

Grade 4—Unit 4

Solomon—Wise and Wealthy, Yet Foolish

In this unit, students will meet a king who reigned during a peaceful time in the history of the Israelite people. King Solomon, known for his great wisdom, received his wisdom when he requested it of God during a dream. This gift from God helped him solve problems for his people and made him famous throughout the known world for his teachings and his writings.

Beginning with his ingenious design of dividing the nation into twelve districts, each with its own governor, to his ability to deal with world leaders, to his extravagant building projects, to conscripted labor, to taxation, there was no end to the projects that Solomon found to do. However, his fantastic plans and his extremely large family required so much of his people that they eventually found themselves, once again, under the bondage of slavery, just as Samuel had prophesied.

Solomon's skill in negotiating with world leaders often involved intermarriage. God had warned him not to seek wives from other nations, because it would lead to worship of idols and other gods. Eventually, Solomon did succumb to his wives' requests for images of their gods. God was greatly displeased that Solomon was not able to keep the covenant, so he divided the kingdom, leaving only one division for Solomon's son to rule.

LESSONS

1. Solomon: The Wise King
2. Solomon: The Foolish King

Unit 4: Solomon—Wise and Wealthy, Yet Foolish

Unit Information

SUMMARY

Solomon, David's son, reigned in Israel during a time of peace. The kingdom stayed united during his reign. It was not enlarged, but it was greatly enhanced by Solomon's many building projects. From the temple God asked him to build, to the palace, to roads and highways, to forts, and the building of chariots, there seemed no end to his ideas and projects. Unfortunately, all of these projects and his huge family brought about taxation and forced labor. The people of Israel were back under slavery, exactly as Samuel prophesied. Solomon's marriage to many foreign women eventually caused him to worship idols and other gods. The consequences of this behavior once again divided the kingdom and removed all of the territories but one from the rule of David's house.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Lesson 1

1 Kings 1–10

2 Chronicles 1:7-13

Lesson 2

1 Samuel 8

1 Kings 4–12

Memory Text: Proverbs 22:17-19

Memory Text used in worship: Acts 17:24-28a

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

Solomon inherited Israel's prosperity, as well as the simmering problems between the north and the south. Although the nation of Israel was a political and economic leader, there was still a subtle division between the northern tribes and Judah. The northern tribes continued to be discontent with a king from Judah.

During David's reign, the nation had been at war almost continually. Solomon knew that Israel needed a period of peace in which to build and establish roots. Solomon was quite a diplomat, especially where neighboring nations were involved. He married the daughter of the Egyptian pharaoh, thus establishing peace with Egypt. He also continued his father's peace pact with the king of Tyre.

Solomon wanted to rule Israel as efficiently as possible. To maintain control over the vast empire, he divided the land into 12 administrative districts. These districts did not correspond with previous tribal boundaries. Solomon appointed governors for each district. He also built and fortified major cities in each district.

Solomon built a royal palace in Jerusalem, and erected a magnificent temple for God in the royal city. Solomon also enlarged the city and fortified it. Such fortifications meant expanding the army, to provide military to care for and protect each district and the royal city. Solomon's army was large, much larger than

David's. He introduced the use of chariots and conscripted young Israeli soldiers into the royal army.

All of these building projects cost a great deal of money. In order to pay for these projects, Solomon built a port at Elath, which served as a trade center. Israel's exports and imports went as far as Africa.

Because there was still not enough money, Solomon began large overland trade with rulers such as the Queen of Sheba. This provided the nation with a great deal of income, as well as new materials. Solomon became a middleman for the trade of chariots from Egypt and fine horses from Cilicia. He exported large amounts of copper, which apparently was available in the region at that time. Still there was not enough money for Solomon's expensive endeavors.

The king began heavily taxing the people of Israel. Each district was responsible to provide enough funding to support Solomon and his court for one month. Each district was expected to pay the same amount, regardless of the number of people in its jurisdiction. Therefore, people in smaller districts shouldered a much larger tax burden than those in larger districts. Even with such taxation, there were still insufficient funds for Solomon's expensive projects.

The king began forcing Canaanites and other foreigners to work as slaves, to provide free labor for the building projects. When this form of slavery proved inadequate, Solomon instituted the *corvee*. This meant that Israelites were conscripted (*forced*) to leave their jobs and homes for four months during the year to work for Solomon without wages. The people were already staggering under Solomon's heavy taxes. To be taken from their jobs for four months meant that they would lose the wages they normally would have earned.

The people remembered the stories of bondage in Egypt. Samuel's warning had come true. Their own king was forcing them into slavery. The people of Israel had no choice. They were bound to serve once again.

Solomon was also known for his wisdom in judging over the people. His response to a dispute between two women showed all of Israel that God had indeed blessed him with great wisdom. His clever responses to the Queen of Sheba also brought him great fame as a man of unusual wisdom.

Although Solomon obeyed God's instructions in building the temple, he showed a lack of foresight in running the nation. Solomon's love of extravagant things and excessive lifestyle brought great oppression to the people of Israel. Solomon had at least 700 wives. Many of them were from cultural groups God had declared off limits for marriage when the Israelites first entered the land of Canaan. Uniting with these women eventually brought foreign gods into the nation.

God spoke to Solomon about his lifestyle, but the king chose to ignore God in that area of his life. Imagine the cost of feeding, housing, and entertaining such a large family and all of the children! Many of Solomon's building projects also reflected his lack of dependence upon God. Such a large army and all the many fortresses indicate that Solomon did not rely on God to fight Israel's battles, as had been the case throughout history.

Solomon, wise when it came to settling disputes among the people, had selfish tunnel vision when it came to looking at the best interests of the people and ensuring their future. When Solomon died, the situation disintegrated rapidly. A long line of kings, some faithful and some unfaithful, sat on the throne. It once again was a divided kingdom between the north and the south.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- Solomon’s God-given wisdom helped his people and brought him admiration from world leaders.
- Solomon fulfilled God’s request to build a temple.
- Solomon’s ideas and projects forced the Israelites back into slavery, under a human king.
- Some of Solomon’s decisions as king did not reflect the heart of a servant.
- God wants us to use our gifts to serve God and not self.
- God requires honest and loyal worship.

WORSHIP

1. Decorate the worship center to display the concepts in this unit. Use Scripture texts, pictures, charts, posters, and maps. You might want to put the three charts from the lessons into the worship center. Also leave room for students’ proverb posters.

2. Include the class Bible and prayer basket or jar in the setting. You may want a special gift dedication basket for this unit. Students can write on slips of paper gifts that God has given them. At some point in the unit, you can dedicate the use of these gifts to God.

3. Choose a theme. The gifts God entrusts to us, and the importance of our loyal worship to God are themes that run throughout this unit. Several songs, a Scripture, and a prayer are provided below to enhance these themes.

Music:

- “Creation is a song” (*Sing the Journey*, #24; *Sing the Journey CD*, #14)
- “Let the whole creation cry” (*Hymnal: A Worship Book*, #51)

Scripture:

- The memory text, Acts 17:24-28a (p.), speaks of who God is, and is appropriate for a worship theme.

Prayer:

“God of all life . . .,” #680, *Hymnal: A Worship Book*

4. Discuss. The “Gifts from God” (Lesson 1) and “Worship” (Lesson 2) activity sheets should be good discussion starters for your worship time. When discussing gifts, help students catch the vision that our gifts are to be used in service for God’s kingdom, and that we are stewards of our gifts. It is important to help students realize that we are all gifted in some way, to provide “acts of kindness.” These gifts are ours to share or hide, but sharing them may make the difference in another person’s life.

6. Think about the word “proverb,” and make students aware of the Song of Songs and Ecclesiastes as other writings belonging to Solomon.

7. Continue to pray with your students, bringing much praise and adoration into your prayers.

MEMORY PASSAGE

This unit includes two memory texts. One is used as an Extend the Lesson activity in Lesson 2; the other is suggested as part of the theme during worship time.

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

- Pray that your students will catch the significance of their “God-given gifts.” Also, pray that they understand how much God desires our true worship.
- Watch your class carefully. Rearrange your teaching style and methods, emphasize important concepts, and ask leading questions until you see the light of learning in every student’s eyes.
- Remember that you have a God-given gift and a God-given opportunity to sow seeds of truth in the hearts and minds of your students.
- The activities in this unit are about a growing relationship with God, rather than earning grades.
- A final unit assessment accompanies the unit.



The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. For “In him we live and move and have our being.”

Acts 17:24-28a

Solomon—Wise and Wealthy, Yet Foolish

LESSON 1: SOLOMON, THE WISE KING

Objective

Students will understand that Solomon’s request pleased God, because he asked for a gift that would help others.

Key Concepts

- Solomon requested a good gift from God.
- God was pleased to give Solomon wisdom, in order to help the people.
- Solomon’s wisdom showed in his actions, his teachings, and his relationships.
- God is pleased when we ask for gifts that will make us better people.
- God wants us to share our talents with others.

Text: 1 Kings 2:1-4; 1 Kings 1–12; 2 Chronicles 1:5-13

Estimated Lesson Time: 40-45 minutes (*plan additional time for Extend the Lesson activities*)

Materials

- Bibles
- 3 large sheets of lined chart paper
- 10 index cards
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: “Gifts from God” (p. 157)
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: “Cooperation Squares” (pp. 158-163), plastic zip-close bags

Teacher Preparation

- Read the Scripture texts and the Biblical Background for this unit. You will need to read 1 Kings 1–12 to have a total picture of this story.
- At the top of the first sheet of chart paper write: “What did David say?” Then skip halfway down and write: “What did God say?” On the second sheet of paper write: “What wise things did Solomon do?” On the third sheet write: “What foolish things did Solomon do?” Post the charts in the room. These will be used in Lessons 1 and 2.
- On each of the 10 index cards, write one Scripture reference or set of references. If you do not have 10 groups of at least 2 students, you can group the following Scriptures together, #1 and #2; #3 and #5; #7 and #8.

(1) 2 Chronicles 1:7-13

(2) 1 Kings 3:4-15

(3) 1 Kings 3:1-4

(4) 1 Kings 3:16-28

(5) 1 Kings 4:29-34

(6) 1 Kings 5:3-5; 6:1, 11-14

(7) 1 Kings 8:6-13

(8) 1 Kings 8:22-30, 62-66

(9) 1 Kings 9:1-9

(10) 1 Kings 10:1-9

- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, make one copy of “Gifts from God” for each student.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, make Cooperation Squares. At the end of this lesson, you will find six pages of patterns. This is one set of squares. Copy

them onto heavy paper, making one set for each group of 5-6 students. Cut out the squares and cut apart the lettered pieces. Put each set into a plastic zip-close bag. Save the sets to use in coming years.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Review with students that David died and Solomon was appointed to be king of Israel. Remind them of the admonition David gave to Solomon. Have them open their Bibles to 1 Kings 2:1-4 and identify the things David told Solomon he must do to be a successful king (*be a strong man, observe what the Lord requires, walk in his ways, keep his decrees, commands, laws, and requirements*). Write the answers on the first chart, under “What Did David Say?” as students identify them.

Explain that in this unit, you will discover if Solomon was able to follow the advice from his father. Share the title of the unit: Solomon—Wise and Wealthy, Yet Foolish. Based on the title, do students think Solomon did or did not follow David’s advice?

LESSON STEPS

1. Plan and explain. Divide the class into 10 groups of at least two. Give each group an index card with the Scripture reference(s) written on it. Explain that they have three tasks: (1) Read their assigned Scripture; (2) Prepare to present this episode to the class; and (3) Find out if this Scripture answers any of the questions on the charts, and be prepared to explain them.

#1 and #2: These Scriptures are about Solomon’s dream. His request and God’s reply need to be highlighted on the chart.

#3: Suggests wisdom, because it shows Solomon making peaceful alliances with surrounding nations

#4: Shows Solomon’s wisdom in solving problems

#5: Highlights Solomon’s great wisdom

#6: Solomon follows God’s plan to build a temple

#7: Solomon continues to follow the plan and brings the Ark to the temple. God shows pleasure in the dark cloud.

#8: Solomon dedicates the temple

#9: God responds with what Solomon and his family must do to keep the relationship

#10: The Queen of Sheba verifies the wisdom and wealth of Solomon

2. Group work. Give the groups sufficient time to satisfactorily complete the task.

3. Share and chart. Each group will share two things—first, their part of the story, and second, what needs to be written on Chart 2. Complete the chart as the students give responses. Also, if students miss important details as they tell the story, add these.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 40-45 minutes.)

• **“Gifts from God.”** Hand out the activity sheet and give directions. This is meant to be a self-directed, individual activity. There are no right or wrong answers. Be open to the ideas students share. If an idea seems incorrect, ask for clarification. Often times children’s ideas make sense when we understand the thinking pattern. Students could choose to take this sheet home and discuss it with their families. It should be saved for discussion during worship time.

• **Cooperation Squares game.** Remind students that Solomon had a big problem to solve when two women came to him with one baby they each claimed was her own. Do they think King Solomon did a good job solving the problem? Solomon needed to do some creative thinking.

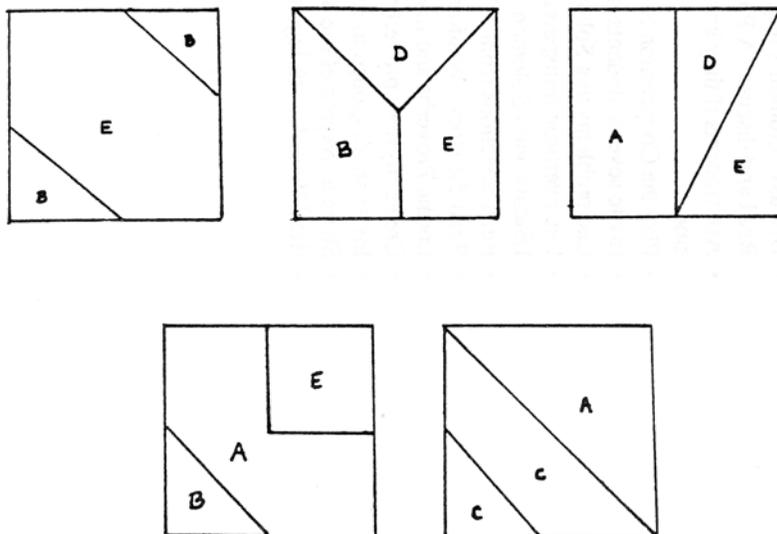
Introduce the game called Cooperation Squares. Explain, “In this activity you have a problem to solve, and you’ll need to do some creative thinking. You will not be able to solve the puzzle alone, so you must work with a group. You can’t solve the problem in usual ways, because no talking is allowed while you are solving it.”

Directions for Cooperation Squares:

1. Divide the class into groups of 5 to 6. Hand out the bags with pre-made sets of “cooperation squares.”
2. Have each group open their packet and give one member all the As, another all the Bs, etc., until all pieces are handed out. Some students will have more than others. That is not important.
3. Explain that this is a game of cooperation, designed to see how well they can work together as a team. This is not a race between teams! They may not TALK at all. They must find other ways to work together.
4. Each group is to construct five squares of equal size by using the puzzle pieces in their bag. The large, blank square is provided to show the size and shape of the squares they are making.

Allow from 5-15 minutes to complete the puzzles. As the students work, watch closely for ways that they are working together. Interact with a group only if you think their frustration level is too high. At the end of the activity, discuss the ways students found to communicate without words.

Cooperation Squares solution:



Gifts from God

Directions: God was pleased that Solomon asked for wisdom, since wisdom would make him a better king. God wants us to ask for gifts that will make us better people, too. List ways you can help other people. After each idea, the gift you need from God to help you do this task. Two examples have been completed for you.

I Can Help Others By . . .

1. being kind
2. showing a friend how to do homework
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

The Gift I Need Is . . .

1. patience
2. knowledge
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Directions: Answer the following questions.

11. What gift did Solomon ask for in 1 Kings 3:4-15? _____

12. Do you think he did his best to build a beautiful temple for God? Explain your answer.

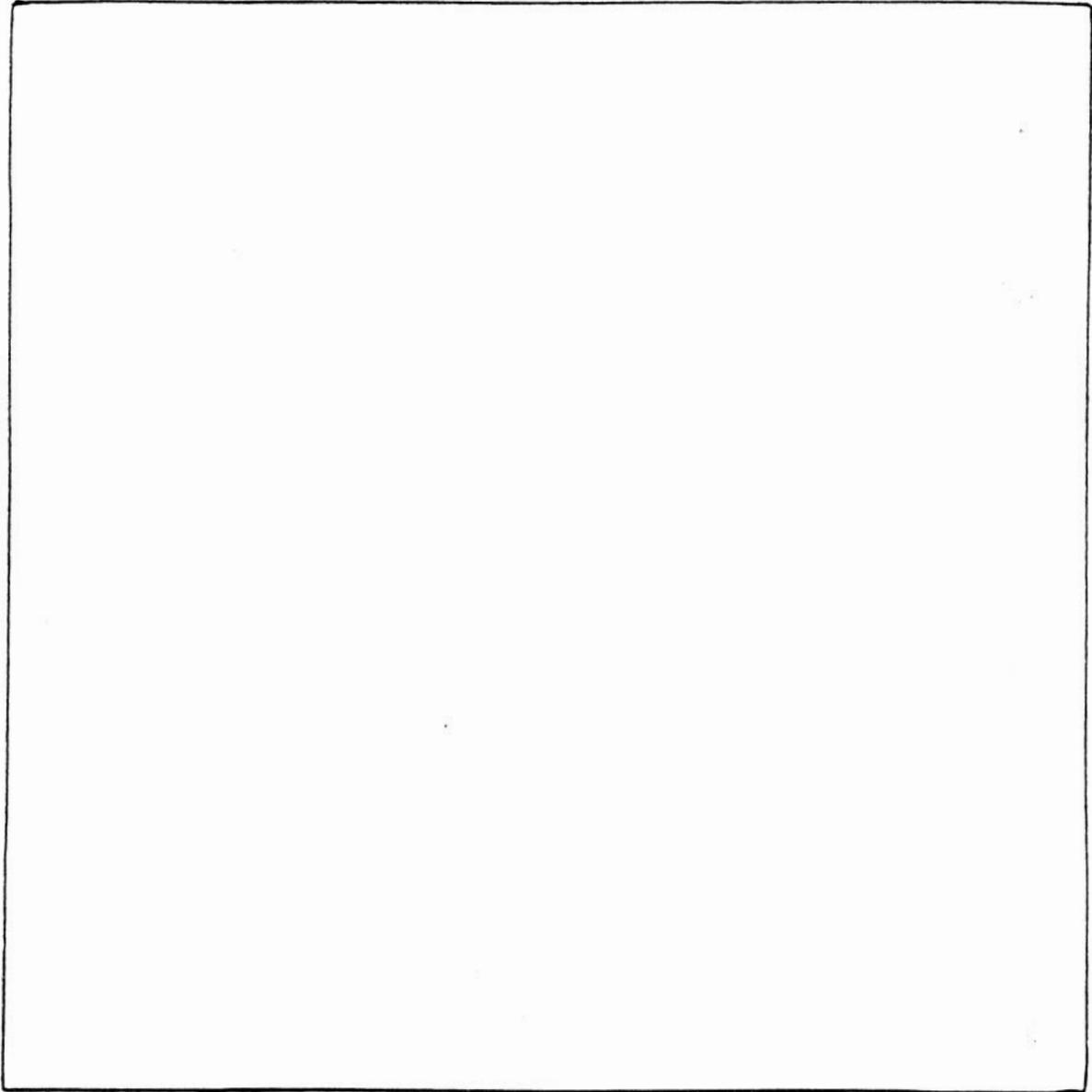
13. Do you think God wants us to build God a temple? Why or why not?

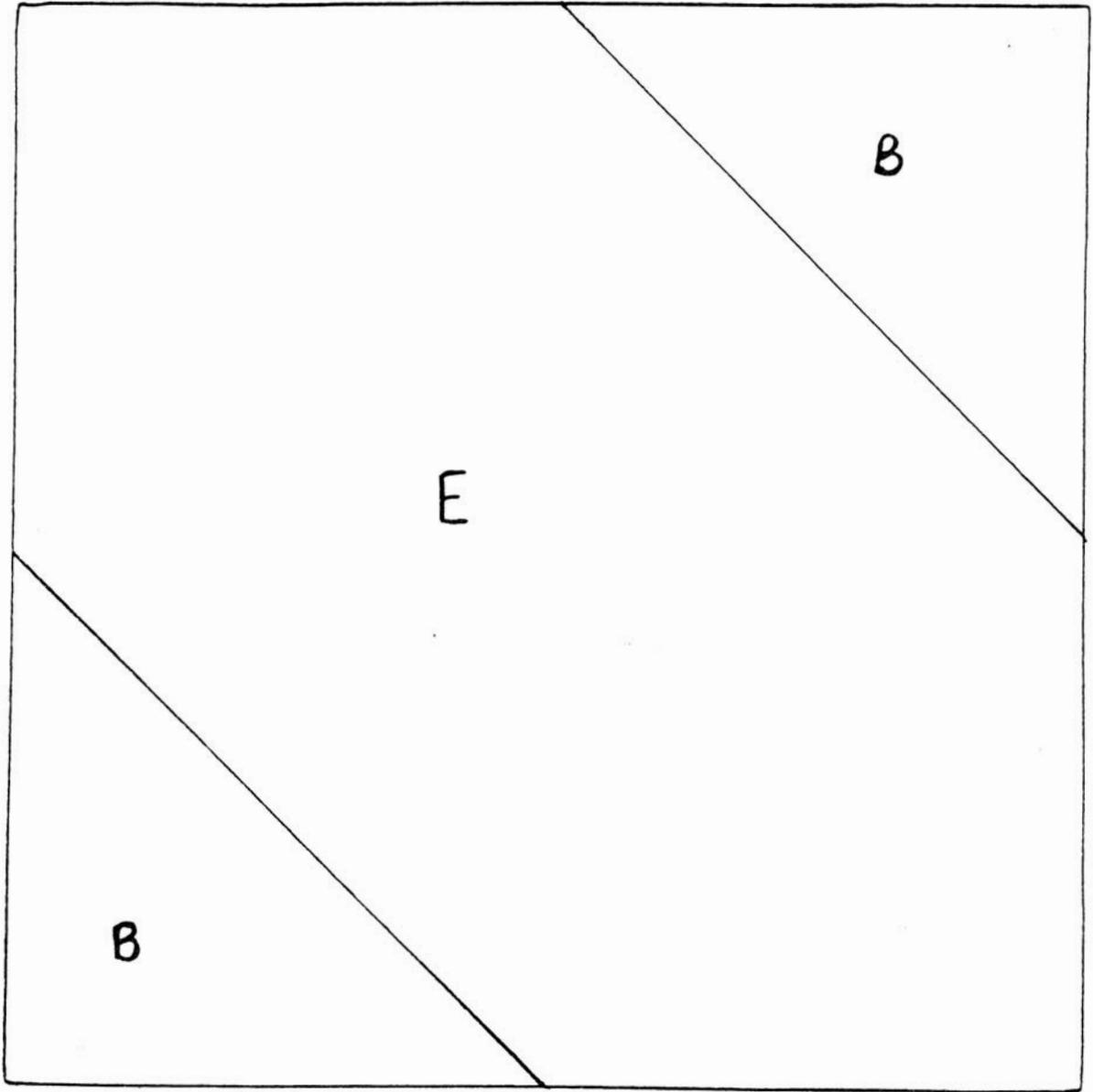
14. What do you think God wants you to build for God? Why?

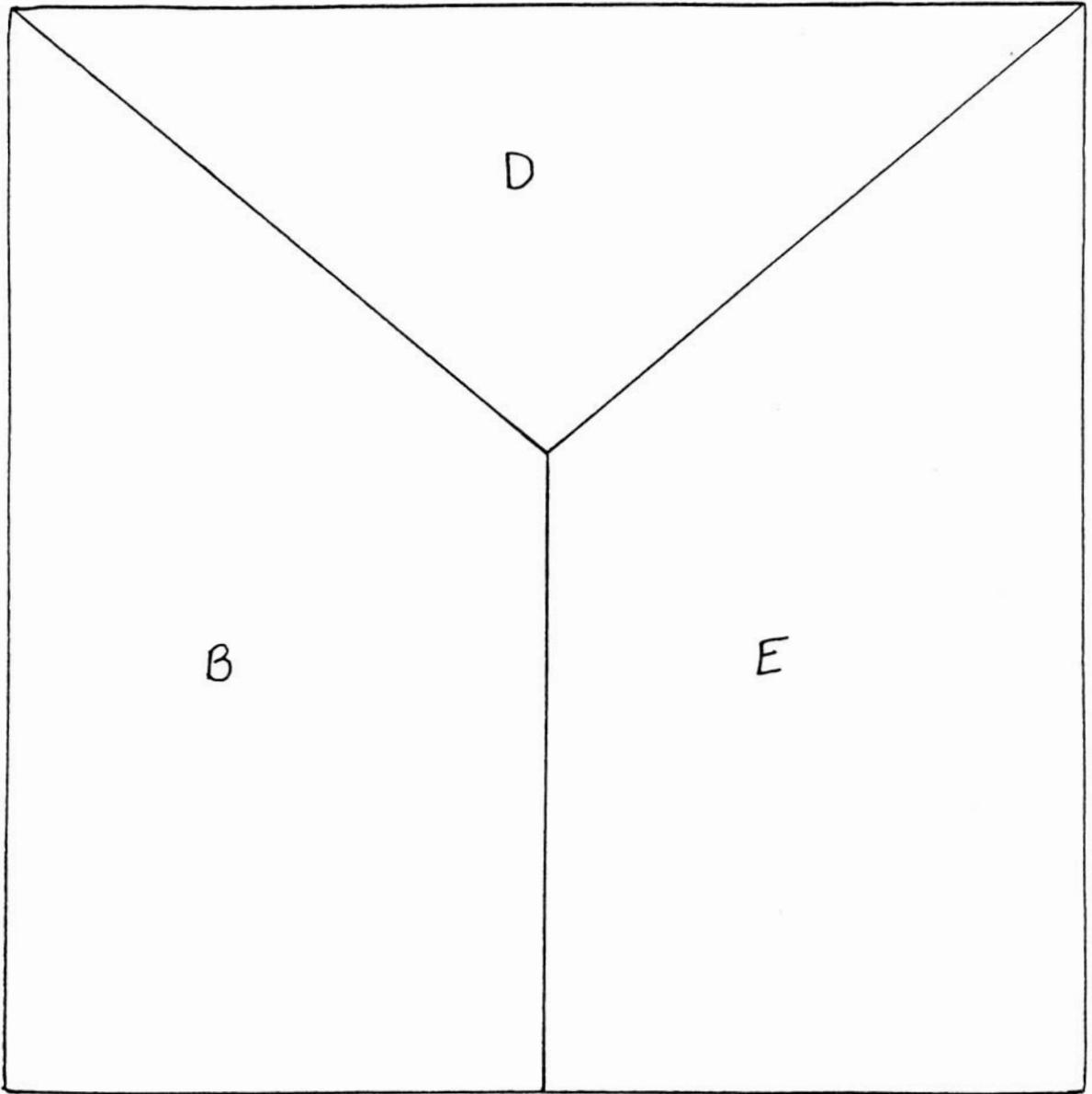
15. Solomon had an opportunity to ask God for a gift. What gift would you like God to give you? Explain your answer.

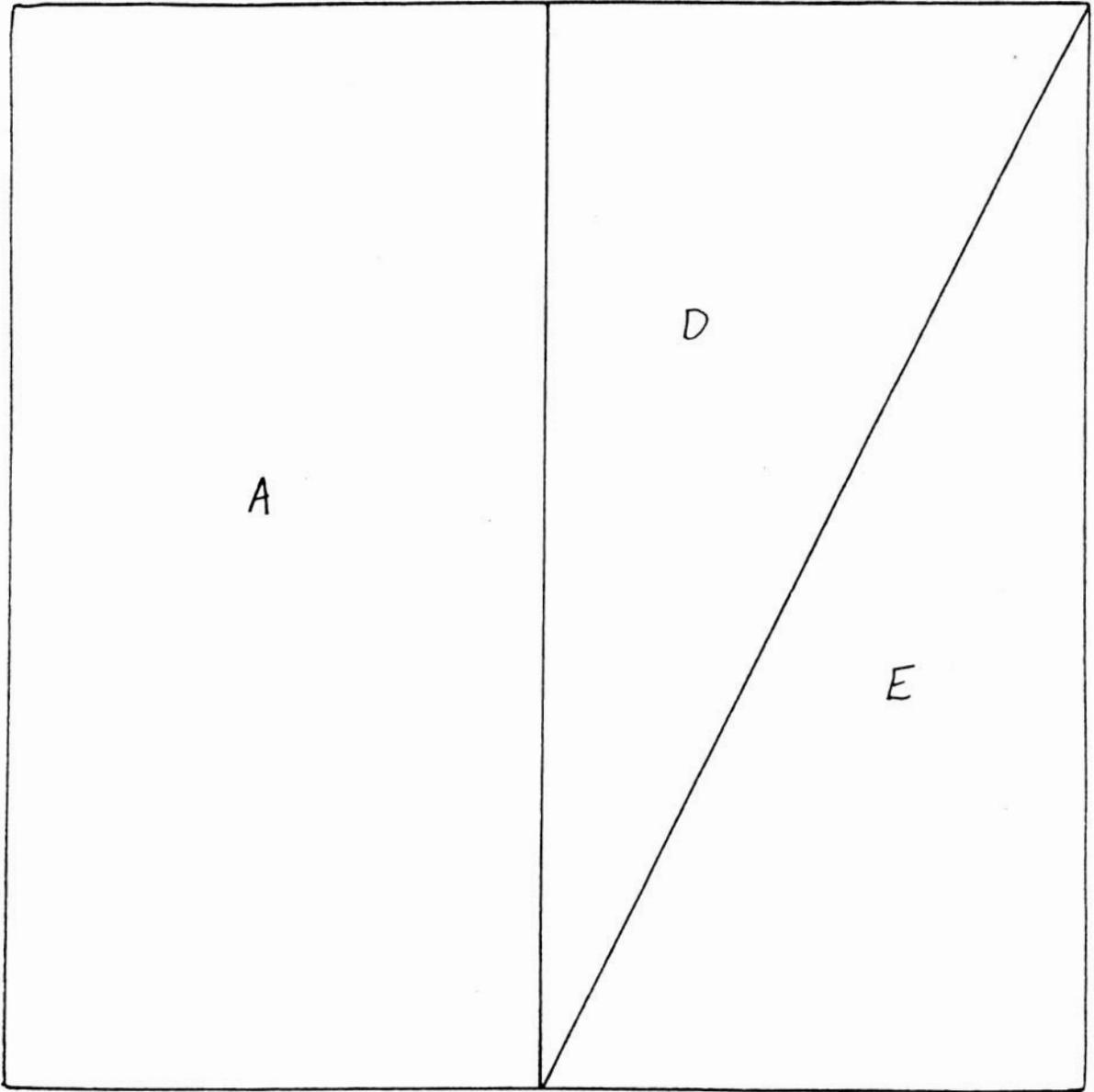


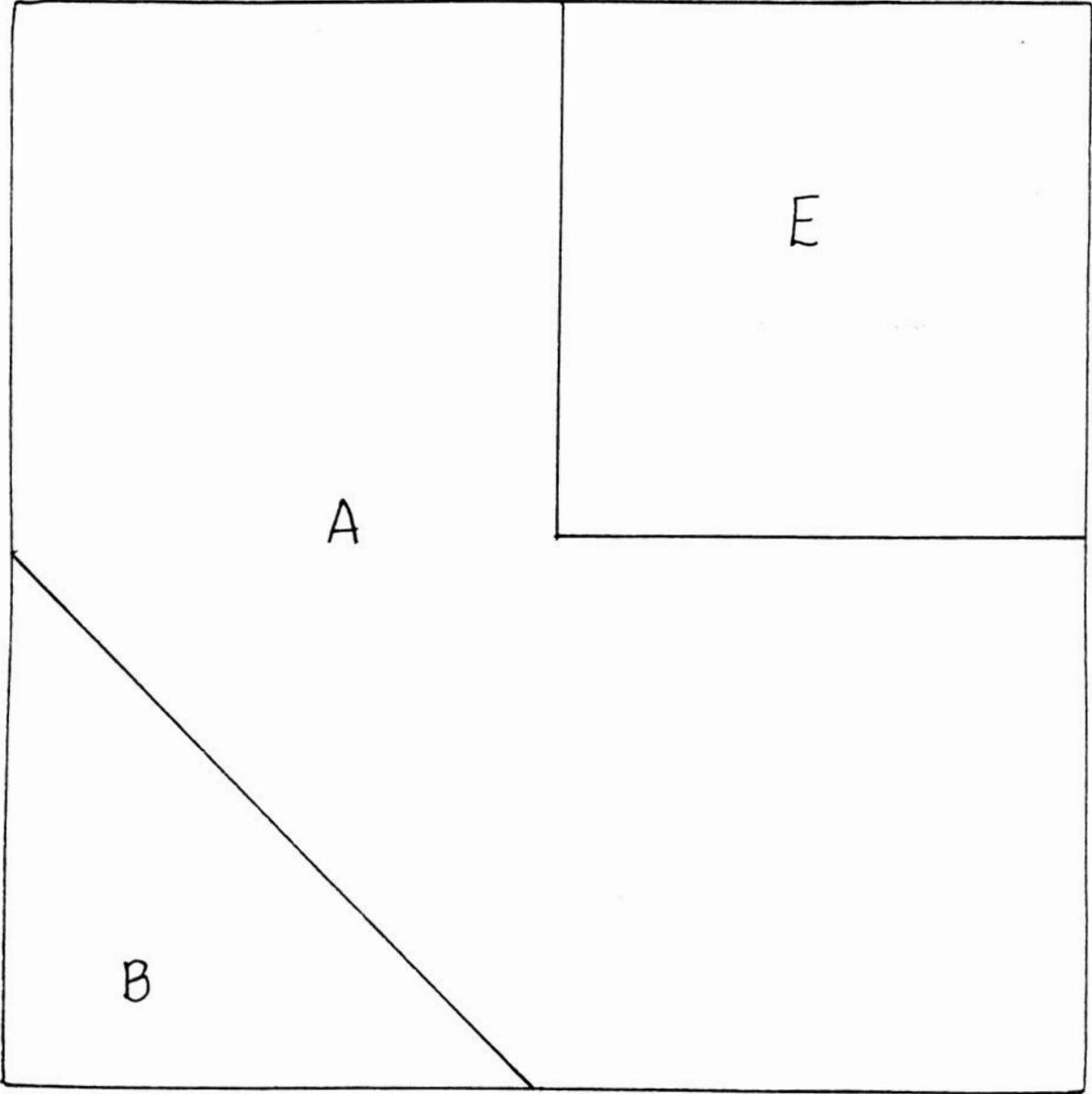
Cooperation Squares

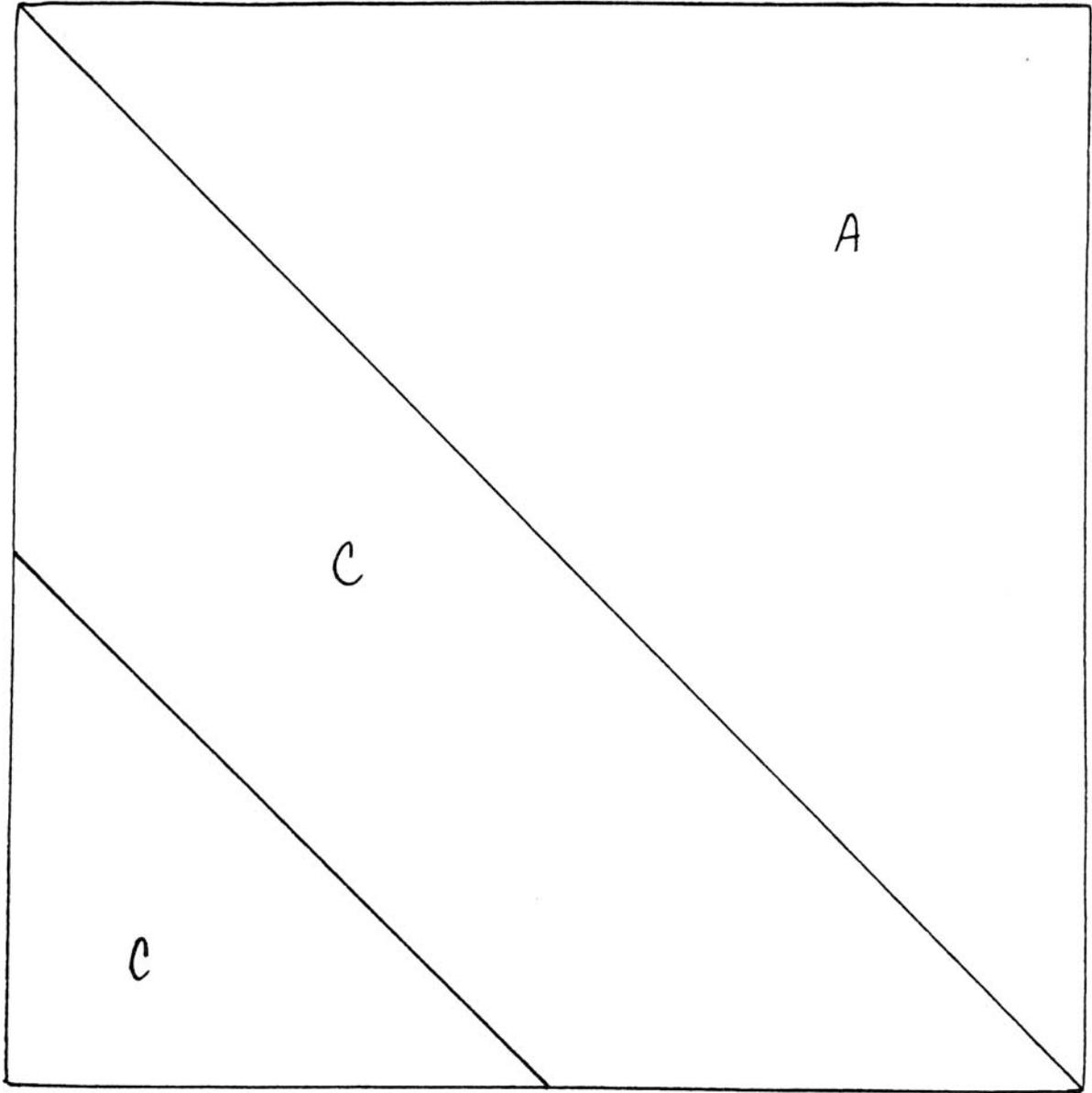












Solomon—Wise and Wealthy, Yet Foolish

LESSON 2: SOLOMON, FOOLISH KING

Objective

Students will discover, through Solomon’s actions, that above all else God desires our worship and obedience.

Key Concepts

- Solomon’s lifestyle and projects brought economic oppression to the people.
- Solomon’s desires led him away from God and into idol worship.
- Solomon’s inability to keep God’s covenant and decrees led to loss of the kingdom.
- Proverbs are wise sayings that can teach us valuable lessons.
- God requires our worship.

Text: 1 Samuel 8:10-18; 1 Kings 4:7, 20-27; 1 Kings 5:13; 1 Kings 9:10-26; 1 Kings 11:1-13, 14-43; 1 Kings 12:1-33

Memory text: Proverbs 22:17-19

Estimated Lesson Time: 40-45 minutes

Materials

- Bibles
- Three charts from Lesson 1
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: “Worship” (p. 167)
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: thank-you note cards, one for each student
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: transparency/projection of memory text (p. 168), directions for memory text activity, construction paper, colored pens or markers

Teacher Preparation

- Read all Scripture texts for the lesson. Be prepared to explain the content of texts that are difficult for students to interpret. Prepare to tell the last section of the story.
- Post the three charts from Lesson 1.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option one, make a copy of “Worship” for each student.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option three, make a copy of the memory text activity directions for each student. Several sets of directions can be copied on one piece of paper. The directions are found in Extend the Lesson.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Remember. Ask students to find 1 Samuel 8:10-18 and silently read Samuel’s words from the Lord. Ask, “What did Samuel prophesy would happen if the people had a human king?” List responses on the board. *(Sons will be taken to work in the army, plow and harvest the fields, and make weapons of war. Daughters will be taken to be perfumers, cooks, and bakers. A tenth of your fields, vineyards,*

grains, vintage, menservants, maidservants, cattle, donkeys, and flocks will be taken. You will become slaves.)

Review the wise things Solomon did by referring to the charts from Lesson 1. Explain that Lesson 1 told us about a wise king, but in this lesson, Solomon is called a foolish king. Ask, “Does anything about Solomon’s behavior seem foolish to you?” Let the students brainstorm about this idea for several minutes.

LESSON STEPS

1. What Did God Say? Refer to Chart 1 to review what God said. Tell students that God reminded Solomon of these requirements throughout his reign.

2. Two foolish acts. Explain that Solomon did three foolish things that God did not approve. *Note: The first two acts are a bit difficult to deduce from Scripture. You may have to ask prompting questions such as: How do you think Solomon got all the food he needed to feed his large family? Do you think he paid the people for this food? If not, what would we call this? Our government takes money from your parents’ paychecks— what is this called? (taxation) Why is what our government does different from what Solomon did? (Solomon’s taxation went beyond the people’s ability to pay, and led to slavery.)*

The first foolish act is found in 1 Kings 4:7, 20-27. Have the students read this Scripture, then discuss what was happening. *(The people were being taxed beyond their ability to pay or give. This was to pay for Solomon’s extravagant living.)* Post this information on Chart 3.

Look for his second foolish act in 1 Kings 5:13 and 1 Kings 9:10-26. Have students read these Scriptures and discuss what the mistake might be. *(Solomon forced people to provide labor for his extravagant ideas and projects.)* Post this information on Chart 3.

Refer the students back to Samuel’s warnings against a human king that you have listed on the blackboard. Talk about each thing Samuel predicted and help students to see that this prophecy did indeed come true during the reign of Solomon.

3. The third foolish act. Have students look at 1 Kings 11:1-2 and find another rule God gave Solomon. What is the rule, and why is it a rule? *(You must not intermarry, because they will turn your hearts to their gods.)* Write this on the first chart. Ask, “What do you already know about Solomon that lets you know he didn’t keep this rule?” *(Solomon married the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt.)*

Read and discuss 1 Kings 11:3-8. Post the foolish behavior on Chart 3. Be sure to emphasize that intermarriage did, in fact, lead Solomon to idol worship. The worship of idols was the sin! Finally, read 1 Kings 11:9-13, where God explains the consequences of his behavior to Solomon. Post this information on Chart 1.

4. The results. The last part of 1 Kings 11 and chapter 12 tell the rest of the story. Briefly tell this story, being sure to include the fact that the kingdom was once again divided. *(Remind students that consequences are a result of our actions.)*

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 40-45 minutes.)

- **“Worship.”** Just as God required all of Solomon’s worship, God has the same desire of us. Hand out the worksheet. This is planned to be an individual activity, not to be graded. After students have completed the activity, use it for a discussion starter during worship. As students share, their thinking will be stimulated. They should be allowed to write down other students’ ideas that appeal to them.
- **Appreciation.** Have students write a thank-you note to someone they consider wise, who is teaching them the ways of the Lord.
- **Memory text: Proverbs 22:17-19.** Give each student a copy of directions *(below)* for the memory text activity. Supply construction paper and colored markers. Display a transparency/projection of the text, or have students refer to their Bibles. Provide help in locating the four commands from the Scripture *(pay attention to the sayings of the wise, listen to the sayings of the wise, apply your heart to the teachings, and trust in the Lord.)*

Directions for Memory Text Activity

1. Read the memory text, Proverbs 22:17-19.
2. Find the 4 things from the Scripture that we are commanded to do.
3. Divide a piece of construction paper into 4 equal sections.
4. Title your paper “Instructions for Wise Living.”
5. Write one of the 4 instructions in each section of your paper. Use colored pens or markers so the writing will stand out. Make your poster as attractive as you can.
6. Post this on your bulletin board to help you remember these instructions.

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Name _____

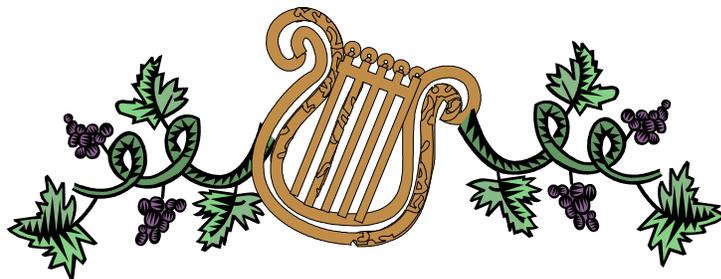
Date _____

Worship

Directions: Solomon was required to worship only God, not idol gods. So are we! On the lines, write down some of the ways you can worship God. Also write down places that you like to be when you are worshiping God.

Name some places that make you feel like you want to worship God. Example: lying in the grass, looking at the clouds.

Name some ways that you enjoy worshiping God. Example: singing or playing a musical instrument.





The words of the wise:
Incline your ear and hear my words,
and apply your mind to my teaching;
for it will be pleasant
if you keep them within you,
if all of them are ready on your lips.
So that your trust may be
in the LORD,
I have made them known to you
today—yes, to you.

Proverbs 22:17-19

Solomon—Wise and Wealthy, Yet Foolish

Unit 4 Assessment

Part 1

For each of the following statements, choose the correct answer and circle it.

- Solomon was the son of _____.
Samuel Saul David
- When Solomon had a dream, he asked God for _____.
wealth wisdom land
- Solomon built a _____ for God.
palace temple highway
- Solomon's _____ displeased God.
wealth proverbs idol worship
- Solomon's people were forced to provide _____ for his projects.
wood labor machines

Part 2

Answer the next three questions with words or phrases.

6. If you prayed to God to give you a special gift, what gift would you ask for?

Why would you like to have this particular gift?

7. Solomon did some important things while he was the king of Israel. Name at least 3 things he did that really helped other people.

8. What are three foolish things Solomon did?

ANSWER KEY

Solomon—Wise and Wealthy, Yet Foolish

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For each of the following statements, choose the correct answer and circle it.

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Samuel Saul **David**
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- Solomon's _____ displeased God.
wealth proverbs **idol worship**
- Solomon's people were forced to provide _____ for his projects.
wood **labor** machines

Part 2

Answer the next three questions with words or phrases.

6. If you prayed to God to give you a special gift, what gift would you ask for?

Answers will vary.

Why would you like to have this particular gift?

Hopefully, students have caught the vision that our gifts are to be used in service to God.

7. Solomon did some important things while he was the king of Israel. Name at least 3 things he did that really helped other people.

Accept reasonable answers, such as: He ruled his people wisely; He wrote proverbs and songs; He made friendly alliances with other nations; He built a temple to worship God; He solved people's problems.

8. What are three foolish things Solomon did?

He lived extravagantly and taxed the people heavily.

He married wives who worshiped other gods, and began to worship idols.

He forced the people to provide labor for his expensive building projects.