Preschool–Grade 6

King Solomon Asks for Wisdom

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: When God said, "Ask what I shall give thee," Solomon asked for an understanding heart to lead God's people well. God was pleased and gave him wisdom, and more. When we lack wisdom, we can ask God.
Bible passage: 1 Kings 3. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." *James 1:5 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), paper and a pencil for each child, a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Anything You Want (5–10 minutes)

Give each child a slip of paper. Say: "If you could ask for anything at all, what would you ask for?" Kids write one thing and fold the paper. Collect them and read them out loud without names. Sort them on the board into two lists: *things for me* and *things that help other people*. Ask: *Which list is longer? Why?* Say: "Today we will meet a young king who could ask God for anything. Let's see which list his answer goes on."

2. Bible story: An Understanding Heart (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to 1 Kings 3. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

A new king. Solomon was the son of King David, and after David he became king of Israel (1 Kings 3:7). "Solomon loved the LORD, walking in the statutes of David his father" (3:3). **Statutes** are God's rules.

A dream at Gibeon. The king went to Gibeon, "the great high place," a hilltop place of worship, and offered a thousand burnt offerings on the altar there (3:4). **Look up 1 Kings 3:5.** God told Solomon to ask for whatever he wanted!

What Solomon asked. Solomon thanked God for His great mercy to David (3:6). **Look up 1 Kings 3:7.** Solomon felt young and unready: "I know not how to go out or come in" means "I don't know how to lead." God's people were "a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted" (3:8). **Look up 1 Kings 3:9.** Solomon asked for "an understanding heart" to **judge**, to decide what is right, and to **discern**, to tell the difference between good and bad.

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God's answer. Look up 1 Kings 3:10. The LORD was pleased. God said Solomon had not asked for long life, or riches, or the life of his enemies, but for understanding (3:11). **Look up 1 Kings 3:12–13.** God gave him "a wise and an understanding heart," so there was none like him before or after. And God also gave him what he had not asked for, "both riches, and honour." God promised that if Solomon walked in His ways and kept His commandments, as David did, He would **lengthen thy days**, give him a long life (3:14).

Back in Jerusalem. "Solomon awoke; and, behold, it was a dream" (3:15). He went to Jerusalem, stood before the **ark of the covenant**, the holy chest that held God's covenant, offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and made a feast for all his servants (3:15).

Two women and a baby. *(Told gently on purpose.)* Two women came and stood before the king (3:16). They lived in one house, and each had a baby boy, three days apart (3:17–18). One baby died in the night (3:19). One mother said the other woman rose at midnight, took her living son, and laid the baby who had died beside her; in the morning she looked closely and saw it was not her son (3:20–21). Each woman said, "The living is my son" (3:22). No one else had been in the house to tell what happened (3:18).

A wise judgment. Look up 1 Kings 3:24–25. The king called for a sword and said to divide the living child in two. Watch what his words showed. The real mother's heart was full of love for her son (the KJV says her "bowels yearned upon her son"), and she said, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." The other woman said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it" (3:26). **Look up 1 Kings 3:27.** The king gave the living child to his real mother, and no one hurt him. **Look up 1 Kings 3:28.** All Israel saw "that the wisdom of God was in him."

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3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Look at the lists on the board. Which list does Solomon's answer go on? Who was he thinking about (3:9)?
2. Solomon said, "I am but a little child" (3:7). Why do you think it pleased God that Solomon knew he needed help?
3. God gave Solomon riches and honour he did not ask for (3:13). What does that show about God?
4. How did Solomon's judgment show who really loved the baby (3:26–27)?
5. Name one time this week when you will need wisdom. How can you ask God for it?

Recall questions

1. Where did the LORD appear to Solomon? *(In Gibeon, in a dream by night, 1 Kings 3:5)*
2. How many burnt offerings did Solomon offer at Gibeon? *(A thousand, 3:4)*
3. What three things did God say Solomon did not ask for? *(Long life, riches, and the life of his enemies, 3:11)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **lack** means you don't have enough; **wisdom** means knowing the right thing to do and doing it; **liberally** means freely, generously; **upbraideth not** means He doesn't scold you for asking. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God gave Solomon an understanding heart when he asked. God loves you, and He wants to help you too. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Solomon was David's son, and Jesus Christ was born in David's family: 'Jesus Christ, the son of David' (Matthew 1:1, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
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.
This week: before a hard choice, stop and ask God for wisdom, like Solomon.

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6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. 1 Kings 3:3: Whose statutes did Solomon walk in? *(David his father's)*
2. 1 Kings 3:4: What was Gibeon called? *(The great high place)*
3. 1 Kings 3:5: When did the LORD appear to Solomon? *(In a dream by night)*
4. 1 Kings 3:7: What did Solomon call himself? *("But a little child")*
5. 1 Kings 3:9: What did Solomon want to discern between? *(Good and bad)*
6. 1 Kings 3:13: What two things did God give that Solomon had not asked? *(Riches and honour)*
7. 1 Kings 3:15: What did Solomon stand before in Jerusalem? *(The ark of the covenant of the LORD)*
8. 1 Kings 3:28: What did all Israel see was in Solomon? *(The wisdom of God)*

   Early finishers can do the Solomon word search or crossword (vbshq.com/bible-stories/solomon).

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for giving Solomon an understanding heart. When we don't know what to do, help us ask You first, and help us choose what is right. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: The story of the two women (1 Kings 3:16–28) is told gently on purpose. Call them "two women," as the lessons do, and keep the baby who died brief. If a child is upset by the sword, point out that the king's words showed who the real mother was, and then he ordered that the child not be hurt at all: "in no wise slay it" (3:27). If a child has lost a baby in their family, be gentle.

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