

CHILDREN'S STORY HOUR Solomon's decision

By Janaan Manternach
NC News Service

Solomon was king of Israel. He was a young man, eager to rule well.

One day Solomon went to pray at a famous shrine. The Lord appeared to him in a dream during the night.

"Solomon, ask something of me and I will give it to you," God said.

"Lord," Solomon replied, "you were very good to my father, King David. Now you have made me king to succeed my father. I am just a youth. I'm not sure at all how to act as king. So, give me an understanding heart. Then I will be able to judge your people and to know right from wrong."

The Lord was pleased with Solomon's request. God said to Solomon, "Because you asked not for long life, nor for riches, nor for more power but for an understanding heart so you could know what is right, I will give you your wish. I give you a heart so understanding that there has never before been anyone like you."

"In addition I give you what

you have not asked for — riches and honor. And if you keep my commandments as your father David did, I will give you a long life."

Solomon woke up and went back to Jerusalem. There he offered sacrifices to God and had a banquet for his servants.

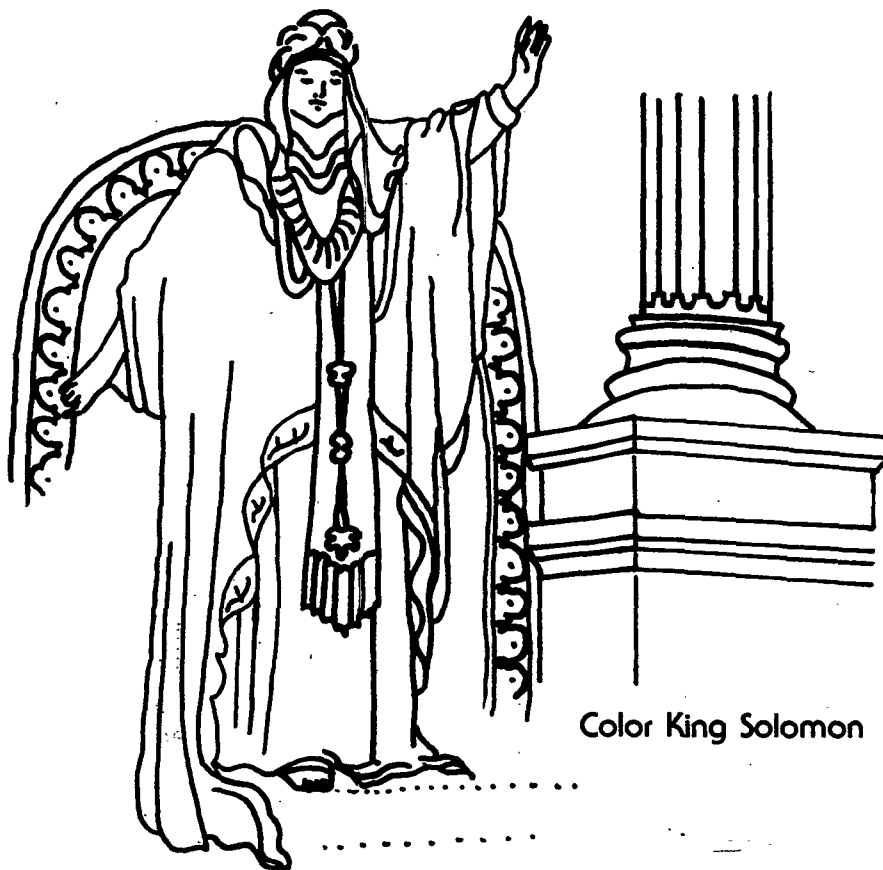
Later two women came to him. They would give Solomon the first test of his wisdom.

"King Solomon," one began, "this other woman and I live in the same house. We each had a baby just three days apart. During the night this woman's son died. Later while I was sleeping, she took my son and put her dead son in his place. When I woke up in the morning, I saw right away that the dead baby was not my son."

The other woman denied this. "It is not so! The living one is my son!"

Solomon listened and watched. For a time he said nothing. Then he ordered one of his servants to bring him a sword and gave the servant this order: "Cut the living child in two. Give half to one woman and half to the other."

One woman became very upset.



Color King Solomon

She fell on her knees and pleaded with King Solomon: "Please do not kill the child. Rather give the living child to her."

The other woman coldly said to the king: "The child shall be neither mine nor hers. Go ahead and kill it."

King Solomon ordered the servant to put away his sword and said: "Give the child to the

woman who begged me not to kill it. For she is the mother."

News of Solomon's judgment in this case spread everywhere and people saw what great wisdom God had given their new king.

(Ms. Manternach is the author of catechetical works, scripture stories and original stories for children.)

Missing Vowels

Fill in the vowels in the phrases below. All of the phrases are contained in this week's children's story.

1. K _ ng _ f _ sr _ _ l
2. w _ nt t _ pr _ y
3. kn _ w r _ ght fr _ m wr _ ng
4. g _ v _ y _ _ _ lng ' l f _
5. j _ st thr _ _ _ d _ ys _ p _ rt
6. l _ st _ n _ d _ nd w _ tch _ d
7. d _ n _ t k _ ll th _ ch _ ld
8. wh _ t gr _ _ t w _ sd _ m

Answers: 1. King of Israel, 2. went to pray, 3. know right from wrong, 4. give you a long life, 5. just three days apart, 6. listened and watched, 7. do not kill the child, 8. what great wisdom.

HOW ABOUT YOU?

Do you think it is a good thing to be wise? Why? Why not?

Children's Reading Corner

Wisdom is sometimes described as "seeing what is right in front of you." Owls are often referred to as wise. In the story titled "The Little Wood Duck," by Brian Wildsmith, nearly everyone, including the youngest duck's mother, fails to see why the little duck doesn't swim like the others. The only one who sizes up the situation is an owl who listens to the little duck and looks him over carefully. Read the story with someone. Afterward, talk about those who poked fun and laughed at the little duck. Why was each one unwise? How can you become wiser in the ways you treat other people? (Oxford University Press, Walton St., Oxford, England, OX 2 6DP, 1983. Paperback, \$3.95.)



Discovery

Guiding children along the road of Christian discovery is the highest priority of Father Forest McAllister, O.F.M. With funding from the Catholic Church Extension Society, he serves the spiritual needs of those who live in isolated communities high in New Mexico's mountainous terrain.

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