

# SOLOMON THOUGHT ABOUT LIFE

ECCLESIASTES 1



**CHRIST CONNECTION:** Nothing we get in this world lasts forever. Only trusting in Jesus really matters. Jesus came to rescue sinners so we can have life with God forever.

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What does God know? God knows everything.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Proverbs 3:7

**STORY POINT:** Solomon taught that God gives life meaning.



## PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

### LEADER Bible Study

The book of Ecclesiastes is part of the Old Testament poetry and wisdom division. Ecclesiastes was written by King Solomon toward the end of his life as he reflected on his legacy and leadership. Though he had all the riches and wisdom life had to offer, he relayed in this writing that nothing matters apart from fearing the Lord and walking in His ways.

If everything is worthless, how are we to live meaningful lives as Christ followers? How is Jesus able to redeem our purpose in life?

The overall tone of Ecclesiastes seems pretty dreary. Solomon spoke of the meaninglessness of all our hard work and effort as people in a fallen world. These ideas seem to be in stark contrast to the ideas of God's beautiful, wonderful creation that we find throughout Scripture. A deeper look reveals that Solomon wasn't commanding his readers to stop caring about working hard, investing in the next generation, or experiencing what life has to offer. Instead, he poetically explained how lives spent on pursuing only the things of this world have no eternal meaning and will not be remembered.

The pursuits of this life are done in vain when we place them above our pursuit of the Lord and the wisdom He provides. Everything loses its meaning when held up against the cross of Jesus Christ. Only a life built on faith in Jesus will matter in the end.

When we order our lives with Jesus as our main pursuit, we experience the purpose and meaning that Christ died for us to receive; we experience life everlasting here and now. The gospel frees us from chasing after temporary, empty things and transforms our hearts to love and serve God. Christ died so that we may have life and have it in abundance (John 10:10).

Lead boys and girls to see the beauty of a life spent pursuing Christ! When all else seems meaningless, in Him we find our meaning as creations lovingly fashioned by a good Creator. Pray that they would turn from their sins and receive the gift of abundant life.



#### PREPARE

##### THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



#### WELCOME

##### 10–15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



#### LEARN

##### 25–30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



#### LOVE

##### 15–20 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel



#### LIVE

##### 15–20 MINUTES

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



## PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, Allergy Alert, construction paper, copy paper, washable markers, crayons, blunt-tipped scissors, glue sticks, glue, tape, blocks, baby dolls, play dough, world map, snacks, paper cups, napkins.



### WELCOME

#### Welcome

- "Turn, Turn, Turn (Proverbs 3:7)" song

#### Activity Page

- "What Is Different?" Activity Page, 1 per child

#### Explore water

- large, shallow tub
- towels
- cup of varying size
- funnels
- pipettes

#### Transition

- countdown video (optional)



### LOVE

#### Snack and talk

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster

#### Look at books

- books about rivers and the ocean
- throw pillows (optional)
- soft blankets (optional)
- sound machine (optional)



### LIVE

#### Purchase items

- reusable shopping bags
- play money
- envelopes
- wallets and billfolds
- toy cash register

#### Paint with sunrise and sunset colors

- tablecloth
- washable sunset-colored paints (orange, yellow, pink, and so forth)
- paintbrushes
- smocks

#### Make and play with a spinning top

- "Spinning Top" printable on cardstock, 1 per 2 children
- unsharpened pencils, 1 per child
- toy spinning tops (optional)
- baking sheet (optional)

#### Transition

- coloring page, 1 per child
- "Turn, Turn, Turn (Proverbs 3:7)" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families



### LEARN

#### Introduce the Bible story

- laundry basket

#### Learn about the Bible

- bookmark
- Giant Timeline or Small Group Timeline

#### Tell the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster
- "Solomon Thought about Life" video (optional)
- storytelling tips props (optional)

#### Practice the key passage

- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- "Turn, Turn, Turn (Proverbs 3:7)" song

#### Learn the Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

#### Missions moment

- "Orvil Reid Photos" printable
- device that plays music
- small Christian tract or Bible



## WELCOME Preschoolers

Post an Allergy Alert, if needed. Set out supplies to engage preschoolers as they arrive. Play music as you welcome preschoolers. Greet children by name at eye level. Follow your church's security procedures.

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE

Lead preschoolers to complete “What Is Different?” on the Activity Page.

**SAY** “ You circled pictures of the things that are different from the others. The items that are the same are all part of today’s Bible story. King Solomon wrote about some things he was thinking, and we can read Solomon’s thoughts when we read the book of Ecclesiastes. ”

### 2 SESSION STARTER

Use one or both of the following options to engage curiosity about today’s Bible story.

#### DRAW DAYTIME AND NIGHTTIME PICTURES



Distribute a piece of both light and dark-colored paper to preschoolers. Suggest preschoolers draw pictures on the paper to show things that might happen in the daytime (going to the park, eating breakfast) or the nighttime (putting on pajamas, looking at the stars).

**SAY** “ King Solomon thought a lot about life. He wrote down the things he thought about. Solomon wrote that the sun comes up in the morning and it goes down in the evening—over and over again. The things Solomon wrote about are in the Bible in the book of Ecclesiastes. We will hear about some of Solomon’s thoughts in today’s Bible story. ”

#### EXPLORE WATER

Lay towels on the floor, and set a large shallow tub on top of them. Add a few inches of water to the tub. Lead boys and girls to explore the water by scooping and pouring it. Demonstrate how to squeeze and release a pipette’s bulb to draw water up into it. Suggest a child squeeze the bulb again to empty it.

**SAY** “ I got this water from the faucet, but where was the water before that? [Allow responses.] The rain falls from the sky and drains into creeks and rivers. The rivers get wider and wider, and they empty into the sea. King Solomon thought about things like this, and he wrote down the things he learned. In today’s Bible story, we will discover how **SOLOMON TAUGHT THAT GOD GIVES LIFE MEANING.** ”

### 3 TRANSITION TO LEARN

Gain preschoolers’ attention by showing the countdown video, turning the lights off and on, or clapping a simple rhythm for children to copy. Invite preschoolers to walk around the room in a large circle before moving to the Bible study area as they transition to Learn.

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





## LEARN the Bible Story

### 1 INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

Welcome boys and girls to the group time area. Show the laundry basket, and talk about what a basket like this is typically used for.

**SAY** “ I have a few laundry baskets like this at home, and it seems like they are never empty. Whenever clothes are dirty, we put the clothes in the basket. The clothes get washed, but as soon as the basket is empty, we put the next day’s dirty clothes in it. Over and over, the basket is emptied; then it is full again. In today’s Bible story, we won’t hear about washing clothes, but we will hear about things that seem to go around and around and never end. Listen closely to hear about the things King Solomon thought about. ”

### 2 LEARN ABOUT THE BIBLE

Place a bookmark at Ecclesiastes 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** “ The words we read in the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes are the words that King Solomon wrote. God gave Solomon thoughts about life, and he wrote down those thoughts. ”

Point to the Bible story picture on the Giant Timeline or Small Group Timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

### 3 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Tell the following Bible story using the provided storytelling tips or show the video. Use the bold version of the Bible story for younger preschoolers.

#### SOLOMON THOUGHT ABOUT LIFE

“ **King Solomon** was the richest man in the world. He **was famous, and he was wiser than anyone else who had ever lived**. He was the most powerful person in Israel. All **these things helped Solomon learn an important lesson. He wrote a book called Ecclesiastes to tell everyone about it. The book starts like this:** .

“The Teacher says, **‘Everything is kind of pointless.’**

Why? Because no matter how hard you work, you don’t get anything in the end.

People are born, people die, and the world just keeps spinning.

**The sun comes up, and the sun goes down. The wind blows all around.**

**Rivers flow into the sea, but the sea never gets too full.**

It’s like a big circle that never ends. It’s all really tiring!

You always want more and more, but nothing really changes.

**What happened before will happen again.**



**What you do today, you'll have to do again tomorrow.**

**Nothing is new under the sun.**

People don't remember other people who died a long time ago.

And the people born later? They will not remember you either."

**Solomon wanted everyone to understand that without God, everything we do on earth doesn't really matter. What's most important is knowing and following God. ”**

**STORYTELLING TIPS**

**Turn around:** Invite preschoolers to stand up and turn around anytime the story tells of something happening over and over.

**Invite a guest:** Invite a pastor or other church leader to join the group during story time. Enlist the guest to speak Solomon's words as you tell the story.

**4 CHRIST CONNECTION**

**SAY** “ Nothing we get in this world lasts forever. Only trusting in Jesus really matters. Jesus came to rescue sinners so we can have life with God forever. ”

**5 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY**

Invite preschoolers to do movements with you as you review the Bible story together.

**SAY** “ Solomon wrote about a lot of things. [Pretend to write on your hand.] What were some of the things he wrote about? (work, the sun rising and setting, the wind, rivers and the sea) Who helped Solomon think [Point to head.] about these things? (God) What did Solomon say was the most important thing? (knowing and following God) **SOLOMON TAUGHT THAT GOD GIVES LIFE MEANING.** Nothing in this world lasts forever, and trusting in Jesus is the only thing that matters. Because of Jesus, we can have life with God forever. ”

**6 PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE**

Before the session, write each word of the key passage in large letters on the face of several yellow paper plates. Place the Key Passage Marker at Proverbs 3:7. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Guide preschoolers to put the yellow plates in order, using the Key Passage Poster as a guide. Say the verse a few times as children work.

**SAY** “ These plates remind me of the rising sun King Solomon wrote about. Solomon wanted people to know how to live in a way that pleases God. When people trust God, they want to make the best choices and turn away from sin. The only way to be saved from sin is through Jesus, who came to rescue sinners so we can have life with God forever. ”

Sing the key passage song, “Turn, Turn, Turn (Proverbs 3:7).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.



## LEARN

### THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

#### 7 LEARN THE BIG PICTURE QUESTION AND ANSWER

**SAY** “ King Solomon thought about so many things. He was wiser than anyone. But who is wiser than Solomon? God is. **What does God know? God knows everything.** God is the one who gave Solomon the wisdom to think about all the things we read in today’s Bible story. God showed Solomon that the most important thing in life is knowing and following God. Because nothing we get in this world lasts, trusting in Jesus is the only thing that matters. Jesus came to earth to rescue sinners so we can live with God forever. ”

#### 8 MISSIONS MOMENT

Print and display a copy of the “Orvil Reid Photos” printable. Lead preschoolers to sit in a circle. Show the photos. Play music and pass the tract or Bible around the circle. When the music stops, tell the preschooler holding the tract or Bible to say: “Tell others about Jesus.” Repeat the game until each preschoolers has a turn.

**SAY** “ Orvil Reid wrote small booklets called tracts to help people in Mexico know about Jesus. Orvil said people would get off their horses and donkeys or stop their cars to receive a tract. Many people read the tracts and wanted to know more about Jesus. Orvil and his team also sold New Testament Bibles at a bookstore. ”

Thank God for people who make tracts and Bibles in different languages and distribute them to help more people learn about Jesus.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

## LOVE God because of what we learned

### 1 PRAY

Invite preschoolers to close their eyes and think about God as they talk with Him.

**SAY** “ God, we are so thankful You know everything. Because You know everything, we can trust You. Thank You for sending Jesus, who came to rescue sinners. Please help us remember that trusting in Jesus is the only thing that really matters. Amen. ”

### 2 SNACK AND TALK

Post an Allergy Alert. Wash hands or use hand sanitizer. Serve a snack. Show the Bible Story Picture Poster as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

**SAY** “ What was your favorite part of today’s Bible story? ”

**SAY** “ What did you learn about God in today’s Bible story? ”

**SAY** “ What did Solomon say is the most important thing? ”

**SAY** “ **What does God know? God knows everything.** ”

### 3 LOOK AT BOOKS

Set out several nature books that have pictures of rivers and oceans. Lead children to look at the different pictures. Talk about how rivers eventually flow into the ocean. Note the different animals that live in each body of water. Consider making the reading area cozy by setting up throw pillows, soft blankets, and playing water sounds on a sound machine.

**SAY** “ Would you rather see a river or the ocean? **[Allow responses.]** Both are beautiful bodies of water God made and are filled with amazing creatures. King Solomon said ‘rivers flow into the sea, but the sea never gets too full.’ God knows how much water is in the sea. **What does God know? God knows everything.** If God knows everything, that means He knows you. God created you and loves you so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to live a perfect life, die on a cross, and come back to life to save you from the punishment for sin. ”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE for God out of love

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- 1 Choose the activities that best fit your group, space, available resources, and time constraints. Set up activities in one of these ways: as a group—all at the same time, in small groups that rotate through each activity, or set up as centers—allowing preschoolers to browse and choose.

#### AIM FOR A TARGET



Write the big picture question and answer on a piece of paper, and tape it to the top of one end of a table. Guide children to form a line at the opposite end of the table. Give each child a piece of paper, and instruct them to wad the paper up tightly into a ball. Tell children to take turns setting a paper ball on the table and blowing it across the flat surface until it reaches the taped target. Read the big picture question and answer each time a child's paper ball lands on the target.

**SAY** “ Was it hard or easy to blow your paper ball to the target? [Allow responses.] The wind that you made by blowing the ball across the table reminds me of something Solomon wrote: ‘The sun comes up, and the sun comes down. The wind blows all around ... nothing really changes.’ Solomon wanted people to remember that the most important thing is knowing and following God. **What does God know? God knows everything.** God knows trusting in Jesus is the only thing that really matters. People can have life with God forever because Jesus came to earth to rescue sinners. ”

#### PURCHASE ITEMS

Insert play money into envelopes, and announce to boys and girls that today is payday. Mention that when people work at their jobs, their bosses pay them money in exchange for their hard work. Give each child an envelope, and offer them wallets and billfolds to use. Set up a pretend store with a toy cash register. Invite children to use shopping bags and pretend to shop and purchase items. Talk about different things people buy with their money. Be sensitive to families who may be experiencing financial stress.

**SAY** “ When people work, they earn money. They spend their money to have things like a place to live or food to eat. Eventually, a person's money is gone, and they won't get more money until their next payday. Our joy comes from knowing God, not in loving money. **SOLOMON TAUGHT THAT GOD GIVES LIFE MEANING**, so people should know and follow Him. Only trusting in Jesus really matters; nothing we get in this world lasts forever. Jesus came to rescue sinners. God wants people to have life with Him forever, and because of Jesus, people can. ”



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### PAINT WITH SUNRISE AND SUNSET COLORS

Cover a table with a tablecloth to protect it from paint. Invite a child to put on a smock, and give her a piece of white heavyweight paper. Offer washable sunset-colored paints and a paintbrush. Point out when the colors merge together to create new colors, and compare it to an evening sky.

**SAY** “ When the sun begins to set, the sky changes and becomes a beautiful blend of colors. In today’s Bible story, we read that **SOLOMON TAUGHT THAT GOD GIVES LIFE MEANING**. One thing Solomon wrote about is the sun. He taught that the sun comes up, and the sun goes down, but nothing really changes. Solomon pointed out that one thing is most important—knowing and following God, because nothing in this world lasts forever. Jesus matters. Jesus came to rescue sinners so that when people trust in Him, they will have life with God forever. ”

### MAKE AND PLAY WITH A SPINNING TOP

Before the session, print the “Spinning Top” printable on cardstock, one per every two children. Cut out the circles, and use a thumb tack to make a hole in the center. Give each child a circle and crayons. Tell them to decorate their circle. As children finish, poke a pencil halfway through the hole in the middle to make the top. Demonstrate how to twist the pencil to make the top spin and move. Consider setting a baking sheet on a table with toy spinning tops for children to play with.

**SAY** “ It was fun seeing how fast we could spin these tops! In Ecclesiastes, Solomon wrote ‘People are born, people die, and the world just keeps spinning.’ The tops we made spin, but then stop moving. The earth God created is always spinning. **SOLOMON TAUGHT THAT GOD GIVES LIFE MEANING**. Nothing we get in this world lasts forever. Only trusting in Jesus really matters. Jesus came to rescue sinners so we can have life with God forever. ”

## 2 TRANSITION

Invite preschoolers to complete their coloring pages. Consider leading preschoolers to sing the key passage song or involving them in a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Give parents the completed Activity Page. Distribute the Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to review the Bible story and engage with the family discussion starters during the week.