

September 20th *Unit 12*Session 2* Elementary

Wisdom for God's People

BIBLE PASSAGE: Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Song of Songs

STORY POINT: Wisdom is fearing the Lord and obeying His Word.

KEY PASSAGE: James 1:5

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What does God know? God knows everything about the past, present, and future.

Opening Activity: Commands and Consequences

Use a dry erase board or large piece of paper and divide into two columns. Label the first column Commands and the second column Consequences. Prompt your kids to name rules or commands they hear at home, at school, in the community, and so forth. List them in the first column. Aim for about 10 commands. (Examples: Look both ways before crossing the street, don't touch the stove, stay seated on the bus, wash your hands before eating) Then prompt them to describe a possible consequence of disobeying each command. (Example: If you don't look both ways before crossing the street, you could be hit by a car.) List the consequences in the second column.

Say: Why do you think we have commands like these? [Allow your kids to respond.] Some people—especially small children—don't always realize the consequences of some actions. Without these commands, they might foolishly walk into traffic, touch a hot stove, or eat lunch with dirty hands. Today we'll explore some of the commands in God's Word for living wisely.

THE BIBLE STORY

When Solomon became king, he asked God for help to lead the Israelites. God gave King Solomon wisdom to lead His people. People came from far away to hear Solomon's wise words. The Bible teaches that there are two ways to live: a wrong way, doing what is foolish and evil; and a right way, doing what is wise and good. Solomon wrote thousands of wise sayings called proverbs.

He also wrote more than a thousand songs. In the Book of Proverbs, Solomon said to love and worship God. He told people how to make wise

decisions. If people listened to God's words and did what God told them to do, God would bless them and protect them. If they did not listen to God's words and obey them, they would make bad decisions and face consequences for their sins. They would not be happy, healthy, or get along well with others!

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart," Solomon wrote in Proverbs 3:5. He also wrote other wise sayings like, "A gentle answer turns away anger, but a harsh word stirs up wrath," and "Even a young man is known by his actions—by whether his behavior is pure and upright." Some people do not always listen to God's words. Solomon wrote, "Fools hate wisdom and instruction." He also wrote, "A fool does not want to learn but only wants to say what he thinks," and "A fool does whatever he thinks is right, but a wise person listens to advice." Solomon wrote another book in the Bible called Ecclesiastes. The Book of Ecclesiastes has wisdom for people too. Solomon wrote about money and work and how to live a good life. Many people seek after these things, but these things do not truly satisfy.

The most important thing, Solomon said, is to love and obey God. Solomon taught that there is a time for everything: "a time to give birth and a time to die; a time to plant and a time to uproot; a time to kill and a time to heal; a time to tear down and a time to build; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance" (Ecclesiastes 3:2-4). Solomon also wrote a poem about love. This poem is called Song of Songs. Solomon wrote this poem to celebrate God's wise plan for love and marriage.

Christ Connection: Wisdom in the Bible shows us how to be like Jesus—in how we live, how we speak, and how we think. But wisdom cannot save us. Only Jesus, who perfectly followed God's wise plan, can rescue us from sin.

Key passage activity

Instruct everyone to stand in a circle. Lead your kids in reading James 1:5 aloud together. Choose one person to begin by saying the first word of the key passage. The player to her right should say the second word, and so on around the circle. Explain that at any time, a player may clap as he says the next word. When a player claps, the motion around the circle reverses—so the kid on his left should say the next word. If a player says the wrong word, supply the correct word, and then start again.

Say: The best place to get wisdom is from God! What does God know? God knows everything about the past, present, and future.

Discussion & Bible skills

Say: God made King Solomon the wisest man who had ever lived, and people came from all over to listen to his wisdom. Wisdom is fearing the Lord and obeying His Word.

Ask the following questions:

1. Who has the best plan for your life? Discuss what types of plans people might make for their own lives. Guide them to recognize that God is in control of all things. Emphasize that God knows how life works best, and He gives us instruction in His Word to show us how to be like Jesus—in how we live, how we speak, and how we think.

2. Why is it foolish to try to live without God? Prompt your kids to recall that wisdom comes from God. God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. God knows how life works best. God has all wisdom and knowledge. He knows everything about the past, present, and future. Fools trust in themselves; the wise person trusts in God.

3. How can you seek to grow in wisdom? Recall that if we ask God for wisdom, He gives us wisdom. Emphasize that your kids can pray for understanding as they learn about the Bible and read the Bible for themselves.

Craft: Wisdom Wall

Before the session, write the following Bible references on separate white papers. Each kid has one: Proverbs 3:5-6; Proverbs 11:13; Proverbs 11:27; Proverbs 12:15; Proverbs 19:15; Ecclesiastes 7:5. Instruct kids to look up the Bible verses and write the words of the verse on the paper. Encourage kids to draw the verses as well. Then glue or tape the white paper onto the craft paper. Attach them in a way that looks pretty on a wall.

Say: King Solomon wrote much of the Books of Proverbs, and all of Ecclesiastes and Song of Songs. Proverbs gives us practical advice for living

wisely. Ecclesiastes teaches us to think carefully about how we should live our lives. Song of Songs reveals God's wisdom for relationships. Wisdom is fearing the Lord and obeying His Word. Wisdom in the Bible shows us how to be like Jesus—in how we live, how we speak, and how we think. A wise person will see his or her need for Jesus, but wisdom cannot save us. Only Jesus, who perfectly followed God's wise plan, can rescue us from sin.

Reflection and prayer

Ask your kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

End by praying together