



Choose wisely

SAMUEL. KINGS AND CHRONICLES

Aim of lesson

To place these books in their historical context and to consider how many of the people mentioned in the books were influenced by God or by other people, to good or bad effect.

Bible background

Samuel, Kings and Chronicles.

Preparation required

Although it is not the purpose of this lesson to cover every story in the six books, you will need to have a good overall picture of the history, main characters and some of the main events. Most of the lesson is covered by the students filling in details on a time chart and you will need to decide how much detail you want to cover depending on the students' previous knowledge and their sticking power.

You will not have time in the lesson to do all the activities, so choose which ones you like or find most useful for your class. Or you may decide to take more than one week over it.

Prepare the game if you decide to do it.

Outline of lesson

Overall picture

Begin by asking the class what they know about the books in question. You might not get much more than 'the first two are about Samuel and the second two about Kings' or you might be told a lot of the events covered in this time period. This will give you a context for completing the table in the students' books. Get them to go through the references and

- complete the names suggested by the initial letters in the 'People' column
- write what they know about each person, or can find out from the references.

The table¹ would then look something like that shown below.

BC	People	References	Major events
1100	Samuel	1 Samuel 3 1 Samuel 16	God spoke to him in the tabernacle Samuel anointed Saul and David
1050	Saul	1 Samuel 8-9 1 Samuel 19 1 Samuel 31, 1 Chronicles 10	Anointed by Samuel Tried to kill David. Killed by the Philistines
1010	David	2 Samuel 2, 1 Chronicles 11 2 Samuel 5:1-5 2 Samuel 6, 1 Chronicles 15 2 Samuel 11 2 Samuel 15 2 Samuel 22, 1 Chronicles 16:8	King in Hebron for 7 years King in Jerusalem for 33 years. Brought the ark to Jerusalem Sinned with Bathsheba and Uriah Absalom rebelled wrote lots of Psalms
970	Solomon	1 Kings 3, 2 Chronicles 1 1 Kings 6, 2 Chronicles 3 1 Kings 10, 2 Chronicles 9 1 Kings 11	Prayed for wisdom Builds the temple in Jerusalem Queen of Sheba visits Solomon Turns away from God
930	Jeroboam	1 Kings 12, 2 Chronicles 10	Rebels - divided Kingdom
874	Ahab	1 Kings 16:29-32	King of Israel, married Jezebel
	Elijah	1 Kings 17	Fed by ravens during drought
		1 Kings 18	Offering on Mount Carmel
	Naboth	1 Kings 21	Killed by Ahab and Jezebel
	Elisha	2 Kings 5	Heals Naaman of leprosy

¹ As elsewhere in these lessons, the dates in the table are taken from 'The Mysterious Numbers of the Hebrew Kings' by Edwin Thiele. This book, and others by the same author, throw valuable light on the events recorded in Samuel, Kings and Chronicles, and the dates have been adopted in many other books, such as the NIV Study Bible

723	Hoshea	2 Kings 17:6	Last king of Israel. Israelites taken to Assyria.
715	Hezekiah	2 Chronicles 29	Cleanses the temple
		2 Chronicles 30	Celebrates the Passover
		2 Kings 18-19, 2 Chronicles 32	Assyrian army destroyed by God
696	Manasseh	2 Kings 21, 2 Chronicles 33	A terrible king who repents
640	Josiah	2 Kings 22, 2 Chronicles 34	Repairs the temple
		2 Kings 23	Tries to get the people to serve God
586	Zedekiah	2 Kings 25, 2 Chronicles 36	Last king of Judah. Taken to Babylon.

As you go through the table ask questions and take the opportunity to remind the students of the history so that they understand the overall picture.

When the table is complete, the students could use a highlight pen, with a different colour for each book, to bring out the scope of each book.

More detail

If you feel your class is not too confident about the events covered in this period or would appreciate a more story-based approach you could now play one of the games from the students' books.

Wordsearch

As the class find the names of people or events in the wordsearch, they must give a 30 second summary of that person or event. Make sure that no student is unable to do this - it is not the aim to 'show people up'. Allow them to 'pass' if they get one they do not like or know - there are easy ones as well as more difficult ones. If you think any are too difficult either omit them altogether or keep them for yourself.

The solution to the wordsearch is: (across,down,direction)

ABIGAIL (7,9,SW)	AHAB (4,1,E)	CARMEL (6,15,W)
DAVID (13,6,NW)	ELI (10,13,E)	ELIJAH (9,8,SE)
ELISHA (8,7,S)	GOLIATH (12,1,S)	HANNAH (7,7,SW)
HEZEKIAH (1,4,SE)	ISAIAH (1,2,E)	JEROBOAM (15,15,W)
JEZEBEL (15,15,N)	JONATHAN (6,5,E)	NABOTH (1,7,NE)
KING (2,10,NE)	NAAMAN (10,8,E)	JOSIAH (9,13,W)
PROPHET (7,12,NW)	SAMUEL (9,12,N)	SHEBA (10,1,W)
SAUL (14,9,N)	SOLOMON (11,6,W)	ZAREPHATH (1,9,NE)

Card game

Photocopy the pictures and make cards from them, lay them face down on the table and take it in turns to turn them over and place them on the class timeline, the timeline at the bottom of the page in the students' books or just sort them all out in order.

You will need to know yourself where they occur and you may wish to add cards of your own. The pictures are:

Destruction of Jerusalem	Naaman	Jonah and the whale	Noah and the ark
	Joash	Elijah taken up to heaven	God destroys the Assyrian army
Lazarus raised from the dead (!)	David the shepherd-boy	Samuel the man of God	Saul the Apostle (!)
David and Goliath	King Saul	Wise king Solomon	Daniel in the lion's den
Young king Josiah	Hannah	Abigail the wife of Nabal	Queen of Sheba

You will notice that there are some red herrings that do not occur in the books we are studying at the moment - though Jonah is not one of them; he is mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25.

Relevance to our Lives

Although sometimes Kings and Chronicles can look like a lot of boring lists we can still learn important things from them. Above all, we can see by what happened to Israel and Judah that it is important to follow God's ways not our own.

Extension activities

- You could get the students to make a list of the characteristics of a good king and a bad king, maybe using as examples those already used in the table they have filled in. Talk about why they were good or bad; bring out that they were judged according to God's values, not men's - things that human politics say make a good king were not valued - but godly characteristics were.
- Can you make comparisons with political leaders today? If Solomon had wisdom why did he do stupid things? Kings were influenced by wives—do our friends influence us? David was 'a man after God's own heart' – not perfect, but someone who deep down always trusted God--just what we should be like?
- What challenges faced each of the kings? Find out by looking at one good king - maybe Josiah; and one bad king – Ahab for example. How did they deal with them? Who did they listen to? Who guided and influenced them?
- Look at the exercise in the students' books on influences. We are all influenced, whether for good or bad, by other people. Bring out that it is important to surround ourselves with people who will influence us for good.
- You could also look at the importance that God placed on the influence of the mothers of some of the kings; get the students to look up 'mother' in a concordance.