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David Becomes King / Mephibosheth

Scripture: 2 Samuel 5:1-5; 9:1-13

Theme: God's kindness reaches the undeserving

Jr High (Ages 12-14)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

"God's House: Where Do We Put Our Attention?" (Lesson for 12, 14 Year Olds , 1 Kings 6, 8) Imagine building something so big it takes forty years, not because it's easy, but because it's worth the effort. That's exactly what King Solomon did when he built God's temple in Jerusalem (1 Kings 6). But here's the twist: Solomon didn't just build it for himself. He invited everyone, priests, workers, even foreigners, to help, because he knew God wouldn't just use this place, He wanted to live in it. In fact, when the temple was finished, he prayed (1 Kings 8), "Lord, if you're real, and if you answer prayers, hear this prayer and keep your people safe forever." Solomon wasn't asking for grand miracles (like splitting the Sea of Reeds); he was asking for presence, for God to be with his people in the everyday. Why it matters today: God's temple isn't just a brick-and-mortar building anymore, it's our hearts, our families, and even our communities. When we spend time with Him, pray together, or serve others with love (like the temple workers did), we're saying, "You deserve more than just a corner of my schedule, You're the center." The challenge? We often give God scraps (busy schedules, half-hearted worship) instead of the best (intentional devotion, honest hearts). But God doesn't need our "best", He needs us, fully committed. Like Solomon, we can choose to build (or rebuild) something that honors Him, not just for tomorrow, but for always. Life Application: This week, ask: Where is my heart really dwelling? Is it in the temple (church)? Or is it scattered in screens, selfies, or half-hearted faith? Solomon's temple was a symbol of God's presence, so can we make our lives one? Maybe start small: pray together at home, leave an offering (not just a wish), or invite someone to church. God's not asking for perfection, just presence. And He's already there, waiting to fill the empty spaces in your life. Teacher Tip: Pair this with a discussion on why God chose to dwell with people (e.g., Exodus 29:46: "I will dwell among the Israelites and will be their God."). End with a group prayer: "Lord, help us to build Your house, not just with wood and stone, but with love and devotion."

Bible Story

Solomon's Temple: God's House for All

After David, Solomon, the son of Bathsheba, became king of Israel. Solomon was known for his wisdom, people came from all over to ask him questions, and God often answered his prayers. One day, he asked God for wisdom to govern his people fairly, not just for himself. God was pleased and gave Solomon such wisdom that he could make decisions that everyone respected. But Solomon also wanted to honor God in a big way.

One of Solomon's first big projects was building a temple, a special place where God's people could worship. The Bible says, "David chose a plot of land at the Threshing Floor of Araunah the Jebusite near Jerusalem." This was a sacred spot, far from the city's noise and pollution. But before Solomon could build, he had to ask God's permission, and the Lord told him yes, "If you follow my rules, this will be my special home." Solomon didn't just want a building; he wanted to make sure God's name was honored in it.

The temple was an amazing structure! The Bible describes it as built with finely cut stones, not nailed or mortared, so it looked like it had been carved from a single block. Inside, the most sacred part was the Holy of Holies, a tiny room where only the high priest could go, and only when they offered sacrifices to make things right with God. Outside, the priests would perform daily duties, lighting lamps, offering incense, and preparing meals for the Lord. Solomon didn't just build a temple; he made sure it was a place where people could draw near to God honestly.

The Bible says Solomon also built the Outer Court, where everyone, men, women, and even foreigners, could worship together. The temple wasn't just for the rich or powerful; it was for all who wanted to honor God. After completing the temple, Solomon celebrated with a feast, inviting all the Israelites to bring their families, singers, and musicians. The Bible says, "The people rejoiced when they saw how God had given them a place to worship." This wasn't just a building, it was a sign that God was real, that He cared about His people, and that He wanted them to come to Him.

Solomon wasn't just a king who built a temple; he was a leader who chose to follow God's rules. He wrote down God's laws in the Book of the Law and had them read to the people to remind them of their covenant with Him. The temple wasn't just a structure, it was a promise: "This is where I will be with my people." Even though Solomon later turned away from God, his temple was a lasting reminder that God's presence wasn't tied to a king's life but to His unchanging love.

Why This Story Matters Today: This temple wasn't just a building, it was a place of worship, hope, and unity. Just like then, people today need a place to meet God honestly, not just on Sundays but every day. Whether it's a church, a prayer corner, or even just a quiet moment in nature, we're called to make sure our hearts and lives reflect God's love. Solomon's temple reminds us: God's home isn't just a building, it's where we choose to come, stay, and serve Him. Would you rather have a kingdom built on your own power or one built on God's love? That's the question every temple, and every life, must answer.

Key Verse

2 Samuel 9:7

Here's a heartfelt, kid-friendly explanation of 1 Kings 8:13, with a mix of wonder, honesty, and real-life connection: King Solomon's Big Promise (and Why It Matters Today) Imagine you just finished building the most amazing playground in your neighborhood, one with swings so high they feel like flying, a climbing wall that makes you question your life choices, and a sandpit so big you could play soccer with friends. Then, you say to God (or the one who designed it), "This is for you, forever, where you can rest, play, and be yourself without limits." That's basically what King Solomon was saying when he built the Temple in Jerusalem, a sacred space where God's people could come home to worship, pray, and feel close to the Creator. But Solomon wasn't just talking about a building, he was offering inclusion. The Temple was a place where everyone who believed in God could come, no matter their job, background, or status. It was like saying: "God doesn't live in fancy places or just for the 'important' people. He's here for YOU, forever." Today, that same idea applies! Whether it's a church, a library, a community garden, or even a quiet corner at home, God wants us to feel safe, loved, and heard in places where we can worship, learn, and grow together. The key? We have to keep those spaces open for others, just like Solomon did. Life Application: How Do We "Keep It Forever"? 1. Protect the "Temples" in Your Life, Are there places where you (or others) feel welcome? At school? Online? At home? Guard them like Solomon guarded his

Temple, no exclusion, no judgment. 2. Share the Invitation , Just like the Temple was for all people, God's love is for everyone. Tell a friend about a good community you're part of. Sometimes, the most powerful thing we do is invite others into something meaningful. 3. Clean Up Your "Playground" , Solomon's Temple had rules (like not making idols or acting selfishly). God's "Temples" today need good behavior, honesty, kindness, and respect. What's one small way you can make a space feel like a safe home for others? Real Question for You: "If God's love is like a playground forever, what's one 'swing' or 'climb' you're afraid to take because it feels too big or hard? God invites you to try, no matter what!" (And if you're scared, He's there holding your hand.) Why This Works for 12, 14 Year-Olds: - Emotional Hook: Uses playgrounds (familiar) to explain God's presence (abstract). - Honesty: Acknowledges fear/uncertainty ("too big," "hard") without shaming. - Actionable: Ends with specific ways to apply the verse (protect spaces, invite others). - Hopeful: Focuses on God's forever promise, not just rules.

Activities

Activity 1:

Students work in small groups to create a model of an idealized "Sacred Space" inspired by Solomon's Temple, one that reflects worship, devotion, and God's presence. They'll brainstorm what makes a place truly holy and discuss how to apply these ideas in their own lives.

1. Set Up (2 min):
2. Share the lesson focus: "Solomon's Temple wasn't just a building, it was God's house, where people could meet Him. What would make a place feel sacred to you?" Hand out Bibles to read 1 Kings 6:1, 8:10 (key details: the ark, the priests, the cedar work, and the dedication prayer).
3. Group Brainstorm (5 min):
4. Divide students into groups of 3, 5. Ask each group to discuss:
5. What did Solomon's Temple include that made it special?
6. What does "holiness" look like to you? (e.g., cleanliness, prayer, art, community?)
7. Write their ideas on sticky notes and share with the class.
8. Create a Model (7 min):
9. Give each group a paper plate or cardboard base to build a miniature Sacred Space. Use construction paper to craft elements like:
10. The ark (or a box labeled "God's Presence").
11. Pillars (like the ones in the temple).
12. Cedar work (stripes of green/blue paper).
13. A menorah or altar (draw a simple menorah or a "burnt offering" symbol).
14. Encourage creativity! If time, have them add a "dedication prayer" in their design.
15. Share & Reflect (2 min):
16. Have each group present their model. Ask:
17. What part of your design felt most sacred? Why?
18. How could we create "holy spaces" in our homes/schools?
19. Tie it to life: "God doesn't just want a building, He wants our hearts and spaces to reflect His love. Where can you invite Him into your life today?"

Activity 2:

Students role-play as different groups involved in Solomon's Temple construction (e.g., builders, priests, kings, prophets) to discuss the challenges and blessings of building God's house. They'll debate: "What would happen if people didn't take worship seriously?" This activity sparks critical thinking and empathy.

1. Assign Roles (3 min):
2. Write the following roles on slips of paper and hand them out randomly (or assign ahead of time):

3. Solomon (the king who builds the temple)
4. Hiram of Tyre (the skilled craftsman)
5. Priests (the ones who serve in the temple)
6. Solomon's Workers (the laborers)
7. Prophet (like Eli or someone skeptical about the temple)
8. Foreign Observer (a visitor judging the temple)
9. Remind students to stay in character but keep the discussion focused on the Bible passage.
10. Debate Scenario (8 min):
11. Explain the prompt: "The temple is being built, but some people think it's a waste of time or money. What's your stance?"
12. Start the debate by having one group (e.g., the prophets or priests) argue for the temple's importance.
13. Encourage others to challenge: "What if the temple becomes too big? What if people only worship to please God?"
14. After 2, 3 rounds, pause and discuss as a class:
15. What did Solomon learn about leadership?
16. How can we avoid making the "church" about us instead of God?
17. Connect to Life (4 min):
18. Ask: "The temple was a place of worship, but it wasn't just for Solomon or the Israelites. What does God want us to do with our time and energy today?"
19. Brainstorm ways to "build" God's presence in our communities (e.g., prayer groups, volunteer work, art for worship).
20. Challenge: "Who could you help in your school or neighborhood to make their space feel more sacred?"
21. Why These Work for Junior High:
22. Teamwork: Both activities require collaboration, which builds friendships.
23. Creativity: Designing a model or debating roles lets them engage with the text in a personal way.
24. Honesty: The debates address tough questions ("What if we don't take worship seriously?") and encourage thoughtful answers.
25. Life Application: Each ties back to real-world questions: "How do we honor God in our daily lives?" and "What does it mean to build something for Him?"
26. Pro Tip: For older students (nearing 14), add a discussion question like: "If Solomon's Temple was destroyed, how would it change worship in Israel? What does that teach us about trusting God's plan?" This invites deeper reflection on perseverance and faith.

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions inspired by Solomon's Temple, God's House (1 Kings 6-8), designed to engage junior high students with meaningful, life-application connections. These questions invite them to reflect on the story's themes of worship, community, and purpose while inviting honest, thoughtful responses.
- 1. "Why Did Solomon Build a Temple to God? What Would It Have Looked Like to Him, and Us Today?"
- (Context: Solomon's Temple was more than a building; it was a place of worship, prayer, and connection with God. It reflected his heart for God's people.)
- Imagine you built a special space, maybe a fort, a library, or a room in your house, where you could spend time with someone you love deeply. How would you design it? What would you put in it to make it feel like a place of safety and joy? Solomon's Temple was like that, but instead of being built for him, it was for God's people. Why do you think God wanted such a special place for His people? How does worshipping in God's presence, whether

through prayer, song, or study, help us feel closer to Him?

- (Life Application: This question encourages students to think about how worship shapes their lives and what it means to create spaces (physical or spiritual) where they can encounter God.)
- 2. "What Did the Temple Teach Solomon, and What Does It Teach Us About Following God?"
- (Context: Solomon's Temple was filled with symbols and rituals (like the Ark of the Covenant and the Priests' robes). These were not just decorations but reminders of God's promises and His covenant with Israel.)
- Look at the details Solomon included in the Temple, gold inlaid work, the cedar wood, the Priests' robes, even the way the people gathered to worship. What do you think these things were trying to teach Solomon (and later, the people of Israel)? For example:
- The gold could symbolize God's purity, how we should strive to be holy.
- The Priests' robes might remind us that God expects us to dress ourselves with integrity in our hearts and actions.
- The Ark of the Covenant (the place where God's presence was seen) could remind us that God's attention is worth honoring, even if it feels distant sometimes.
- What's one way you think God is trying to teach you through His Word or through other people right now? How can you pay attention to those lessons and grow?
- (Life Application: This question ties the Temple's details to practical faith, how God's Word and community shape our lives.)
- 3. "Solomon's Temple Was a Place Where God's People Could Come Together, But Was It Perfect? Why or Why Not?"
- (Context: The Temple was beautiful, but 1 Kings 6:6-7 describes a rough construction job, workers left gaps in the cedar panels. Solomon also later built the outer wall of the Temple in the same way, which led to complaints. Was this a sign of disobedience, or was there more to it?)
- If you were building a house or a project with others, what would you expect? Would you expect it to be perfect on day one, or would you accept that some things would need fixing later? The Bible doesn't say Solomon's Temple was flawless, it just says it was dedicated to God. Why do you think God accepted a Temple that wasn't completely perfect? What does this teach us about how we approach projects in life, whether it's a school project, a relationship, or even our own faith?
- (Life Application: This question helps students see that growth isn't about perfection but progress. It's a great tie-in to the idea that God's work in us (and His house) is ongoing.)
- 4. "If You Were One of the Priests or Levites in Solomon's Temple, How Would You Feel About What You Saw There, and What Would You Hope People Would Feel?"
- (Context: The Priests were in charge of the Temple worship, the Levites carried the Ark and led the music. Their jobs were sacred, and they had to ensure everything was done with reverence.)
- Imagine you walked into the Temple for the first time and saw:
- The gold and cedar work (beautiful but not yours).
- The Priests in their colorful robes (symbolizing God's glory).
- The people praying, singing, and offering sacrifices (a mix of fear and awe).
- How would you feel? Excited? Nervous? Proud? What would you hope the people in the crowd were feeling?
- Now think about your own "church" or worship space. Is it easy for people to feel awe or connection when they come? Why or why not? What would make your worship space feel more like a place where people truly encounter God, not just for a few minutes, but for their whole lives?

- (Life Application: This question ties worship to personal experience and invites students to reflect on how they, as part of God's people, can create spaces (or lives) where worship feels meaningful.)
- Why These Questions Work for Junior High Students:
- Open-ended: No right/wrong answers, encourages personal reflection.
- Connects to life: They tie the Bible story to their experiences (school, relationships, growth).
- Honest & relatable: The questions acknowledge that God's work isn't always perfect and that worship can feel messy or beautiful.
- Encourages teamwork: Solomon's Temple was a community project, these questions invite students to think about how they, as part of a group, can honor God together.
- Would you like any of these adjusted to focus more on a specific theme (like sacrifice, beauty, or fear)?

Prayer Focus

Prayer Focus: "Building a House for God's Presence" Teacher: "Hey kids, today we're diving into one of the wildest stories in the Bible, King Solomon building the Temple in Jerusalem. Imagine this: after so much chaos and hardship, God told Solomon, 'If you're faithful, I'll make a place where my name will be honored forever.' But here's the thing, Solomon didn't just build a wooden box with gold and stone; he invited people to come worship, pray, and feel God's love. That's the cool part: God's House isn't just a building, it's a place where we can run to when life gets messy, where we can ask big questions, and where God meets us like family. So today, let's pray not just for the Temple to be perfect, but for our hearts to be a place where God's Spirit can build something real, something that matters." "God, You're not just about grand plans or fancy places. You're about love, truth, and people who care. Help us to build something in this world, our lives, our friendships, our hearts, that shows You matter more than anything else. Teach us to be like the Temple, open, honest, and full of Your presence. Amen." (Pause for a moment of reflection, ask students: "What's one way you want to be a 'building' for God this week?") Why it works:

- Relatable: Connects to real struggles (e.g., "When life gets messy, where do we go?") - Honest: Acknowledges Solomon's success and the bigger lesson (God doesn't need a temple, we do). - Life-app: Ends with a call to action (e.g., how to "build" for God daily). - Bible ties: Highlights 1 Kings 8:27 ("Let all the peoples of the earth know that You are God!"), God's mission is global and personal.

>> Missions Spotlight

In many parts of Southeast Asia, temple-building is a central part of religious life. Missioners working among the Khmer people of Cambodia use Solomon's temple story to explain that God no longer lives in buildings made by hands, He lives in the hearts of those who trust in Jesus.

-> To the Cross

Solomon built a beautiful temple for God. But Jesus said, 'Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days' (John 2:19). He was talking about His body. Jesus IS the temple, the place where God and humanity meet. And now, through the Spirit, WE are God's temple.