

Solomon's gift from God

A service plan looking at **wisdom**

PRAYER / WORSHIP ACTIVITY OPTION 1

5 You will need either a slideshow of images or a few trays full of soft, dry play sand, stationed around the church. Encourage people to wonder at God's gift of wisdom, either by showing a slideshow of images or by inviting them to try to count grains of sand and imagine how many grains there are on a beach, and on all the beaches around the world put together. That's how vast Solomon's wisdom was, according to 1 Kings 4:29! The slideshow should encourage meditation on the theme of wisdom. You could include imagery (oceans, grains of sand, stars) and suggest various qualities that contribute to wisdom, such as knowledge (eg a picture of encyclopaedias), listening to God (praying hands), understanding people (a sympathetic listener), judgement (a court room) and discernment (images to reflect good / bad decision-making).

OPTION 2

10 Invite people to bring hard questions to God in prayer. They may like to write down their questions or simply use a small piece of card with a question mark as a sign of their prayer. You'll need pens and lots of plain postcards or small pieces of card. You will also need to make a prayer postbox: a plain cardboard box, taped shut, with a large cross drawn on the front and a slot cut in it like a postbox. Invite people to offer their prayers to God by posting

their hard questions or their question marks in the prayer postbox.

STORY

10 You will need: two crowns, a royal cloak, a sword and a realistic baby doll wrapped in blankets. No set-up is needed - this story is created in the telling, with the help of the congregation. Simply stand at the front with your box of costumes / props and begin.

Our story today starts with a great king: King David. Who would like to be King David? (Invite a volunteer forward and crown them.) King David reigned for 40 years, but this isn't his story - because he has just died. (Encourage your volunteer to drop dead.) His crown and his kingdom passed to his son. Who would like to be the new king? (Invite a volunteer forward and crown them.) Here is the new king. Now, brace yourselves - it's time for a flash forward. This is the new king, just a few months later. (Arrange your volunteer: crown straight, strong posture, big sword held in both hands above their head. Then introduce the baby to the congregation - encourage lots of oohs and aahs - and place the baby at the king's feet, beneath the sword.) Wait a moment - we need to press pause and look at this scene. What is the king doing? Does anyone have a question to ask at this point? (Invite responses.) Let's go back and find out what led our new king to threaten a baby with his sharp sword. (Take away the baby and the sword).

To read the rest of the story go to premierchildrenswork.com

REFLECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE STORY

OPTION 1

10 Divide people into all-age groups. Ask for a volunteer in each group to play the part of Solomon and give each king a crown. Everyone else in the group is going to ask Solomon some questions. First, set the scene: Solomon was a new king at the

beginning of this story. His dad, King David, had been a great king for 40 years - now it was Solomon's turn. Then God said to Solomon, 'Ask me for whatever you want.' Now it's your chance to ask Solomon some questions about this critical moment with God. For example: Solomon, how did you feel when you became king? How did you feel when God spoke to you? What did you think about asking God for? Why did you ask for wisdom? The volunteer kings should answer in role, then someone else in each group can take a turn as king while more questions are asked. You'll need several cardboard crowns - one for each group.

OPTION 2

10 The Queen of Sheba came 'to test Solomon with hard questions' (1 Kings 10:1). What hard questions might she have asked? How did she test his wisdom? Invite people to think about this individually or discuss it with others. People could then consider this: what hard questions might we ask God? Encourage people to write down their hard questions. You'll need pens and lots of plain postcards or small pieces of card. (A great piece of music to use here would be 'Big, big questions' by Fischy Music, from their album inspired by the Psalms, *Bring it all to me*. See fischy.com)

GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 10**
- Which bit of the story can you see most clearly in your imagination?
 - What would you like to ask God about this story?
 - Do you know someone who is wise?
 - What do you think 'being wise' means? How can we spot wisdom?

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