

Chapter 6

The Monarchy: The Journey Takes A New Direction

Student Preparation

- Students were assigned to read Chapter 6, “The Monarchy: The Journey Takes A New Direction” (pages 132–153).
- Students were also asked to complete the Review and Reflection” questions from pages 114, 120, and 124, but not 128.

Warm-up (about 20 minutes)

- Invite students to briefly share their case for war scenarios done in the previous class. List adapted just war doctrine principles from page 120 on the board. Have students orally critique the cases with respect to: (1) credibility of scenario and (2) compliance with the just war theory. Let the students assign awards for: “Best Case for War,” “Most Creative Case,” “Honorable Mention,” etc.
- Collect the review questions from Chapter 5 and ask students to recall the benefits and challenges of village life in Palestine (pages 126–127). Was tribal leadership in the Bet Avs working? Have students verify their answers by referencing the text. If it was working, why did the Israelites continue to ask the prophet Samuel for a king? “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it.” (Make sure that this exchange reminds students that the Israelites were surrounded by pagan cultures led by military leaders or kings.)

Part 1: Lesson (about 30 minutes)

Text Reference: Introduction, Religious Development During the Monarchy, The “United” Monarchy: Saul, David, and Solomon (pages 132–143)

- Redirect the group’s attention to page 132. Samuel warns the people about a king’s demands. “Their sons would be assigned to run before his chariot, etc.” Ask students which of these demands would probably be most objectionable to the Israelites. Fast forward to the twenty-first century. What expectations are most objectionable today in a democratic government?
- Divide the class into three focus groups. Assign each group to a different king—Saul, David, Solomon. The groups should review information in the text and dig a bit deeper into Scripture (1 Samuel and 1 Kings). Students should research and record information about: 1) How the king was selected, 2) accomplishments, 3) defeats or problems, 4) how he used power (for good or evil), 5) relationship to God.
- Acting as a “Meet the Press” style panel, have each group give a 5-minute profile of their king to the other groups. Suggest that they also address the added question: “Did your king serve God and his people well?”

Break/Writing Exercise (about 15 minutes)

- Join students for a break with refreshments.
- Assign students to do the Journal Assignment on page 144 on the Temple. As background information, have them re-read “The Temple of Solomon” (page 143) and give them Handout 6C: “Solomon’s Temple” (page 279 of the TWE).

Part 2: Lesson (about 30 minutes)

Text Reference: The Divided Monarchy, The Last Days of the Independent Monarchy, Further Reflections (pages 144–153)

- Read Lincoln’s “Gettysburg Address” to jumpstart discussion about the agonies of a “divided kingdom.” Sample student familiarity with the Civil War. How did it start? Why were civil wars (including the American Civil War) particularly painful?
- Summarize the text’s description of the division of Israel (pages 144–147). Jeroboam, was a soldier in charge of Israelites forced to labor on Solomon’s projects. When Jeroboam defended the slaves, Solomon was angry. Jeroboam had to flee. Later, with help from Egypt, Jeroboam led a rebellion against Solomon’s successor, King Rehoboam. Egypt attacked Jerusalem and took the Temple treasures. In 922 B.C., Jeroboam established the northern kingdom of Israel.
- Ask: “How did Jeroboam, king of the northern kingdom, try to prevent the kingdom’s reunification?” (He built alternate temples in Dan and Bethel, set up golden calves as idols and appointed priests who were not from the tribe of Levi—the traditional tribe of priests.) .
- Provide a roll of newsprint paper and markers, and divide the class into two groups. Have each group create a horizontal timeline titled “The Rise and Fall of the Kingdom of Israel.” Provide dates for the reigns of

King Saul (ca 1030–1010 B.C.), King David (ca 1009–969 B.C.), and King Solomon (969–922 B.C.). Students should choose at least ten other dates from Chapter 6 to describe the division of Israel and the eventual collapse of both kingdoms. Have the groups colorfully illustrate the timelines as though for an elementary school class studying the Bible. Display and compare the two timelines.

Prayer Experience (about 20 minutes):

- Have a student light a candle and turn off the room light. Play 2–3 minutes of a CD or tape with appropriately meditative instrumental or liturgical music. (Music featuring a harp, David’s instrument, would work well.)
- Ask three students to slowly read the three sections of Psalm 138.
- Invite students to add their praise of God to David’s praise by listing things, people and circumstances for which they have a grateful heart.

Conclusion (5 minutes):

- Assign the Review and Reflection Questions on pages 134, 138, 144, 148 and 151.
- Have students read Chapter 7, “God’s Prophets: At the Heart of the Journey” (pages 156–173) for the next session.