

## WEEK 4 LESSON GUIDE



### BIG IDEA

God gives us true wisdom.

### BIBLE

**Solomon's Wise Ruling:** 1 Kings 3:19–28;  
James 3:13–18

## ABOUT THIS WEEK

From knowing which crews to hire to the best type of tool to use, construction sites are places where important decisions are made. This week, we'll hear about how Solomon used wisdom and compassion to make a decision to settle a dispute between two women. Solomon had a unique response to his situation, which helps us to see how **God gives us true wisdom.**

## LARGE GROUP TIME

*Beep. Beep. Beep.* We're backing up in our story of Solomon to find out what happened after God gave him great wisdom. Solomon helps solve a crisis by stepping in with an unusual solution. Let's *dig* in and learn more!

**WHAT?** *What are we talking about today?*

### ACTIVITY | Knock It Down, Build It Up

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need to build two walls with cardboard building bricks on opposite sides of your space. Make each wall with the same number of bricks (or something similar) but with different colors (for example, one wall could have red bricks, and the other could have yellow bricks). Mark a box on the ground with painter's tape in front of each wall to designate a "construction site." To play, divide your kids into two teams. The "red" team starts on the side with the yellow bricks, and the "yellow" team starts with the red bricks. The objective is for team members to take bricks off the wall (one at a time—bricks are heavy!) and build their team's wall on the opposite side. Make one or two kids on each team the construction site manager. The managers can tag kids from the other team, and they have to freeze until they are tagged by their own team's manager.*
- ✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Give kids a chance to make their own choices throughout your programming. Letting them choose from a list of options can empower kids to take control and help them feel safe.*
- Wow, what a bustling construction site! Things got a little chaotic there, didn't it? A better way to build might be if we all worked together instead of trying to stop each other from achieving our goals.
- In today's Bible story, we'll find out what happened when two people came to King Solomon to help solve a problem.
- **What do you think it takes to solve a tricky problem with other people?**

## ACTIVITY | Tools And Towers

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll need either poster boards or a dry-erase board for kids to draw on that can be seen by the rest of the group, a list of simple construction-related words for kids to draw (dump truck, bucket, hammer, hard hat, wrecking ball, saw, traffic cone, crane, drill, tape measure, nails), two Jenga towers, and a timer. To play, divide your group into two teams, with one player from each team taking turns as the illustrator at a time. Use a countdown video or a timer for one minute. Set up two Jenga towers, one for each team, and each time their team doesn't get the answer correct in the allotted time, they have to remove a block from the tower. Play until one tower falls over.

✂ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** Have simple pictures of the construction related words that the kids can copy when they're the illustrator.

- Wow, you guys were really able to show what you know about the construction world. In this game, knowing the answer wasn't enough ... you also had to be wise about which block to remove from your towers.
- Today we're talking about how knowledge and wisdom are not the same thing but how real wisdom comes from knowing God!

## QUESTION | What's a decision you had to make today?

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ask the following question. You can have every kid shout their answer but then ask a few kids to share their answers with everyone. Comment briefly on their answers—and have fun with this! Give some examples like, did you decide to put on clean clothes or not to put on clean clothes? Did you decide to brush your teeth or not to brush your teeth? Did you decide to get up on time or did you decide to sleep in?

✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Encourage preteens to also share why they made that decision.

- **What's a decision you had to make today?**
- We all make decisions every day. Sometimes a decision is super easy, and we know what we should do. But sometimes, there seems to be no clear answer as to what might be the best way to go.
- Even when we are not sure what choice to make, we can trust that God is always there to help give us wisdom to make the right choice.

**SO WHAT?** Why does it matter to God and to us?

## SCRIPTURE | 1 Kings 3:19–28 (Solomon's Wise Ruling)

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have a [sound bite](#) of construction noise playing in the background. Wear a construction hat and anything else to add to the construction vibe. Have your space decorated with items like caution tape, construction signs, blueprints, traffic cones, and more.
- Decisions, decisions, decisions! Life is full of decisions! When you're building a church or a road or whatever it is, you have to choose the right people to help you, the right materials to use, and even the right tools for the job! One wrong decision could make it or break it ... literally!
- What I'm saying is, making the right choices requires wisdom.
  - **Who can tell me who we've been talking about that has lots of wisdom?** King Solomon.
  - **How did Solomon get this incredible amount of wisdom?** God listened to Solomon's request for wisdom. Solomon asked God for wisdom and God said yes.
  - **What do you think it means to have wisdom?** Simply put, it's not just about knowing a lot of stuff. It's about using that knowledge and making the best choice. It's not always easy to do, which is why we need to talk to God. Solomon knew that from the start!
- After God answered Solomon's prayer and gave him great wisdom, Solomon settled a big dispute that was presented before him.
  - The situation was this: two women were living in the same house, and they each had a baby. One

morning, the first woman woke up and saw that her baby had died. But then she realized ... this wasn't her baby. The other lady must have switched their babies in the middle of the night. But that's not the other lady's story.

- So they insisted that the baby alive was theirs and continued to argue in front of King Solomon. They wanted King Solomon to decide who the mom of this baby boy was. How could he know for sure? It's not like they had DNA tests back then! That's a huge decision! If he got this wrong, the real mom and her baby would be separated forever. So, he used the wisdom given to him from God.
- **Let's read 1 Kings 3:23–25.**
  - What? Solomon was saying that since the women couldn't agree, they would each have to settle for half a baby. If they allowed this to happen, the baby would die. Solomon wasn't really going to harm the baby, but they didn't know that.
  - Solomon was wise. He knew that no true mom would stand by and watch anything happen to her child ... she would do anything to protect her child, even if that meant giving her child up to someone else. And that's exactly what happened.
- **Let's read 1 Kings 3:26–28.**
  - It took true wisdom to get this result. Solomon had to go beyond the information he was given and find a way to figure out who the real mother was. This was only possible because God gave King Solomon the wisdom to make the best decision.
  - God's wisdom may not always be the most obvious way of doing things, but that's because God helps us see more than just the problem at hand.
- Because Solomon relied on God, he was able to deliver a fair ruling. Now that's true wisdom!

## BIG IDEA | God gives us true wisdom.

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Write the words of the Big Idea on pieces of large painter's tape and attach them to one side of large cardboard building blocks (like [these](#) or make your own using tissue boxes). Stack them up so that the words are on the back. Create a "wrecking ball" by attaching a beach ball or indoor [sensory ball](#) to the ceiling or high fixture using string and duct tape. Allow kids to swing the ball to knock down the blocks (you can also have kids simply throw the ball). Have kids help you restack the blocks in order of the Big Idea.
- What a build-up to the Big Idea! Let's say the Big Idea together: **God gives us true wisdom.**

## ACTIVITY | Wise, Not Wise

- **[INSTRUCTIONS:** For this activity, you'll play a game like "Hot and Cold." To play, have one person step outside of the room while the rest of the group agrees on where to hide an object. After the item is concealed, invite the volunteer back in and try to locate the hidden item. The group calls out "wise" if they are getting closer and "not wise" if they are getting farther. Once they get really close, everyone says, "True wisdom!" If you don't have a lot of hiding places in your room, have the kids spread out in the room and give one person a small figurine or ball to hold in their hand as the item to find.
- ✂ **PRETEEN HACK:** Tell a story about a time when you thought something false about yourself or your situation and God delivered plans that were true and gave you wisdom to see the difference between the two.
- Great job getting the group's help to wisely locate the hidden object!
- Sometimes, we think being wise means we have to be the smartest person in the room. But that's not true, and that's not true wisdom. In Solomon's case, he probably was the smartest guy in the room. But it's not like he used complicated mathematical equations to solve the problem he was given. He used the wisdom God gave him.
- Being wise is not about having all the answers and all the information. It's all about what you do with that information to make the best choice possible.

- Being wise also means we are okay with asking for help with our decisions, especially asking God for help because **God gives us true wisdom.**

### ACTIVITY | Building Foundations

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need paper cups, straws, paper plates, cotton balls, tissue paper, and bouncy balls. To play, have kids get into teams of three to four. Then, have them work together to build a structure using all of the materials you provide that can support a team member's weight for ten seconds without crushing it. You could scale it down using smaller materials to support the weight of a heavy book.*

✳ **ACCESSIBILITY HACK:** *Provide hardback books, cardboard boxes, exercise balls, pillows or similar objects that kids can sit on top of. With the exception of the exercise balls, take turns stacking a few of the objects then add additional pillows or bean bags around the stacked objects as cushion for kids to fall into. You can simply have one exercise ball in the middle of the cushions. Invite kids to sit on the top of the stacked objects or the exercise ball and see how well the objects keep them up. Talk about how the foundation of a building matters then about how God and God's true wisdom give us a firm foundation for our lives.*

- When it comes to building anything, the foundation is the most important. Once something has a solid foundation with all the right structural supports, it has a better chance of being safe for all the people to go inside and can even stay standing during storms and earthquakes.
- Today's Bible story tells us that when Solomon had a difficult decision to make, he remembered that God gave him the gift of wisdom. A wisdom that was beyond compare to anyone else. His foundation for problem-solving was in God! Because he trusted God to help him see the situation in a unique way, he helped return the baby to his real mother.
- **God gives us true wisdom.**

### SCRIPTURE | James 3:13–18

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Have kids close their eyes and listen as you read these verses to them.*

✳ **PRETEEN HACK:** *Remind preteens that God poured a lot of wisdom into the Bible. How well do they feel they know the Bible? What practical steps might they take to be more familiar with what the Bible says in order to receive true wisdom?*

- This scripture tells us about two different kinds of wisdom. One kind is selfish and hurtful, and the other is the true wisdom from God.
  - The first kind of "wisdom" only looks out for themselves. They care about winning and putting others down—which causes confusion and chaos.
  - Wisdom from God, however, looks very different. God's true wisdom is shown in the way we help others without looking for recognition or anything else in return. We do it because God gave us wisdom, and the least we can do is to help others with it. We can use God's wisdom to help others achieve peace, too.
- Jesus once talked about two different kinds of builders: a wise one and a foolish one (Matthew 7).
  - The wise man built his house on sturdy rock, while the foolish man built his house on sand.
  - **When it started to rain, whose house do you think remained standing? The one on the rock, obviously!**
  - Having true wisdom is like building a house on a rock, where we turn to God to be our support and strength.
- This passage in James reminds us to lean on God's true wisdom. Just like how Solomon settled a tricky matter and the man who built his house on sturdy rock, we can see that **God gives us true wisdom.**

### VIDEO | Under Construction, Episode 4

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

**NOW WHAT?** *What does God want us to do about it?*

**REFLECTION | Construction Break!**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Ring a bell or play an alarm on your phone to pretend you are taking a construction break. Invite kids to sit casually around the room and provide a snack if you'd like. For today's sharing and reflection time, use the [image provided](#) of a "Detour" sign as you talk with kids.
- It's time for a construction break! We have built up our knowledge of God's words with the story of how Solomon settled an argument in an unusual but effective way.
- When we are in a construction zone, we have learned that signs play a big role. Take the "Detour" sign, for example. When there is a large construction project or if a road needs to be renovated, the "Detour" sign lets people know to go another way, instead of the usual route. If they don't follow that sign, they might get themselves into a sticky situation—literally, they could get stuck on wet cement!
  - **How did the second woman make her own "detour" when she woke up in the middle of the night and found out her baby had died?**
  - **How did Solomon take a "detour" from what most people might have done in his situation so that he could issue a fair ruling?**
  - **Who are some people that you consider wise? Why do you think they are wise?**
  - **Why should we pursue true wisdom?**
- Being smart or having knowledge is great, but it's not the same thing as being wise. Knowledge says, "I know what's right," while wisdom says, "I'll do what's right." When you are wise, you take the knowledge you have and use it to make the best choice.
- Solomon wasn't just super smart—he was super wise. That's because God gave him true wisdom, just like how **God gives us true wisdom.**

**RESPONSE | Wise Choices**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Have kids sit in groups of two or three. Present a few scenarios where they need to discuss with each other about what might be the wisest choice to make. Use the scenarios below or create your own.
- **What are some decisions that you, or kids your age, might have where you need wisdom?** Let's practice using God's wisdom to help us make the best choice.
- **What would be a wise choice to make if ...**
  - **You know your friend is being dishonest, but you don't want to get them in trouble?**
  - **You got invited to two birthday parties on the same day and time, but you can only go to one?**
  - **Two of your friends are arguing, and they want you to pick a side?**
- We all need wisdom for different situations we find ourselves in, and God invites each of us to have wisdom. If we ever feel like we don't know what to do, we can always ask because **God gives us true wisdom.**

**MEMORY VERSE | James 1:5 (NIV)**

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Learn the memory verse together using any combination of the resources provided: [memory verse coloring page](#), [sign language motions](#), or choose from [this list](#) of our favorite memorization techniques!
- **"If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."**

**PRAYER**

- God, we know true wisdom only comes from you. Your wisdom helps us be kind, helpful, compassionate, and fair. Remind us in any situation that we can always come to you for true wisdom. Amen.

## SMALL GROUP GUIDE

### DISCUSSION

#### ● SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS

- **What problem did King Solomon have to solve in today's Bible story?** *He had to figure out who was the baby's real mother.*
- **How did King Solomon know who was the rightful mother of the baby?** *The real mother begged him to save the baby's life even if it meant she couldn't have him.*
- **Where did King Solomon's wisdom come from?** *God!*
- **Read James 3:17. What does true wisdom from God look like?** *Pure, peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere.*

#### ● APPLICATION QUESTIONS

- **Can you think of a time when you had a wise choice to make?**
- **What are some sources or people you can go to when you are searching for wisdom?**
- **What is one of the first things you can do when you have a decision to make?**

### ACTIVITY | Construction Sign

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *For this activity, you'll need to give each kid a white index card. To make this, have kids line the top and bottom of their card with striped [washi tape](#) (or design their own borders) and write the Big Idea with orange marker in the middle of their card. Then they can attach two white clothespins on the bottom of their card to make a freestanding sign. You can also pass out two [gem stickers](#) to place on the top corners. See a worked example [here](#).*
- We are all under construction ... God is not done with us! Every day is a chance for us to grow wiser as we learn more about God's ways. Put your sign somewhere visible to help remind you that you can make wise choices because **God gives us true wisdom.**