

13. The Wisdom of Solomon – Part 2

INTRODUCTION

Remind the children of their previous learning about the wisdom of Solomon. Provide a definition of wisdom, such as:

'The proper use of the full range of your life's experiences.'
(Tony Buzan)

Provide them with some puzzles to ponder. Perhaps these were things that the Queen of Sheba wondered about:

- Is there an important difference between just acquiring knowledge and learning skills on the one hand *and gaining wisdom* on the other?
- Can you learn wisdom from a book or a computer?
- How long do you think it takes to become wise?
- What's the point of learning 'stuff' like what your teachers teach you?
- What do you need in addition to your growing knowledge of (all sorts of) 'facts' to help you to do useful things?
- What EXTRA skill might you need to learn in addition to using your knowledge if you are to make a wise judgment?

Point out that one skill people often talk about in relation to wisdom is the skill of learning to understand more about how other people 'tick', that is, how a situation is likely to be felt and understood by another person – how they are likely to react. We learn this sort of thing gradually *as we get to know ourselves as well as other people better.*

ACTIVITY

Make sets of separate cards for each of the following things to consider when making an important decision about something they would like to do, and distribute to the children in small groups:

1. Will I learn something useful from doing it?
2. Is it likely to be dangerous – to me or someone else?
3. Will I hurt or upset someone if I do it?
4. Will it really make me happy?
5. Will it help someone else?
6. Is it a good use of my time?
7. Will it be fun?
8. How will other people react?
9. Will I get into trouble?

10. What might be the long-term consequences of my action?
11. Will I regret doing it?
12. Will it involve being disloyal to someone who trusts me?

Encourage the groups to talk about the relative importance of each question: how far would it matter if the answer is 'yes' or 'no' in each case? Ask them to order the questions in terms of their importance, with the most important at the top. Some questions can go alongside each other if the groups want.

After some time, get some feedback from the groups about the reasons for their choices.

ACTIVITY

Let the children know that there are stories about wise people from all parts of the world and not all of these 'sages', as we call them, lived long ago. In our country, before we had modern medicine there were wise women who could be found in every village. They knew a lot about the healing properties of common and not so common plants and herbs. They often had wisdom about people's relationships and advice on how to make good choices.

Tell one or more of the following stories:

- [Lessons from a Donkey](https://haqislam.org/lessons-from-a-donkey/) [a Muslim story that finishes with five simple rules to be happy]: <https://haqislam.org/lessons-from-a-donkey/>
- [Human Kindness in Islam](https://haqislam.org/human-kindness-in-islam/) [from 'Muslim Manners' by Iqbal Ahmad Azami]: <https://haqislam.org/human-kindness-in-islam/>
- [Are we this foolish?](https://haqislam.org/are-we-this-foolish/) [The Story of Mullah Nasruddin and his Ring and The Idiot, the Wise Man and The Jug]: <https://haqislam.org/are-we-this-foolish/>

Encourage the children to engage in one or more of the following activities:

- Re-write any of these stories in our own words, print them out and mount them on paper with a Muslim art pattern border, e.g. from <http://clipart-library.com/islamic-border.html>
- Produce an illustrated version of one of the stories.
- Produce a performance of one of the stories with a reading accompanied by quiet 'Arabic-sounding' music composed and performed by some of their peers.
- Read the story of King Midas as an example of a *foolish* king, e.g. from <http://www.primaryresources.co.uk/english/kingmidas.htm>

CONCLUSIONS

Encourage the children to reflect on what they have learned about wisdom in the last two sessions and to look out for examples of wisdom and foolishness in the coming week's news. Point out that what might be wise in one time and place might not be so wise in another. And that sometimes it's hard to make judgements about the wisest course of action because we can only make an educated guess about how things will turn out.