

**K-5th Grade**  
**Israel's First King**  
*Parent Devo & Bible Study*

**Session Title:** Israel's First King

**Bible Passage:** 1 Samuel 8–15

**Story Point:** God's people wanted a king like the nations around them.

**Key Passage:** Jeremiah 10:6

**Big Picture Question:** Is anything or anyone greater than God? No, God is greater than everything and everyone.

**Parent Devotional**

Today's Bible story picks up more than 20 years after the Philistines returned the ark of God to the Israelites. During that time, Israel began to seek God again, and Samuel led them to remove their foreign gods and worship God only.

Samuel had judged Israel throughout his lifetime, but he was getting old. So Samuel made his sons, Joel and Abijah, judges over Israel. But like many sons before them, Joel and Abijah did not follow the example of their father. They disobeyed God and caused problems for Israel. The elders of Israel spoke to Samuel about his sons and demanded a king. All the other nations around them had kings, they pointed out. Samuel knew their desire to imitate the nations around them was sinful, and he prayed to God.

"Give them what they want," God said. "They have not rejected you; they have rejected Me as their King." Samuel explained to the Israelites what rights a king would have over them; he warned them that when they regretted asking for a king—and they would regret it—God would not help them.

The people insisted on having a king, so God chose a man named Saul to be the king. By all appearances, Saul was a good king. He was handsome, taller than most people, and God had blessed him. But Saul failed to obey God. First, Saul sinned by burning offerings in Samuel's absence. Later, when the Israelites defeated the Amalekites, Saul did not follow God's instructions for destroying everything. The Lord regretted making Saul king.

As you teach, guide the kids to understand that Saul was not the king the people needed. All earthly kings are imperfect. But we can see how those kings point us to the perfect King, Jesus, who followed His Father's instructions without fail. Thank God for sending us the King we needed—a King who loved us enough to give His life for our salvation.

# Israel's First King

*1 Samuel 8–15*

**Samuel was a judge over Israel. At this time, Israel had no king, but the leaders of Israel said, “We want a king like the nations around us!” Samuel wasn’t sure how to respond, so he prayed to God. God said, “Give them what they want, but warn them what it will be like to have an earthly king.”**

A king could make their sons serve in the army, he could make their daughters work for him, or he could take away their fields and servants. But the Israelites didn’t care. “Give us a king!” they said.

**God brought to Samuel a man named Saul. “You will be king!” Samuel said. Saul was surprised; he was from the tribe of Benjamin, the smallest tribe in Israel. Samuel anointed Saul, and the Spirit of God was with Saul.**

**When the time came for Samuel to introduce the Israelites to their new king, no one could find Saul. God said, “There he is, hidden among the supplies.” The people ran to Saul. “Long live the king!” they said.**

The Israelites thought Saul would be a good king, but Saul did not obey God. One day, Saul took an army to fight the Philistines. But the Philistines had more chariots, more horses, and more soldiers. Saul wanted to ask God for help. Maybe if he made an offering to God, they would win the battle.

There was one problem: only the priests, like Samuel, were allowed to give offerings to God. Saul waited, but Samuel did not come. Saul’s soldiers started to leave, so Saul decided to make an offering to God himself.

**Then Samuel arrived. “You have disobeyed God,” Samuel said. “You will not be king much longer. God is going to find someone obedient to be king.”**

**Some time later, the Israelites won a battle against the Amalekites (uh MAL uh kights). God wanted Saul to destroy everything, but Saul only destroyed things he didn’t want.**

God told Samuel, “I regret that I made Saul king because he does not obey Me.”

**Samuel confronted Saul. “I did obey God!” Saul argued. “I only saved the best animals to sacrifice to the Lord.”**

Samuel asked, “Does God care more about obedience or sacrifices? You rejected His instruction, so God has rejected you as king.”

**Saul admitted his sin and asked for forgiveness. Samuel said, “God has taken away your kingship today, and He will make someone else king.”**

*Christ Connection: God intended for a heavenly king to rule over Israel, but the Israelites did not trust God's plan and wanted a king like the nations around them. God gave them a king, but Saul did not obey God. God had a plan to send His Son, Jesus. King Jesus trusted and obeyed God perfectly and died so sinners could be forgiven and accepted.*

**Memory Verse:**

Jeremiah 10:6

"There is none like you, O Lord;  
you are great, and your name is great in might."