

SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINES

JUDGES 13-16



KEY PASSAGE: 2 Chronicles 7:14

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: *What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.*

CHRIST CONNECTION: Samson's great strength came from God alone. He had no power to defeat the Philistines on his own. We cannot please God on our own. Through faith in Jesus, people are saved from sin and receive the Holy Spirit, who helps them live to please God.

STORY POINT: Samson learned that strength comes from God alone.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

The life of Samson showcases the downfall of a mighty hero whose story draws some similarities to Jesus. Samson's shortcomings, however, reveal the need for a greater deliverer. Only by faith in the Son of God can we please our Father in heaven and get a proper view of where true strength comes from.

What comparisons and contrasts can we make between Samson and Jesus? What can Christians glean about the source of their strength?

In Samson's story, the angel of the Lord delivered the news that a woman who was unable to conceive would have a son. This has similarities to the New Testament's even greater account of the miraculous conception of Jesus to the virgin Mary. We later read that Delilah, whom Samson loved, was bribed with silver to betray him into the hands of his enemies, just as Judas did to Jesus. Both Samson and Jesus were called to bring salvation to God's people amid the oppression they faced, though only Jesus was able to do so in a lasting way by perfectly obeying God's commands.

Samson's strength came from the Spirit of God and Samson's adherence to the angel's command that he not cut his hair. As a Nazirite, Samson was called to be set apart in holy service to God, though he disobeyed God's call to abstain from the unclean and idolatrous ways of the world. The downfall of Samson revealed the need for a greater hero who could fulfill God's commands and deliver His people once and for all.

Though Samson was an esteemed warrior, his strength was not his own; it came from God who called him to walk in holiness. Like Samson, we cannot please God on our own. We need the power of His Spirit to help us walk in His ways (Galatians 5:16). Jesus is the better Samson—our perfect sacrifice who suffered in our place to create lasting transformation amid our helpless and hopeless state. Lead boys and girls to see that when we place our trust in Jesus, the Holy Spirit dwells within us, allowing us to walk victoriously in faith.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Guide kids to open their Bibles to Judges 13. Remind kids that the Bible is filled with stories about imperfect people, like Samson, who God used for His glory. Through their stories, God shows us more about Himself and how all people need Jesus as their Savior.

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Judges 13:5 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ Before Samson was born, he was called by God to be a judge for Israel. Do you remember what the angel of the Lord told Samson’s mother? **[Allow responses.]** The angel told Samson’s mother to never cut his hair. The angel also gave some other commands for Samson to follow because he was set apart by God for a special purpose. As Samson grew up, the Lord was with Samson and gave him great strength. He defeated armies and tore apart lions.

But then Samson met Delilah, and he loved her. What did the Philistines ask Delilah to do? **[Allow responses.]** They asked Delilah to figure out where Samson’s strength came from so they could defeat him. Each time Delilah asked Samson where his strength came from, he lied to her. Finally, Samson told her the truth: ‘My hair has never been cut, because I am a Nazirite to God from birth. If I am shaved, my strength will leave me, and I will become weak and be like any other man.’ Delilah betrayed Samson and had someone cut Samson’s hair while he slept. Then, the Bible tells us, that the Lord left Samson. Without the Lord, Samson was weak and was captured by the Philistines.

Later, when Samson was standing between two pillars in the Philistines’ temple, Samson prayed for God to give him strength one more time. What do you think Samson learned when he was able to push down the pillars? **[Allow responses.]** **Samson learned that strength comes from God alone.** Samson’s hair never held any power. God alone had given Samson strength. Samson had no power to defeat the Philistines on his own. We cannot please God on our own. Through faith in Jesus, people are saved from sin and receive the Holy Spirit, who helps them live to please God. ”

2 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Prompt kids to discuss:

1. How can we hold on to our faith when we make mistakes?
2. Why is having faith in Jesus the only way to please God?

3 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Finish It” activity page.

SAY “Today, we will see how God called a man named Samson to be a judge. We’ll learn that Samson was known for his great strength.”

4 **GROUP DISCUSSION** (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “God gave Samson special strength. God gives His people gifts as well. What gifts do you think God has given you?”

Challenge each kid to share gifts they might have such as athletic gifts, artistic gifts, musical gifts, social gifts, etc. Discuss how God also gives followers of Jesus spiritual gifts to help build up the church and glorify God.

SAY “Samson gave his life to rescue the Israelites from the Philistines. Who gave His life to save people forever?”

Remind kids of Jesus’ self-sacrifice on the cross for our sin. Discuss how Samson’s death was limited to a physical rescue as Israel was freed from physical oppression. Tell kids that Jesus’ sacrifice frees or saves people from sin for all time. Discuss how faith in Jesus also leads to the gift of the Holy Spirit who helps us live to please God as we rely on His power.

SAY “How does God give Christians strength?”

Discuss how God gives believers strength through the power of the Holy Spirit at work within them. Tell kids this is not necessarily a physical strength, like Samson, but it is a spiritual strength to follow God and His ways. Help kids understand how the Holy Spirit empowers believers to follow God, share the gospel, turn from sin, produce good fruit, and love others.

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**



ACTIVY OPTION 3 from next page: **STYLE IT**

Provide each kid with a piece of cardstock, markers, and scissors. Invite kids to draw a picture of their head and face on the cardstock. Then lead kids to cut out their heads. Using a hole punch, assist kids in punching holes around the edge of their heads. Provide kids with different colors of yarn and chenille craft stems. Guide kids to string the yarn and chenille craft stems through the holes to create hair. Kids may need help tying the yarn or twisting the chenille craft stems to secure the pieces of “hair.” Encourage kids to be creative and style their hair how they like, making it long or short, different colors, or even curly. Chenille craft stems can be manipulated to create curls. Invite kids to share their hairstyles with the group.

SAY *You took great care in creating your hairstyles. Today, we will see how Samson needed to take special care of his hair. God had chosen Samson to be set apart to serve Him. Because of this, Samson was never to cut his hair. Let’s see what happened when Samson’s hair was cut.*



LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: MATCH THE JUDGE



Before the session, print a set of 12 cards from the “Match the Judge” printable for each group of two to four kids. Cut the cards from the printable. Distribute the cards to each group and direct kids to turn the cards face down in three rows of four.

Challenge kids in each group to take turns flipping over two cards, one at a time, to find a match. If kids find a match, they remove the matching cards and take another turn. If they do not find a match, the cards are set back down and the next kid takes a turn. The kid with the most matches in each group wins. Play again as time allows.

SAY “Over the past few weeks, we have learned about the judges Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon, and Samson. What did God call these judges to do? [Allow responses.] God called these judges to save His people from their enemies. No judge was perfect. They all sinned. But they do point us to the perfect Judge—Jesus—who came to save people from their sins once and for all.”

OPTION 2: THE ABCD OF JUDGES

On a dry erase board, write the following letters and words: *A abandon, B bondage, C cried, D delivered*. Provide each kid with a paper plate and guide them to divide the plate into four sections. Direct kids to write each letter and word in individual sections of their plate. Tell kids what each word means and how it relates to the cycle we see in Judges. For example, *bondage* relates to how the Israelites were ruled by their enemies. Then provide each kid with a metal brad and a paper clip to create a spinner. The paperclip will be held to the center of the plate by placing the brad through the paper clip and pushing the brad through the plate. Invite kids to flick the spinner. Call on a kid and ask what letter he landed on. Then ask him a question regarding the letter. For example, if he landed on *D*, you can ask, “What judge helped deliver God’s people from Sisera’s army?” (*Deborah*) Repeat as time allows.

SAY “The book of Judges reminds us that all people are sinful and need to be saved. While these judges helped rescue God’s people, only Jesus can take away our sin forever.”

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Who can I tell about this story?

Be sure to send the sheets home with the kids along with the activity pages so parents can continue to discuss the Bible story with their kids. If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page. Pray for your group.