

# Session 19

## Solomon moves out

During this session your 8 to 11s will see what happened when Solomon forgot about God. Children have busy lives and they should not be made to feel guilty about playing football or watching television. Encourage them to put God at the centre of their lives and then enjoy all that he has given them.

**To plan your session...** Choose a selection of *Starting, Into the Bible* and *Living the life* activities to make your session fun and memorable.

### Options to start your session...

#### Parachute praise

**Activity time:** 5 minutes

**Aim:** to thank God for never letting us go

**You will need:** a parachute or a double bedsheet, a small ball

- 1 Invite the children to sit around a parachute or sheet. Place a ball in the middle and challenge them to roll it around the edge of the parachute without it dropping off.
- 2 After a few minutes, say: 'Thank you, God, that you are faithful to us. Thank you that you don't give up on us, even when we make mistakes or deliberately do things that do not please you. Please help us to be faithful to you and to spend time with you.'
- 3 Encourage everyone to say 'Amen' if they agree.

#### Domino run

**Activity time:** 10 minutes

**Aim:** to see that mistakes escalate

**You will need:** dominoes

- 1 Help the children set up a 'domino run'. They can start with a simple line or circle. Invite them to knock it down and see the dominoes fall.
- 2 Then try making a more complicated run, where the line splits as one domino knocks over two that are standing next to each other.
- 3 If you don't have the space or facilities to do your own domino run, there are plenty of video clips on YouTube.
- 4 Ask if anyone has heard of the 'domino effect'. Invite them to explain what it is. Clarify that, in life, one mistake can be the beginning of others, just like in a domino run. Tell the children that they are going to see the effects of King Solomon's mistake, on his life and on his kingdom.

#### Aim

To remember that there are consequences if we ignore God

#### Bible passage

Kings 11:1–13,26–43;  
12:1 – 13:10

#### READY to USE activity

#### Mistakes

**Activity time:** 10 minutes

**Aim:** to realise how easy it is to make mistakes

- 1 With the children in pairs or threes, challenge them to come up with a list of mistakes that could be made in a kitchen. Ask for two dangerous ones, two where something gets broken and two funny ones.
- 2 Invite the children to compare their ideas. Ask: 'What would be the consequences of these mistakes?'
- 3 Differentiate between genuine mistakes and things that people choose to do wrong. Admit that we all do wrong things. Explain that sometimes we do things we didn't mean to do, but at other times we deliberately choose to do things that do not please God.

**Tip for Leaders:** Sitting in a circle so that everyone can see each other is ideal because it helps everyone to feel included. If possible, the leader should be on the same level as everyone else.

# Into the Bible – options to explore the Bible passage...

## READY TO USE activity

### Bible with mistakes

**Activity time:** 20 minutes

**Aim:** to understand the importance of staying faithful to God

**You will need:** a large sheet of paper (optional), copies of the *Xstream* sheet from page 138

#### 1 Bible Timeline

Ask the children who God gave the Ten Commandments to (*Moses*). Challenge the children to tell you as many of these as they can remember, then fill in the rest from Exodus 20. Ask why they think God gave his people laws to follow. (*They helped them to live to please God and were the best way for them to live.*)

#### 2 Make a chart

Say that when people broke God's commandments there were disastrous results! Make a large chart, with columns headed 'Solomon', 'Rehoboam' and 'Jeroboam' and two rows entitled 'Mistakes' and 'Consequences' (if you don't have a large sheet of paper, stick several smaller sheets together). As you tell the story, challenge the children to call out when they think one of the three people has made a mistake (indicated by '\*' in the text). Pause and fill in the mistake on the chart. Ask what the consequence might be. Read on, find out and mark it on the chart.

#### 3 Read the Bible story

**Story:** King Solomon loved women! He had 700 wives! God had commanded his people not to marry foreign women, but Solomon did and he built them temples to carry on with their own religions \*. In the end, King Solomon even started worshipping the gods his wives worshipped \*; when he was old he forgot about God and the great things he had done \*.

Solomon liked building cities, and a man called Jeroboam was one of his best workers. One day, Jeroboam met a prophet who said: 'God is angry with King Solomon because he has stopped worshipping God: God is going to take the kingdom away from Solomon's family. After Solomon dies, you are going to be king of most of Israel.'

When Solomon heard about this, he was furious and tried to kill Jeroboam \*. But Jeroboam escaped and went to live in Egypt until Solomon died.

Solomon died after he had been king for 40 years. His son Rehoboam expected to be king, but Jeroboam came back from Egypt and wanted to be king as well. The people came to Rehoboam and asked him what sort of king he would be. Solomon had taken a lot of money from them to pay for his building projects, and they wanted to know if Rehoboam would be the same. The old advisers warned him not to take so much money from them, but the young men said that he should take more! And that is what Rehoboam did! He announced that he would be stricter than Solomon had been \*. That did it! Most of the people decided to follow Jeroboam.

Rehoboam was left ruling two of the 12 tribes of Israel in the south. Jeroboam ruled the other ten tribes in the north. Jeroboam had a problem. The Temple was in Jerusalem, which was in Rehoboam's kingdom, not his. Jeroboam was afraid that when the people went to worship God at the Temple they would go back to Rehoboam. So he made two gold calves for the people to worship \* and told them that these were their gods \*. He invited all sorts of people to be the priests for these new gods \*.

Solomon's kingdom was now a divided mess where people didn't worship God at all. And it all started when Solomon stopped being faithful to God.

#### 4 Xstream

Invite the children to look at the *Xstream* sheet from page 138. In groups of two or three, challenge them to think of answers to the kings' problems. Encourage the children to read out their replies.

**You will find another  
Into the Bible option  
on the next page...**

# Into the Bible – options (continued)...

## Bible story with drama

**Activity time:** 20 minutes

**Aim:** to understand the importance of staying faithful to God

**You will need:** script from pages 139 and 140, a large sheet of paper, a long piece of string, scarves and costume jewellery (optional), crowns and cloaks (optional)

### 1 Bible Timeline

Invite the children to look at the SU Bible Timeline to spot the long-term results of disobeying God. Challenge them to see that if people put God first they made good decisions. If something else was more important, they made bad decisions and forgot about God. (Such as the people of Israel, who obeyed God and were led out of Egypt, but then didn't trust God, so wandered in the desert for 40 years.)

### 2 Act

There's a script for this session's story, which deals with the kingdom's deterioration after Solomon's foolish marriages, on pages 139 and 140. Make sure that all the children can see a copy of the script. Invite volunteers to play the main characters: Narrator, Objector, Solomon, wives, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Ahijah, Prophet. Everyone else can be wives, advisors to Rehoboam, People of Israel and false priests.

Begin to direct the performance, but when the word 'Mistake!' comes up, the action freezes. At this point, invite the children to come out of role and talk about what mistake has been made and what might happen next. When a Bible reference is listed, encourage the children to look it up; the one who finds it first each time can read the verses out. Make sure the children understand what the verses mean, and then continue with the drama. The play has five scenes:

**Scene 1:** Solomon's 700 wives make him turn away from God, and he starts worshipping their gods instead.

**Scene 2:** Ahijah meets Jeroboam and prophesies that he will become king over ten of the 12 tribes of Israel. Jeroboam escapes from Solomon and goes to Egypt.

**Scene 3:** Rehoboam becomes king in the south and winds the people up by announcing that he is going to be a harsher king than Solomon, and that he is going to increase taxation.

**Scene 4:** Jeroboam creates his own religion.

**Scene 5:** Jeroboam is warned that God will destroy his false religion in the reign of Josiah.

### 3 Chat

Encourage the children to recap the mistakes that the characters in the play made. Use the following questions to help them:

Where did things start to go wrong? (*When Solomon disobeyed God by marrying foreign wives.*)

What were the long-term results of Solomon's unfaithfulness? (*The kingdom was taken away and split into two parts. The people who lived in the larger part didn't worship God any more. So Solomon's unfaithfulness to God led to most of his people being unfaithful to God as well.*)

What does this part of the Bible teach us about why we should remain faithful to God?

Explain that Solomon married the pharaoh's daughter at the beginning of his reign as a way of making peace with Egypt. It looked like a good idea, but it was the beginning of him marrying foreign women, and after a while he began to copy his wives and worship the gods they worshipped.

### 4 Response

Say that we can also be unfaithful to God and often it starts with things that don't seem terribly important. Ask: 'What small mistakes can we make? How might they grow into problems? How can we help ourselves to keep faithful to God?' Put the string on the floor in a winding path that the children can walk along. Ask them to walk along the path slowly, and as they do to pray silently that God will help them to keep faithful to him along the path of their lives.

## More on this theme

If you want to do a short series with your group, another session that works well with this one is:

**Session 18** God moves in, 1 Kings 5–8

# Living the life – options to help live God’s way...

## Prayer snap

**Activity time:** 10 minutes

**Aim:** to pray about things that distract us from God

**You will need:** cards from page 141

- 1 Give each child a set of cards from page 141 and encourage them to shuffle them. These represent things that can distract us from God and things that can help us to focus on him.
- 2 Invite the children to get into pairs and play a game of Snap! using both sets of cards. When they get two matching cards, instead of shouting ‘Snap!’ they should stop and pray. If their pair of cards shows a way to focus on God, they should pray that God will help them use this to stay faithful to him. If the cards show a distraction, they should pray that they will be able to resist that temptation and stay faithful to God.

## Collage

**Activity time:** 15 minutes

**Aim:** to think about the difference between people who are, and are not, faithful to God

**You will need:** leaves, tissue paper

- 1 Read Psalm 1:1–4 together.
- 2 Working in pairs, or all together, create a collage to show the two types of people mentioned in the psalm. Those who trust God are like a healthy tree, while those who don’t are like sawdust or straw, blown away by the wind. Suggest that the children use leaves or tissue paper to show the healthy tree standing by a stream, and also show a withered tree whose leaves are blowing away.
- 3 Talk about how they can be like healthy trees. Ask them to suggest some things that will help them grow strong for God.

**READY TO USE**  
**activity**

## Active game

**Activity time:** 5–10 minutes

**Aim:** to think about what will help us stay faithful to God

- 1 Make labels for four different parts of your room: ‘At home’, ‘At school’, ‘At church’ and ‘With friends’.
- 2 Call out one of the places and invite the children to run to it. Repeat this with each place. At each, ask the children: ‘What could you do to make sure you stay faithful to God when you are at home/at school/at church/with friends?’
- 3 Establish that reading the Bible regularly, remembering Bible verses, praying, coming to the Xstream group and talking with other Christians are all ways they can stay faithful to God.
- 4 Before the children move on to the next place, sing a song they know well or say short one-line prayers, based on what they have just discussed.



## Extra ideas for the session and beyond...

Make a prayer diary and encourage the children to record their prayers. Next session, they could chat to you about it, if they want to.

Invite the children to write a letter to God, asking him to help them be faithful to him.

Sing along to ‘Call to me’ (*Light for Everyone* CD), ‘All the time’, ‘I try to do what’s good’ and ‘Big, fat, fluffy difference’ (*Reach Up!* CD).

MP3s for this activity are available in the zip folder.



# Problem Page

Can you answer the letters from these kings?

Dear Xstream,

I am a king, and I have many wives. But all my wives believe in different gods and now I am confused. Should I carry on worshipping my God or should I do what my wives do? Also, I am a bit cross with my God because he says that he will make someone else king instead of my son. Have I really done anything bad when I worship my wives' gods?

Yours, very confused,  
King Solomon

Dear Solomon...



Dear Xstream,

I am king of most of Israel, but the Temple where we all worship is in the part of Israel I don't control. Do you think I should let my people go there? I am planning to create a new religion for my people to follow instead, with a different god. Do you think that would cause problems?

Yours unsure,  
King Jeroboam

Dear Jeroboam...



Dear Xstream,

I am the true king of Israel, but everyone is following an imposter called Yeroboam. My soldiers won't fight to win my kingdom back and everyone says it's my fault because I was too hard on the people. What do you think I did wrong?

Yours truly,  
King Rehoboam

Dear Rehoboam...



## Script for 'Bible story with drama'

**Cast:** Narrator, Objector, Solomon, Wives, Rehoboam, Jeroboam, Ahijah, Prophet

**Non-speaking parts:** Wives, Advisors to Rehoboam, People of Israel, False priests

**Props:** A large sheet of paper to represent Ahijah's cloak

### Scene 1: Beautiful women

**Narrator:** King Solomon had many wives – 700 in fact!

**Solomon:** I love beautiful women!

*(Wives walk around the room and come to Solomon holding out their hands.)*

**Wives:** Please?

**Solomon:** I give them everything they ask for. They've all got their own temples so they can worship their own gods.

**Objector:** Mistake!

**Wives:** Come with us to worship.

**Solomon:** Actually, now I tend to worship my wives' gods instead of my own.

*(Solomon and the wives point to the temples.)*

**Objector:** Mistake! *(Reads 1 Kings 11:9-11.)*

### Scene 2: A prophecy

**Narrator:** Solomon always had a building project on the go. He rebuilt cities almost for the sake of it.

**Solomon:** I like things to look nice.

*(Everyone pretends to build.)*

**Narrator:** Solomon's building manager was called Jeroboam. One day, Jeroboam met a man of God.

*(Jeroboam and Ahijah meet alone on the stage. Ahijah wears a 'cloak' made from paper.)*

**Ahijah:** Jeroboam! Peace be with you!

**Jeroboam:** Hi, Ahijah! Nice cloak.

*(Ahijah rips his cloak into 12 pieces and gives 10 to Jeroboam.)*

**Ahijah:** This is what God says. Because Solomon isn't following him, he will take the kingdom away from Solomon's family. You will rule over ten of the tribes of Israel; but God will leave two tribes with Solomon's son for the sake of David, Solomon's father.

**Jeroboam:** Oh, right! Thanks!

**Narrator:** But when Solomon heard what Ahijah had said, he was not happy!

**Solomon:** I'll kill him!

**Objector:** Mistake!

*(Solomon chases Jeroboam around the stage.)*

**Narrator:** But Jeroboam escaped Egypt, where he lived until Solomon died.

### Scene 3: Solomon is dead

**Narrator:** After 40 years as king, Solomon died.

*(Solomon lies on the floor. Rehoboam and wives sit around him crying loudly.)*

**Narrator:** Go away, ladies! And take your false gods with you.

*(Wives leave.)*

**Narrator:** Someone sent for Jeroboam.

**Jeroboam:** *(Entering.)* Sol's dead, eh? Fantastic! I've got lots of plans for this kingdom.

**Rehoboam:** Excuse me.

**Jeroboam:** Who are you?

**Rehoboam:** I'm King Rehoboam... Solomon's son, actually.

**Narrator:** The people weren't sure who to follow. So they asked Rehoboam what sort of king he would be.

**Everyone:** Treat us well, Rehoboam!

**Narrator:** Rehoboam asked for advice.

**Rehoboam:** *(Asking children individually.)* Should I be a gentle king or a hard king?

*(The children answer, 'Gentle' or 'Hard' randomly.)*

**Narrator:** After three days' thinking time, Rehoboam told the people what he would be like.

**Rehoboam:** You thought my father's taxes were high? Mine will be higher. You thought he was a hard master? I'll be harder still! You will soon see a difference!

**Objector:** Mistake!

**Narrator:** The people weren't happy with this answer.

**Everyone:** Down with Rehoboam! Down with Rehoboam!

**Jeroboam:** Those who want me to be king, follow me now! King Jeroboam! King Jeroboam!

**Narrator:** Just as God had said, ten of the tribes of Israel followed Jeroboam, and two followed Rehoboam. Solomon's kingdom was split in two.

## Scene 4: Jeroboam's reign

**Narrator:** Jeroboam ruled over the northern part of the kingdom. But the Temple was in the south, where Rehoboam reigned. Jeroboam wondered what would happen if he let his people go to Jerusalem.

**Jeroboam:** I can't risk letting them go to Rehoboam's land – he might win them back. Think. (*Jeroboam 'thinks' while walking around the stage.*)

**Jeroboam:** Idea! I'll make some bronze cows for the people to worship. They won't know the difference!

**Objector:** Mistake! (*Reads 1 Kings 13:34.*)

**Jeroboam:** People of Israel! These cows are your gods! You can worship them any day you like, here. You don't have to go to Jerusalem any more!  
(*All the people bow down.*)

**Narrator:** Jeroboam made a lot of priests to serve the new cow gods.

**Objector:** Mistake!

**Narrator:** The priests didn't need any experience or qualifications.

**Jeroboam:** You want to be a priest? Sure. You want to? Fine!

(*The children who are 'False priests' line up and Jeroboam accepts them all as priests.*)

**Jeroboam:** Hey, let's have some new festivals as well! We'll worship the cows on a New Holy Day.

**Objector:** Mistake!

## Scene 5: A warning

**Narrator:** Jeroboam used to worship at the new altar – even though God himself had made him King of Israel.

**Objector:** Mistake!

**Jeroboam:** I just love the sense of power!

**Narrator:** One day, Jeroboam had a visitor at his new altar.

**Prophet:** This is what the Lord says: "David will have a descendent – a great, great grandson called Josiah. Josiah will kill all the priests who offer sacrifices to these false gods on this altar. And to prove I am telling the truth, right now the altar will split in half!"

**Jeroboam:** Arrest this man! (*Points at the prophet.*)

**Objector:** Mistake!

**Jeroboam:** Oh, my arm! My arm!!! I can't move it!

**Narrator:** Jeroboam's arm was paralysed. And the altar, at that moment, broke in half.

(*Everyone makes creaking and snapping sound effects.*)

**Jeroboam:** Ow, ow! Ask God to heal my arm!

**Prophet:** Lord, please heal Jeroboam.

**Jeroboam:** My arm is healed! You must come and have dinner with me!

**Prophet:** No, I must go home now. God said so.

**Narrator:** And that's the story of how Solomon's kingdom was split and the people led away from God. Things carried on getting worse – but that's another story! Can you see where the three kings went wrong? What could they have done to stop these things from happening?

Friends

TV

Football

Bible

Praying

School

PlayStation

Youth  
group

Being  
popular

Fear

Money

Pop music