

Preschool
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.

BIBLE STORY

Israel's First King

1 Samuel 8–15

Samuel was a judge in Israel. One day, God's people said, "The people around us have a king. We want a king too!"

Samuel was not sure what to do, so he prayed. God said, "Give the people a king, but warn them what an earthly king can do."

A king could make their sons serve in the army. A king could make their daughters work for him, or he could take away their land and servants. **Still the Israelites didn't care. "Give us a king!" they said.**

God chose a man named Saul to be king. Samuel anointed Saul with oil, and the Spirit of God was with Saul.

When the time came for the Israelites to meet their new king, Saul was missing! The people found Saul hiding. Saul stood among all the people and they said, "Long live the king!"

But Saul was not a good king. He 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.**

But that was not a good idea. **Only the priests were allowed to give offerings to God.** Saul waited for Samuel to come, **but** Saul's soldiers started to leave. **Saul decided to make an offering to God himself.**

Then Samuel arrived. "What have you done?" Samuel asked. "You have disobeyed God. You will not be king much longer."

Some time later, the Israelites won a battle against the Amalekites (uh MAL uh kights). **God told Saul to destroy everything, but Saul did not obey. He only destroyed things he didn't want.**

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

Saul argued with Samuel. “I did obey God!” he said. “I just saved the best animals to sacrifice to the Lord.”

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

Saul admitted his sin and asked for forgiveness. **Samuel said, “God is going to make someone else king.”**

Christ Connection: God planned for a heavenly king to rule over His people, but the Israelites wanted an earthly king like the people around them. God made Saul king, but King Saul did not obey God. God sent His Son, Jesus, to be king over everything. King Jesus obeyed God perfectly and died so we can be forgiven.

Memory Verse:

Jeremiah 10:6

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