

St. John's Church School
Old Testament - JSB Supplemental Lesson

Lesson 23: The Wisdom of Solomon

Bible Text: 1 Kings 3.

Recap of the previous story (3 mins.): King David's reign over Israel lasted for forty years. After his death, the kingdom passed to his son Solomon. Solomon was a great king, and his reign was peaceful. King Solomon was known, not only for the beautiful temple he had built as a gift for God, but most especially for another gift that he received from God.

Activity Introducing the Story (7 mins.):

In this game, children will learn about Solomon's choice to receive wisdom from God, as well as discover what this gift meant to him and to God's people.

Ask the children the following question:

"What would you ask for if God said you could have anything?" Allow children to raise hands, and discuss answers.

Then, tell the children that you will learn today how King Solomon answered that question, and why it pleased God, and what his choice meant for God's people.

Story Time (10 mins.)

Reference: Read or tell the story from **one** of the following: "The Judgment of Solomon," from *Bible Stories for Children*, by Geoffrey Horn, p. 166-168; the interactive scripted story, "Solomon's Prayer," from *Big Book of Holiday and Bible Celebrations*, pg. 37-39 (reproduced with this lesson); or the basic story below:

Story Time: After David's death, his son Solomon became king in Jerusalem. God told him to ask for any gift he wanted. Now, one of a king's most important jobs was to act as judge of his people, settling disputes and disagreements among his people, punishing the wrong and upholding the right. Solomon was young and inexperienced. So, rather than asking God for something for himself—riches, honour, victory, he asked God for the gift that would help him serve his people: **the gift of wisdom and understanding, so that he could discern between good and bad, and be able to be the judge of God's people.**

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****Important:**

What do “wisdom” and “understanding” mean? Wisdom and understanding mean having the knowledge and learning that you need to be able to make good choices.

****Important: What is a proverb? A proverb is a short traditional saying that expresses some truth.**

Because he asked for wisdom rather than long life or riches for himself, God not only gave Solomon wisdom, but also made him a great and glorious king.

Solomon's first test of wisdom came when two women came to him with two babies, one that had died in the night, and one that was alive. Each said the dead baby belonged to the other woman. How to tell which was telling the truth? Solomon told a soldier to take his sword and cut the baby in half, one half for each woman. One woman told him not to kill the baby, but to give it to the other woman, instead. The other woman said, divide it. Solomon, therefore, knew that the baby belonged to the first mother, and he gave the baby back to her.

When the people of God heard about this judgment, they knew then that God had given great wisdom to their young king. Later, Solomon built God a great stone Temple in Jerusalem, to replace the old Tabernacle (Tent) of Moses; and he made it a place for the worship of God (1 Kings 5-9). Solomon's wisdom and glory spread far beyond the people of God, and even the Queen of Sheba (a rich kingdom in the south of Arabia) came a very long way to hear his wisdom (1 Kings 10). She was deeply impressed with the wisdom God had given him in his kingdom, and she gave him amazing gifts of gold, spices, and precious stones. (Q. What other royal persons came a great distance and gave precious gifts? What were those gifts, and to whom were they given?)

King Solomon also wrote several of the books of the **Old Testament**, including: *The Book of Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon.*

Drawing the Story to a Close:

Say: God gave his wisdom to Solomon to judge his people, and pours it out on Christ and all Christians, so that they may understand and decide in

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every situation between right and wrong, between the way that leads to life and the way that leads to death (Matthew 7:13, 14).

Jesus in the Story: (2 mins.)

In Jesus, we see even more than in Solomon the supreme gift of God's wisdom, revealed to us. And, if the Queen of Sheba came a great distance to learn this wisdom from Solomon, and in gratitude gave him precious gifts, should not we be willing to believe what he says and learn from him, and to give him the best that we have? ["The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment of this [unbelieving] generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, a greater than Solomon is here" (Matthew 12:42).]

The gift of God's wisdom and understanding is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit to Christ (Isaiah 11:1-9), whereby he is able to perceive and judge the truth and not be taken in by appearances, and by his right judging is able to establish peace in his kingdom. That gift is also given to Christians in their Confirmation (BCP, p. 297, cf. Ephesians 1:17, James 1:5). The wisdom of God revealed in Jesus Christ enables us to see and follow the way that leads us to life, and to avoid the way that leads us to death (Matthew 7:13-14).

Understanding the Story: (15 min.)

Aim: **1.** To understand through the story of Solomon the importance of God's wisdom in our own lives. **2.** How we pray, study, and receive God's guidance through Christ and His word.

Questions to discuss:

What is the wisdom of God? Why is it important? (See Proverbs 2:10-22).

Where do we find it? (See Matthew 7:24-27).

What other kinds of wisdom are there? (1 Corinthians 1, 2; James 3:13-18).

Q. What did God tell Solomon to ask for?

A. Anything he wanted.

Q. What did Solomon ask God for?

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A. He asked for Wisdom to lead his people.

Q. How did God answer Solomon's prayer?

A. God was so pleased with Solomon's request, that He not only gave him wisdom, but made him a great and glorious king.

Q. How does God give us wisdom?

A. Wisdom is one of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that we receive in Confirmation.

Q. Why is wisdom so important?

A. Wisdom helps us to judge the truth and to know how to act in obedience to God, especially when the answer seems unclear at first.

Q. How do we nurture the gift of wisdom?

A. By our church school study of the Bible scriptures, and by our obedience to our parents and Christian leaders, and by prayer for God to show us his ways.

Proverbs Activity game: (15 min.)

Have at hand:

- **Favorite proverbs, written on small strips of paper (provided)**
- **Silly sayings, written on small strips of paper (provided)**
- **Hat (or basket)**

Place proverbs and silly sayings in basket or hat, and have children draw one out. Take turns either reading or having the teacher read each saying, and let the children decide whether the saying is a real proverb of wisdom, or just a silly saying. Talk about the answers.

For older classes:

- **Favorite proverbs, written on small strips of paper (provided)**
- **Silly sayings, written on small strips of paper (provided)**
- **Hat (or basket)**

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- **Extra blank small strips of paper**
- **Pencils**

Have older students make up their own sayings to put in the basket before the drawing begins.

Praying about the Story: (2 mins.)

O God, by whom the meek are guided in judgment, and light riseth up in darkness for the godly; Grant us, in all our doubts and uncertainties, the grace to ask what thou wouldst have us to do, that the Spirit of Wisdom may save us from all false choices, and that in thy light we may see light, and in thy straight path may not stumble; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.* BCP, p. 595.

A Verse from the story to Learn at Home:

“For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding.” *Proverbs 2:6.*

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Silly sayings:

"The strawberry shampoo doesn't taste as good as it smells."

"Hey, diddle, diddle, the cat and the fiddle."

"Twinkle, twinkle, little bat, How I wonder what you're at!"

"Through the teeth, and past the gums. Look out, stomach,
Here it comes!"

"Remember Grant, remember Lee, but most of all, remember
me!"

"It's more blessed to give than to receive, unless you have
chicken pox."

"Birds of a feather that flock together make a good target."

"Haste makes wastepaper."

"Don't follow the crowd. It may be going to the dentist."

Real Proverbs:

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"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction."

"For whom the Lord loveth, he correcteth; even as a father the son in whom he delighteth."

"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favour rather than silver and gold."

"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

"Apply thine heart unto instruction, and thine ears to the words of knowledge."

"As cold waters to a thirst soul, so is good news from a far country."

"He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy."

"A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."

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