untold riches? Many children? A long life? Endless victory over other nations? But Solomon isn't tempted by any of this stuff...

I love how the Contemporary English Version of the Bible puts his answer to God: "LORD God, I'm your servant, and you've made me king in my father's place. But I'm very young and know so little about being a leader. And now I must rule your chosen people, even though there are too many of them to count. Please make me wise and teach me the difference between right and wrong. Then I will know how to rule your people. If you don't, there is no way I could rule this great nation of yours." (**1 Kings 3:7-9**)

What an amazing thing for a new king to say. Tradition has it that Solomon was a teenager (possibly even younger) at the time of his accession to the throne: what a remarkably mature thing to want. I don't know about you, but when I was a teenager, I thought I knew everything!!!

Solomon's request is utterly altruistic – he wants wisdom, not for his own glory, but so that he can lead God's chosen people in the way that He would have them led. And of course we know that God grants him not only the wisdom that he requests but also untold riches and the promise of a long life (**1 Kings 3:10-14**).

What would my response be to the same question? Would I be able to put aside my own agenda to ask for the thing that would further God's purposes most? It's a question worth bearing in mind as you prepare this session...

All I Want

Warming Up

15 mins

Activity

Ask the children to look through the catalogues and cut out pictures of things that they want.

Get the children to create a large collage together of all the things they have cut out. Try to get a discussion going whilst they do that about the things they want and why.

The Point: Just for fun and to introduce the idea of what we desire.

Equipment

Big piece of flip chart or lining paper, glue, scissors, catalogues/magazines. The Argos Catalogue (a UK catalogue retailer) is ideal.

Three Wishes

Teaching Time

20 mins

 Discussion

Give the children paper and writing/drawing materials. Ask them what they would wish for if they rubbed a magic lamp and a genie appeared and offered them 3 wishes. They can write or draw their responses. After a few minutes, ask the children to share their wishes with the group.

Now ask the children what they would wish for if they could change things about their character or add new skills (emphasise that this *not* about what they look like on the outside – it's an inside thing). They can write down/draw their ideas first or you can just get straight into a sharing time.

Explain to the children that God is not a genie in a lamp, but that sometimes He does things like this...

Read **1 Kings 3:5**: *One night while Solomon was in Gibeon, the LORD God appeared to him in a dream and said, "Solomon, ask for anything you want, and I will give it to you."*

Ask the group if they were the king, what would they ask for? What things or skills might be important for a king to have?

Read the next few verses (**6-14**) of the passage: *Solomon answered:*

'My father David, your servant, was honest and did what you commanded. You were always loyal to him, and you gave him a son who is now king. LORD God, I'm your servant, and you've made me king in my father's place. But I'm very young and know so little about being a leader. And now I must rule

your chosen people, even though there are too many of them to count.

Please make me wise and teach me the difference between right and wrong. Then I will know how to rule your people. If you don't, there is no way I could rule this great nation of yours.'

God said: 'Solomon, I'm pleased that you asked for this. You could have asked to live a long time or to be rich. Or you could have asked for your enemies to be destroyed. Instead, you asked for wisdom to make right decisions. So I'll make you wiser than anyone who has ever lived or ever will live. I'll also give you what you didn't ask for. You'll be rich and respected as long as you live, and you'll be greater than any other king. If you obey me and follow my commands, as your father David did, I'll let you live a long time.'

Recap the story by asking the children these questions:

What did Solomon ask for? What is wisdom? Is it an important thing for a king to have? Is it an important thing for us to have?

Why was God pleased with Solomon for asking for this? What did He give him as well?

Read **Proverbs 3:13-18**:

God blesses everyone who has wisdom and common sense. Wisdom is worth more than silver; it makes you much richer than gold. Wisdom is more valuable than precious jewels; nothing you want compares with her. In her right hand Wisdom holds a long life, and in her left hand are wealth and honour. Wisdom makes life pleasant and leads us safely along. Wisdom is a life-giving tree, the source of happiness for all who hold on to her.

Tell the children that Solomon wrote this. Do they think that Solomon thought he had asked God for the right thing?

You can finish the activity here, or go on to tell the next part of the story:

Here's a story about Solomon using his wisdom to help two women: **(1 Kings 3:16-22)**

One day two women came to King Solomon, and one of them said: Your Majesty, this woman and I live in the same house. Not long ago my baby was born at home, and three days later her baby was born. Nobody else was there with us. One night while we were all asleep, she rolled over on her baby, and he died. Then while I was still asleep, she got up and took my son out of my bed. She put him in her bed, then she put her dead baby next to me. In the morning when I got up to feed my son, I saw that he was dead. But when I looked at him in the light, I knew he wasn't my son. "No!" the other woman shouted. "He was your son. My baby is alive!"

"The dead baby is yours," the first woman yelled. "Mine is alive!"

What would you say to the women if you were Solomon? How would you sort this situation out?

Here's the end of the story **(1 Kings 3:23-28)**:

They argued back and forth in front of Solomon, until finally he said, "Both of you say this live baby is yours. Someone bring me a sword." A sword was brought, and Solomon ordered, "Cut the baby in half! That way each of you can have part of him."

"Please don't kill my son," the baby's mother screamed. "Your Majesty, I love him very much, but give him to her. Just don't kill him."

The other woman shouted, "Go ahead and cut him in half. Then neither of us will have the baby."

Solomon said, "Don't kill the baby." Then he pointed to the first woman, "She is his real mother. Give the baby to her."

Everyone in Israel was amazed when they heard how Solomon had made his decision. They realized that God had given him wisdom to judge fairly.

Why was Solomon's decision so wise?

Remind the children that Solomon was only wise because God had given him that special ability.

The Point: To teach the children about wisdom through Solomon's story. To show that God gives us all special abilities if we ask Him and are asking with the right motivation.

Equipment

Paper, pens/pencils, straightforward modern translation of the Bible – Contemporary English Version is a good choice (alternatively, you can select the relevant passages from this version at Biblegateway.com and print them out).

Wisdom For The World

Response

10 mins

 Prayer

Ask the children to think about situations in the world at the moment that need God's wisdom to be solved. Have some examples ready.

Explain that sometimes situations are too complicated for humans to solve, but that we can ask Father God for His wisdom and hand to be on tricky situations.

As you talk about situations, let the children find the places you mention on the map and stick a pin in each one. As they do this, get them to pray a simple prayer, such as 'God send your wisdom to this situation'.

Children will need help to find the different countries.

The Point: To pray for the world and let the children know that God can be in every situation.

Equipment

World map mounted on a cork board, pins – the sort that have a plastic ball or pillar to make them visible. You will also need to be aware of situations in the news this week.
