

UNIT 15 | SESSION 1

JUDAH'S GOOD KINGS

2 KINGS 18-19; 2 CHRONICLES 14-24



KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 145:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is God like? God is holy, good, and loving.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Judah's good kings led the people to God and away from sin. Yet when they died, the people returned to their sinful ways. Jesus is our good King who died and rose again, and always leads us to God and away from sin.

STORY POINT: Judah's good kings worshiped God.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

Good kings and evil kings—both were seen throughout the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Depending on who was king, the people would either be led to worship the one true God or led the opposite direction toward idolatry and wickedness.

King Asa sought to do what was good in the eyes of the Lord and removed the places of idol worship. He commanded the people of Judah to worship and obey God. But once Asa died, Ahaziah became king and led the people to once again turn to idolatry. When he died, his mother Athalia made herself queen by force. She ruled as queen for six years and did evil in God’s sight.

The priest Jehoiada planned to overthrow the evil queen. His men captured her and made one of Athalia’s young sons, Joash, king. Following Jehoiada’s lead, Joash tore down the temple of Baal and restored worship in the temple to God alone.

After Joash came King Hezekiah. He also sought to do what was right in the sight of the Lord. After cleaning out the temple so the people could worship, Hezekiah invited Judah and Israel to celebrate the feast of the Passover. Afterward, everyone went back to their towns and destroyed their places of worship to false gods.

When the king of Assyria came to attack Judah, King Hezekiah prayed to God, and Judah was saved. God sent an angel to destroy the Assyrian army.

The last good king of Judah was Josiah. King Josiah was only eight years old when he came into power, but he also did what was right in the eyes of the Lord. Under his rule, the people renewed their covenant with God and remained faithful to Him.

The good kings of Judah led the people to worship the one true God. The Lord raised up kings who would lead Judah to turn away from idolatry and keep His commands. Judah would serve God under the rule of the good kings but returned to their sinful ways after the good kings died. Yet, despite the people’s inconsistent worship of the Lord, God proved faithful to preserve His people. The line of Judah would one day give rise to the King of kings, who would make the way for people to worship God in spirit and truth.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10–15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15–20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out 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, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "The Southern Kingdom" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- index cards, 10
- paper crowns, 2

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ball
- music
- timer (optional)



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- map
- GPS device
- compass

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- dry erase board and marker
- index cards, 3 per group

Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- "Connect It" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Judah's Good Kings" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- dry erase board and marker (optional)

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 15, Session 1" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "North African and Middle Eastern Peoples Intro" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)
- construction papers, 1 or 2 per kid
- stickers
- stapler



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “What is something good you have seen someone do for someone else? Did it encourage you to do something good for someone? Why?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “The Southern Kingdom” activity page.

SAY “Judah was in the Southern Kingdom, and the capital of Judah was Jerusalem. Today, we will learn about some of the kings of Judah who ruled from Jerusalem.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: MATCH THE KING

Before the session, write the following names and Bible references on individual index cards: Jeroboam (1 Kings 12:20), Nadab (1 Kings 15:25), Baasha (1 Kings 15:33), Ahab (1 Kings 16:29), Hoshea (2 Kings 17:1), Rehoboam (1 Kings 12:23), Asa (1 Kings 15:9), Joash (2 Kings 12:18), Hezekiah (2 Kings 18:1), Josiah (2 Kings 23:28). Create two paper crowns and label one Israel and the other Judah. Tape the crowns to a wall.

Form kids into five groups and give each group two cards and tape. Distribute Bibles to groups and invite them to look up the references on their cards. Next, direct kids to determine if the name on the card was a king of Israel or Judah. Lead kids to tape their cards under the correct crown on the wall. Review the correct answers.

SAY “We've learned about the wicked kings of Israel: Jeroboam, Nadab, Baasha, Ahab, and Hoshea. Today, we will learn about Judah's good kings: Asa, Joash, Hezekiah, and Josiah. We'll see how **JUDAH'S GOOD KINGS WORSHIPED GOD.**”

OPTION 2: GET RID OF IT



Guide kids to form a large circle. Play music and direct kids to toss a ball around the circle. Tell kids that when the music stops, whoever has the ball will be out. Explain that their goal is to get rid of the ball as quickly as possible before the music stops. Play as time allows.

Consider playing an alternative version where kids work together to get the ball around the circle in 30 seconds or less. The last kid with the ball will toss it outside the circle before time runs out.

SAY “In this game, the goal was to get rid of the ball. Today, we will learn about Judah's good kings and how they had a goal: to get rid of idol worship among the people. The kings of Judah weren't 'good' because they were sinless. Rather, they were good because they wanted to turn away from sin and worship God alone. We'll see how these kings led God's people to do what was right in His eyes.”

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





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Welcome, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m excited you’re here. If you have a Bible with you, will you hold it up? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] Today, as we learn about Judah’s good kings, we will be in the Old Testament books of 2 Kings and 2 Chronicles.

In our story, we’ll see how **JUDAH’S GOOD KINGS WORSHIPED GOD**. [Display the Story Point Poster.] Let’s pray: ‘Dear God, thank You for helping us to do what is right and good. Please help us remember that You alone are worthy of worship. Amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “ We have a new big picture question to learn: **What is God like?** What do you think God is like? [Allow responses.] God is so great! We could spend forever learning more about Him and what He is like. To help us summarize what God is like, we will learn the answer: **God is holy, good, and loving.**

When we say God is holy, we mean He is without sin. God is good because He always does what is right and true. And God is loving because He cares about us and has demonstrated His love through Jesus, who died for our sins. When we learn about what God is like, we recognize how only He is worthy of worship. Only God is holy, good, and loving all of the time. Today, we will see how Judah’s good kings understood how God alone is to be worshiped. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ We’ve learned how the Northern Kingdom of Israel was led by wicked kings. Not one king led the people to worship God and turn away from sin. God gave His people many opportunities to return to Him, but the people of Israel continued to reject God. What happened because they did not repent? [Allow responses.] Israel was destroyed by the Assyrians, and the people were taken captive to Assyria. The only kingdom that remained was the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Today, we will learn how **JUDAH’S GOOD KINGS WORSHIPED GOD** and led the people away from idolatry. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 2 Kings 18–19; 2 Chronicles 14–24. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Judah’s Good Kings.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

JUDAH’S GOOD KINGS

“ The Southern Kingdom of Judah had several good kings that led the people to follow God, worship Him, and turn away from sin.

King Asa did what was good and right in the eyes of God. He removed the places that the people worshiped false gods. He commanded the people of Judah to worship God and obey His laws. Asa rebuilt the altar that was in front of the Lord’s temple. Asa and the people of Judah promised to seek the Lord with all their heart and all their soul.

When an enemy army came, Asa prayed, saying, “Lord, we are counting on you to help us. You can give us victory.” The Lord answered his prayer, and Asa was loyal to God his entire life.

Years later, a wicked king named Ahaziah (ay huh ZIGH uh) became king over Judah. When Ahaziah died, his mother, Athaliah (ath uh LIGH uh), made herself queen by force. One of Ahaziah’s young sons, Joash, was hidden from Athaliah by his sister. Athaliah ruled as queen for six years and did evil in God’s sight.

The priest Jehoiada (jih HOY uh duh) made a plan to overthrow Queen Athaliah. They captured her and placed a crown on Joash’s head, making him king. Under the leadership of Jehoiada the priest, Joash tore down the temple of Baal and brought back the proper worship of God in the temple. Throughout the time the priest Jehoiada instructed him, **Joash did what was right in the Lord’s sight.**

Many years after Joash, Hezekiah became king over Judah. He did what was right in the Lord’s sight just as his ancestor David had done. One of his first acts as king was to clean out the temple so the people could worship and make sacrifices to the Lord. The people brought so many sacrifices that the priests needed help to prepare all the offerings.

Hezekiah invited Judah and Israel to celebrate the feast of the Passover. They enjoyed praising God and feasting so much that they celebrated for two weeks! After the feast, everyone went back to their towns and tore down the altars and places of worship to false gods.

After this, the same king of Assyria who had destroyed Israel came to attack Judah. The Assyrians said, “Do you think your God will save you? All the other kingdoms we defeated thought so, too.” **King Hezekiah prayed to God, and God**

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Tell kids to give a thumbs up when they hear how the kings led the people to do what was right.

List them: Write the names of Judah’s good kings on a dry erase board when you mention them in the story.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

sent an angel to destroy the Assyrian army. Judah was saved!

The last good king of Judah was Josiah. Even though he was only eight years old when he became king, he did what was right in the eyes of God. He smashed and tore down the places of idol worship. As he was cleaning out the temple, he found the book of the law from Moses. When Josiah heard the words of the law, Josiah was sad, because the nation was not obeying God's commands. **Josiah read the words of the law to all the people at the temple. Then Josiah and the people promised to keep the commands found in the book of the law.** The people renewed the covenant with God and stayed faithful to God while Josiah was alive.

Christ Connection: Judah's good kings led the people to God and away from sin. Yet when they died, the people returned to their sinful ways. Jesus is our good King who died and rose again, and always leads us to God and away from sin. ”

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ The Southern Kingdom of Judah had wicked kings like Israel, but unlike Israel, they had several good kings. What did the good kings of Judah have in common? **[Allow responses.] JUDAH'S GOOD KINGS WORSHIPED GOD.** They led the people to know God's commands and follow His ways. The good kings of Judah helped the people understand that God alone is to be worshiped.

How did each king show they worshiped God? **[Allow responses.]** Asa removed idols, rebuilt the altar of the Lord's temple, and trusted in God to save His people from their enemies. Joash repaired the temple so the people could worship God in it. Hezekiah cleaned out the temple and led the people to celebrate the Passover again. Josiah tore down places of idol worship and read God's laws to the people so they could know His commands.

Judah's good kings led the people to God and away from sin, but when the kings died, the people fell back into idol worship. Jesus is our good King who died and rose again. Jesus always leads us to God and away from sin. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Unlike the kings of Judah, we have a king that never dies. King Jesus defeated death when He rose from the grave. When we trust in Jesus, we have the power to turn away from sin and obey His good commands. Jesus changes our hearts so we desire to only worship God. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 15, Session 1” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Is there anything we can do to be good enough for God?
2. How does trusting in Jesus help us want to turn away from sin?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Point to Northern Africa and the Middle East on a world map.

SAY “ In Northern Africa and the Middle East, there are more than 800 different people groups present. Many of the people groups are unreached people groups, where people have never heard about Jesus and there are no churches or missionaries to help the people hear about Him. ”

Play the missions video, which helps kids see the culture and people of Northern Africa and the Middle East. Note: There is no narration for this video. It is meant to show snapshot images of the people and cultures of North Africa and the Middle East. Ask kids to name some animals they saw in the video. Then ask kids what some of the people were doing in the video.

Tell kids that many countries in this part of the world have governments that are hostile to the gospel and will not allow missionaries to openly tell people about Jesus. Explain that missionaries have to be cautious and creative when trying to reach people for Jesus. Tell kids that missionaries have started sharing the gospel through digital and online platforms in these dangerous places. Pray for missionaries serving in Northern Africa and the Middle East, asking God to give them boldness, courage, and peace. Pray the people in this region will have curiosity about Christ and be open to hearing the gospel.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 145:9 together.

Provide each kid with one or two pieces of construction paper. The number of papers will vary based on the circumference of each kid’s head. Demonstrate how to cut zig zags across the top of their paper to make a crown shape. Before taping or stapling their crowns in a circle, direct kids to write out the key passage on their crowns. Then invite kids to decorate their crowns using stickers and markers.

SAY “ Our key passage serves to remind us that God is good. We made crowns to remember that God is a good King who always leads us to what is right. ”

Lead kids to sing “The Lord is Good (Psalm 145:9).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for providing Jesus as the perfect King who always does what is right and good. Please help us to turn away from sin and follow Your ways. Amen. ”

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





LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 2 Chronicles 15. Tell kids that 2 Chronicles primarily focuses on the kings of Judah, retelling their stories from 1 and 2 Kings.

Consider pointing out the location of Judah (14) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 2 Chronicles 15:12-15 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY “ After Asa removed the idols of the land and rebuilt the altar of the temple, the people made sacrifices to God and worshiped Him. Asa led the people to make a covenant with God, promising to seek God with all their heart and soul. They genuinely desired God, and God was with them.

Like Asa removed the idols and led the people in worship, Jesus removes the guilt of sin from our lives and leads us to worship God rightly. When we trust in Jesus, our desires change. We want to obey God. We want to love God above everything else. God will be with followers of Jesus and help them live for Him. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ Why were the kings in our story considered good? ”

Tell kids that the four kings were good because they led the people to worship God and turn away from sin. Share how they weren't sinless—only Jesus is sinless—but they did seek to do what was right in God's eyes. Share how God was faithful to give His people good kings who ruled rightly. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 25:8-12.)

SAY “ Josiah became king at eight years old and followed God's ways. What does this tell us about who can follow God and His ways? ”

Encourage kids to understand that people of all ages can follow God and obey His commands. Share how God does not show partiality. Anyone can turn to Him, repent of sin, and follow His ways. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 Tim. 4:12.)

SAY “ Why do you think the people returned to their sinful ways after each good king died? ”

Discuss how the good kings were able to set a good example, but they were unable to change the people's hearts. Tell kids that we all need God to change our hearts because we are sinful. When we trust in Jesus, God changes our hearts so that we desire to turn away from sin. While Christians will still sin, they recognize their sin, repent, and ask God to help them live for Him. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ezek. 11:19.)





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: TOOLS OF NAVIGATION

Display the following navigation tools: map, GPS device, compass. Hold up each item and ask kids how the tool is used. Offer explanations if kids are unsure. Discuss how these tools help guide us to the location we want to go. Share how they can also help us avoid places we don't want to go.

Invite kids to take turns holding the compass. Emphasize how the compass always points to the earth's North Pole. Challenge kids to work together to use the compass to find the directions of north, south, east, and west in your room.

SAY “ Navigational tools, like compasses, guide people in the right direction. The good kings of Judah guided people in the right direction because **JUDAH'S GOOD KINGS WORSHIPED GOD**. When we look to Jesus and His Word, we can be guided in the right direction too. Jesus will always lead us to what is good and best. He is our perfect King who guides us to life in Him. ”

OPTION 2: GOD IS...



Write the following Bible verses on a dry erase board: Exodus 34:6; Leviticus 11:45; Psalm 25:8; 1 Samuel 2:2; Matthew 19:17; 1 John 4:9-10. Then provide kids with three index cards and lead them to write holy, good, and loving on individual cards. Challenge kids to look up the Bible references and determine which reference matches each card. Kids can write the reference on the corresponding cards. Review the answers.

(Exodus 34:6, loving; Leviticus 11:45, holy; Psalm 25:8, good; 1 Samuel 2:2, holy; Matthew 19:17, good; 1 John 4:9-10, loving)

SAY “ **What is God like? [Allow responses.]** **God is holy, good, and loving.** The good kings of Judah recognized what God is like and how only He is worthy of worship. As we learn about God through His Word, our hearts can desire to love Him above everything else. In Jesus, we see how God is holy, good, and loving and how He has made the way for us to be holy, good, and loving like Him. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His holiness, goodness, and love. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Connect It” on the activity page.