

ISRAEL'S EVIL KINGS

1 KINGS 14-15; 2 CHRONICLES 12-13



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: The first kings of Israel led the people to disobey God and to worship idols. Israel's kings suffered the consequences of their sin. We all sin when we disobey God and worship other things. Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sin and bring us back to God.

STORY POINT: Israel's kings did evil in God's sight and worshiped idols.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

When we hear the word idolatry, we might think about the golden calf in Exodus 32. While today's story includes King Jeroboam crafting two physical golden calves, it points to the invisible idolatry of the heart. What is idolatry? Idolatry is a sin in which we love and value something else above God.

Rehoboam had been cruel to God's people, and because of his harsh treatment, ten tribes rejected him as king and sought out Jeroboam to be king of Israel. Rehoboam's domain in Judah was smaller but held an important status because it was the location of the temple.

Jeroboam feared the people would eventually abandon him and return to Jerusalem to worship at the temple. Taking matters into his own hands, Jeroboam led the people to break the law of Moses and worship two golden calves. God was angry with Jeroboam and sent the prophet Ahijah to tell Jeroboam that he had behaved wickedly, that God was going to bring disaster upon his house, and that there would be a new king over Israel.

After Jeroboam, Israel had other evil kings—Nadab and Baasha. Like Jeroboam, they led Israel to turn away from God and worship idols. All three of these kings were eventually judged for their sin.

The first three kings of Israel led the people to disobey God. We all sin by disobeying God. Like Israel's kings, we may turn to other things above the Lord. Is there anything that has become an idol in your heart? As you prepare this week, remember the gift of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection that paid the price of our sin. Likewise, remind kids that Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sinful idolatry and bring us back to God. Pray for boys and girls to grasp the weight of our sinful choices to worship other things and the depth of Christ's love to provide salvation.



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

- ☐ "Where Does It Lead?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ index cards
- ☐ dry erase board and marker

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ "Golden Calf Puzzle" printable



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ painter's tape
- ☐ cardstock pieces, 10

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ painter's tape
- ☐ inflated balloon
- ☐ timer

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

- ☐ "Israel's Evil Kings" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 13, Session 2" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Aaron Taylor and Ohio Map Photos" printable

Key Passage Activity

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



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** “What should we do if someone asks us to do something wrong? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Where Does It Lead?” activity page.

| **SAY** “Through today’s story, we will learn that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS**. These evil kings led the people to disobey God’s command to worship Him alone. We all disobey God when we sin, but God sent Jesus to save us from sin.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: GOD OR IDOL?

Before this activity, use index cards to write out some characteristics of God such as living, hears us when we pray, answers prayer, speaks to us, saves people from sin, etc. Then, write some characteristics of idols such as: not alive, does not hear, does not answer prayers, silent, etc. On dry erase board, create two columns and label one God and the other Idol. Gather kids in one large group. Choose an index card from the stack and read it aloud. Invite a volunteer to tape the card under the correct heading on the dry erase board. Continue until all the cards have been placed under the correct headings. Then, review how God is the one true God.

| **SAY** “In today’s story, we will learn that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS**. The evil kings led God’s people to disobey His command to worship Him alone. God is the only true God who loves us, hears us, answers us, and saves us from sin.”

☐ OPTION 2: GOLDEN CALF PUZZLE



Print a copy of the “Golden Calf Puzzle” printable. Prior to the session, cut out each piece and hide the pieces around the room. Invite kids to work together to find the pieces. Then challenge kids to place all the pieces together to complete the puzzle.

| **SAY** “Today, we will learn how King Jeroboam crafted two golden calves and told the people to worship them. But only God is worthy of worship. He has always existed and will exist forever as the God of the universe. When people worship created things instead of the Creator God, that is called idolatry. Idolatry is a sin because **there is one true God who alone deserves worship**.”

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





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 happy to see you. Today, we will be hearing a Bible story from the Old Testament book of 1 Kings. If you have a Bible with you, will you take it out? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

The Bible teaches us how God’s people were divided into two kingdoms because of Solomon’s unfaithfulness to God and Rehoboam’s foolish sin. Today, we will learn more about the kings of Israel. We’ll see that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS**. [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s go to God in prayer: ‘Dear God, thank You for helping us understand that You alone are to be worshiped because You are the One true God. Help us have hearts that desire to follow You and turn away from idols. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Our big picture question is, **How many gods are there?** What is the answer? [Allow responses.] The answer is, **There is one true God who alone deserves worship.**

God made everything, and everything exists for Him. We were made to love God and worship Him. God is good, loving, and holy. Only He deserves our worship. Today, we will see how Israel’s evil kings worshiped false gods instead of the one true God. Our story can help us remember that only God is worthy of worship. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

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

SAY “King Solomon was the last king before the kingdom of God’s people was divided. Solomon began following the Lord faithfully, but he eventually allowed his heart to worship idols. After Solomon died, his son, Rehoboam, became king. Last week, we learned that Rehoboam’s foolish sin divided the kingdom. Today, we will learn about Israel’s first three kings and how **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS**. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to 1 Kings 14–15; 2 Chronicles 12–13. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Israel’s Evil Kings.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

ISRAEL’S EVIL KINGS

“When God’s people split into two separate kingdoms, King Jeroboam became king over Israel in the north. Unlike King David, **Jeroboam did not keep God’s commands and follow Him with all his heart**, doing what is right. **Jeroboam acted wickedly and made false gods for the people to worship.**

God was angry with Jeroboam. He sent the prophet Ahijah to tell him: “You have behaved wickedly, and **I am going to bring disaster on you. There will be a new king over Israel.** The new king will completely destroy the house of Jeroboam.”

Then the kingdom of Israel went to war with the kingdom of Judah. The king of Judah said to the people of Israel, “You have left the LORD your God! **You worship golden calves**, and you banished the priests of the LORD and made new priests. **But we continue to worship God.** We make offerings to Him every morning and every evening. **We are obeying the commandments of the LORD, but you are not. Do not fight against us, because you will not win!**”

God was with the people of Judah because of a promise He had made to King David, and they defeated Jeroboam and the army of Israel. Then the Lord struck Jeroboam, and he died.

After Jeroboam died, his son Nadab became king of Israel. Unfortunately, Nadab was just as evil as his father. Another man named Baasha (BAY uh shuh) attacked and killed Nadab and all his family, just as God said through the prophet Ahijah. Baasha became the new king of Israel. Baasha followed the same pattern as the evil kings who came before him, leading the people away from God to worship idols.

Christ Connection: The first kings of Israel led the people to disobey God and to worship idols. Israel’s kings suffered the consequences of their sin. We all sin when we disobey God and worship other things. Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sin and bring us back to God. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Use movement: Move about the room as you tell the story, emphasizing how the kings of Israel did not follow God.

Create two groups: Form two groups and lead each group to sit on opposite sides of the room, mirroring Israel and Judah.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ The first king of the Northern Kingdom of Israel was Jeroboam. Even though God had shown kindness to Jeroboam and allowed him to become king, Jeroboam turned away from God. How did Jeroboam sin against God? **[Allow responses.]** Jeroboam made two golden calves for the people to worship. He lied and said the golden calves had rescued God’s people from Egypt. But God had rescued His people from Egypt. Jeroboam lied and led the people to worship idols instead of the one true God. Jeroboam was more concerned with remaining king than following God. Because of Jeroboam’s sin, God said he would not remain king.

Who were the other two kings of Israel we learned about? **[Allow responses.]** Nadab and Baasha became king after Jeroboam. But they followed in Jeroboam’s wicked ways. **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS.** The first kings of Israel led the people to disobey God. Israel’s kings suffered the consequences of their sin. We all sin when we disobey God and worship other things. Jesus died and rose again to pay for our sin and bring us back to God. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ The Bible tells us that we have all sinned and are separated from God because of our sin. Jesus died and rose again so we can be saved from our sin. When we trust in Jesus, God washes away our sin and makes us right with Him. Have you trusted in Jesus? ”

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

1. If you have a friend who follows a different religion and thinks many gods exist, is it wrong to tell her about God?
2. Why is telling others about Jesus the best news they could hear?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Aaron Taylor and Ohio Map Photos” printable. Point to Ohio on the map. Tell kids that Aaron Taylor is the church planter and teaching pastor of Living Hope Church in Columbus, Ohio. The church, started in 2018, has been sharing the good news about Jesus with people in the area. Aaron and his church began two local nonprofits and a new ministry center called the Finding Hope Center.

SAY “ The center is a place where families who need help can receive household items like mattresses, bedding, and furniture. The center often helps single moms, immigrants, refugees, and others at no cost. They want to be a place for families to receive needed materials while also providing hope as they tell them about Jesus. Over time, the Finding Hope Center has been able to partner with other organizations like Send Relief to expand their reach and meet the needs of



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

| families in their community. ”

Pray for Aaron and his wife, Elizabeth, and their two daughters as they serve at Living Hope Church. Pray for the ministries of Living Hope Church and the Finding Hope Center.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

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

| **SAY** “ Nothing compares to God. He is the only true God who rules over all. ”

Gather kids together and direct them to form a large circle. Say the first word of the key passage. Then move around the circle, clockwise, challenging the next kid to say the next word of the key passage. Continue around the circle until the entire key passage has been said.

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 providing Jesus as our Savior to bring us back to You. Help us obey Your commands and encourage others to do the same. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

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





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

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 2 Chronicles 13. Remind kids that the Bible was written by many different people over thousands of years. Share how the Holy Spirit inspired each author to write God's words and that we can always trust the Bible.

Consider pointing out the location of Jerusalem (H5), where the temple was located, on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Chronicles 13:8 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ Jeroboam was afraid the people would return to Judah because God’s temple was in Jerusalem. Jeroboam didn’t care if God was worshiped; he cared whether or not he would remain king of Israel. His heart did not love God or understand that God is worthy of all worship.

When we love things more than God or put things above God, we create idols in our hearts. However, we can repent and turn away from idols and worship the one true God. Jesus changes people’s hearts to love God more than anything else. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ How did the kings of Israel lead the people away from God? ”

Remind kids that **ISRAEL’S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD’S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS**. The kings’ hearts were not concerned with worshiping God. Rather, they cared most about their power and status as king. We can be tempted to put ourselves first and make an idol out of our desires. Encourage kids to remember that God alone deserves all worship.

SAY “ What do we do when we recognize an idol in our lives? ”

Tell kids that being able to recognize sin is a grace of God because we see our need to repent of the sin. Share how we can pray to God, repent of our sin, and ask God to forgive us. Then we can take steps to remove that idol from our lives or ask God to help us turn away from idols when we are tempted to turn to them. We can also ask a friend or an adult to pray for us and remind us of God’s truth in the Bible.

SAY “ What might you be tempted to turn to above God? ”

Answers will vary. Discuss how we are all tempted to turn to other things for comfort, peace, help, or joy. Tell kids that only God can truly be everything we need. Discuss how everything in this world will fail us because it doesn’t last, can’t save, and was never meant to bring us everlasting joy. Remind kids to seek God first in everything because He is the only God who saves and gives eternal life through His Son, Jesus.

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: BOOKS OF THE BIBLE HOPSCOTCH

Before this activity, create a hopscotch board using painter's tape. Write the names of 10 Bible books, in order, on individual pieces of cardstock and tape the cardstock to the hopscotch board. Direct kids to line up and challenge them to take turns hopping down the board. Encourage kids to shout out the names of the books of the Bible they land on. For an added challenge, play using traditional hopscotch rules and a flat stone or bottle top. Allow enough time for each kid to complete the game at least once.

SAY “ The Bible is God’s Word to us. As we study the Bible, we grow in our knowledge of God. The more we know God and His Son, Jesus, the better we become at recognizing sin in our lives. Thankfully, God made the way for our sin to be forgiven: by faith in Jesus. ”

☐ OPTION 2: KEEP IT AWAY



Place a line of painter's tape across the room, dividing the room in half. Form kids into two groups and assign each group one half of the room. Inflate a balloon and direct groups to hit the balloon back and forth to one another. Assign each group five points. Set a 30 seconds timer, but don't tell kids how much time they have. Whichever team has the balloon on their side when the timer goes off will lose a point. Play as time allows, adjusting the timer each time. The team with the most points left wins.

SAY “ In 1 John 5:21, we learn that we are to guard ourselves from idols. This means we want to keep away from idols. Just as you didn't want to be the team with the balloon, we want to be children of God who turn away from worshiping idols. **ISRAEL'S KINGS DID EVIL IN GOD'S SIGHT AND WORSHIPED IDOLS,** but through faith in Jesus, we can receive hearts that love and worship God. ”

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.