Preschool–Grade 6

Rehoboam and the Divided Kingdom

Sunday School Lesson for Preschool (Ages 3–5), 20–30 minutes

Main point: I listen to good advice, and I speak good words.
Bible passage: 1 Kings 12. Read 1 Kings 12:1–20 yourself before class, and read the teacher note at the end.
Memory verse: "speak good words to them" *1 Kings 12:7 (KJV)*.
You need: a Bible, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: put a bookmark in your Bible at 1 Kings 12.

1. Opening game: Heavy, Light (5 minutes)

Say "Heavy!" and everyone walks slowly, bent over, like they are carrying something very heavy. Say "Light!" and everyone walks on tiptoe with their arms up, like they are carrying a feather. Switch back and forth. Say: "Heavy things are hard to carry. Today we will hear a true story about people who asked their king to make their heavy load lighter."

2. Bible story (5 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to 1 Kings 12. Say: "This story is true. It is in God's Word." Read each line slowly and do the motion. When you see **Say it with me**, the kids say the line back to you.

Rehoboam was going to be the new king (1 Kings 12:1). *(Put a pretend crown on your head.)*
The people asked the king to make their heavy load lighter (12:4). *(Bend over like you carry something heavy.)*
The old men said, "Speak good words to them" (12:7). *(Hand on your heart.)*
Say it with me: "Speak good words!"
But Rehoboam did not listen to the old men (12:8). *(Cover your ears.)*
The young men said, "I will add to your yoke" (12:11). That means, "Make it even heavier!" *(Stomp your feet.)*
Rehoboam spoke rough, unkind words to the people (12:13). *(Make a grumpy face.)*
The people did not want him for their king. They went home to their tents (12:16). *(Walk in place.)*
Only some of the people stayed with Rehoboam (12:20). *(Hold up a few fingers.)*
God wants us to listen to good advice and speak good words. *(Smile big!)*
Say it with me: "I will speak good words!"

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

3. Questions to ask (3 minutes)

1. What did the people ask the king to do? *(Make their heavy load lighter, 1 Kings 12:4)*
2. What did the old men say? *("Speak good words to them," 12:7)*
3. Did Rehoboam listen? *(No, 12:8)*

4. Memory verse (3 minutes)

Say: "The old men told the king to 'speak good words to them.' That means kind words." Teach the motion: touch your lips on "speak," make a heart with your hands on "good words," and point to a friend on "to them." Say the verse with the motion three times: in a normal voice, in a whisper, and in a happy loud voice. Then say "1 Kings 12:7" and clap three times.

5. What this means for us (3 minutes)

Say: "God loves you! Everyone has done wrong things. That is called sin (Romans 3:23). Jesus is God. He came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins. He was buried. Then He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us what to do (Acts 2:38). We repent: we tell God we are sorry, and we stop doing wrong. We are baptized in Jesus' name, down under the water, and our sins are washed away. And God gives us the Holy Ghost. That is God's own Spirit in us. When people are filled with the Holy Ghost, they speak in other tongues, words God gives them (Acts 2:4)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Good Words (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a take-home sheet. In the drawing box, help them draw themselves saying good words to someone in their family. While they color, ask: "What is a good word you can say to your mom or dad? To a friend?" Kids who finish early can play Heavy, Light again.

7. Prayer

Say each line, and the kids say it after you:
"Thank You, God, for people who help me.
Help me listen to good advice.
Help me speak good words. In Jesus' name, amen."

Tip: send the take-home sheet home so parents can tell the story again this week.

Teacher note: what this lesson leaves out. The preschool story calls the yoke a "load," and it leaves out the whips and scorpions (12:11, 12:14), Jeroboam's name and the man the people stoned (12:18). It does not explain why the kingdom split. If a child asks why the people left, say simply: "The king was not kind to them, and he would not listen."

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post