
Leader BIBLE STUDY

The nation of Israel experienced quite the range of leaders throughout its history. Moses led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. Joshua brought them into the promised land.

From there, Israel was ruled by a series of judges: Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, and several others until the time of Samson. The period of the judges was not a particularly proud time in Israel's history. Without a godly king, the people continuously turned away from God and disobeyed Him. "Everyone did whatever he wanted" (Judg. 21:25).

Then came Samuel. Samuel guided God's people between the time of the judges and the time of the kings. The Israelites asked for a king, and God gave them Saul. But God took Saul's kingdom away and gave it to David. When David died, his son Solomon became king. Solomon's sin led to the nation of Israel being divided into two kingdoms. Solomon's son Rehoboam ruled over Judah in the south, and Jeroboam ruled over Israel in the north.

For several decades, Israel was led by men who did evil. Baasha became the third king of the Northern Kingdom when he murdered the second king. Baasha made God's people in Israel sin, and when he died, his son Elah became king. Elah was king for two years, but then his servant Zimri killed him. Zimri became the next king. Zimri's reign was short—just seven days. Zimri died in a fire, and Omri became Israel's next king. When Omri died, his son Ahab became king. King Ahab was more evil than any other king before him.

The evil kings of Israel did not lead God's people well. They sinned and led God's people away from Him. As you teach kids the reality of Israel's past, point out God's plan to send a perfect king for His people. Jesus came to bring salvation from sin and be the faithful, loving King Israel needed.

Preschool WORSHIP OVERVIEW

Session Title: Israel's History of Evil Kings

Bible Passage: 1 Kings 16

Big Picture Question: What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a king who loved God.

Key Passage: 2 Kings 17:13-14

Unit Christ Connection: The prophets called God's people to repentance as Christ calls people to repentance. Sin continued to divide and ultimately destroy the Northern Kingdom, but Christ's perfect kingdom is forever.

Large Group Worship

(15–20 minutes)

Small Group Activities

(25–30 minutes)

Large Group Closing

(10+ minutes)

The BIBLE STORY

Israel's History of Evil Kings

1 Kings 16

God's people had many leaders over the years. Moses led them out of Egypt, and Joshua led them into the promised land. And then several judges led the people. Do you remember Deborah, Gideon, and Samson? Then came Samuel, and God's people asked for a king. Saul became king, and then David. After that, David's son Solomon was king.

After King Solomon died, the nation of Israel split into two kingdoms: Israel, the Northern Kingdom, and Judah, the Southern Kingdom. And a time began when the nation of Israel was ruled by some bad kings. These bad kings did not love God, and they did not lead God's people like they should.

Baasha (BAY uh shuh) was the third king to rule over Israel. He was a bad king. Baasha had killed King Nadab (NAY dab) to take over the throne. Many of the things Baasha did were very bad, and he led the people of Israel to sin. The people of Israel began to serve and worship idols—people and things that were not God. They did not love God, and this made God sad and angry. God sent a man to tell Baasha that he would not be king anymore. Baasha died, and his son Elah (EE luh) became Israel's king.

Maybe Elah would be a better king! But he wasn't. Elah wasn't a very good king, and he wasn't king for very long. Elah was like his father, and he made God angry because he worshiped idols and caused Israel to sin and turn away from God. After two years, Zimri (ZIM righ)—a leader in Elah's army—planned to kill Elah. And he did. Zimri killed Elah.

Would Zimri be a better king than Elah? No! Zimri became king, and he acted just like Elah and Baasha. He was an evil king, and he caused Israel to sin. The people of Israel didn't want Zimri to be king. The people wanted Omri (AHM righ), the leader of the army, to be king of Israel. Omri took over the city where Zimri lived, and Zimri

was afraid. He knew he could not stand against Omri. **Zimri went into his house and set it on fire.** The house burned down with Zimri inside, **and Zimri died.**

Now Omri was king—the sixth king of Israel. While Omri was king, he bought a hill and built a city named Samaria. **Was Omri a good king? No! Omri** was like the kings before him. He **worshiped** people and **things** that were not God, and he caused Israel to sin. **This made God angry.**

Omri died, and his son Ahab (AY hab) became king of Israel. Israel needed a good king, but Ahab was more evil than the kings who were before him—more evil than Omri, more evil than Zimri, more evil than Elah, and more evil than Baasha. **Ahab was a very bad king! He married Jezebel, who told him to do bad things. Ahab served and worshiped the false god Baal. He built a place in Samaria for people to worship Baal, and all the things Ahab did made God very angry.**

Christ Connection: God's people wanted a king, but no king helped God's people love God. God was going to send Jesus. Jesus would come from heaven and be the king of God's people. He would help them love God, and He would be the best King ever.

Large Group WORSHIP

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Large Group Worship (15–20 minutes)

Smile and greet kids and parents as they arrive.

Welcome and sing

Gather for worship. Sing a fun song like "I Can Say Hello" to help newcomers feel welcome. Collect an offering; supply coins to kids who did not bring an offering today. Let them practice giving.

Practice the key passage and a Bible skill

Show the Book of 1 Kings in your Bible and today's Bible story picture on the timeline.

Say • Is 1 Kings in the Old or the New Testament? (*Old*)

What do you think a book called "Kings" is about? (*kings*) Right! There are two books in the Bible about kings—1 and 2 Kings. At the beginning of 1 Kings, the greatest king of Israel, King David, died. He was very old. His son, King Solomon, allowed people to worship idols; when he died, the great nation of Israel split into two parts. Israel, in the north, had the same name as the great nation, but it was ruled by evil kings. Judah, in the south, had a few good kings who loved God.

- Play "Mighty to Save" in the background as you welcome incoming preschoolers. Follow your church's security procedures.
- "I Can Say Hello" song
- offering basket

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- "God's Perfect Words" song

Read the key passage poster aloud. Sing “God’s Perfect Words” together. Talk about times when we don’t obey God because we do not listen to Him, such as when we don’t show love to someone or don’t help a person in trouble.

Play a counting game to get the wiggles out before the Bible story. Clap your hands three times, counting aloud with each clap. Encourage preschoolers to clap and count along with you. Do a different motion three times, such as hop, shake heads, or click tongues. Continue the game, changing the number of times to repeat the action.

Watch or tell the Bible story

Invite children to count with you to five several times.

Say • Today’s Bible story tells about five evil kings in

Israel. Listen carefully to hear the name of the worst king. Hold the Bible open to 1 Kings 16 as you tell the Bible story in your own words, or watch the Bible story video.

Worship with song and pray

Play the song “Mighty to Save.” Sing the key passage song again. Talk about the evil kings who did not love God but led the people away from God. Ask who the worst king was. (*Ahab*) Ask what King God would send to lead His people back to God. (*Jesus*)

Listen to the first two stanzas of “Come, Christians, Join to Sing” (through “Praise is His gracious choice”); teach kids to sing “Alleluia! Amen!” Play and sing the same portion of the hymn with kids singing the words “Alleluia! Amen!”

Say • Thank You, God, for sending Your Son, Jesus.

Transition to small groups

Introduce the small group activities. Send kids, one by one, to the activity of their choice. Use the countdown video.

- “Israel’s History of Evil Kings” video (optional)
- Bible

- “Mighty to Save” song
- “God’s Perfect Words” song
- “Come, Christians, Join to Sing” song

- countdown video (optional)
Tip: Do activities one of these ways:
 - as a group, all at the same time
 - in small groups that rotate through each activity
 - set up as centers, allowing preschoolers to browse and choose

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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Small Group Activities (25–30 minutes)



- washable markers
- yarn and tape (optional)
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster



- beanbags
- plastic plates
- small books
- masking tape

Make fist puppets

Show each kid how to make a fist. Draw a face using colors that she chooses. Draw the lower lip on the thumb, the upper lip on your fist, and the eyes and nose in proper relation to the mouth. Draw hair or tape yarn “hair” on the fist. Move the thumb up and down to make the puppet talk.

Let kids take turn asking the big picture question for the others to answer: ***What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a king who loved God.***

Walk like a king

Mark a start and a finish line with masking tape. Guide kids to stand like a person who is bored, sneaky, or wearing a uniform. Practice tiptoeing, stomping, and striding. Challenge them to walk balancing something on their head.

Say • Some people look kingly because of the way they stand and walk—straight and sure. Practice walking like a king. Try to walk from the start line to the finish line balancing something on your head. Can you walk and keep it from falling off your head?

- sponges
- purple and yellow paint
- shallow pans
- paper
- scissors

Paint with heart-shaped sponges

Cut sponges into heart shapes. Put a layer of each color paint into a shallow pan. Use kingly colors: purple paint and yellow (gold) paint.

Say • *What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a king who loved God.* A good king would listen to God and lead the people in the kingdom to love God. God would take care of them. Bad kings didn't pay attention to God. They did what they wanted to do. That caused trouble for themselves and their people. What king was God going to send who would love God and be the best King ever? (*Jesus*)

- heart stickers or cutout hearts
- large sheets of paper, 1 per kid
- glue

Sort hearts

Cut out hearts or use heart stickers that preschoolers can easily sort into three groups (three different sizes or colors, for example). Draw three circles on a page for each kid. Guide them to sort hearts and then glue or stick each group of hearts into a circle. As they work, remind kids that God sees people's hearts. (See 1 Sam. 16:7.) God knows who loves Him.

- "Whose Side Are You Leaning On?" song

Sing and lean

Challenge preschoolers to see who can stand on one foot the longest.

Say • Could you stand on one foot longer if you were leaning on somebody? Who would be the best to lean on? God is called the Lord. *Lord* means "the one who has power." Let's sing about leaning on the Lord. Have fun singing "Whose Side Are You Leaning On?" Pantomime the actions as you sing.

- countdown video (optional)

Transition to large group closing

Use the countdown video to move to the closing.

Large Group CLOSING

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Large Group Closing (10+ minutes)

Review

- Bible
- Timeline Map
- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster

Welcome the children. Remind kids that today's Bible story listed five kings in a row in Israel who were bad kings and did not love God—Baasha, Elah, Zimri, Omri, and Ahab.

Practice counting to five. Clap hands once as you name each king. Encourage a volunteer to locate a picture of a bad king on the timeline. Read the key passage aloud.

Say • *What kind of king did God's people need? God's people needed a king who loved God.*

Ministry Project:

Support missionaries through prayer. If your church is taking part in a large or long-term missions project, explain the activity in simple terms. Help kids understand how this project helps people learn about God, and how they can be a part of this project.

If you do not have such a project, tell children about ways your church helps missionaries. Perhaps you give money to a special Christmas or Easter offering. Perhaps you send boxes of supplies to Samaritan's Purse®.

- "Mighty to Save" song
- large globe
- "I Can Say Hello" song
- "God Will Listen When You Pray" song

Play the song “Mighty to Save” as you invite children to take turns spinning a globe and touching the country of their choice. Pause the music as you pray for missionaries in that country who tell people about Jesus. Encourage volunteers to take turns praying for the missionaries around the world. End the prayer time by thanking God for sending His Son, Jesus, to be the best king for all of God’s people.

Conclude with a fun song such as “I Can Say Hello” or “God Will Listen When You Pray.” Play a game as you wait to dismiss.

Play “The Good King Says”

Remind kids that today’s Bible story told about kings who were not good. They were bad kings of Israel. They did not love God. They did not help the people do good things.

In this game, similar to “Simon Says,” children may follow any direction you give, as long as you begin with, “The good king says.” If you simply suggest an action, children should ignore it. Suggest actions such as these:

- Wiggle your nose.
- Clap three times.
- Hop on one foot until I say, “Stop.”
- Sit down.
- Find a partner.

Dismiss children

As parents arrive, follow church security rules for dismissing children.

**The LORD warned Israel
and Judah ... “Turn from
your evil ways and keep
My commands.” ... But they
would not listen.**

2 Kings 17:13-14



**The LORD testified
against Israel, and against
Judah, ... Turn ye from
your evil ways, and keep
my commandments. ...
Notwithstanding they
would not hear.**

2 Kings 17:13-14

**The LORD warned Israel
and Judah, ... “Turn from
your evil ways and keep my
commandments.” ... But they
would not listen.**

2 Kings 17:13-14



**The LORD warned Israel
and Judah ... : “Turn from
your evil ways. Observe
my commands.” ... But they
would not listen.**

2 Kings 17:13-14



**The LORD testified
against Israel and against
Judah, ... “Turn from
your evil ways, and keep
My commandments.” ...
Nevertheless they would not
hear.**

2 Kings 17:13-14

What kind of king did God's people need?

God's people needed a king who loved God.



