

A Good Shepherd Sacred Story

Wise Solomon

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WISE SOLOMON MATERIALS

- small wicker basket to hold:
 - wooden Solomon figure
 - wooden altar



Solomon

WISE SOLOMON I KINGS 3:3-15

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand and get the story from its shelf. Return to the circle and sit down, placing the basket next to you.

During the few seconds of silence, gently stroke the wooden Solomon figure to center yourself and the children.

Lean forward slightly as you speak.

Place Solomon just left of center in the storytelling area.

Cross your arms in front of your chest (the sign for love).

Move Solomon to the right and place the altar to the right of him.

Open your hand, palm up, over the top of the altar.

Touch the Solomon figure as you speak.

Place your hand on your chest and shake your head as you speak of being unsure of how to rule.

Touch your forehead and then, your heart.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

All the words to this story are inside of me. If you will make silence with me, I will find all the words to this sacred story of God's people.

David and Bathsheba had another baby. His name was Solomon.

Solomon grew up and after David died he became the king of the people of God.

Solomon loved Yahweh and lived in the good ways of his father, David.

Once Solomon went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices to Yahweh.

While he was there Yahweh appeared to Solomon and said, "Ask me for anything that you want."

Solomon said, "You showed my father, David, steadfast love because he was faithful to you and now you have given him a son to sit on his throne."

"You made me king over Israel and I don't know how I will do. I'm like a little child."

"So give me a mind and heart that can understand what you want me to do, so I can tell the difference between good and evil. "

Nod and smile as you speak.

Touch the Solomon figure as you speak.

Touch the head and then, the chest of the wooden Solomon figure. Then, pause slightly and lean forward before continuing with "but I will also" .

Again, touch Solomon and nod your head as you speak.

Put your hands in front of your eyes and move them away. Move the Solomon figure back to the left of center in the storytelling area.

Rest your hand on the Solomon figure as you speak.

Carefully place the wooden pieces in the story basket.

Yahweh was very pleased that Solomon had asked for these things.

Yahweh said to Solomon, "Because you asked for wisdom and not a long life or power over your enemies, I will give you what you asked for."

"You will have a wise heart and mind, but I will also give you great riches and honor because you didn't ask for them. "

"And if you walk in my ways and keep my commandments I will give you a long life. "

Then Solomon woke up and found he'd been dreaming. He went to Jerusalem and offered sacrifices to Yahweh there.

And Solomon did many wise things in his lifetime.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder why Solomon didn't know how to rule God's people?

I wonder why Solomon didn't ask for money?

I wonder how God felt when God heard what Solomon said?

I wonder if Solomon had a long life?

Watch carefully how I put these materials away, so you will know how to handle them if you choose to make this story your work today or another day.

After speaking, stand and carry the basket back to the shelf. Then return to the circle and sit down.

Watch carefully where I return this story, so you will know where to find it if you choose to make this your work today or another day.

Be certain every child has had the opportunity to choose his or her work before dismissing them as a group.

I wonder what you will make your work today? Let's go around the circle and decide.

WISE SOLOMON TEACHER HELPS

This passage has been heavily edited by the Deuteronomist or D source. * We note that the groundwork is laid for Solomon to succeed. Looking back, the Deuteronomist must have worked to explain why Solomon had such a successful reign. They did not look at what he had done to achieve success and then try to decide how he achieved it, but rather looked at his success and determined that all this had been given to him because God loved him and he had done good things in his life. This story would have been presented to explain why Solomon made good decision in some of his life. The gift of wisdom was not innate, but a God given gift that was Solomon's for the asking. **In** addition, because he made an honorable request that would help his people, he was given great honor and riches. How else would the people of the exile have explained Solomon's success when he built temples to foreign gods for his many wives? (I Kings 11: 1-8)

I have included this story as a model for the children to understand that God grants wisdom and that God keeps God's promises. This story shows a very wise man who asked for wisdom. Someone with less perceptions of his own vulnerability would have asked for great riches. Solomon seemed to understand that he was always one step away from destruction and he wanted to do the best he could to secure the covenant promise made to his father, David.

Note, too, that from this time on David is referred to as righteous, faithful and upright. This is a great example to all of us about forgiveness. Not only was David forgiven for his sin in regard to Bathsheba, but it was not a part of the community memory of the people of God when they reflected back on him. They saw David as an upright king who walked in the ways of Yahweh and remained faithful to his God. His sexual immorality was a mistake that was forgiven and forgotten.

The Deuteronomist was very interested in the worship at the temple in Jerusalem. So even though the dream takes place at Gibeon the story finishes in Jerusalem where Solomon has come to finish his time of sacrifice in the place accepted and approved by Yahweh.

Later on in I Kings we will read of the sins of Solomon, but for this time and this story we understand that Solomon loved God, was faithful to God and humbled himself as he chose that which would help him rule his people.

Our first wondering question asks why Solomon didn't know how to rule God's people. Do kings get any practice? We will wonder and enjoy the responses from the children.

I've included the wonderment about why Solomon didn't ask for money because many children perceive having extra money as a solution to lots of things. We need to gently begin to help children understand that there are more important things in our world than material possessions, although this story grants those to Solomon as well.

We will wonder next about God's feelings when he heard Solomon's request. Obviously, God was pleased. Did he laugh, smile and nod, say "good job", or what? How did Solomon know God was pleased? How do we know when we have pleased God? These are some off-shoot questions we may want to address.

The fourth wondering question helps the children think about the last part of the story where God promises Solomon a long life IF he remains faithful. Most of the children will believe Solomon lived a long time because they will not be able to stretch beyond this story. That's *OK*.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

In this story Solomon is given riches and honor because he didn't ask for wealth or power. How would Solomon's reign have been viewed by the people if he was poor and had no power? Would he have been thought successful? Would the people have believed God was with him?

The Old Testament is very interested in God rewarding people who are good and punishing people who are bad. Think of a good person you know who has had a very hard life. Then think of someone who is not "good" who has had a very easy life. Where is God in their lives? Which of those people are happy?

This story ends with Solomon coming to Jerusalem to worship in the right place. Where can you worship? Which setting do you like best? Can you worship without other people around? How does that feel?

* The Old Testament is made of several different sources. They have marked differences, while also containing some similarities. The D source stands for Deuteronomist, an editor or group of editors who took many old sources during the time of the exile, about 560 BC, and edited them to be more aligned with the laws of Deuteronomy. The three principles important to the D source are: The importance of a single sanctuary, Jerusalem; divine retribution, God blesses those who obey him and punishes those who do not; God fulfills God's word, the warning is usually given through a prophet. (The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible; edited by Charles Laymon, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1987)