



TASMANIAN
COUNCIL OF
CHURCHES

SCHOOLS SUNDAY TAS

churches celebrating and supporting local schools

**Be
wise!**

**18 FEBRUARY
2018**

SU
TASMANIA

RESOURCE PACK

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Be wise!

... an annual opportunity to pray for and support young people at school



The Tasmanian Council of Churches (TCC) is a fellowship of Christian Churches in Tasmania committed to the promotion of Christian unity. The TCC is an autonomous body with policies decided by the six Member Churches.

www.tcctas.org.au/



SU Tas (Scripture Union Tasmania) is part of a worldwide Christian movement which operates in more than 130 countries. SU Tas has worked in Tasmania for over fifty years through camps, missions, outdoor programs, resources and school chaplaincy services.

www.sutas.org.au/

Schools Sunday provides an annual opportunity for churches to pray for and support young people and the local school community at the start of a new school year. We seek to encourage Christian students and staff in their daily life at school and to challenge them to live out their faith and connect with a Christian group that might be running in the school.

This year on Schools Sunday we encourage you to plan a specific Sunday morning focus on schools. If the date, **18 February 2018** is unsuitable for your church calendar, choose another day, early in the school year, that works better for you.

Schools Sunday is an excellent way to encourage Christian students and school staff members to remember that God is not confined to church, but goes with them to school.

This resource is full of ideas for either a complete Sunday service or a short segment within a regular service. Use what will best suit your congregation and your situation. Message, prayers and activities are included.

The theme 'Be Wise' explores the Bible story of Solomon and is split into three sections: 1) A wise king who knows God; 2) A wise king who knows himself; 3) A wise king who pleases God.

In this resource you will find:

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| Schools Sunday Service Ideas | 3 |
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Use some of these ideas to plan your own Schools Sunday service.

SCHOOLS SUNDAY SERVICE IDEAS 1

SETTING THE THEME

Before the Day

- Invite the congregation to bring an old school photo along and mount a display.
- Invite children to bring along a piece of art work and mount a display.
- Have children bring their school bag or hat.

On the Day

- Find out which schools are represented by people in your congregations (children, grandchildren, staff) and make a list on a whiteboard.
- Break the ice by asking what people's favourite class was/is, one favourite project when at school/currently, talk about their favourite teacher and why.

SINGING

- Invite your school choir to present several items.
- Ask your Children's Ministry group and/or youth group to present an item/s.
- Revive some old Sunday School songs.
- Learn a new children's song.

DRAMA

- Dramatise the Bible reading.
- Try the following for drama ideas:
 - www.bobsnook.org
 - <http://dramatix.org.nz>
 - www.christianskitscripts.com

SCRIPTURE READING

1 Kings 3:1–16 (see message on pages 6–11)

- Invite teens or children to read the Bible.
- Dramatise the reading with different people reading the different parts.
- Read from the NIV in three sections (v1–3; v4–9, v10–16) and allow the story to unfold as you bring each teaching point.
- Watch it online <http://us-en.superbook.cbn.com/video/king-solomon-asks-wisdom>



SCHOOLS SUNDAY SERVICE IDEAS 2

Use these further ideas to plan your own Schools Sunday service.

USING TESTIMONY

- Invite someone who is actively involved in a school to share a ministry story (chaplain, lunchtime Christian club leader, Christian teacher, student leader).
- Invite a school chaplain to bring a message and share about their work in the school. You might like to interview them instead.
- Invite a school volunteer or a parent helper to share briefly about their role in the school.
- Invite a young person to share a personal story of their friendship with Jesus. How were they welcomed into that friendship and/or their church?

FELLOWSHIP TIME

- Share a morning tea or fellowship lunch afterwards to help make the day more special.
- Use this time to raise funds for schools work.
- If you have invited your principal, chaplain or school choir use this time to connect with them.

SERMON IDEAS

- Interview your local chaplain/Christian worker, principal or teacher.
- Share a message highlighting your schools as local mission fields.
- Use the message outline on pages 6-11.

OFFERING

- Take up a special offering that will go toward your local ecumenical schools work, local chaplain or an organisation that works in schools.
- Invite children or teens to take up the offering and lead offering prayers.
- Take an offering and support an aid organisation working with children.

Here are some ways to pray for local schools in your church's district, town, or suburb and the children in your congregation who attend there.

SCHOOLS SUNDAY SERVICE IDEAS 3

PRAYING

What to Pray

- Invite a chaplain or people from the congregation already working in schools to share prayer points for their school/s and pray for them.
- Invite children to write a prayer for their school and read these out on Schools Sunday.
- Use the prayers on pages 12 and 13.

How to Pray

- Invite the children to lead prayers or invite members of the congregation representing different age groups to lead prayers.
- Invite to the front those who work or volunteer in schools, lay hands on them and pray for them.
- Invite the congregation to list prayer points for schools/education then form small groups and spend some time praying through the different topics.
- Give different members of the congregation one of the topics below asking them to write a prayer to pray on Schools Sunday.

STUDENTS

- Beginning school for the first time
- Starting at a new school
- Experiencing learning or relationship difficulties
- Student leaders and Christian students

SCHOOL STAFF

- In your congregation
- Principals and teachers
- Support and administration staff

FAMILIES

- Wise parenting
- Christian families
- Those experiencing relationship difficulties
- Those serving the school as volunteers

EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

- Federal Minister for Education
- Tasmanian Minister for Education
- Departmental staff, curriculum and policy makers National Schools Chaplaincy Program

MESSAGE OUTLINE

A WISE KING WHO

Use this outline
as a basis for
a message.
PowerPoint slides
are available
to enhance the
message.



WELCOME

We welcome you to our Schools Sunday service at the start of this new school year. It is an exciting time of change for our children, young people, and school staff.

I wonder how many young people have a new pair of shoes, or a new pencil case? Or perhaps you have a new teacher, and new class mates? Who has started school for the very first time?

Here at church, we want to assure you of our prayers as you make a return to school.

Verse 10 of Psalm 143 says:

You are my God; teach me to do your will.

Be good to me, and guide me on a straight path.

We come to worship God, who is with us no matter where we go; who can teach us his ways, and guide us as we go forward into a new school year.

This would be a good time to pray or sing.

MESSAGE

I wonder how you came to be in church today? What is your story? Many of us are here because we were brought along by, or have come with, our friends or family. We have grown to know God and love him through others telling us about him.

In 1 Kings 3:1-3 we hear Solomon's story.



Bible Reading: 1 Kings 3:1-3 Use one of the suggestions from page 3.

There is no temple – or church – for Solomon to worship God in. However, Solomon had watched how his father, King David, trusted in God throughout his life; in the good times, in the bad times. He had listened when David sang about God's goodness, his great love, his patience and mercy. We can read David's songs today in the book of the Bible called Psalms.

As a boy, Solomon would have listened to stories of God keeping promises, loving the outcast, being patient with the foolish. He would have learned that God was a holy God to be listened to and obeyed. From his father, Solomon learned faith and trust in God.



In verse 3 we read, 'Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David.' So, Solomon knew God – he showed his love for the Lord, trusted him and walked in God's ways, just as his father had done before him.



EXCEPT THAT he offered sacrifices and burned incense on the high places. (verse 3).

KNOWS GOD

MESSAGE OUTLINE

Solomon was worshipping God, but he was also copying the behaviour of those who didn't love God! Solomon knew God; but he didn't always do things God's way. He was learning to be king. He had to learn that God's ways needed to be at the centre of his life, every day. Learning is what all of us do, especially those of us who are at school. God wants each one of us to learn what He is like, to get to know Him, to trust Him and learn to live His way; when at home with our family – and in school with our friends and teachers.

Sometimes Solomon did what other people who didn't love God were doing. We face that challenge too, don't we? All of us face pressures to live the way others do – particularly those of us who are at school. God challenges us to live a different way. Let's think about that for a few moments.

CHOOSING GOD'S WAY POWERPOINT

Play the Choosing God's Way PowerPoint or invite a few people in the congregation, young and old, to share in one sentence their challenges of living God's way.

Further on, in verse 15 of our Bible passage, we are told that Solomon chooses to follow God and worship Him with honour, praise and glory before the ark of the Lord's covenant. He is a WISE KING who KNOWS GOD. He chooses not to compromise and do what others are doing. He worships God where God has instructed; he is doing things God's way at last. Let's pray that all of us – at home, work, and at school – choose God's ways too. Why don't we stop and pray together now, asking for God's help to do that?

Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David.

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Use prayer option 1 from page 12.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

A WISE KING WHO

DECISION CHALLENGE

Before the service, prepare a gift in a box. The gift could be anything from the useless to the useful, such as a cabbage, a big bar of chocolate, a bin bag.

Invite a primary aged child to choose between two gifts. Offer them a gift (a small book or trinket) and say they can have this – or they can have what is in the larger box. You will give a clue as to what is in the box, but it will be a riddle they need to solve. Clues might be:

1. Cabbage: the object in the box is round and green and is eaten by millions around the world.
2. Chocolate: the object in the box can be runny, messy, and often disappears quickly.
3. Bin bag: the object in the box is black, shiny, strong, and lasts almost for ever.

Allow them to ask the rest of the children – and the rest of the church family – for help to solve the clue. If they choose the box, give them what is in it (you may also want to be kind and give them the book as well for their effort!).

Explain they needed to come to a decision. Was it easy? Maybe not! They didn't have all the information, and people were telling them to do different things. Sometimes this happens when we need to make decisions too.

In our Bible story, Solomon was asked by God to make a decision. Let's find out what happened. Teach us his ways, and guide us as we go forward into a new school year.



Bible Reading: 1 Kings 3:4-9 Use one of the suggestions from page 3.

We read in verse 5, 'the Lord appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you!"'

As you listened to the Bible reading, I wonder if your mind went to a kind of Genie in a lamp scenario... 'I can grant you three wishes!!'

This is not a made-up story of genies inside magical lamps. Here is an account of someone who has a relationship with God and wants to please God and bless others more than anything. It is not random, it is not based on rubbing a lamp...it's about a God of grace and love, deepening his relationship with Solomon.

Wow! What a chance for Solomon to ask for something amazing! And we aren't talking here about some vague wish that might or might not come true. This was God asking him what he wanted! God was more than able to answer.

**I want to be wise.
I want to know how
to tell wrong from
right.**

KNOWS HIMSELF

MESSAGE OUTLINE

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Solomon knew who he was – a young king. Imagine writing ‘King Solomon’ on your new pencil case or Facebook profile, or hearing ‘King Solo-mon’ called when your teacher takes the register. How important you would feel!

But did you notice how Solomon identifies himself in the passage? Three times when talking to God he identifies himself not as ‘the king’, but as ‘your servant’. Yes, King Solomon calls himself a servant. How can that be? What does he mean?

Back in history, a king was very powerful. A king could have anything he wanted, and do anything he pleased. Yet here Solomon is showing that although he is a King, he knows that there is a greater King who is far more powerful.

Before that King, Solomon is only a servant. That King is God.

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Solomon is a WISE KING who doesn’t just know God; HE KNOWS HIMSELF. Solomon isn’t full of his own importance, even though he is a king. He realises he is “only a little child, and doesn’t know how to rule.” (v.7).

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He is humble before God. He recognises he needs help. He knows that God is God, and that he is not.

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So, in answer to God’s question, (v 9) Solomon says to God, “I want to be wise! I want to know how to tell wrong from right.”

Why? Not so that everyone will say what a great king he is, but so that he can tell right from wrong and rule his country well. He wants things which are right to be praised and things which are wrong to be stopped. He wants those being mistreated to be helped, and those doing good to be encouraged. He wants to think the way God thinks and to see the world the way that God sees it. Solomon wants to be the best king he can be – a servant king who has God as his King.

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If God were to say to us today, ‘Ask for whatever you want me to give you!’ what would your answer be? What would my answer be? Would we be like Solomon, and not pray to be rich or successful, but to be wise – to know right from wrong? That’s a great prayer!

Solomon showed his love for the Lord by walking according to the instructions given him by his father David.

This could be an opportunity for an appropriate song.

MESSAGE OUTLINE

A WISE KING WHO

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom.

WISE OR NOT WISE?

Explain that you will make a statement and the children (and adults) should decide whether an action is 'Wise' or 'Not Wise'.

Designate the LEFT-HAND side of the room as WISE and the RIGHT-HAND as NOT WISE. When you make a statement, they choose whether it is some-thing wise, or not wise, and move accordingly. If movement is difficult in your venue, then have them raise their LEFT HAND if they think it is WISE, and their RIGHT HAND if they think it is NOT WISE.

Statements:

- Washing your hands after playing sport. WISE – or UNWISE?
- Staying up all night at the computer and getting no sleep. WISE – or UNWISE?
- Taking something that doesn't belong to you. WISE – or UNWISE?
- Looking both ways before you cross the road. WISE – or UNWISE?
- Eating a whole packet of biscuits all at once. WISE – or UNWISE?
- Ignoring your homework and pretending it got lost. WISE – or UNWISE?
- Saying 'sorry' when you do something wrong. WISE – or UNWISE?



Bible Reading: 1 Kings 3:10-15 Use one of the suggestions from page 3 or 14.

How do we know when someone is pleased? They might give us a big smile, or a hug, or say 'Well done!'. At school, we might get a 'smiley face' sticker, a 'treat' or be allowed to do something special. God was pleased with what Solomon asked for. How did Solomon know God was pleased? The Bible tells us!



Verse 10 says, 'the Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for wisdom.' Because he asked for that and not a long life, or riches, or anything selfish, God gave him the wisdom he asked for as well as many other good things.

In the rest of the chapter we find out how he was able to solve a very tricky problem – one he could not have worked out without God's help. God did indeed make Solomon very wise. He was not just a WISE KING, but a WISE KING who PLEASED GOD.



But what is wisdom? We talk about knowledge – knowing a lot of things; but wisdom is something different! Solomon asked God for wisdom, that he would know how to tell wrong from right. For Solomon, wisdom was knowing the right thing to do and doing it. Solomon wanted to please God and follow his ways.

When it comes to what it means to be wise, Proverbs 9:10 gives us a big clue:

PLEASES GOD

MESSAGE OUTLINE

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"Wisdom begins with respect for the Lord. And understanding begins with knowing God, the Holy One." (International Children's Bible)

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Wisdom begins with knowing God and realising HE is God and we are not. The wisdom of Solomon comes not from a chance meeting with a genie, or a quick Google search. It doesn't come from listening to a blogger, reading an encyclopaedia or asking the best teacher you have ever had. It is the result of meeting and getting to know the living God!

What might wisdom look like in the classroom tomorrow? If I have wisdom from God, does it mean that I have better marks than anyone else? Will I be-come much cleverer than I was before? Perhaps not! Will I always know how to answer the teacher when she asks a hard question? Will it mean getting 100% in all my exams? Does God's wisdom put me at the top of the class? No, it doesn't promise that!

God answered Solomon's prayer and gave him so much wisdom that he was able to share it with us. Some of Solomon's wise sayings are written down for us in the book of the Bible called Proverbs. The book of Proverbs is proof that God answered Solomon's prayer for wisdom. Solomon was therefore a WISE king who PLEASED GOD, who realised that even though he was a king, he couldn't live properly without God being in charge.

So, what will God-pleasing wisdom look like in the classroom, or where we work or spend our time? Let's find out!

Do Activity 'Wisdom is...' from page 12.

And so, Solomon goes down in history as one of the wisest Kings who ever lived – but he pointed to another King, a king who would come later, who was both perfect and wise: King Jesus. What a servant king Jesus was! Jesus got it right every time; there was not a thought or a word out of place as he obeyed his Father each day. We are glad that our friendship with God doesn't rely on us being wise all the time, but rather, putting our trust in King Jesus.

By asking God for help to be wise, Solomon did the wisest thing. We would be wise to do the same. At this point we are going to pause and take time to pray for each other as we go back to our homes and families and as we go out into our world tomorrow, whether that's school, work or at home. These prayers are based on the wise advice God gave Solomon and are found in the Bible book called Proverbs.

Use prayer option 2 from page 14.

In our Schools Sunday service we have explored the story of Solomon in 1 Kings 3:1-16. Solomon is a WISE KING who KNOWS GOD, who KNOWS HIMSELF and who PLEASES GOD. The challenge is for each of us as we go back to school, into work and into our homes, to follow Solomon's example to BE WISE, seeking God for the wisdom only he can give.

The challenge is for each of us... to follow Solomon's example to BE WISE, seeking God for the wisdom only he can give.

PRAYER OPTIONS

Use the prayers below as a guide for integrating prayer into your church service.

Teach me to do your will... and guide me on a straight path

PRAYER OPTION 1

Read Psalm 143:10 (GNB) aloud together as a prayer:

You are my God;
Teach me to do your will.
Be good to me,
And guide me on a straight path. Amen.

Invite children and school staff to come forward to name their school and light a candle (or a battery tea light which they can hold). Explain that they are like lights for God in their school. With the candles lit, pray for the children and the leaders of each school to be wise, to know right from wrong, to know that they can talk to God and ask him for what they need.

PRAYER OPTION 2

We suggest that representatives of the church family are involved in saying these prayers, including children, young people, school staff, parents, grand-parents.



CHILD Wise children make their fathers proud of them; foolish ones bring their mothers grief. Proverbs 10:1

Heavenly Father, thank you for our parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, for the people we live with and the people who care for us. Thank you for their love and care. Forgive us when we don't listen, and disobey. Please help us to be wise by listening to them and by wanting to make them proud.



TEENAGER Sensible people accept good advice. People who talk foolishly will come to ruin. Proverbs 10:8

Lord God, thank you for our teachers and older people who can offer us good advice. Help us, God, to be willing to listen and learn from others, and not always think that we know best.



CHILD Never say anything that isn't true. Have nothing to do with lies and misleading words. Proverbs 4:24

Father God, please forgive us when we tell lies. Help us to be trustworthy and honest people who always tell the truth.



TEENAGER It is foolish to speak scornfully of others. If you are smart, you will keep quiet. Proverbs 11:12

Father God, we ask forgiveness for the way we sometimes put others down and make fun of them. May the way we speak to others at school and at home always reflect your love and kindness.

PRAYER OPTIONS



CHILD If you want people to like you, forgive them when they wrong you. Remembering wrongs can break up a friendship. Proverbs 17:9

Thank you, God, that through Jesus you always forgive us when we do wrong. Help us to remember this and forgive others in the same way you forgive us.



ADULT An angry person stirs up conflict, and a hot-tempered person commits many sins. Proverbs 29:22

Father God, please help us to be peacemakers wherever we are – in our classroom, in the staff room, in the office, factory, or in our street with our next-door-neighbours.

ACTIVITY

WISDOM IS ...

Print the following on strips of paper. Ask volunteers to read them out in turn, either standing where they are in the congregation, or coming out the front. Afterwards they can be stuck onto a large strip of paper.

Wisdom is... trusting in God

Wisdom is... being a good friend

Wisdom is... reading the Bible

Wisdom is... including others

Wisdom is... listening

Wisdom is... talking to God

Wisdom is... giving your best

Wisdom is... making good choices

Wisdom is... telling the truth

Wisdom is... asking God for help

Wisdom is... saying thank you

Wisdom is... loving God

1 KINGS 3:1-5

Characters: Narrator, Solomon, Solomon's wife, two voices offstage to represent God and Solomon in his dream.

Props: Two signs saying 'Gibeon' and 'Jerusalem'.

Narrator: Solomon made a treaty with Pharaoh King of Egypt and married his daughter.

(Solomon and his wife move over towards the stage area.)

Solomon brought her to live in David's City until he finished building his palace, the Temple of the Lord, and the wall around Jerusalem. The people, however, were still sacrificing at the high places, because a temple had not yet been built for the Name of the Lord.

(Solomon's wife leaves the stage.)

Solomon loved the LORD (Solomon kneels and raises arms in worship) and followed the instructions of his father David, but – he also slaughtered animals and offered them as sacrifices on various altars.

(Solomon moves as Narrator speaks...)

On one occasion, he went to Gibeon to offer sacrifices because that was where the most famous altar was. He had offered thousands of burnt offerings there in the past. That night, at Gibeon, Solomon fell asleep.

(Solomon lies down).

The LORD appeared to him in a dream, and said:

God's voice: Ask for whatever you want me to give you.

Narrator: Solomon answered:

S's voice: You always showed great love for my father David, your servant, and he was good, loyal and honest in his relationship with you. And you have continued to show him your great and constant love by giving him a son – me! – who today rules in his place. O LORD God, you have let me, your servant, succeed my father as king, even though I am very young and I don't know how to rule. Here I am among the people you have chosen to be your own, a people who are so many that they cannot be counted. So give me the wisdom I need to rule your

PLEASES GOD

DRAMATISED BIBLE PASSAGE

people with justice and to know the difference between right and wrong. Otherwise, how would I ever be able to rule this great people of yours?

Narrator: The Lord was pleased that Solomon has asked for this, and so he said to him:

God's voice: Because you have asked for the wisdom to rule justly, instead of long life for yourself, or riches, or the death of your enemies, I will do what you asked. I will give you more wisdom and understanding than anyone has ever had before or will ever have again. I will also give you what you have not asked for: all your life you will have wealth and honour, more than that of any other king. And if you obey me and keep my laws and commands, as your father David did, I will give you a long life.

Narrator: Solomon woke up

(Solomon stretches and sits up)

and realised that God had spoken to him in a dream. Then he went to Jerusalem

(walks towards JERUSALEM sign)

and stood in front of the Lord's Covenant Box and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings to the LORD (mimes). After that he gave a feast for all his officials.

We thank
SU Scotland
for much of
this content.

**Be
wise!**

Trust the Lord with all your heart.

Never rely on what you think you know.

Remember the Lord in everything you do, and

he will show you the right way. *Proverbs 3:5-6*

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