

LESSON 3

THE KINGDOM DIVIDES

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Wants Us to Follow Godly Advice

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 \(NIV\)](#)

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.

Curiosity

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

Welcome Question

At your start time ...

Create fun energy by welcoming kids with excitement! Give a warm welcome to each kid and tell them how glad you are to see them!

Read the Welcome Question:

Who is someone you trust? Why do you trust that person?

Invite several kids to share their drawings or answers.

Leader Tip: Add to the fun of the Welcome Question discussion by setting a timer for 30 seconds and seeing how many kids can share their answers in that time!

It's great to hear about people in your lives who you can trust! In God's big story today, we're going to hear about two important men who chose to ignore the advice of trustworthy people and listened instead to some pretty bad advice-givers! But first, it's time to be curious!

Curiosity Questions

I'm curious ...

- **Have you ever had to make a tough decision? Tell us about it.**
- **When you have a hard decision to make, do you think it's good to ask other people for advice? Why or why not?**

Elementary Interactive Game: Would You Rather?

Let's get started today by playing a game called **Would You Rather?** There will be a “Would You Rather?” question on the screen with two answer choices—one on the right side of the room and one on the left. Point to the right and left sides of the room. **You will choose your answer and then go to the side of the room that matches your choice**

Advance to the [second Would You Rather? Slide](#) and read the question out loud: **Would you rather ... pet a skunk or pet a porcupine?** Invite kids to go to the left side of the room if they choose skunk and the right side of the room if they choose porcupine. Once everyone has moved to one side or the other, invite everyone back to the middle.

Advance through the four remaining **Would You Rather?** Slides, inviting kids to move to one side of the room or the other after each question.

Make It Inclusive: If kids in your group have a lot of extra energy, make this game even more active by giving them silly ways to move throughout the room. For example, they could move in ways that match their answers, like as skunks, porcupines, eagles, dolphins, or super strong and fast people!

For your reference, here are the game questions:

[Would you rather ...](#)

[Pet a skunk or pet a porcupine?](#)

[Have super strength or have super speed?](#)

[Fly like an eagle or swim like a dolphin?](#)

[Eat pizza for breakfast every morning or eat cereal for dinner every evening?](#)

[Wear shoes on your hand every day or wear socks on your ears every day?](#)

Gather the kids. **Those were some hard choices to make, but you all did an amazing job! Today in God's big story, we will learn about two powerful leaders who also faced difficult choices. Sadly, they didn't listen to wise people and ended up making some very bad decisions.**



Today we'll learn how important it is to listen to the right people. Our Wonder Truth is **GOD WANTS US TO LISTEN TO GODLY ADVICE.**

Preteen Interactive Game: Roll and Tell

Gather kids and help them form groups of 5–8 kids. Invite each group to sit in a circle. **Let's play a game called Roll and Tell!**

Give one dice and a copy of the Roll and Tell Sheet to each group. **Each group will choose someone to go first. That person will roll the dice and will answer the matching question from the Roll and Tell Sheet.**

For example, if someone rolls a two, they will answer the question, “What’s a decision you’ve made today?” Point to the corresponding question on the Roll and Tell Sheet.

We will play for several minutes or until everyone has had a turn. When everyone in your group has gone, give a thumbs-up to show me you’re done!

Give kids time to take turns rolling the dice and answering questions.

Make It Inclusive: Some kids may be hesitant to share answers to the Roll and Tell questions with their group. Assure everyone that it is OK to simply say, “pass” when it’s their turn.

Gather the kids together. **In your group today, you may have heard about easy decisions people have made—like what to eat for breakfast. And you may have heard about some tough decisions too! When it comes to making decisions, it’s important to follow godly advice. That means we can ask God and other people who know God for help when we are making tough decisions.**



We'll hear in God's big story today about two people who did the opposite of this! Today's Wonder Truth is **GOD WANTS US TO FOLLOW GODLY ADVICE.**

Declaring God's Wonder

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You are trustworthy, (Kids repeat.)

And I can follow You! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

Word of Wonder Activity

WORD OF WONDER

Come near to God and he will come near to you.

—James 4:8a (NIV)

God loves us and wants us to follow godly advice. When we come near to God, He helps us tell the difference between godly advice and bad advice. Our Word of Wonder helps us remember this! Let's say the verse together.

Open your Bible to [James 4:8a](#). Read [James 4:8a](#) several times together.

Now let's practice our Word of Wonder creating a work of art! Invite kids to create a Word of Wonder art piece by writing and drawing with sidewalk chalk on a posterboard. Encourage them to write the verse in the center of their art piece and then decorate around it with symbols and drawings. If your group is mostly younger kids, consider writing the verse on the posterboard for them and inviting them to decorate around it. When the kids are finished, invite all the groups to hold up their artwork for everyone to see.

Leader Tip: If the weather is nice and there is a space outside where kids can draw safely on the sidewalk, take groups outside to create their art pieces. Adults in your church will love seeing kids' artwork and what they are learning in children's ministry!

Elementary Questions

- **Who were the two kings in today's story?** (1. Rehoboam [RAY-oh-boh-am], who we called "Rere" in this lesson. 2. Jeroboam [jer-roh-BOHM], who we called "Jerry" in this lesson.)
- **What did Rehoboam do when he heard advice he didn't like?** (He ignored the advice and asked for advice from the young men he grew up with instead.)
- **Because Rehoboam decided to ignore wise advice, what happened to the kingdom of Israel?** (It split in two!)
- **Have you ever had to make a hard decision? Tell us about it.**
- **What do you usually do when you have a hard time making a decision?**
- **When did you get good, godly advice from someone? How did their advice help you?**

God's wisdom helps us understand hard things and make good decisions. When you must make a hard decision, you can go to trustworthy people who will give you godly advice and you can go directly to God to ask Him for wisdom! Let's go directly to God in prayer now!

Make It Inclusive: If kids struggle to answer open-ended questions, provide them with answer choices. For example, ask: "Because Rehoboam decided to ignore wise advice, did the kingdom of Israel completely disappear or did it split in two?"

Preteen Questions

- **Who was seeking advice in today's part of God's big story?** (1. Rehoboam [RAY-oh-boh-am], the king of Israel in the north, who we called "Rere" in this lesson. 2. Jeroboam [jer-roh-BOHM], the king of Judah in the south, who we called "Jerry" in this lesson.)
- **What bad advice was given to Rehoboam?** (Make the people work even harder.) **To Jeroboam?** (Make false gods called idols for the people to worship.)
- **Because Rehoboam decided to ignore wise advice, what happened to the kingdom of Israel?** (It split in two!)
- **Have you ever been given advice you didn't like or didn't want to follow? Tell us about it.**
- **How is godly advice different from regular advice?**
- **When did you get good, godly advice from someone? How did their advice help you?**

Wisdom is knowledge and understanding that comes only from God. God's wisdom helps us understand hard things and make good decisions. When you must make a hard decision, you can go to trustworthy people who will give you godly advice and you can go directly to God to ask Him for wisdom! Let's go directly to God in prayer now.

Small Group Prayer Time

Give each kid a note card. Invite them to close their eyes and think about people they know who love God and could give them godly advice. Encourage them to write each person's name or draw pictures of each person on their note cards. Close by inviting kids to thank God for each person on their card and pray for each one. Some kids might pray out loud while others may choose to pray quietly. Kids can take their note cards home as a reminder to continue praying for those people.

Identity

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

Elementary Responding in Worship: Trusting God's Word

Ahead of time, print one copy of the Trusting God's Word Cards [NIV](#) for each kid. Cut out the cards and organize them into four piles with all like cards stacked together.

Before the activity, set up four response stations. At each, place one stack of cards, coloring utensils, and writing utensils.

In God's big story today, we saw how important it is to listen to godly advice. Rehoboam and Jeroboam ignored godly advice and listened to bad advice instead. As a result, the kingdom of Israel divided into two, and the Israelites turned away from God and started worshiping idols.

All of us face hard decisions sometimes. When we don't know what to do, God wants us to listen to Him and listen to people who know and love Him.

One place we can always go to for godly advice is the Bible. The Bible tells God's big story; it's God's true and loving message for us.

Let's spend time reading words from the Bible and talking with God in prayer.

We have four stations set up and at each are cards with a Bible verse on it. Show the kids the four stations, and hold up a Trusting God's Word Card [NIV](#).

When you get to a station, I encourage you to take a card, read the Bible verse, and draw or write on the back of the card about a situation in your life where those words can help you.

For example, God's words to us on one of the cards are about giving our worries to Him. What do you worry about? You can draw a picture of it and tell God that you trust Him with that thing!

You can help kids form four groups and assign each group to one station. Or you can invite kids to start at any station they would like and allow them to move from station to station as they finish their pictures. Play music from the [God Speaks Elementary Spotify playlist](#) during this time.

Be available to read the Trusting God's Word Cards for younger kids. If there are a lot of younger kids in the group, consider assigning a youth or adult leader to each station to help read the cards.

After several minutes, gather kids together, and invite everyone to read the words from the bottom of the Trusting God Cards together: **God's Word is true and trustworthy! God wants us to follow godly advice.**

Preteen Responding in Worship: Godly Advice Posters

Ahead of time write the following words in the center of a large sheet of butcher paper or posterboard: “God’s Word is true and trustworthy! God wants us to follow godly advice.” If your group is large, prepare multiple sheets of butcher paper or posterboard.

Gather kids around the prepared butcher paper or posterboard. Set out writing utensils and markers.

In God’s big story today, we saw how important it is to listen to godly advice. Rehoboam and Jeroboam ignored godly advice and listened to bad advice instead. As a result, the kingdom of Israel divided into two, and the Israelites turned away from God and started worshiping idols. All of us face tough decisions sometimes. When we don’t know what to do, God wants us to listen to Him and listen to people who know and love Him.

One place we can always go to for godly advice is the Bible. The Bible tells God’s big story; it’s God’s true and loving message for us.

Let’s spend time reading God’s wise words in the Bible and creating posters with some of the best advice in the world—God’s very words from Scripture! Display the Bible Verses Slide [NIV](#).

(Alternatively, if you’d like kids to look up the four verses in their Bibles rather than read them from the slide, display the [Bible Verses References Slide](#).) Invite kids to look up the verses from the slide or other verses in the Bible that provide wisdom or godly advice. If they have a favorite verse that isn’t included on the slide, that’s great—they can use it! If they are thinking of a verse but don’t remember where to find it, see if you can find it together.

Once all the kids have found a Bible verse that shares godly advice, invite them to work together to create a poster that is filled with godly advice from the Bible. They can write out the verses they found and illustrate their verses with drawings and symbols.

Make It Inclusive: Preteens with learning differences or reading challenges are often not comfortable reading aloud. Always present opportunities for kids to read on a volunteer basis and never require kids to read out loud. When an activity includes reading, allow kids to work with partners.

After a few minutes, invite kids who are comfortable reading aloud to read the verses they wrote on the poster. Ask the following questions and allow kids to think about their answers quietly or share them aloud:

- **What is a tough situation you’re facing?**
- **Is there a verse on our poster that could help you in this situation? Which one?**

Invite kids into a short time of quiet prayer. Encourage them to talk with God about a tough situation, about their worries or what they are scared about, and to give all of it to God. He loves them!

If possible, post the completed Godly Advice Poster on the wall where kids will see it each week as a reminder that God’s Word is true and to listen to godly advice.

Blessing Your Kids

Blessing: God loves you! He has given you the Bible, and He has put people in your life to share godly advice with you. May you listen to God's voice this week and always!

GAME 3: LINK AN ELBOW

In this game, kids will link an elbow with their partner as quickly as possible.

Leader Tip: Some clever kids may try to stay near their partners as they move about the room. Encourage everyone to stay as far from their partners as possible until they hear, "Link an elbow!"

Gather kids and help them each find a partner. **Let's play a partner game that calls for speed and teamwork!**

Explain that kids will move about the room freely as music plays. The sillier they move or dance the better! The only rule is that they cannot be anywhere near their partners while the music is playing. When the music stops, you will shout, "Link an elbow!" and kids will find their partners and link elbows together. The last pair to link up will be eliminated.

You'll continue to play until there is just one pair remaining.

Leader Tip: *For Younger Kids.* Take the elimination element out of the game and just let kids play for fun

Play upbeat music from the [God Speaks Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids move and throughout the room. After about 30 seconds, pause the music and shout: **Link an elbow!** Allow kids to find their partners and link elbows with them.

The last pair to link elbows can stand to the side and cheer for their friends as the game continues. Keep playing until just one pair remains. Then gather everyone together.

Great job working together with your partners! Each time you linked your elbows, you were truly connected as one team! Today in God's big story, we learned about a sad time in Israel's history when the kingdom did not stay connected.

King Rehoboam (RAY-oh-boh-am) chose to listen to bad advice, and as a result, Israel split into two. With God's help, we can make better choices and listen to godly advice!