Preschool–Grade 6

King Solomon Asks for Wisdom

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Wisdom is a gift God gives to those who ask. Solomon could have asked for anything, and he asked for an understanding heart to serve God's people. God was pleased, and He still gives wisdom to anyone who asks.
Bible passage: 1 Kings 3. Students read 1 Kings 3:3–15 out loud themselves; the teacher tells 3:16–28.
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)* and "For the LORD giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." *Proverbs 2:6 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read all of 1 Kings 3. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Smart or Wise? (5–10 minutes)

Draw two columns on the board: *knows a lot* and *knows what to do*. Read each example, and students say which column it goes in: 1) Knowing every answer on a science test. 2) Knowing when to stay quiet in an argument. 3) Knowing the rules of a game. 4) Knowing how to be fair when two friends both want the same thing. Ask: *Can someone know a lot and still make foolish choices?* Say: "Today we'll read about a king who asked God for the second column."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: 1 Kings 3:3–15. Old words in this passage:

- **statutes** (3:3): God's rules and laws; **high places**: hilltop places of worship
- **burnt offerings** (3:4): offerings burned on the altar to God
- **shewed** (3:6): showed; **uprightness**: honesty, doing right
- **I know not how to go out or come in** (3:7): I don't know how to lead
- **for multitude** (3:8): because there are so many
- **judge** (3:9): decide what is right; **discern**: tell the difference between
- **the life of thine enemies** (3:11): for your enemies to die
- **honour** (3:13): respect and a great name
- **lengthen thy days** (3:14): give you a long life
- **the ark of the covenant** (3:15): the holy chest that held God's covenant; **peace offerings**: offerings of thanks shared in a meal

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Tell 1 Kings 3:16–28 (in your own words, gently): Two women came and stood before the king (3:16). They lived in one house, and each had a baby boy, three days apart, with no one else in the house (3:17–18). One woman's baby died in the night (3:19). The other mother said that woman rose at midnight and swapped the babies, laying the dead child beside her (3:20). In the morning she looked closely and knew it was not her son (3:21). Each said, "the living is my son" (3:22). The king repeated both claims (3:23) and said, "Bring me a sword," then ordered the living child divided in two (3:24–25). The real mother, whose "bowels yearned upon her son" (her heart was full of love for him), cried, "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." The other said, "Let it be neither mine nor thine, but divide it" (3:26). The king said, "Give her the living child, and in no wise slay it: she is the mother thereof" (3:27). All Israel heard, "and they feared the king: for they saw that the wisdom of God was in him, to do judgment" (3:28).

Solomon is the king who wrote many of the proverbs: "The proverbs of Solomon the son of David, king of Israel" (Proverbs 1:1, KJV).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. God said, "Ask what I shall give thee" (3:5). If God asked you that tonight, what would you honestly say? What does your answer show about what matters most to you?
2. Solomon said, "I am but a little child" (3:7). Why is knowing you need help the start of wisdom?
3. Solomon asked for wisdom to serve others: "to judge thy people" (3:9). How is that different from asking for wisdom just to get ahead?
4. God gave Solomon riches and honour that he did not ask for (3:13). Jesus said, "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (Matthew 6:33, KJV). How do these two passages fit together?
5. God's promise of long life came with an "if": "if thou wilt walk in my ways" (3:14). Why does a gift of wisdom still need obedience?
6. Solomon's judgment showed what was in each woman's heart (3:26–27). How did wisdom from God help him see what no one else could prove (3:18)?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in James 1:5: **lack** means don't have enough; **liberally** means freely, generously; **upbraideth not** means doesn't scold or put you down for asking. In Proverbs 2:6, **out of his mouth** means from His Word. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say James 1:5 this week; keep working on Proverbs 2:6 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Solomon knew he needed God. The wisest choice any of us can make is to follow God too. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16), born in the family of David and Solomon (Matthew 1:1). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where in my life do I need wisdom right now (school, friends, family, a choice)?
2. Am I asking God for it, or only trying to figure it out myself?
3. Write a short prayer asking God for an understanding heart, like Solomon (1 Kings 3:9).
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: every morning, pray James 1:5 back to God and ask Him for wisdom for one thing that day.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You give wisdom to everyone who asks, and You don't scold us for asking. Give us understanding hearts to know good from bad and to help others. Thank You for Jesus, who saves us. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: 1 Kings 3:16–28 is told, not read aloud, on purpose, to keep the hard parts gentle and brief at this age. Call them "two women," and stay with what is written. If a student asks about verse 16, say simply that the Bible tells us more about the two women there, and the point of the story is the king's God-given wisdom (3:28). If a student has lost a baby in their family, be gentle.

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