

Session 6

The divided kingdom: Whose advice do you follow?

Children learn how the kingdom was divided

Scripture: 1 Kings 12:1–19

Supplies:

- Felt board or sand box with the characters from the story
- Newspapers
- Top deck chocolate/Liquorice All Sorts
- Paper, crayons, sticky tape
- Wool or rubber bands
- Map of Israel copied on cardboard



Welcome

Unfair fight: Choose 12 children to play a simple game like newspaper war (Give each group a few old newspapers. They bunch them up and can throw each other with them). The game has a catch: you choose a captain for each team. Then they start picking from the remaining 10 children. Once each captain has chosen one teammate, send the 8 who are left to one team. Now they are two teams: one with 2 teammates and one with 10. Let them play this unfair game for a while. Tell them that later in the story they'll realize why they were divided like this. (Remember, the game ends where you turn the rules around and see which team has the most paper in one basket/bin. This is how we tidy up afterwards.)



Worship

Settle down ritual from Psalm 23: The children sit down with legs crossed and eyes closed. Let the children repeat this phrase 3x with you: "The Lord is with us". Now say: "Because the Lord is my Shepherd, I am not afraid. He leads me through dark times and cares for me."



Word

Do the following activities:

- Pull a piece of bark off a branch
- Separate the white and milk chocolate from the Top Deck
- Take a layer off a piece of liquorice

What happened with these three things? Something was separated from something else, and the difficulty is that you can't put them back together again. So, what did we learn? It's so much easier to separate something than it is to put it back together again.

Background for presenter:

1 Kings 11:26–12:19 (Tell the story by using the felt board or sand box)

Jeroboam worked for king Solomon. He rebelled against the king. The problems began when Solomon was doing construction in the city of David. Jeroboam was a strong man and Solomon noticed him. He appointed Jeroboam as a foreman for the building work. It was in this time that Jeroboam was on his way out of Jerusalem. The prophet Ahijah found him on the way there. He was wearing a brand-new cloak. It was just the two of them in the field. Suddenly Ahijah took his new cloak and tore it into 12 pieces. He told Jeroboam to take 10 of those pieces because God was going to break down the kingdom of Solomon because he stopped serving God alone and began worshiping idols. God is going to give Jeroboam 10 of the tribes. For the sake of David one of the tribes and the city of Jerusalem will remain under the leadership of David's family. When Solomon heard about this, he wanted to kill Jeroboam. Jeroboam fled to Egypt and remained there until Solomon died. Solomon's son, Rehoboam, took his place as king. All the people of Israel came together to make him king. Jeroboam's friends went to get him in Egypt. He led the Israelites to go speak to Rehoboam. They told Rehoboam: "Your father made life very hard for us and made us work very hard. If you can make this burden lighter for us, we would really like for you to be king." Rehoboam told them to come back in three days so that he could think about their request. He asked his father's advisors what they thought. They told him that if he listens to the people, they will always accept him as king. He wasn't satisfied and went to ask his young friends for their opinion. He followed their advice and three days later told the people: "You asked me to lighten my father's burden on you. I won't. I am much stronger than my father. I will make you work even harder. I will punish you even more harshly if you don't work hard enough." When the Israelites heard his answer, they were furious. They went back to their homes. Rehoboam only became king of those who lived in Judah. He sent one of the leaders with him to Israel to see what he can do. The Israelites killed him with stones and Rehoboam himself only just managed to escape. He fled back to Jerusalem. This is how Israel broke away from David's family.

Start the story here:

The 12 tribes of Jacob were separated by a very foolish decision. King Rehoboam made two foolish decisions. One was that he chose to listen to the advice of inexperienced people rather than the advice of experienced people who also helped king Solomon. The second mistake he made was to think that he was more important than his father and would be much stronger than him. Through this he caused a lot of trouble for himself. The people rebelled against him and only two of the tribes remained with him. The other 10 tribes followed Jeroboam and made him king.

The twelve tribes were: Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, Benjamin, and Joseph's two sons Manasseh and Ephraim. Levi's descendants didn't get any land because they were committed to working in the temple. Only Judah and Benjamin stayed with Rehoboam.

The 10 tribes were known as the Northern kingdom of the Israelites and the other 2 tribes as the Southern kingdom of Judah. Later they were called the Jews. In Jesus' time these two tribes still didn't see eye to eye. Judah's holy place was Jerusalem and Israel's holy place was Samaria. In Jesus' time the Jews and Samaritans did not get along at all. It is so sad that such a foolish decision of one king can have such repercussions even 900 years later.

Children reflect on the story:

1. I wonder if people can still be so stubborn and foolish today
2. I wonder how enemies can be reunited again
3. I wonder who can reunite people who are enemies



Working and Playing

- Give the children paper and crayons and let them draw two things that have been separated. They can tear the paper apart and reattach them with cling wrap or sticky tape.

- Give the children different pieces of wool or rubber bands that they can plait into one piece.
- Copy the map of greater Israel and cut it into pieces and let them rebuild it as a puzzle.

Closing prayer to end the session

Put your hands together:

“Lord, as my hands are two but can hold each other, I ask that you help everyone who is angry with someone else to make peace and live together in love. Amen”

