

The Divided Kingdom

Sunday Plan

SCRIPTURE

1 Kings 12

MEMORY VERSE

Proverbs 16:18

OPTIONAL VIDEO

King Rehoboam

<https://southside.cc/755-040>

Pride breaks what God built.

For the Teacher

Read this before you teach. Solomon — David's son, the wisest king in the world, the man who built the temple — has just died. His son Rehoboam takes the throne. The people come with one request: *your father worked us hard. Lighten the load and we'll serve you.* It's a fair ask. Rehoboam asks the elders, the men who advised his father, what to do. They tell him: *Speak kindly to them and they will be your servants forever.* He doesn't like that answer. So he asks his friends — the young men he grew up with — and they tell him to flex. Be harsher than your father. Show them who's boss. He listens to his friends. The kingdom splits in half by sundown. Ten tribes leave.

KEY TRUTH

Pride breaks what God built.

This is what pride looks like. Rehoboam isn't an obvious villain. He's a young king who wants to look strong. The elders gave him real wisdom; he traded it for the answer that felt better. Pride isn't just bragging — it's refusing to listen because you already know better. That's what breaks the kingdom in half. Don't let the kids walk out thinking pride is only big bullies and obvious arrogance. It's also the small, daily move of refusing the advice you don't want to hear.

God built this kingdom. Don't lose sight of what's at stake. This isn't a CEO making a bad personnel call. God promised David a kingdom forever (2 Samuel 7). Solomon built the temple where God dwells. Rehoboam inherits all of it — and breaks it in a single afternoon. The kids should feel the weight: the thing he wrecked wasn't his to begin with. God built it.

The advice question is the whole lesson. *Who you listen to matters.* The elders gave wise counsel. The peers gave proud counsel. Rehoboam picked the one that flattered him. Proverbs is loud about this — that's why the memory verse is from Proverbs and not Kings. Wisdom literature reads 1 Kings 12 and says *of course that's what happened. Pride goes before destruction.*

What we're skipping and why. Chapter 12 keeps going — Jeroboam takes the ten northern tribes, sets up gold calves at Bethel and Dan, and starts Israel down a long road of idolatry. That's important but it's a separate lesson. Today stays in 12:1–19. The fracture itself, and the choice that caused it.

Repeat the bottom line all morning. Say it at least six times. Have the kids say it back. Write it on the board. End with it.

MATERIALS

- Bibles for every student
- Whiteboard or large paper, markers
- Pencils, crayons or colored pencils
- A small block tower or stack of cups (something the teacher can knock over once, on purpose)
- Activity sheets (printed in advance from this week's activities — pick what you'll use)

1. Gather

Welcome the kids and have them sit together. Before they sit, build a small tower in the middle of the floor — blocks, cups, anything that stacks. Make a show of it.

ASK

Has anyone ever built something — a tower, a Lego thing, a sandcastle — and then someone wrecked it in two seconds?

Let two or three kids answer. Then knock the tower over with one hand. *That fast.* Say:

Today's story is about a man who inherited the biggest, best thing in the whole world — and broke it

in one afternoon. Because of one choice. Write the bottom line on the board:

SAY

Pride breaks what God built.

2. The Story

Setting the Stage

Before opening the Bible, the kids need to know who's who. Tell them, in your own words:

SAY

Last week we talked about King David's son Solomon — the wisest man in the world, the one who built the temple where God's people would worship. Solomon was king for forty years. The kingdom of Israel was strong. The temple was beautiful. Other countries sent gifts.

Then Solomon died. And his son Rehoboam — that's the new king's name, Rehoboam — took the throne. He was about forty years old. He had grown up rich. He had grown up watching his dad be in charge. And on his very first day as king, the people came to him with a question.

Reading the Text

Have everyone open to 1 Kings 12:1. Pick a confident reader for the first section.

1 Kings 12:1–5

After the reading, work through these questions together:

DISCUSSION

1. What did the people ask Rehoboam to do?

→ *Lighten the load. Solomon had worked them hard — taxes, forced labor for his building projects. The people said: ease up on us and we'll serve you.*

2. Was that a fair thing to ask?

→ *Yes. They weren't refusing to serve him — they were asking him to be a kinder king than his dad had been. Make sure the kids see that the request was reasonable.*

3. What did Rehoboam tell them?

→ *Come back in three days. He needed time to decide. So far so good — he didn't snap. He stopped to think.*

The Two Pieces of Advice

Tell the class to keep their Bibles open. Rehoboam asks for advice — twice. From two different groups. You're going to read both, and they need to listen for the difference.

Pick a confident reader.

1 Kings 12:6–11

DISCUSSION

1. Who did Rehoboam ask first?

→ *The elders — the older men who had advised his father Solomon. The wise ones. The experienced ones.*

DISCUSSION

2. What did the elders tell him to do?

→ *“If you’ll be a servant to these people today, and speak kind words to them, they’ll be your servants forever.” Be a servant king. Speak kindly. Treat them well, and you’ll have their loyalty for life.*

3. Then who did Rehoboam ask?

→ *His friends. The young men he had grown up with. The guys who had partied at the palace with him. They weren’t in charge of anything yet — they just thought they should be.*

4. What did the friends tell him to do?

→ *Crush them. Be harsher than your dad. “My little finger is thicker than my father’s waist.” Show them who’s boss. Make a joke out of how heavy the load is going to be.*

The Wrong Choice

Pick a confident reader.

1 Kings 12:13–16

ASK

Whose advice did Rehoboam follow?

The friends. The proud ones. Not the elders.

Then ask:

DISCUSSION

1. What happened to the kingdom?

→ *Ten tribes walked away. “What share do we have in David? To your tents, O Israel!” Just like that. The country broke in half — Israel in the north, Judah in the south. It would never come back together.*

2. Could Rehoboam have stopped this if he’d listened to the elders?

→ *Yes. The elders told him exactly what would have worked. He ignored them because their answer felt small. The friends’ answer felt big. He picked the one that flattered him.*

3. So why did the kingdom break?

→ *Because Rehoboam was proud. Pride breaks what God built. That’s our bottom line.*

TRANSITION

This is the heart of the lesson. Rehoboam wasn’t tricked. He wasn’t forced. He had wise advice in his hand and traded it for proud advice because the proud advice felt better.

3. The Point

Say the bottom line again, with the kids:

SAY

Pride breaks what God built.

The Memory Verse

Have everyone turn to Proverbs 16:18. Have a student read it aloud:

SCRIPTURE

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

SAY

“Haughty” means stuck-up. Thinking you’re better than everyone else. Thinking you don’t have to listen to anybody. That’s exactly what Rehoboam did. The elders gave him wisdom. He thought he was too good to take it. So the kingdom fell.

Read the verse three ways together: all together normally, all together stomping their feet on *destruction* and *fall*, all together in a whisper.

Pride Looks Small

Walk to the board. Tell the kids:

SAY

Pride doesn’t always look like a king on a throne. Pride looks like me when my mom tells me to clean my room and I roll my eyes. Pride looks like ignoring a friend who tells me I’m being mean. Pride looks like a kid who already knows everything, so he doesn’t have to listen to anybody. That’s the same pride that broke Israel. Same kind. Smaller scale.

ASK

Who in your life gives you good advice that’s hard to listen to?

Let three or four kids answer. Don’t push for the “right” answer. Parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches, the Bible, older siblings — all valid. The point is just naming it.

Pray over the answers:

PRAY

God, you built so many good things — families, friendships, churches, this world. Help us not to be the kind of people who break things you built. Make us the kind of kids who listen. Especially when the advice is hard to hear. Make us humble like the elders, not proud like Rehoboam. Amen.

4. The Work

Pick one or more activities from this week’s menu. Print enough copies for each kid in advance. The kids don’t have to do all of them — pick what fits the group’s energy and what time you have left.

The menu for this week:

- **A Kingdom in Two** — coloring page reinforcing the moment the kingdom split.
- **Wise Words** — word search with the names, places, and key vocabulary from 1 Kings 12.
- **Advice I Need to Hear** — drawing prompt connecting the lesson to the kid’s own life.
- **Remember the Split** — fill-in-the-blanks recall using the kids’ Bibles (1 Kings 12).

The full production specs for each activity are in this week’s activities file.

NOTE

While the kids work, sit with them. Ask one or two what they’re working on. Reinforce the bottom line one more time before class ends. If you finish early, have a few kids share what they made. If you run long, send the activity sheets home.

What Comes Next Week

The northern kingdom Israel goes hard after fake gods. God sends a prophet named Elijah to call them back — and Elijah challenges 450 prophets of Baal to a showdown on Mount Carmel. Fire from heaven. Soaked altar. The kids will see what happens when God refuses to share his throne.