



THE WISDOM BIRD

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In this story based on Jewish and African tales, the Queen of Sheba travels a great distance to meet King Solomon, who is known far and wide for his wisdom. During her visit, both the queen and king learn important lessons from a little bird.

The Queen of Sheba journeys to Jerusalem to meet Solomon, great King of Israel, and determine for herself: does he live up to his reputation? “You have great knowledge,” says the queen, “but show me what you can do with it.” What are the differences between knowledge and wisdom? How does the hoopoe show Solomon that he has made a poor decision? How does Solomon correct his error? These and other questions are some that you and your children can explore. What a beautiful way for the young to come to the realization that knowledge is only a foundation for wisdom, and that true wisdom must include kindness, compassion, insight, understanding, and generosity of spirit.

The Wisdom Bird relates one of a myriad of stories about King Solomon and is one of many that involve the Queen of Sheba. What a wonderful opportunity for children to create a “Solomon story”—fanciful or serious—of their own. A quiet Friday night *Shabbat* dinner might be the perfect time for your children to tell or read their unique story.

KING SOLOMON

Solomon, son of King David, was ruler of the united Kingdom of Israel for nearly forty years, beginning about 970 B.C.E.; he was responsible for building the first Temple in Jerusalem. Solomon was famous as a magician: he was said to be able to converse with animals, some of which so loved him that they voluntarily entered his palace, hoping to be chosen for his next meal! King Solomon was highly renowned for his wisdom. In one famous story recounting his insight, King Solomon settles an argument concerning who is the true mother of a baby: Solomon suggests the baby be divided in two, whereupon one woman shows her maternal love by offering to give up the baby.

The Song of Songs, also called *Song of Solomon*, is the shortest book of the Bible. Some attribute the writing to Solomon; others believe it was dedicated to the king by its author. Reading as a passionate love story between a man and a woman, some say it is an allegory for the unique relationship between God and Israel. Pj