

LESSON 3

THE KINGDOM DIVIDES

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: We Can Follow God**SCRIPTURE:** [1 Kings 12](#)**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Afraid Israel might split, King Rehoboam chooses his friends' advice over that of wise elders, leading to the very split he wanted to avoid. Jeroboam, leader of the northern kingdom, also listens to unwise advice, which leads to idol worship.**WORD OF WONDER:** Come near to God, and he will come near to you. —[James 4:8a](#)

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Two kings, Rehoboam and Jeroboam, were the first to lead the divided kingdom of Israel. King Solomon's son, Rehoboam—the natural-born king—would rule the southern kingdom, and Jeroboam—son of one of Solomon's officials—would rule the northern kingdom.

WHAT?

Big decisions have big consequences, so when Rehoboam neglected to listen to the wise elders, Israel's united kingdom became divided. Because he listened to his young friends, the country broke out in civil war, and [1 Kings](#) records the history of two kings, two capitals, and two religions.

WHERE?

The *divided kingdom* refers to the southern kingdom—called *Judah*—which continued to be ruled by David's family line and included the tribes of Judah and Benjamin, and the northern kingdom—called *Israel*—which included the other 10 tribes of Israel.

WHEN?

The kingdom of Israel was established under King Saul, strengthened under King David, and reached the height of its glory under King Solomon (David's son). Solomon, however, turned away from God, making the division of the kingdom inevitable.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Even when the kingdom of Israel divided, God remained faithful to His people and never stopped loving them. Sadly, the northern kingdom, Israel, had only ungodly kings. Judah in the south, however, had several kings who loved and followed God, such as Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, and Josiah.

Object Lesson: Car Play

Ahead of time, use painter's tape to create four paths on the floor: a straight line, a zigzag line, a swirly line, and a triangle. The paths will be the roads for the toy vehicles to follow.

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Hello, and welcome to church! Today we're going to learn that we can follow God! Do you like to be a leader or follow someone? Allow the kids to respond. **Let's take turns letting our cars follow and lead.**

Let the kids play with toy cars and trains. Let the kids use the cars and trains to follow the roads. Encourage kids to follow the roads. They can take turns leading and following with their cars.

In God's big story today, we will learn that we can follow God. Just like your car or train followed the other cars or the path, you can follow God!

Activity: Follow the Leader

Gather the kids together and stand in front of them. **We're talking about leading and following, so let's see if you can follow the leader. I'll do silly things, and you pay close attention to see if you can copy me exactly. You have to pay close attention to the leader and follow my actions closely.**

Do the following actions:

- Touch your head, shoulders, knees, and toes.
- Pat your head.
- Flap your arms like a bird.
- Stomp your feet.
- Do a silly dance.
- Spin in a circle.
- Lift your leg high in the air.
- Do arm circles.

To make it more challenging for older kids, do three of the actions in order and tell the kids to watch closely, then have the kids mimic all three of them in order, exactly as you did. You can even let kids take turns being the leader.

Leader Tip: It's OK if toddlers can't do all of the movements. Encourage and affirm them to do their best. You can tweak the actions to make them fit your group's age level.

Was it hard to follow the leader? Sometimes it's hard to do the right thing or know who to follow. But there's one leader who is the very best, who we can always follow: God! Our Wonder Truth today is **WE CAN FOLLOW GOD.**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

WE—*Point to everyone.*

CAN FOLLOW—*March like you're following the leader.*

GOD—*Point up.*

Prayer and Blessing

Let's pray and talk to God. When I say "listen," cup your hands behind your ears. When I say "follow," march in place.

God, we thank You for being with us. Help us listen (hands behind ears) to what You say. Help us follow (march in place) You today and every day. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: Our God, who loves you, is with you! He is mighty to save and will never leave you. May you always trust Him.

Activity: Silly Faces

In today's story, the two kings didn't listen to good advice. They followed bad advice and didn't follow God. We're learning that we can follow God. He gives us the Bible to help us know Him and know how He wants us to live. Let's practice paying close attention and following the leader, while remembering that we can follow God!

I'm going to make a silly face and do a silly movement or silly dance. You can copy me.

Make a silly face and encourage the kids to copy you. Then choose a child to do another silly face, and encourage the other kids to copy that person. Continue until all of the kids have had a chance.

These are just silly faces, and not important decisions like in our story today. But no matter what we do, we can follow God. He is the most important leader to follow. He loves us and we can trust Him.