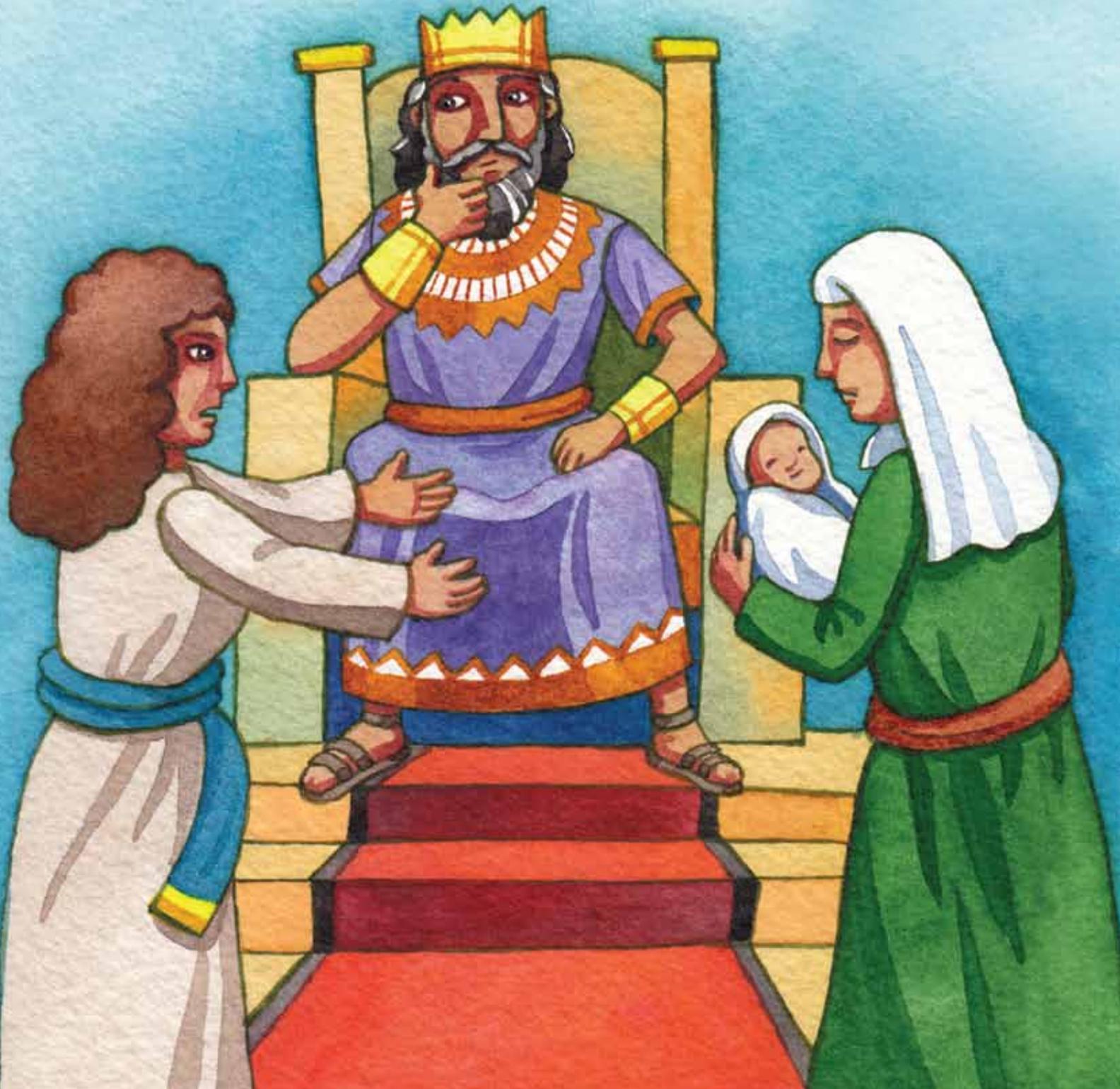


dwell[®]



Dear Family,

Golden temples, a divided kingdom, and fire from heaven are just a few of the rich, dramatic, and exciting stories in this unit. You can continue to explore those stories as a family at home by looking for the weekly symbol in your God's Big Story cards set.

Here's what our schedule looks like:

Date: _____ Solomon (Wisdom)

Date: _____ Solomon (Temple and Sin)

Date: _____ Divided Kingdom

Date: _____ Elijah and the Widow

Date: _____ Elijah at Mount Carmel

Date: _____ God Strengthens Elijah

Our Memory Challenge for this unit is Matthew 7:7-8. Feel free to talk with your child in the upcoming weeks about how these verses relate to your lives. Consider downloading the memory work song, "Ask, Seek, Knock" from our website (via iTunes) too.

Yours in Christ,

Memory Challenge

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.”

—Matthew 7:7-8, NIV

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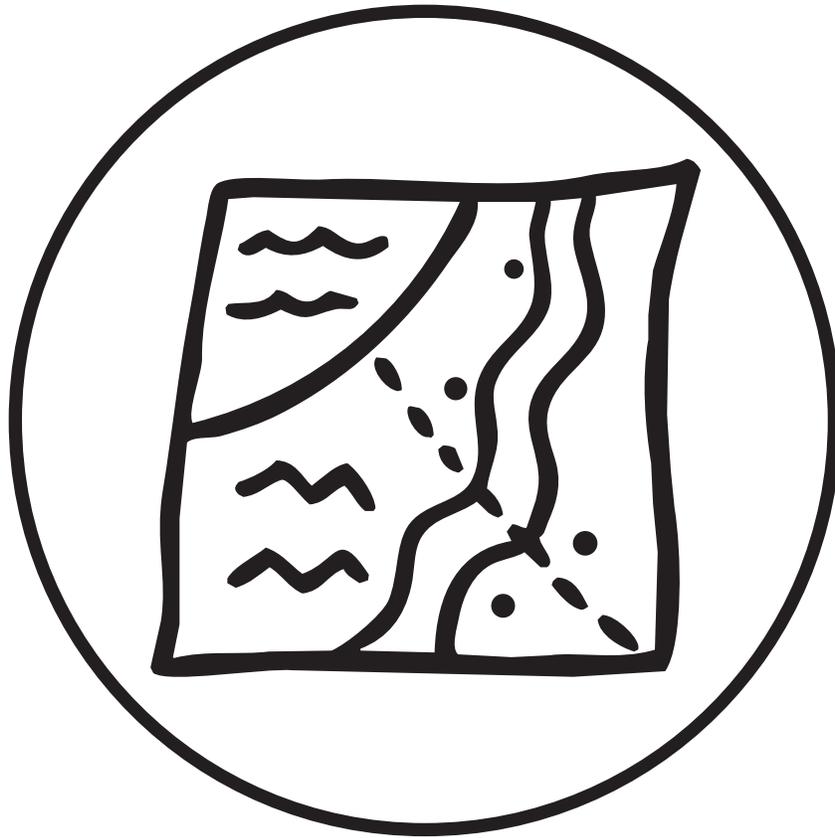
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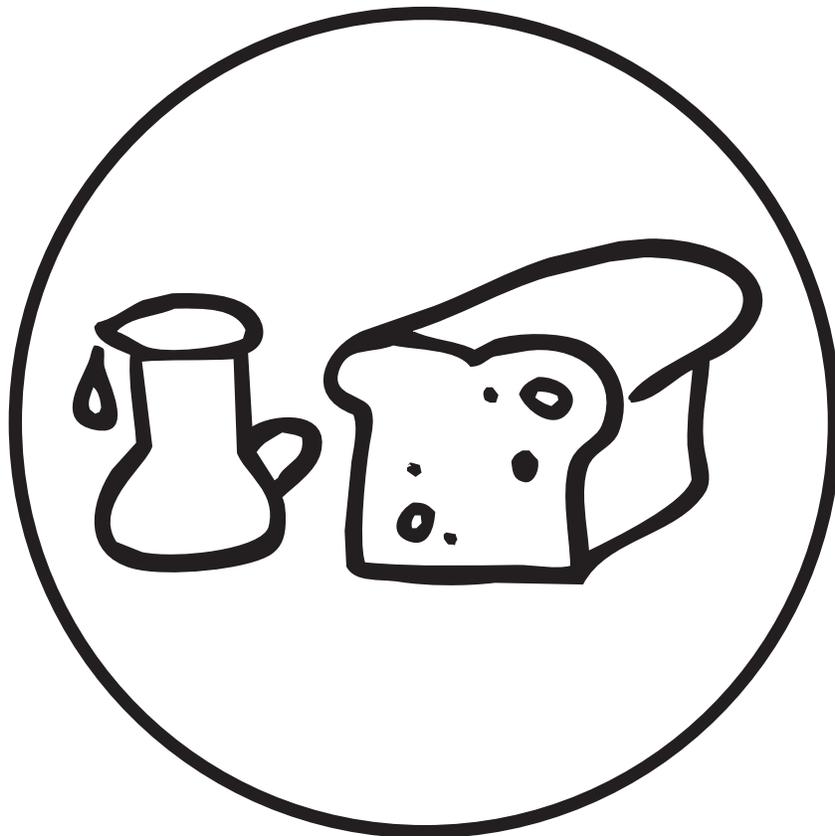
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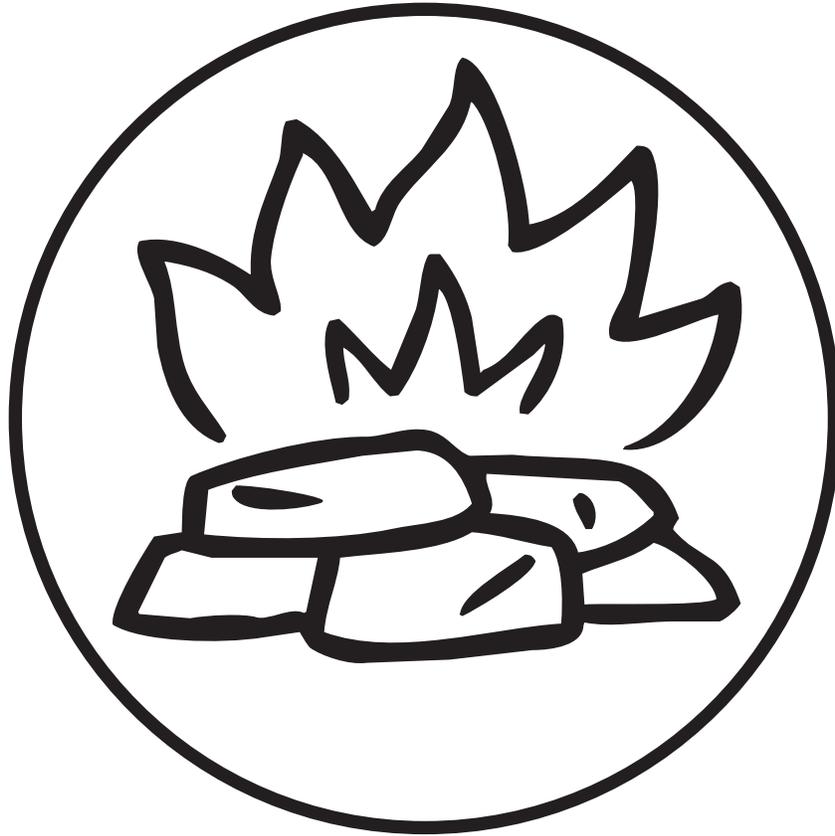
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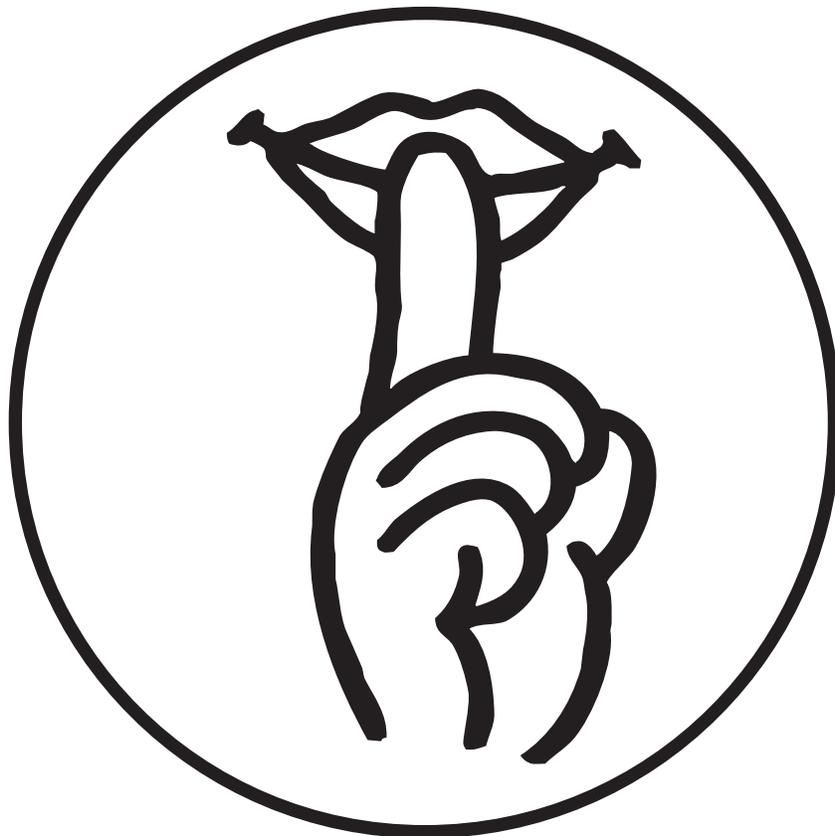
Marvel Year 2, Unit 2, Session 3



Marvel Year 2, Unit 2, Session 4



Marvel Year 2, Unit 2, Session 5



Marvel Year 2, Unit 2, Session 6

Solomon's Wisdom

Teaching

Scene 1: The Lord Speaks to Solomon

Narrator: Solomon, David's son, became king after David. Solomon showed his love for God by keeping the commandments of the Lord and living the way God wanted him to live. One night, as Solomon slept soundly in his palace, the Lord appeared to him in a dream.

(Solomon lies down, pretending to sleep.)

Voice of God: Solomon, ask for anything you want, and I will give it to you.

(Solomon rises and looks to hear where the voice is coming from.)

Solomon *(looking up)*: Lord, you have shown great kindness to my father, David. You have continued to show your kindness to our family by allowing me to become king after my father. But I am young, and I don't know how to rule as king. Please give me wisdom to rule your people the right way. Help me to know the difference between right and wrong.

Voice of God: Since you have asked me for wisdom and not for riches, power, or a long life, I will give you what you have asked for. You will have more wisdom than anyone else has ever had or ever will have. And because you asked for wisdom, I will **also** give you great riches and honor. No other king will be greater than you. And if you continue to obey me, I will give you a long life too.

(Solomon lies back down.)

Narrator: When Solomon awoke from his dream, he was filled with awe. He knew that it was more than a dream—he had really been talking to God! To show God how grateful he was, he brought sacrifices to God's temple and held a magnificent feast, dedicated to God, in his palace.

Scene 2: Solomon's Wisdom Put to the Test

Narrator: One day Solomon's wisdom was put to the test. Two women came to the king with a problem.

(Women approach Solomon, Woman 2 holding a baby.)

Woman 1: My lord, this woman stole my baby and won't give him back! We live together in the same house, and not too long ago I had a baby. Three days later she had a baby too.

One night her baby died because she lay down on him accidentally. So, while I was sleeping, she switched our babies. She put her dead baby next to me and took my living baby! When I woke up I was devastated to discover that my baby was dead—but when I looked closer in the morning light I realized that this was not my baby!

Woman 2: That's a lie! This is *my* baby—your son is dead!

Woman 1: No, the living child is mine!

Woman 2: No, he's mine!

Woman 1: Mine!

Solomon: Silence! No more arguing. Both of you insist that your child is alive, but one of you is lying. Servants! Bring me a sword. *(Servants bring a sword.)*

Solomon: Cut the living child in half and give one half to one woman and one half to the other.

Woman 1: No, my lord, please don't kill the child—give the baby to her and let him live!

Woman 2: No, neither of us will have him. Cut the baby in two!

Solomon *(pointing to Woman 1)*: Give the child to her. Because she wants the baby to live, she must be the child's mother.

Woman 1: Oh thank you, my lord! Thank you!

Narrator: All of Israel heard what happened; they were amazed at the wisdom God had given Solomon to rule fairly.

CHARACTERS

Narrator

Solomon

Voice of God

Woman 1

Woman 2

King's Servant
(action role only)

Wise Sayings of Solomon

(Taken from The Good News Bible, Today's English Version)

People who promise things they never give are like clouds and wind that bring no rain (Proverbs 25:14).

Kind words are like honey—sweet to the taste and good for your health (Proverbs 16:24).

Stay away from foolish people; they have nothing to teach you (Proverbs 14:7).

Be kind and honest and you will live a long life; others will respect you and treat you fairly (Proverbs 21:21).

Smiling faces make you happy, and good news makes you feel better (Proverbs 15:30).

The lazy man stays home; he says a lion might get him if he goes outside (Proverbs 22:13).

Pay attention to your teacher and learn all you can (Proverbs 23:12).

The lazy man turns over in bed. He gets no farther than a door swinging on its hinges (Proverbs 26:14).

If you oppress poor people, you insult the God who made them; but kindness shown to God is an act of worship. (Proverbs 14:31)

Praying for Wisdom

Leader: Our Father in heaven, when Solomon asked, you gave him wisdom.

Children: We ask for wisdom too, Lord.

Leader: For wisdom to make the right choices,

Children: O Lord, make us wise.

Leader: When faced with difficult situations,

Children: O Lord, make us wise.

Leader: When we need to do what's right and good,

Children: O Lord, make us wise.

Leader: Whenever we need your guidance,

Children: O Lord, make us wise.

All: Thank you, God, for keeping your promise and making us wise.

Amen.

Magnificent Temple, Unwise Choices

Use this script to tell the story, pausing where indicated to let the children contribute their lines. Before you begin, you'll want to briefly let each group know what you expect of them.

In the fourth year of his reign as king, Solomon decided to build an amazing, beautiful, splendid, glorious temple—a place where the people of Israel could come and worship God. As you can imagine, this was no small project.

Give the signal to temple groups to read cards 1 through 5, in order:

- 1. He rounded up seventy thousand carriers.**
- 2. He needed eighty thousand stone cutters!**
- 3. He hired thirty-three hundred bosses or overseers to make sure the work got done right.**
- 4. The temple took over seven years to build.**
- 5. The entire building and everything in it were overlaid with pure, shining gold!**

After Solomon finished the temple, the Lord appeared to him. God was pleased with the temple, but he must have been a little concerned about Solomon, because he gave him a promise and a warning. “I have made this temple holy. My eyes and my heart will always be here. If you walk before me faithfully and keep all of my commands, then your family line will always reign over Israel. But if you turn away from me and do not keep my commands and serve other gods and worship them, I will not remain in the temple and will cut off Israel from the land I have given them.”

Many years passed, and Solomon continued to grow in fame and fortune, just as God had promised him. He lived in a fabulous palace, filled with gold and expensive furnishings. And he accomplished many great and wonderful things in his kingdom.

Sadly, as time wore on, Solomon forgot about God’s warnings. He started ignoring some of God’s commands.

Give the signal to the unwise choices group to say their 5 lines in order:

- 1. Solomon married many wives from foreign nations.**
- 2. His wives encouraged Solomon to worship their gods instead of the real God.**

3. So Solomon built temples for the pretend gods too.

4. And he went to worship these gods with his wives.

5. Solomon forgot about the true and living God of Israel.

The Lord became very angry with Solomon. “Since you have turned against me by worshipping other gods,” he told him, “I will take the kingdom away from your family and give it to someone else. But for your father, David’s, sake, I will not do this in your lifetime. Instead, I will take the kingdom away from your son when he becomes king. For the sake of your father, David, I will still allow him to be king over one of the tribes of Israel.”

God did just as he said he would.

A man named Jeroboam found favor in King Solomon’s eyes. Jeroboam was such an excellent worker that Solomon put him in charge of an entire labor force. One day Jeroboam was leaving Jerusalem when a prophet named Ahijah approached him, wearing a new coat. Ahijah took off the coat and tore it into twelve pieces.

Give the signal to the Ahijah group to tear up their paper into twelve pieces.

The prophet of God told Jeroboam that God would take the kingdom away from Solomon’s son.

Ahijah gave Jeroboam ten pieces of the coat.

Give the signal to the Ahijah group to lay ten pieces on one side of the table or floor and two on the other.

“You, Jeroboam,” Ahijah said, “will rule the ten tribes of Israel. Solomon’s son Rehoboam will rule over only the tribe of Judah.” God promised to be with Jeroboam if he would keep the commands of the Lord.

Jeroboam tried to become king immediately, but when Solomon heard he became angry and tried to kill him. Jeroboam escaped to Egypt and lived there until King Solomon died.

Temple cards

(cut apart and give to the Temple team)

1. He rounded up seventy thousand carriers.

2. He needed eighty thousand stone cutters!

3. He hired thirty-three hundred bosses or overseers to make sure the work got done right.

4. The temple took over seven years to build.

5. The entire building and everything in it was overlaid with pure, shining gold!

Unwise Choices cards

(cut apart and give to the Unwise Choices team)

1. Solomon married many wives from foreign nations.

2. His wives encouraged Solomon to worship their gods instead of the real God.

3. So Solomon built temples for the pretend gods too.

4. And he went to worship these gods with his wives.

5. Solomon forgot about the true and living God of Israel.

Interview Cards (Cut apart and give to appropriate group.)

Group 1: Temple (Check out 1 Kings 6)

WICU: Thanks for being willing to talk to us today, King Solomon. What made you want to build this huge temple, anyway?

Solomon:

WICU: What are your favorite things about the new temple? How would you describe it?

Solomon:

WICU: What would you like our viewers to know about this temple—and about your God?

Solomon:

Group 2: Sins (Check out 1 Kings 11:1-8)

WICU: Welcome, Solomon. Everyone's been eager to hear from you—because, well, you have more wives than anyone else we've ever met. Exactly how many women did you marry?

Solomon:

WICU: Sounds exhausting! And didn't we hear that your God told you not to marry anyone who wasn't an Israelite. What happened there?

Solomon:

WICU: And the temples—they puzzle us too. Everyone knows about the amazing temple you built for your God. But what's with all these other temples? Do you worship in them too?

Solomon:

Group 3: Judgment (Check out 1 Kings 11:9-13, 29-40)

WICU: Great to have you back on our show, Solomon. We'd like to get your reaction to the news we heard. Someone told us your God is angry with you. Can you comment on that?

Solomon:

WICU: We also heard that the prophet Ahijah had a meeting with Jereboam. Did you hear about that meeting, King Solomon? What's your opinion about what Ahijah said?

Solomon:

WICU: King Solomon—we don't know whether or not what Ahijah said will come true. But we're wondering if you have any regrets about what happened?

Solomon:

The Big Split

When Solomon died, his son **Rehoboam** (*give signal to Rehoboam sign holders*) took his place as king of Israel.

But not for long. **Jeroboam** (*give signal to Jeroboam sign holders*) also heard that Solomon was dead, and he remembered what Ahijah had told him. So **Jeroboam** left Egypt (where he'd been hiding from Solomon) and returned to Jerusalem.

Jeroboam and all the leaders of Israel went to talk to King **Rehoboam**. "Your father, Solomon, worked us and the people of Israel too hard," they told him. "If you lighten our labor load and make life a little easier for us, we'll serve you wholeheartedly."

Rehoboam needed some time to think about their request. "Come back in three days," he told them. "I'll have an answer for you then."

After the leaders left, **Rehoboam** went to talk to the men who had advised his father, Solomon.

"What do you think I should do?" he asked them.

"Do what the people are asking you to do," they told him. "If you lighten their work load, they will always serve you and be loyal to you."

Rehoboam wasn't so sure he liked their advice. So he went and asked his young friends their opinion: "My father's elders say that I should go easy on the people of Israel and not burden them with too much work. What do you think I should do?"

Rehoboam's friends told him that Solomon's advisors were wrong. "You should make the Israelites work even harder," they told him. "Tell the people of Israel, 'My pinky finger is thicker than my father's waist. If my father laid a heavy burden on you, I will make it even heavier!'"

Rehoboam liked the advice of his friends better than the advice of Solomon's advisors. So after three days he walked arrogantly into the meeting with **Jeroboam** and the other leaders. "My father made your work load heavy," he told them scornfully, "and I will make it even heavier! My father slashed you with whips, but I will slash you with scorpions!"

The Israelite leaders were shocked at **Rehoboam's** reply. They went home angry and discouraged—and they began complaining to each other. "Why should we put up with this?" they wondered. "**Rehoboam** doesn't care about us. He doesn't deserve to be our king."

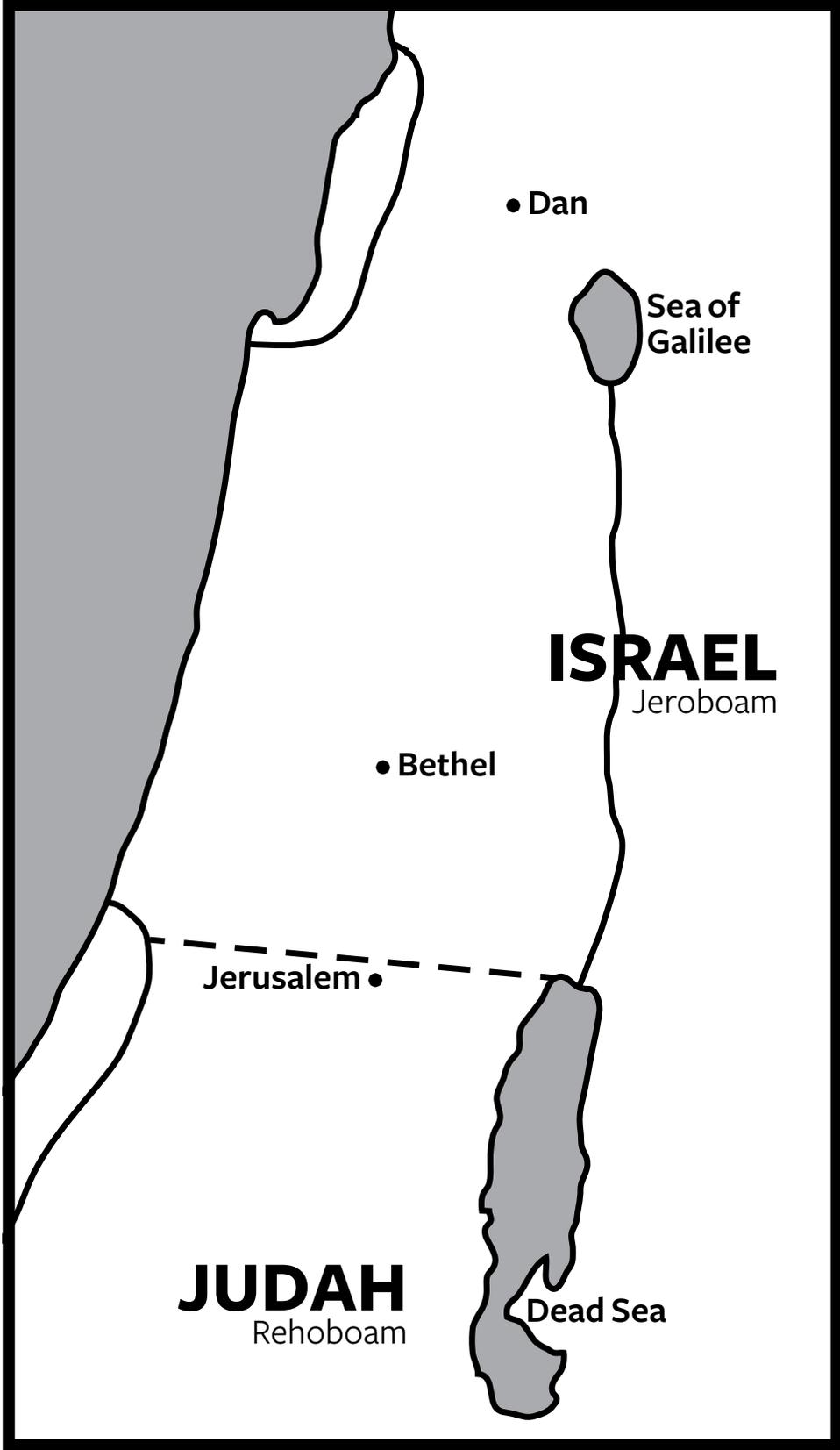
So the people of Israel rebelled against **Rehoboam** and appointed **Jeroboam** to be king, just as Ahijah had predicted. Only the small tribes of Benjamin and Judah remained loyal to **Rehoboam** for the sake of David's family.

The kingdom was divided into two parts: Israel and Judah. **Jeroboam** ruled over ten of the tribes of Israel, and **Rehoboam** ruled over a small portion of land known as Judah. (*Show the group the map from the printable pages.*)

After **Jeroboam** became king of Israel, he became worried that the people of Israel would change their minds and go back to following **Rehoboam**—especially because the temple was in Jerusalem, right in the center of **Rehoboam** territory. He knew he needed to do something to stop the people from going to Jerusalem!

So **Jeroboam** made a very bad decision that was also a sin against God. He built golden calves for the people of Israel to worship. He told them, "It is too much for you to travel all the way to Jerusalem to worship God in the temple there. Instead, here are your new gods to worship." So the people worshipped the golden calves in the cities of Bethel and Dan.

Map of the Divided Kingdom



Up Close

What do you think your candidate looked like? Draw his picture.



If you had to describe your candidate with one word, what would it be?

List three things you think might make your guy a good king.

List three things you think might make your guy a bad king.

If the candidate had asked your team for advice, what would you have told him?

What do you know about your candidate's relationship to God?

Name two things we can learn from this candidate's mistakes.

Fill-in-the-Blank Skit

The Divided Kingdom

Narrator: After King Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became the new ruler of Israel. When Jeroboam heard that Solomon had passed away, he returned to Jerusalem. He, along with all the people in Israel, gathered before Rehoboam and said . . .

People of Israel:

Rehoboam:

Narrator: Rehoboam went to the elders, the older men who had given advice to his father, Solomon, when he was alive.

Rehoboam:

The elders:

Narrator: Rehoboam also asked for the advice of his childhood friends.

Rehoboam:

Rehoboam's friends:

Narrator: After three days, Rehoboam gave his answer to the people of Israel.

Rehoboam:

Narrator: The people were shocked and angry.

People of Israel:

Narrator: The people appointed Jeroboam to be king of Israel instead of Rehoboam. Only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remained loyal to the family of David. After Jeroboam was made king, he began to worry that people in Israel would change their minds and follow Rehoboam again. So he devised a plan . . .

Jeroboam:

Narrator: Jeroboam committed a great sin in the sight of the Lord and led the people of Israel astray to worship false gods.

Elijah and the Widow

Scene 1 (Narrator, Elijah, King Ahab)

Narrator: As the years went by the people of Israel drifted farther and farther from God. Their king, the wicked Ahab, did more evil things than all of the other kings of Israel before him.

King Ahab: Come, people of Israel! Come and admire the new temple I have made for the mighty god Baal!

Narrator: God was very angry at Ahab for his sinful and wicked ways. Ahab and the people of Israel had forgotten the one true God. They wanted gods they could see—gods made of wood, stone, silver, and gold. So the Lord appointed a faithful prophet named Elijah to warn King Ahab about his wicked ways.

Elijah: King Ahab, listen up! You have not been serving the one true God, the God of your forefathers. Because you have chosen to disobey his commandments, no rain will fall on this land for a few years—not until I say so.

King Ahab: I serve no god but the mighty Baal—he is the true god of the heavens!

Narrator: King Ahab paid no attention to the prophet of God. But sure enough, the land became dry and dusty. The Lord told Elijah to flee from Ahab to a ravine or valley east of the Jordan River. There God ordered ravens to provide bread and meat for Elijah to eat and a brook for him to drink from.

Scene 2 (Narrator, Elijah, Widow)

Narrator: No rain fell, and the land continued to grow hot and dry. Plants wilted and rivers dried up. Even the brook Elijah had been drinking from vanished in the scorching sun. The people could no longer grow crops, and food became very scarce. Then the Lord spoke to Elijah. “Go to the town of Zarephath and stay there. I have told a widow living there to provide you with something to eat.” So Elijah traveled many days to get to Zarephath. When he arrived he approached a woman gathering sticks.

Elijah: Excuse me, ma’am, would you please give me a little water in a jar so I may have a drink? I am terribly thirsty from my long journey to this town. And please bring me some bread too.

Widow: I’m sorry, sir, but I don’t have any bread. I only have a little flour in a jar and a small amount of oil in a jug. I’m gathering sticks to make a fire to cook one last meal for me and my son. After that there will be nothing left—we will surely die of hunger.

Elijah: Don’t be afraid. Go home and do what you have just told me. But make a small loaf of bread for me first, and then make something for you and your son. The Lord says that the jar of flour and the jug of oil will not run out until the day he sends rain on the land.

Narrator: The woman did as Elijah told her, and every day there was enough food to eat. Just as the Lord had said, the jar of flour and the jug of oil did not run out. Elijah stayed at the widow’s home, and they enjoyed plenty of food.

Scene 3 (Narrator, Elijah, Widow)

Narrator: Some time later the widow’s son became very ill. Day after day he grew worse, until he finally stopped breathing and died.

Widow: Elijah, Elijah, come quickly!

Elijah: What is it?

Widow: My son, my dear son has died! Why did you come here, man of God? Did you come here to remind me of all the wrong things I’ve done? Have you come to punish me by killing my son?

Narrator: Elijah took the boy to the upper room where he was staying, and he cried out to the Lord. He stretched himself on the child three times and said . . .

Elijah: Lord my God, let this boy’s life return to him!

Narrator: God heard Elijah’s prayer, and the boy became alive again. The widow was astonished and filled with joy.

Widow: Now I know that you are a man of God and that you speak the word of the Lord!

Fire from Heaven

A prophet of the Lord named Elijah lived in the land of Israel. **(Signal to Elijah to step forward.)** God talked to Elijah often. And God told him how unhappy he was with the way the people of Israel were living. One day God told Elijah it was time to visit the wicked king Ahab and remind him who was god. So Elijah traveled to the palace and asked to see the king. **(Signal Elijah to walk up to Ahab.)**

Elijah told Ahab God was angry that he and his wife, Jezebel, worshipped pretend gods and that the king was leading the people to worship other gods too. “God is not pleased,” Elijah said. **(Invite Elijah to repeat the words after you.)** “God said to tell you that there won’t be any rain—none at all—until I give the OK.” **(Again nod to Elijah to repeat.)**

After Elijah left the palace Ahab was upset! **(Encourage your actors to mime.)** He paced back and forth and shook his fists. He sent his servants to hunt for Elijah. But God kept Elijah safe.

One year passed.

Then two years.

Then three years.

All the green and growing things in the land of Israel had dried up. No food could grow because there was no rain. Everyone’s wells were dry. The people were hungry and thirsty and worried. Finally Elijah visited Ahab again. **(Invite Elijah to mime.)**

“Is that you, Elijah, the troublemaker of Israel?” Ahab shouted. **(Invite Ahab to repeat.)**

“I’m not the troublemaker,” Elijah replied. **(By now “Elijah” will have the idea! Just nod your head to indicate that he should repeat after you, line by line.)** “You and your family are the problem. You have disobeyed God’s commands and followed pretend gods.”

Elijah challenged Ahab to a showdown. He told him to gather all the people of Israel, along with four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of Asherah, another false god. “Then we’ll see who is really God,” he told Ahab.

When the people of Israel heard what was about to happen, they hurried to Mount Carmel. They were excited! This would be a big show. **(Nod to people to move together.)**

When they had all arrived at the mountain, Elijah had some more orders. “Get two bulls for me and two for the prophets of Baal,” Elijah said. “Let the prophets of Baal choose one bull to cut up and place on an altar before Baal. I will do the same on the altar of the Lord. Neither of us will light a fire. Instead we’ll call on our gods to light the fire! The god who answers by sending fire from heaven on the altar is the one true God.” **(You’ll want to pause after each sentence to let your character dramatize and repeat.)**

Everyone agreed with Elijah’s plan, and they also agreed that the prophets of Baal would go first. Baal’s prophets began dancing around the altar they had made to their pretend god. They danced and called, “Baal, hear us! Send fire! Baal, hear us! Send fire!” For hours and hours they continued to dance and call. **(Encourage prophets to dramatize.)**

The people of Israel just stood and watched, wondering whether anything would happen. As time passed they began scratching their heads. They had thought Baal was real. Why didn’t he send fire? Was Baal just a fancy statue? **(Nod to people to act out their bewilderment.)**

(Note: By this point in the story, the group should be fully engaged in the melodrama. Continue to nod at them, if needed, and encourage them to act the story out as you read it.)

“Shout louder!” Elijah called out to the prophets of Baal. “Perhaps Baal is busy or in deep thought. Maybe he’s on a trip,” he taunted. “Or he might be sleeping!”

So the prophets of Baal shouted louder and even cut themselves with swords and spears. “Baal, here us! Baal, hear us!”

The whole afternoon passed, and many of the people of Israel were getting tired and hungry. “Will Baal ever come?” they wondered to one another. Evening came, and still nothing. Even King Ahab was beginning to grow restless.

Finally Elijah called all the people to gather around him. He stood before an old, torn-down altar of the Lord. The people watched him take twelve stones, one by one, and rebuild the altar. He dug a large trench around it. Then he cut up his bull and laid it on the altar.

“What will happen now?” the people wondered. “Will we be here all night?”

Then Elijah did something really strange. He told some of the people to fill jugs with water and pour water on the altar. So they did. And then he told them to do it again! What a mess. The altar was drenched. Nothing could burn on such a wet altar. No way! Even the trench around the altar was filled with water.

Elijah knelt by the altar and prayed to God: “Answer me, Lord. Answer me, so these people will know that you and you alone are God.”

Then the most amazing thing happened! As the people watched a blazing fire fell directly from heaven and landed right on the altar. It was such a hot fire that it burned the bull, the wood, the stones, and even the soil. All the people leaped back from the heat in terror. And then all of them fell to their knees on the ground. “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!” all the people cried.

Elijah turned and pointed to the prophets of Baal. “Seize them!” he cried. Hundreds of men grabbed the false prophets and took them to the Kishon Valley to be killed.

Then Elijah turned to Ahab. “Go, eat and drink. I hear the sound of a heavy rain coming,” he told him.

But Ahab wasn’t ready to go yet. He wanted to see what would happen next. He watched as Elijah and his servant climbed the mountain.

Near the top of the mountain Elijah knelt down to pray. After a while he got up and sent his servant to look toward the sea. The servant looked and returned, reporting that the sky was clear. Elijah prayed again, then arose and sent his servant again to look toward the sea. Seven times in all Elijah sent his servant! The seventh time, the servant came back all excited. “I saw a cloud,” he reported. “It’s just a little cloud, the size of a man’s hand. But it’s a cloud.”

Elijah smiled. “Go,” he told his servant, “Tell Ahab to hitch up his chariot and get back to the palace before the rain stops him.” As the servant was hurrying down the mountain to tell the king, the sky turned black with thick clouds, and a heavy rain began to fall.

The drought was finally over! Farmers could plant new crops, and wells, rivers, and streams would be filled once more. Now the people of Israel would know, without a doubt, that the God of Elijah was truly the God of Israel.

Benjamin's Story

Shalom. My name is Benjamin, and I am an Israelite. My family and I live just outside of the city of Samaria, where King Ahab lives. Listen . . . do you hear that? It's the sound of rain falling. What an amazing sound! Just a few days ago the land of Israel was dry and empty. We hadn't received rain in three years! Many people died of hunger because food had become very scarce. The well near our house dried up, and our entire village ran out of water. We didn't think we were going to survive. But everything changed a few days ago. Let me tell you what happened . . .

A prophet of the Lord named Elijah lived in our land too. He saw that the king and queen were leading the people down the wrong path. They were encouraging them to worship fake gods, made of wood and stone. So one day Elijah went to the palace and confronted King Ahab about his wickedness. Elijah told the king that God was not pleased with what he was seeing in Israel. As a punishment, and to remind them who was God, no rain would fall in Israel—not one drop—until Elijah gave the word.

When the drought dragged on—first one year, then two, then three—Ahab tried to find Elijah to kill him. But God kept his prophet safe from the king's clutches. Finally, Elijah went back to King Ahab.

"Is that you, Elijah, the troublemaker of Israel?" the king shouted.

"I'm not the troublemaker," Elijah replied. "You and your family have caused the trouble by disobeying the Lord's commands and following after false gods. Elijah told King Ahab that it was time for a showdown. "Gather all the people of Israel, along with four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal and four hundred prophets of Asherah," he said.

When my family and I heard the news about what was going on, we followed the crowds to Mount Carmel.

"Get two bulls for me and two for the prophets of Baal," Elijah ordered. "Let the prophets of Baal choose one bull to cut up and place on an altar before Baal, without setting fire to the offering. I will do the same on the altar of the Lord, and I will not light the fire either. Then you call on the name of your god, and I will call upon the name of the Lord. The god who answers by sending fire from heaven on the altar is the one true God."

Everyone agreed with Elijah's plan, and the prophets of Baal went first. The morning dragged on as the prophets of Baal cried out the name of their god. They shouted, "Baal, answer us!" But there was no response. They danced and shouted for hours and hours as the hot sun perched high in the sky.

All of us bystanders just stood and watched, wondering whether anything would happen. I began to wonder if Baal was a real god or just a large, fancy statue. Almost everyone in our town worshipped Baal. We had heard the stories of the God of Israel who delivered our people out of Egypt, but that had happened so long ago that some people thought it was just a myth.

"Shout louder!" Elijah called to the prophets of Baal. "Perhaps Baal is busy or deep in thought—or maybe he's on a trip," he taunted. "Maybe he's sleeping and needs to be awakened!" So the prophets of Baal shouted louder and even cut themselves with swords and spears. Afternoon passed, and many of us were beginning to grow tired and hungry. "Will Baal ever come?" we all wondered. Evening came, and still nothing. Even King Ahab began to grow restless.

Finally Elijah called all the people to gather around him. He stood before an old, torn-down altar of the Lord. We all watched him take twelve stones and rebuild the altar. He dug a large trench around it, cut up his bull, and laid it on the altar. He then ordered some men to fill four large jars with water and pour it on the offering and on the altar. Then he told them to do it again. And again! Water flowed all around the altar and into the trench below.

Then Elijah prayed to God: "Answer me, Lord. Answer me, so that these people will know that you are God." Suddenly a blazing fire fell directly from heaven and landed right on the altar Elijah had built, burning up

the bull, the wood, the stones, the soil, and even the water in the trench! When we all saw this we fell to the ground in fear and cried, “The Lord—he is God! The Lord—he is God!”

Elijah turned and pointed to the prophets of Baal. “Seize them!” he cried. Hundreds of men grabbed the false prophets and took them to the Kishon Valley to be killed. Then he turned to the king. “Go, eat and drink, because I hear the sound of a heavy rain coming,” he told him.

Elijah and his servant climbed to the top of Mount Carmel and knelt down to pray. Elijah sent his servant to go and look out toward the sea, and each time the servant came back he reported to Elijah that there were no rain clouds in the sky. Seven times Elijah sent his servant to do this. On the seventh time the servant saw a small cloud, the size of a man’s hand, rising from the sea.

“Go and tell Ahab to hitch up his chariot and go before the rain stops him,” Elijah told his servant. The sky turned black with thick clouds, and a heavy rain began to fall. Our drought was finally over! Farmers could plant new crops, and wells, rivers, and streams would be filled with water once more.

The Lord even gave Elijah the strength to run past Ahab and his chariot, all the way back to the city of Jezreel! Now my family and I know without a doubt that the God of Elijah is truly the God of Israel.

Now if you’ll excuse me, I need to go collect water from our well. I’ve never been happier to do a chore in my life!

I Was There

Team 1

I hear you were there when Elijah first visited the palace and told Ahab that God wasn't going to put up with his wickedness anymore. How did Ahab react to Elijah's words?

What did you think of Elijah's threat about no rain? Did you believe it?

What did you and the other people of Samaria think about Elijah's threat after a year? After two years?

What is Ahab like as a king? Do you and the other people of Israel love him? Respect him? (I promise to keep your answer confidential.) Why do you feel that way?

What can you tell us about Jezebel?

How did the drought affect you and your family?

Team 2

What made you follow the crowd to Mount Carmel, and what were people in the crowd saying to each other?

What did you expect would happen when the prophets of Baal started calling for fire?

What did you think about the prophets of Baal after several hours had gone by?

What were people in the crowd saying when Elijah asked to have all that water poured on the altar?

When the fire came from heaven, how did you feel? What did people around you say? Do?

What do you think now about the Lord God? About Baal?

When I'm Down (Cut apart and use with step 1.)

Sad

Afraid

Discouraged

Disappointed

Alone

Rejected

Hurt

Terrified

Hopeless

Rejected

Depressed

Worried

Heartbroken

Abandoned

Teased

Words of Hope (Cut apart and use with Step 4.)

Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty” (John 6:35).

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken (Psalm 55:22).

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand” (Isaiah 41:10).

The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore (Psalm 121:7-8).

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose (Romans 8:28).

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled (Matthew 5:6).

He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds (Psalm 147:3).

The Lord is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid? (Psalm 27:1).

He will take great delight in you; in his love he will no longer rebuke you, but will rejoice over you with singing (Zephaniah 3:17).

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matthew 11:28).

1 Kings 19: Readers' Theater

Based on *The Message*

Reader 1: Ahab reported to Jezebel everything that Elijah had done, including the massacre of the prophets.

Reader 2: Jezebel immediately sent a messenger to Elijah with a threat.

Jezebel: The gods will get you for this, and I'll get even with you too! By this time tomorrow you'll be as dead as any one of those prophets.

Reader 3: When Elijah saw how things were, he ran for dear life to Beersheba, far in the south of Judah.

Reader 1: He left his young servant there and went another day's journey deep into the desert.

Reader 2: He came to a lone broom bush and collapsed in its shade, wanting in the worst way to be done with it all—to just die.

Elijah: Enough of this, God! Take my life—I'm ready to join my ancestors in the grave!

Reader 3: Exhausted, he fell asleep under the lone broom bush.

Reader 1: Suddenly an angel shook him awake and said

Angel: Get up and eat!

Reader 2: He looked around. To his surprise, right by his head he saw a loaf of bread baked on some coals and a jug of water. He ate and drank and went back to sleep.

Reader 3: The angel of God came back, shook him awake again, and said

Angel: Get up and eat some more—you've got a long journey ahead of you.

Reader 1: He got up, ate and drank his fill, and set out. Nourished by that meal, he walked forty days and nights, all the way to the mountain of God, to Horeb.

Reader 2: When he got there he crawled into a cave and went to sleep. Then the word of God came to him.

God: So, Elijah, what are you doing here?

Elijah: I've been working my heart out for you, the God-of-the-Angel-Armies. The people of Israel have abandoned your covenant, destroyed the places of worship, and murdered your prophets. I'm the only one left, and now they're trying to kill me.

God: Stand on the mountain at attention before me. I will pass by.

Reader 1: A hurricane wind ripped through the mountains and shattered the rocks around Elijah, but God wasn't to be found in the wind.

Reader 2: After the wind there was an earthquake, but God wasn't in the earthquake either.

Reader 3: And after the earthquake there was a fire, but God wasn't in the fire.

Reader 1: After the fire, Elijah heard a gentle, quiet whisper.

Reader 2: When Elijah heard the quiet voice, he muffled his face with his cloak, went to the mouth of the cave, and stood there. A quiet voice asked

God: So, Elijah, now tell me, what are you doing here?

Reader 3: Elijah repeated what he had said earlier.

Elijah: I've been working my heart out for you, the God-of-the-Angel-Armies, because the people of Israel have abandoned your covenant, destroyed your places of worship, and murdered your prophets. I'm the only one left, and now they're trying to kill me.

God: Go back the way you came, through the desert to Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael to be the new king over Aram. Then anoint Jehu, the son of Nimshi, as king over Israel.

Reader 1: A new king sounded like good news to Elijah, who was still hiding from the wicked Ahab.

God: Finally, anoint Elisha, son of Shaphat, from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet. Anyone who escapes death by Hazael will be killed by Jehu, and anyone who escapes death by Jehu will be killed by Elisha. Meanwhile, I'm preserving for myself seven thousand souls: the knees that haven't bowed to the god Baal, the mouths that haven't kissed his image.

Reader 2: Elijah went straight out and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, in a field where twelve pair of yoked oxen were plowing.

Reader 3: Elisha was in charge of the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to Elisha and threw his cloak over him.

Reader 1: Elisha deserted the oxen, ran after Elijah, and said

Elisha: Please! Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye—then I'll follow you.

Elijah: Go ahead. But, mind you, don't forget what I've just done to you.

Reader 2: So Elisha left. He took his yoke of oxen and butchered them. He made a fire with the plow and tackle and then boiled the meat—a true farewell meal for the family.

Reader 3: Then he left and followed Elijah, becoming the older prophet's right-hand man.

Team 1

With your team members, read 1 Kings 19:1-9a. It will be your job to retell this part of the story to the rest of the group. You can choose one of the following approaches for doing that:

- Make a mural or poster and plan to use it to retell the story.
 - Create a skit to retell the story.
 - Make a comic strip that retells the story.
 - Write a song, a poem, or a rap that retells your part of the story. Plan to perform it for the group.
-

Team 2

With your team members, read 1 Kings 19:9b-18. It will be your job to retell this part of the story to the rest of the group. You can choose one of the following approaches for doing that:

- Make a mural or poster and plan to use it to retell the story.
 - Create a skit to retell the story.
 - Make a comic strip that retells the story.
 - Write a song, a poem, or a rap that retells your part of the story. Plan to perform it for the group.
-

Team 3

With your team members, read 1 Kings 19:19-21. It will be your job to retell this part of the story to the rest of the group. You can choose one of the following approaches for doing that:

- Make a mural or poster and plan to use it to retell the story.
 - Create a skit to retell the story.
 - Make a comic strip that retells the story.
 - Write a song, a poem, or a rap that retells your part of the story. Plan to perform it for the group.
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