

Scripture Reading: Joshua 1

Introducing the Joshua/Judges Series! Throughout the next few weeks, we will adventure with the children of Israel as they claim their new Canaan home! We will learn about some of the men and women who judged Israel. The Bible is the not boring and it contains so many lessons that apply to our lives! We hope you have fun on this Canaan journey!

The children of Israel were finally ready to march into the land of Canaan, the place God promised Abraham 400 years earlier, and God had a message for Joshua and the people.

We are taught to always respectfully listen to the words of our parents, teachers, friends, and the preacher, but it is even more imperative (very, very important) that we not only listen to God's messages but hear what He says.

Lesson Discussion

Memory Verse

Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.

Joshua 1:9

Key Thought

God's messages, given through the words of the Bible and the still small voice in our ear, are of vital importance and contain life-changing lessons.

- To whom did God give a message in our lesson?
- Did the people respond favorably to God's message?
- What four main messages did God give Joshua? Discuss them.
- Why is obedience to God's word so important? Are there benefits? Are there consequences for disobedience? What are they?

God never wastes His words. Everything He says is true and *will* happen.

God's message to Joshua was this: "Arise, go over Jordan. Every place the sole of your foot walks on, I will give it to you, just like I told Moses. No man will be able to stand against you all the days of your life. Just like I was with Moses, I will be with you. I will not fail you or forsake you. Be strong and very courageous. Obey my law exactly. Do not turn right or left away from it. Think about my law and live it. When you do this, you will have good success."

Joshua immediately took God's message and passed it to the children of Israel. This was their response: "Everything you have told us, we will do. Just like we listened to Moses, we will listen to you." Food was prepared, and the people got ready to pass over Jordan.

God's message to Joshua was like a lunch box packed full of good food.

These are some of the lessons it contained:

Get Up!: God told Joshua to "Arise." Laziness never accomplishes anything. Some people are morning people and jump right out of bed in the morning, ready to face the day. Others are a little slower to arise. Whether you are a morning person or a night person, there comes a time when you have to GET UP, swing your legs over the side of the bed, stand up, and start moving!

God's Gifts: God is a giver! He isn't stingy or selfish. The first chapter of Joshua mentions the word "give" nine times. Among God's gifts is His promised presence—He will always be there and be our friend. He promised to help us when things get hard. He promised to give us peace. He wants us to enjoy our lives and the gifts He gives (see Joshua 1:15).

Don't Be Afraid—Be Strong: When God is on our side, we don't ever have to be afraid or weak-kneed because we will always win and never be on the losing team! Sometimes, staying on God's side is hard work; we have to be different from the world, but not being on God's side is even harder work. The devil is not a nice guy. His people run scared, and he never gives peace or help when it is needed.

Obedience: God requires complete obedience to His words. This is where many people have a problem. They want God to be their friend and want His help, but they don't want to obey His words or think about them.

Remember, good success and safety from harm is the reward for obedience to God.

COMMANDMENTS AND PROMISES

Review the portion of the lesson where God commanded Joshua and list them on the right. List the promises God made on the left. Isn't it encouraging to see that as many times as God asked something of Joshua, He also promised to be with him?

	Commandments:		Promises:	
1		1		
2		2		
3		3		
4		4		
5.		5		

LISTENING FOR GOD Teachers:

Read this portion of text for your students. Discuss why it is important to listen for God's voice.

Close their eyes and stay completely silent for one minute. It is very important to close your eyes. That doesn't sound like a long time, but it's plenty of time when you're being quiet! Listen closely. Can you identify the things you hear? What did you hear? Would you have heard those things if we had come out here to play a game of tag? No, you wouldn't have paid attention to the sounds, because there would have been shouting, and talking, and laughing, and running going on. Was it difficult to be quiet for a full minute? Would it be difficult to be quiet for 10 minutes? How about for a full hour? It's not easy to be quiet, because we have so many things going on and so many "noises" in our lives. It's hard for us to hear God's voice in the middle of the noise. But, when you get quiet, when you look into God's Word and listen, He will give you direction and help you know that you are not alone.

The Beautiful Way (primary) and The Compass (junior) Sunday school literature can be downloaded at sundayschoolliterature.com or churchofgodeveninglight.com/beautiful-way. Please email questions or input to gellenbeck.lindsey@gmail.com. Contributor: Sister Julie Elwell

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Joshua and the Judges Series
Rahab, Two Spies, and God

Faith Beats Fear

Scripture Reading: Joshua 2, Joshua 6:25, Matthew 1:5, James 2:25, Hebrews 11:31 Rahab was a Canaanite woman who lived in Jericho, a city

protected all the way around by three layers of very thick and very high stone walls, one of the walls against which her house was built. The news buzzing through Jericho was that the great army of Israelite people were now camped outside their walls.

One day, two young men entered Jericho, sent by Joshua to spy out the city. Much like our hotels today, Rahab's house was set up so travelers could spend the night, which these two young spies did; however, they were not to rest in peace. Someone told the king of Jericho that two spies from Israel and had entered the city and were lodging in Rahab's inn. The king sent this message to Rahab: "Bring me the men who have come into your house, for they are spies."

Memory Verse

What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. (When I am afraid I will trust in You.) Psalm 56:3

Key Thought

Having faith in God, even in fearful situations, will keep us safe.

Rahab, perhaps with heart pounding wildly,

Lesson Discussion

- Who was Rahab, where did she live, and was she a woman who had "always done things right?"
- Were the Canaanites afraid of the Israelites? Why?
- Which was greater, Rahab's fear of the king of Jericho catching her or her belief in the God of the Hebrews? Did her faith cause her to act or just sit still and do nothing?
- What kinds of situations make you a little fearful? Do you believe God is bigger than your situation and your fears?

took the men to the roof of her house and hid them under piles of flax plants. Would the king's men find them and not only kill them but kill her for her traitorous actions? Rahab told the king, "Two men did come to my house, but I do not know where they came from. As it was getting dark, they left, but I

DID YOU KNOW?!

Canaan was the name of Noah's grandson. Over nine hundred years later, Canaan's family had grown to many people who lived in a land named after him—the land of Canaan.

don't know where they went. Hurry and follow them so you can catch them." The king's men hurriedly left the city, but they could not find the men.

In the meantime, Rahab went back on the roof. She told the spies, "Everyone has heard about how your God dried the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt. We heard about how you completely conquered our neighbors. The people of this land have no more courage; our hearts have melted in us because of fear." Rahab continued,

"But I know God has given you this land. The Lord your God, He is God in heaven above and in earth beneath."

She then asked the spies to promise her in the name of their God that, since she had shown them kindness by protecting them and hiding them, when they came to fight against Jericho that they would save her and her family.

The spies said, "We promise, we will save you and deal kindly with you if you do not tell anyone about our business here. Hang a scarlet cord out of your window. When we see it, we will know where you are, and you will be saved." Rahab then threw the scarlet cord out her window, and the men escaped the city by climbing down.

When the walls of Jericho fell a few days later and everything in the city was destroyed, the young men went in and rescued Rahab, bringing her and her family to safety.

Although afraid, Rahab did not believe the dead gods of her country or the strong rock walls surrounding her city would save her. She believed so strongly in the God of the Hebrews—the One true God of heaven and earth—that her faith caused her to act in spite of her fear.

Her faith caused her to act and her actions were the means of her salvation. ■



RAHAB'S FAMILY TREE

"And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse; And Jesse begat David the king....And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." Matthew 1:5, 6, 16

You might be wondering what in the world this verse has to do with our lesson—and what do all those "begats" mean, anyway? Let's state the verse a different

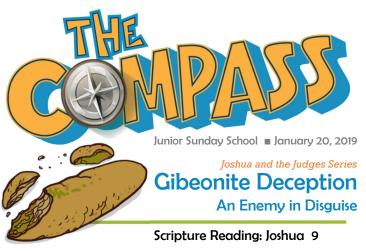
way: **Salmon** was the father of **Boaz**, whose mother was **Rahab**. **Boaz** was the father of **Obed**, whose mother was Ruth. Obed was the father of **Jesse**, who was the father of **King David**. Many generations passed and then we learn that Mary, the mother of **JESUS**, was married to Joseph.

Do you know what a family tree is? Matthew 1 is the family tree of Jesus. Normally, the Jews only kept track of the names of the fathers. However, God felt it was important to include Rahab in this list. She had lived in sin, but because of her great faith in God, He forgave her. After she was saved from Jericho, she married a Hebrew prince, a man named Salmon. Rahab eventually became the great-great grandmother of King David. She was also named in the lineage of Jesus! No sin is greater than God's mercy!

UNSCRAMBLE! Rearrange the letters below to spell the names of those in Rahab's family tree.									
Mother									
AARBH									
Father									
LOASNM									
Son									
AOZB									
Grandson									
BODE									
Great Grandson									
SESEJ									
Great-great Grandson									
GNKI DDIAV									
King of kings!									
EUSSJ									

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The strong walls of Jericho had crumbled to the ground in the first great victory by the Israelites in the land of Canaan. God had commanded them to march around the city one time each day for six days, and on the seventh day, they marched around seven times, blowing their trumpets at Joshua's command. Only Rahab and her family were saved from the destruction of Jericho.

Many mighty men lived in Jericho's neighboring city of Gibeon. When they heard about the unusual and great victory of the Hebrew people at Jericho and remembered how their unseen God had parted the Red Sea and sent many plagues in Egypt, these strong men were afraid.

Who could stand against this God who had so much power?

They knew God was powerful enough to destroy them. So they made a plan to trick Joshua and the princes of Israel into making an

Memory Verse

Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths. Proverbs 3:5-6

Key Thought

Always ask God. Never make a promise you can't keep. Belief in God saves us. They put on worn and tattered clothes. They

This was their plan:

alliance with them.

Lesson Discussion

- What did the Gibeonites do to trick Joshua and why did they do it?
- Did Joshua and the princes of Israel respond the way they should have?

What did they do right, and what did they do wrong?

- Even though it may have been wrong for the Gibeonites to deceive Joshua, why did they do it, and what was the outcome?
- Why should our first response to a situation always be prayer?

put old sandals on their feet and old sacks on their donkeys. They even got dried-out and moldy bread to carry in their sacks and perhaps even smeared a little dirt on their faces. They then made the short three-day journey downhill to the camp of the Israelites in Gilgal. They slumped tiredly as they came into camp to make it appear as if they had been traveling for weeks.

When Joshua asked these men where they were from and what they wanted, this is what they said: "We have come from a far away country. We have heard reports of your God and our king sent us to make peace with you." They showed Joshua the moldy bread, which they said was "still warm out of the oven when we left home." They said their sandals were worn out because their trip had taken so long.

Joshua made a mistake at this point. He listened to the report of the Gibeonites, but he did not ask God what he should do. God had told Joshua very clearly not to make peace with any of the inhabitants of the land and to destroy them—we will talk more about why in another lesson. However, peace was made and the men of Gibeon drew a big sigh of relief. Three days later, their deception was discovered.

The Israelite people were angry with their leaders, but Joshua said,

"We made a promise to them in the name of the Lord and we will not go back on it."

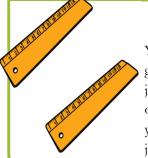
Instead, they told the Gibeonites, "You will be our slaves. From this day forward, you will chop wood and haul water for the house of our God." The Gibeonites willingly agreed—after all, being a slave was better than being killed. We do not read in the Bible that this agreement was ever broken.

Three very important lessons can be gleaned from this story:

1. We live in what is called the "Information Age." We have books, computers, and cell phones. We can easily find answers to our questions. But these sources cannot see the future and do not know our hearts.

We should always ask God first what He wants us to do when we have questions.

- 1. Keeping our promises is important! Psalms 15 says that when we promise something we should keep it, even if it hurts us to do so.
- 2. Belief in the powerful God of heaven and earth was what saved the Gibeonites (much like Rahab's belief in God saved her). When we believe in God enough to give our lives to Him, we will also be saved.

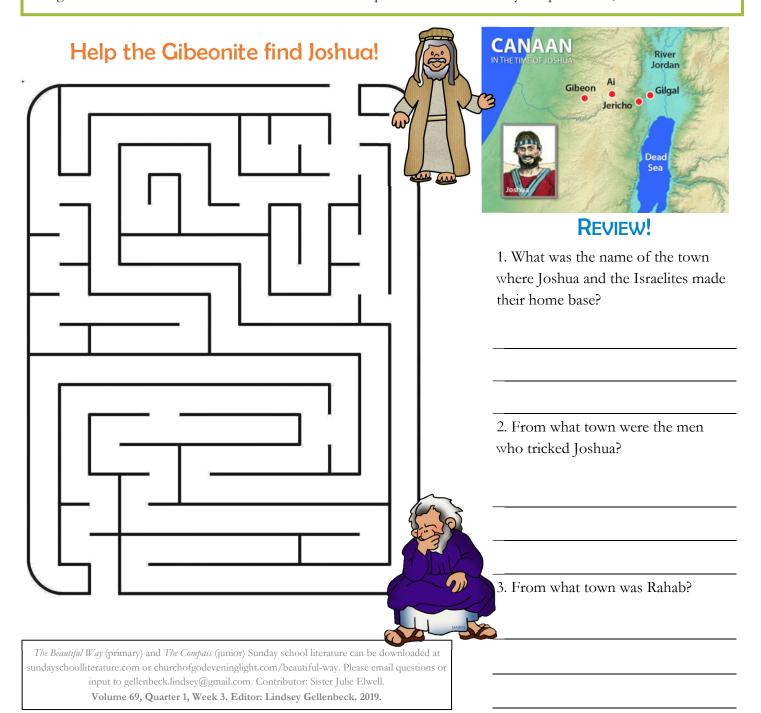


KEEP YOUR PROMISES!

You only need two long sticks or two rulers. Show the sticks to the children and tell them you are going to make them a promise. The promise is that you will put the sticks about two feet apart and jump over both of them. Move the sticks a little farther apart and promise again that you will jump over them. Make sure you will be able to keep your promise. Next, spread the sticks far enough apart you know you will be unable to jump over them both with one jump. This time, don't promise to jump over them, but ask the children what they would think if you made the promise to jump over

them. Let the children spread the sticks apart and themselves and take turns promising and then jumping over the sticks, stopping when they know they can no longer promise to do so.

Never make promises you cannot keep! People will not trust what you say if you always promise and then do not follow through. Psalms 15:4 tells us that if we want to live in God's presence we should always keep our word, even if it's hard.





Joshua and the Judges Series

God—Creator and Commander of Heaven and Earth The Sun Stands Still at Gibeon Scripture Reading: Joshua 10:1-15 "Sun Stand Still."

This incredible request was made by Joshua to God in one of the most extraordinary battles the Israelites fought in their conquest of Canaan.

The Gibeonites had just tricked Joshua into agreeing not to kill them but also agreed to be their slaves. When the Canaanite king of Jerusalem heard how the great city of Gibeon and its mighty men had made peace with the Israelites, he was fearful. (This was before the Israelites controlled Jerusalem!) He gathered four other kings and went to fight the men of Gibeon. The men of Gibeon did not stand a chance against all these armies and immediately sent word to Joshua. "Help us," they pleaded!

Joshua and the army of Israel marched all night in a difficult and twisting climb of 18 to 20 miles.

Memory Verse

Ah Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretched out arm, and there is nothing to hard for thee.

Jeremiah 32:17

Key Thought

GOD CREATED THE
EARTH. He measures the
water in the palm of His
hand, measures the
heavens with His fingers,
puts the dust of the earth
in a basket and knows the
weight of the mountains
and hills.

God said, "Do not be afraid.

Lesson Discussion

- Describe specifically how God fought for the Israelites against the five kings and their armies at Gibeon. What did He tell them about being afraid?
- Can anyone remember what the first verse in the Bible is (Genesis 1:1)?
- Name the theory the scientists use to explain the existence of the world.
 Does their evidence prove God didn't create the earth and heavens?
- What proof do we have that is greater than creation? Where does God still work?

I have given you the victory and not a single one of them will be able to stand up to you."

The soldiers of Joshua's army surprised the five kings in battle the following morning. As their enemies fled, God hurled large hailstones from heaven, killing even more of them than those who had died while battling the Israelites.

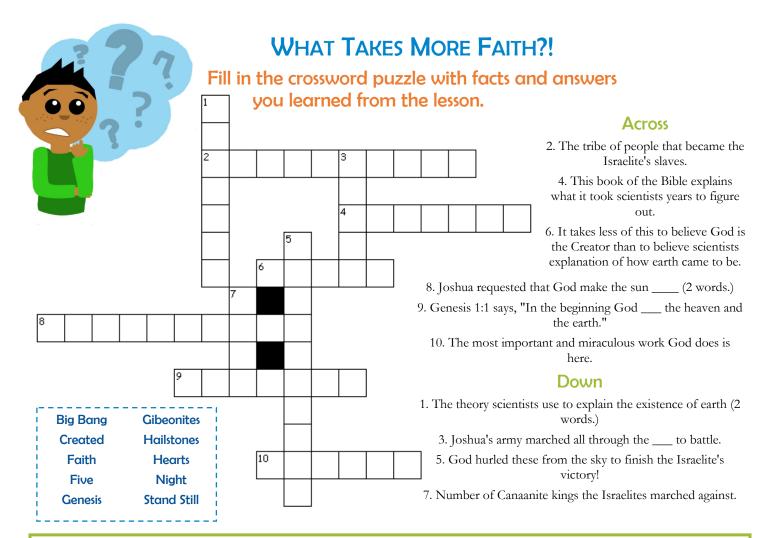
Joshua then made his incredible request to God, asking for the sun to stand still because more fighting was left to do before sunset. Amazingly, the sun stopped in the middle of the sky and did not go down for about a full day—God stopped our massive planet earth from rotating in space (Joshua 10:13)! There has never been another day like it before or since. God listened to the voice of a man, and darkness did not fall until Israel had destroyed all its enemies. God promised victory, and God always keeps His promises.

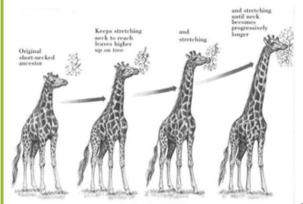
Let's think about God—the One who created the heaven and the earth and commands it completely. In today's world, there are many different ideas about how the universe was created. Most of these ideas exclude God's existence. It's easy to become confused when faced with so many conflicting ideas, especially when they are presented as the absolute truth and proven by science. The most commonly taught scientific explanation for creation is known as "The Big Bang Theory." In simple terms, they say the universe all started billions of years ago as one tiny, super-hot point of energy which exploded and expanded, creating all matter in the universe. Scientists say that this energy, this beginning of all life came from nothing or that an "unimaginable power" put it there.

What takes more faith? To believe that the entire universe came from nowhere or that there was a Creator, our God, that orchestrated the divine plan of creation.

We serve a God of order, of supreme intelligence, and every step of creation was planned by Him. Science doesn't disprove God's existence, but rather shows just how incredible His work of creation really was.

When we read Genesis and compare it to scientist's explanation of creation, we find something fascinating. The Bible spelled out steps of creation that scientists took thousands of years to discover and prove. Nearly every step of Genesis matches the process in which scientists say the Earth was formed. To go into detail on all the scientific proofs of God's creation story could fill many books, but what is most important is that we understand that we are not simple or foolish for thinking God created the Earth. No, instead we believe in a God whose works are all around us. He doesn't stop there; He also reveals Himself in our own lives which is the greatest proof of all.





EVOLUTION!

This is one of the hottest and most controversial topics amongst Christians and in society. I'm sure you've all heard someone say that humans came from monkeys or that land animals evolved from fish which trace all the way back to tiny single celled creatures. It's true that fossils show us many types of different creatures, and we can even see how some of them changed over time. The first giraffes had very short necks, but over time they grew longer and longer to allow them to reach food in higher trees.

However, the Bible is very clear that God created distinct creatures, and He specifically made man in His image. Man did not evolve from the animals. When we look at the "proof" of evolution we find huge missing links in fossil records and discrepancies in the timeline that can't be explained by scientists. Now, were there fish before land animals? Were animals created before humans? Of course, that's exactly what Genesis tells us. God created Earth and all life in a certain order according to His plan. However, that does not mean we have to blindly buy into evolution. We need not be confused about what is true. When we examine all the evidence we can be confident in our belief in God and His works of creation.



Caleb's Bold Request:
Give Me This Mountain"
85 Years Strong

Scripture Reading: Numbers 14:24; Joshua 14:6-13

Eighty-five (85) years old probably seems old to you. Can you think of someone that age? How do you think about them?

Caleb was 85 years old when he spoke these great words, "Give me this mountain!"

Let's go back in time for a minute. Forty-five years earlier, Joshua and Caleb, along with ten other spies, explored the land of Canaan at Moses's request. The report ten of the spies brought back was filled with fear. "The people who live there are powerful and their cities are strong and very large. We even saw giants that made us look like grasshoppers." Their fearful report was contagious, and the whole camp of the Israelites cried throughout the night.

Caleb, one of the believing spies, silenced the people and said, "Let us go at once and take the land. God promised it to us, so we are well able to overcome it."

Memory Verse

I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me. Philippians 4:13

Key Thought

Our strength and help always comes from God; not ourselves. Elderly people are living evidence of God's day-by-day faithfulness to His children. Because of Caleb's courageous faith, God rewarded him,

Lesson Discussion

- When do we first learn of Caleb in the Bible?
- How did God define Caleb's character? (What did God say about him?)
- How old was Caleb when he told Joshua he wanted to fight (and defeat) the giants of the mountain?
- Talk about specific things you can do to completely follow God. Will you be different from the world?

saying, "My servant Caleb isn't like others. Because he has a different spirit in him and has followed me fully, I will bring him into the land he explored, and his descendants will possess it." True to God's word, Joshua and Caleb were the only two men over the age of 20 that God allowed to enter into Canaan. Every person over 20 years old were not allowed because of the many times they did not believe in God, even after everything He had done for them.

We don't hear of Caleb again until 45 years later. I like to imagine he and Joshua had many heart-to-heart talks and prayers for guidance and wisdom throughout those years. In his old age, Caleb came to Joshua with a bold request. He told his old friend, Joshua, and all the people that were gathered around, "God promised He would keep me alive, and here I am today, 85 years old, just like He promised. I am just as strong today as I was the day Moses sent us to spy out the land and just as vigorous to go to battle as I was then." Caleb continued, "Give me the mountain the Lord promised me that day. Joshua, you heard that the Anakims were there (the giants), and that their cities were large and strong, but with the Lord's help, I will drive them out just like He said." So, Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him the mountain for his inheritance—in other words, Joshua told Caleb that when he conquered the giants of the mountain (the city of Hebron), he and his family could live there. Caleb's family settled on Mount Hebron after it was conquered.

These characteristics of Caleb are noteworthy:

- 1. Caleb did not brag about his own strength. Rather, he gave God credit over and over again as being the One to help him and give him strength.
- 2. Caleb "had a different spirit and followed the Lord wholly." He believed in God so strongly that he was not "like everyone else." He lived for God with everything he had in him—he did not just "sort of" live for God.

Also, remember, if you know someone who is "old," do not just view them as slow, wrinkled, and grayheaded. At 85 years old, Caleb declared himself to be as strong as he was when he was 40 years old.

Strength is not just measured by who can run fastest. More importantly, it is measured by what is on the inside of a person—characteristics of belief in God, courage, love, and strength.

If you want to be a courageous and strong person when you get old, start now. Be a strong young person who dares to be different from everyone else and fully believes in and lives for God—like Caleb. ■

GIANTS THAT LIVE IN OUR MOUNTAINS

Pass out Post-it-Notes and have the children write a couple of their own personal "giants."

(Examples: Forgetting to pray, fighting with siblings, not listening to parents, cheating, lying, using bad language, not dressing modestly, listening to inappropriate music, being dishonest ---- or maybe it could be things like, being afraid of the dark, worries about the future, failing a test, being made fun of or laughed at, or being called on at school).

Affix the post-it notes on a wall as high as a giant might be (6 to 8 feet) tall. Take turns throwing marshmallows at the giants on the wall.

Discuss:

We won't overcome hard areas in our life by sitting in one place. We have to stand up and throw the

marshmallow. How do we do apply this spiritually? We pray. We ask God to give us strength. We ask Him to help us do better if we have failed.

Memorize I Corinthians 12:9, "My strength is made perfect in weakness," and remember that we need God's help—and He loves and wants to help us—to defeat our giants.



INTERESTING FACTS!

Hebron was the name of a city located on the mountain in which the Anakins lived and which Caleb requested Joshua give to him. Hebron was also:

- A city built seven years before the ancient Egyptian city Zoan was built—it was an old city!
- The city in which Abraham, father of the children of Israel, lived many years earlier, and it was where his wife, Sarah, died and was buried.
 - Jacob and Isaac lived in Hebron.

After Caleb overcame the giants and claimed the city, Hebron became:

- One of the Cities of Refuge (which we will learn about in another lesson).
- The city where King David became king of Judah and was his royal residence for seven and a half years before being anointed king over both Judah and Israel. It was an important city!

Who lived in Hebron and buried his wife there? King David was anointed king of Judah in	When we kill the giants of fear in our lives, we don't know how important those places of victory will become!
What were the names of the giants of the mountains?	Hebron later became a
Who killed the giants of Hebron?	

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Joshua and the Judges Series

Six Cities of Refuge Jesus is Our Shelter

Scripture Reading: Joshua 20:1-9

High in the Alpine mountains along the roads, there are small, square huts. They were built for

travelers when sudden storms, which so often sweep down from the snowy white mountains, threatened to overtake them. Over the doorways and sometimes in the ice are written the words, "Refuge No. 1," "Refuge No. 2," "Refuge No. 3," etc. These "refuge huts" bring to mind the Cities of Refuge illustrated in the Old Testament.

God commanded that six very special cities be chosen in the conquered land of Canaan to become "Cities of Refuge." What was their purpose? Let's imagine the following scenario (adapted from the example given in Deuteronomy 19:5-6):

Steve, an Israelite man, was in the woods cutting down trees with his friend, Dan. As Steve worked, the heavy head of his ax flew off the handle, hit Dan, and killed Steve did not hate Dan nor kill him on purpose—it was an accident! But Steve was afraid that

Memory Verse

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Psalm 46:1 **Key Thought**

SAFETY is only found in Jesus, our City of Refuge outside of Him, we are at risk of enemy attack.

Lesson Discussion

- What was a City of Refuge and who was it for?
- What example is given in Deuteronomy 19:5-6 of someone who could run to a City of Refuge?
- Can you remember the five characteristics of a City of Refuge? How do you relate these to God?
- Who is our refuge today? Can you list some other reasons we need to "run to Jesus" besides forgiveness of sins? (Think of things like when you are tired, scared, sad, being made fun of...)

the hearts of Dan's family would be so hot with anger and grief that they would kill him too. Steve knew there was a City of Refuge less than a day's journey away where he would be safe, so he ran as fast he could to this city. Once inside the city gates, he explained to the priests and elders what had happened. He was given a place to stay until a trial could be held. If he was judged to be innocent, Steve would be allowed to safely live within the city walls and be safe where Dan's family could not harm him. God commanded that Steve could only return to his home without fear of harm after the high priest of Israel died.

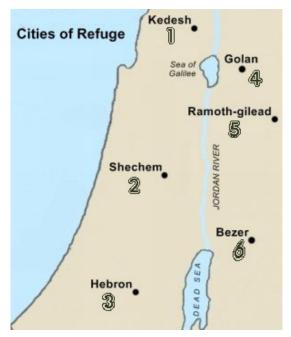
The Cities of Refuge were God's way of not only protecting innocent people like Steve, but they were also a way to make sure that no more blood would be spilled. God wanted as little killing in His land as possible!

Cities of Refuge Characteristics:

- 1. Six evenly-spaced cities of Refuge appointed—three on the east side of the river Jordan and three on the west side. Every person's home would have a city close by, requiring no more than one day's travel.
- 2. Smooth, wide, and level roads were built leading to the cities. No potholes or trees across the road were allowed so that there would be no hindrances in the flight of the pursued person.
- 3. EVERY pursued person could enter these cities, not just the Israelites. Strangers and travelers could also enter the city if they needed safety. God loves and values the safety of every person.
- The gates to the city were never locked—they were open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No waiting in lines for the city to "open" were necessary.
- 5. The cities were stocked with food shelter. They not only provided legal protection, but provided for the physical needs of the person seeking refuge.

The Cities of Refuge paint us a picture of salvation. Jesus is our City of Refuge.

We are all guilty of crimes—except, in our case many of them are not accidents. We have committed accidental sins, as well as some on purpose—sins such as cheating, lying, stealing, and becoming angry. The devil is our enemy and wants nothing more than to chase us down, destroy our lives, and kill us. If we run as fast as we can TO Jesus, our "City of Refuge," and ask Him to forgive our sins, we will be safe and the devil cannot harm us! ■



1. _____ was a city standing on a rocky ridge in the midst of green hills. Its name means "HOLY." Jesus is HOLY. He does not have one dirty stain on his clothes. He wants us keep our spiritual clothes clean with His help.

2. _____ was perhaps one of the most beautiful cities in Israel. It was situated at the edge of a valley with mountains on either side. Its name means SHOULDER. Jesus carried the cross with all the sins of the world on His shoulder. He is a strong shoulder on which we can lean and cry when we don't feel strong.

NAMES HAVE MEANINGS!

Match the numbers and write the name of the city in the blank line next to it's description.

3	was one of
	a. It was nestled on a peaceful slope
amid olive groves and loo	ked down on orchards and grain
fields. Its name means FI	ELLOWSHIP or FRIENDSHIP. Jesus
is a best friend and a forest	ver friend!
4.	was set among the shepherd
	Galilee. Its name means JOY. People
	ng them temporary joy like a noisy,
shallow stream. Jesus brit	ngs joy like a great, deep, flowing river.
5	was situated near
	here Jacob wrestled in prayer with the
	ests. Its name means EXALTATION.
	as once rejected by men, but God has
=	heaven where He sits to always hear our
prayers and help us fight of	our battles.
6.	Its exact
	covered, but we think it was on one of
	f Mount Nebo where Moses was
	the land of Promise before he died. Its
	s is our rock. He is STRONG when we
are weak. He is our refuge	
O	

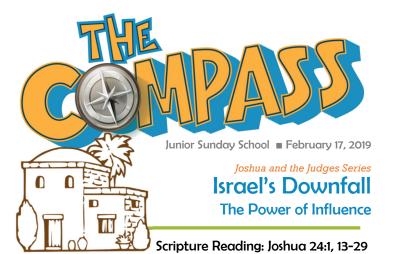
JESUS IS OUR REFUGE

Needed: Make six copies of a picture of Jesus. On the back of each picture write the name of a City of Refuge OR for a simplified/varied version of the same idea, choose a student (or take turns for everyone in the class if you have a small class) and use a cell phone to take six *different* pictures of the same person—different poses, different expressions, different backgrounds. Hang the six different pictures on a wall or show them to the students.



Observe an obvious fact. The *same* person can be wearing different clothes or striking different poses, but they are still the same person. IN THE SAME WAY, we learned in our lesson today that the Cities of Refuge are an overall picture of Jesus and the safety and protection we have when we run to Him for salvation from our sins and from the pursuit of our enemy, the devil.

Did you know we have an additional SIX pictures that represent Jesus in the Cities of Refuge? In the Old Testament, names *meant* something significant. These were the names of the Cities of Refuge: Kadesh, Shechem, Hebron, Golan, Ramoth-Gilead, and Bezer. Although these cities were in *different* locations and had *different* names, they all give us a picture of the *same* Jesus. Let's learn what the names mean to have additional pictures of Jesus to hang in the picture gallery of our mind.



Under the command of Joshua, the Israelites won many battles in the promised land of Canaan. This was a good time for them because they served God, and God's blessings were on them. The land of Canaan was divided into 12 different regions--one region for each of the 12 tribes of Israel to settle and call home. However, many of the inhabitants of Canaan were still left to conquer. It was left up to the individual tribes to destroy the remaining Canaanites in their regions.

It is important to understand something here: God promised Abraham and his descendants the land of Canaan, but God did not command the destruction of all the Canaanites just because He didn't like them. He created and loved them; but they had rejected Him, and for that, He ordered the destruction of their cities. Remember how Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed during the lifetime of Abraham? These are just two of the cities in Canaan whose idol worship included acts of the most

Lesson Discussion

 For what two reasons did God leave Canaanites in the land?

Memory Verse

Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing and I will receive you. 2 Corinthians 6:17

Key Thought

God's commandment to keep ourselves separate from the world is only because He loves us so much and does not want sin to harm us.

- What was Joshua's last message to the children of Israel? What was their response?
- Do you believe God has the power to help us stay strong in the midst of bad influences? Talk about how He has helped you!
- Discuss specific ways to stay strong when you might be tempted to do wrong.

horrible kind. They also committed terrible sins. The side of God that demands fairness (or justice) was not okay with this. What He *did* do was make a way for people who believed in Him to "join" with the Israelites.

The Bible gives two reasons for leaving some Canaanites alive after the Israelites had won their battles and settled in the land:

1. There were not enough Israelites to physically fill the land. The wild animals would be too great in number compared to the Israelites, making it unsafe. (Deuteronomy 7:22).

God wanted to test the Israelites to see if they would continue to obey Him.

New children had been born and had grown up. They had been too young to fight in the battle of Jericho or to have seen the battle where God caused the sun to stand still. God *still* wants us to serve Him because we really want a relationship with Him—not just because our parents and grandparents did!

Joshua had been a faithful and obedient commander, but he eventually got old, living to be 110!

He had some very important things to tell the Israelite leaders before he died. He gathered them together and told many stories of God who had so mercifully and powerfully helped them in the past. He then said, "Be sure and obey everything in the law of Moses. Do exactly what it says. Do not have anything to do with the nations that live around you. Do not worship their gods or pray to their idols. Be as faithful to the Lord as you have always been" (Joshua 23:6-8).

The people said, "Yes! Yes! We will be faithful!"

Sadly, if we turn a couple of pages in our Bibles, we find the children were only faithful to God as long as Joshua, their parents, and their grandparents lived. They did *not* destroy the remaining idolworshiping Canaanites around them. They did not keep themselves separate but began marrying their sons and daughters. Predictably, but worst of all, they begin to serve their false gods, rejecting the God who had given them so many blessings.

Our lesson today is not as easy as some because it shows us how easily we can be influenced to do wrong when we hang out with the wrong kinds of people.

Although there may have been some of the children of Israel who remained faithful to God, many did not.

CHOOSE GOD FIRST!

U	M	S	S	Т	M	Χ	0	V	S	M	Q	J	M	В	F	D	L	I	A	С	Z	R	A	J	D	S	U	K	S	S	N
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A	Q	С	D	Ε	D	В	D	A	Q	S	Т	U	М	Y	N	U	P	J	С	М	M	0	A	S	Н	A	K	I	U	0	Q
0	Н	С	I	R	Ε	J	S	D	Т	J	I	Ι	0	Т	V	D	Q	A	N	Ε	Т	R	0	I	K	S	В	M	R	D	0
В	Q	G	L	D	N	В	Н	I	Ε	L	U	R	L	N	0	J	F	С	Ε	R	R	М	M	Н	Т	С	0	Z	F	I	V
J	Χ	R	Ζ	L	N	Q	С	Ε	A	P	Т	Ε	I	Ε	K	Z	M	Ε	I	С	М	Y	I	Z	R	Н	А	J	N	Н	G
A	F	D	С	K	V	Ε	P	Н	N	S	P	С	J	Q	A	J	Q	0	D	I	M	J	S	L	L	0	F	Т	Р	D	A
W	Y	F	R	Р	Χ	G	G	D	Ε	Y	0	K	R	М	P	R	I	В	Ε	F	В	U	Н	Т	L	N	S	U	M	J	K
Н	0	Н	V	M	Т	P	R	D	G	Z	R	Ι	M	N	Т	Z	S	J	В	U	M	P	Ε	Т	Ε	R	M	V	L	I	G
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		C	ana	anite	es						Id	ols							Jer	icho							Meı	cifu	1		
		Ι)est	roye	d					I	Influ	ienc	e						Jos	hua							Mo	oses			

SWEETS AND TACKS

Justice

God loves us more than we could possibly imagine! Even the most vivid imagination could never comprehend how much He loves us! It is for that very reason that His commandment is so strong that we have nothing to do with sin. Sin hurts bad and He knows it—He wants us to have nothing to do with it.

Israelites

God said in Numbers 33:55 that if they mingled with the inhabitants of Canaan, there would be pricks in their eyes and thorns in their sides. God

Teachers.

Faithful

Needed: Plastic snack bags with equal parts colorful M&Ms or Skittles and equal part tacks—enough for every student in the class. Tell the students they are welcome to eat the candy, but they have to also eat the tacks with the candy.

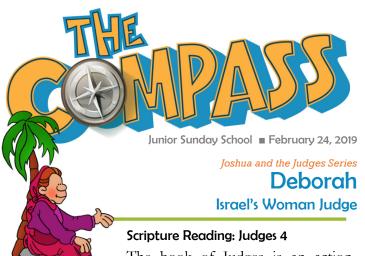
They cannot separate them out.

treasured (and still treasures) His children. He loves them dearly and does not want them to come to harm. Sin looks good on the surface, but, mixed in with it are often unseen sharp, stinging, and hurtful things.

Obedience

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The book of Judges is an action-packed book spanning 350 to 400 years. Judges were the men and one woman whom God sent to deliver

and lead the Israelites to victory from their enemies. It paints a picture of repeated failures on the part of the Israelites, as well as God's repeated mercies. After Joshua's death, the people developed a pattern—or a *cycle*—of doing right and then doing wrong. The cycle looked like this:

Sin: The children of Israel rejected God, served idols, and lived out very sinful behaviors.

Servitude: God allowed their enemies to conquer them, forcing them into bondage.

Supplication: They cried out to God and repented of their sins.

Salvation: God had mercy and sent a judge to save them from their enemies in times of crises.

(Repeat) (Repeat) (Repeat) (Repeat) (Repeat), etc.

Memory Verse

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive is our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

1 John 1:9

Key Thought

If you fail, get back up and keep going.

Do you ever find yourself failing? You mess up once and then

Lesson Discussion

- Name the four Snamed cycles into which the children of Israel continually fell.
- Talk about times you have failed. Why can it sometimes feel hard to try again?
- Talk about the two sides (characteristics) of God we see in our story today.
- Do you believe God still has the ability to fight YOUR battles for you?

mess up again—and maybe yet again? It can be discouraging, but we see that because God loved His people, He always took them back—He wanted them back!

If you fall down, GET BACK UP. If you sin, tell God you're sorry as many times as it takes.

God will not cut you off no matter what lies the devil tells you! Thankfully, we now have the Holy Spirit to give us power to live a consistent, holy life.

In our lesson today, we will look at an example of this cycle. The children of Israel had been in bondage to King Jabin of Canaan for 20 years. A woman named Deborah judged the people during this time. One day, Deborah sent for a man named Barak. She said, "I have a message for you from God. Take 10,000 men to defeat King Jabin's army." Barak hesitantly said, "If you will go with me, I will go; but if you will not go with me, I will not go." Deborah agreed to go, but told Barak that credit for the victory would go to a woman instead of to him.

When the commander of King Jabin's army, Sisera (siser-uh), heard that the Israelites were gathering for battle, he sent for 900 chariots of iron and many powerful warriors to fight. Surely, the Israelites would be defeated with so great an army! However, on the day of battle, Deborah assured Barak that God had gone before them and would win the battle for them.

God did indeed fight their battle! He confused Sisera's army and threw them into a panic.

Not one of the enemy was spared that day.

In the confusion of battle, Sisera jumped down from his chariot, fleeing to an area where the people were known to be friendly with King Jabin. As he sought protection, a woman named Jael (jey-uh l) went out to meet him and said, "Come in here; do not fear." He lay down and she covered him up. In his thirst, he asked for water to drink and asked her to stand guard so that no one would find him. Thinking he was safe, he fell asleep. After he was asleep, Jael killed him, later delivering him to Barak.

After God granted this great deliverance from such oppressive and cruel taskmasters, Deborah sang a song of praise to God, also praising Jael's heroic act.

So it came to be that a woman was given credit for rescuing the Israelites from the cruel commander, Sisera, just as Deborah had predicted. The land then had rest for 40 years. After that time, the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of God and were delivered into the hand of Midian.

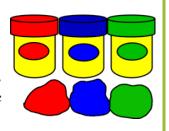
MEN AND WOMEN WHO JUDGED ISRAEL

Use the key to discover the names of those who judged Israel!

Α	В	С	D	Е	F	G								
5	11	24	2	15	21	7	3	8	9	20	18	15	25	
Н	-1	J	К	L	М	N								
9	18	6	12	25	1	20	15	9	16	2	_			
0	P	Q	R	5	Т	U								
3	14	26	10	22	8	16	22	9	5	1	7	5	10	
V	W	X	Y	Z										
19	13	17	23	4										
15	25	18				40 years	2	15	11	3	10	5	9	
13	23	10				12 years	7	18	2	15	3	20		
22	5	1	16 1	15 25		years	22	5	1	2	2	3	20	

A RUINED VASE

Needed: Playdough. Give every student a ball of playdough. Ask them to create a perfect vase. Let them work at doing this. Make note of how many times they roll the playdough back into a ball and start over. After they have had time to make their vases, engage them in a discussion of the following: Were they able to make a perfect vase the first time? How many times did they try again? How many of the students asked to just throw the playdough away?



Read Jeremiah 18:1-4. God told Jeremiah to go to the potter's house. Ask the students if they have ever watched someone making pottery and let them discuss what they saw. As Jeremiah watched, the vessel the potter was making marred in his hand. In other words, it got messed up; so the potter patiently started the process over. God told Jeremiah that we are like clay in His hands. God never messes up, but sometimes we do. However, God does not throw us in the trash, but He patiently and loving remolds and reshapes us. Our responsibility is to learn from our mistakes and failures and ask God to help us do better next time!

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God is My Peace

Scripture Reading: Judges 6

After 40 years of rest, the children of Israel once again found themselves in trouble. They had done evil in the sight of God,so He handed them over to the Midianites (mi-dē-ə-nīt) for seven years. The Midianites were very powerful and there were so many of them, they were like grasshoppers of the field. They took all the food of the land, leaving barely any for the Israelites to eat, and they left very few animals to work the land. Many of the Israelites hid in the caves of the mountains.

The Israelites cried to God for help, and God sent an angel to an Israelite man named Gideon. The angel found Gideon hiding in a winepress, separating wheat from chaff, a job he would have normally done in the open field. No doubt Gideon was afraid of being caught by the enemy.

The angel said, "Mighty warrior, the Lord is with you."

Gideon replied, "If God is with us, why has all this happened to us?" God has deserted us!" The Lord

Memory Verse

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. John 14:27

Key Thought

When we feel alone God is our peace and proves over and over He has not left us, but will make us strong.

Lesson Discussion

- Why was Gideon hiding out when the angel found him? What was the angel's message to him?
- Why do you think God wanted Gideon to tear down the altar of Baal?
- How many signs (miracles) can you find in the story where God proved to Gideon He was with him?
- Have you ever felt alone like Gideon? Talk about how you know God is with you.

looked at Gideon, however, and said, "I will be with you, and you will destroy every one of the Midianites." Gideon did not feel like a warrior. He countered, "But Lord, I am just a man from a poor family."

Gideon then went inside his tent and cooked a goat, made broth (soup), and a loaf of unleavened bread to serve his guest, the angel. When he returned, the angel told him, "Put the meat and bread on this rock and pour the broth over it." Gideon obeyed. The angel then touched the meat and bread with his staff and instantly fire came from the rock, burning up the meat, bread, and broth. The angel disappeared and Gideon then knew for sure the Lord had spoken to him.

Gideon built an altar and called it "Jehovah Shalom." The name is important because it means "The Lord is my peace."

In the middle of all the trouble and Gideon's feelings of weakness, God's presence brought peace.

That same night God spoke to Gideon again. He said, "Tear down your father's altar to the false god, Baal and build me an altar instead." The next morning when the men of the town saw what Gideon had done, they were furious. They demanded that Gideon's father kill him. Gideon's father wisely answered, "If Baal is really a god, let him stand up for himself." Of course, Baal had no power to hurt Gideon!

Gideon still had some doubt that God would be with him to save the Israelites against the 135,000 enemy soldiers who had power over them! He implored God, saying, "You promised to be with me. Please give me another sign. Tonight, I will put a piece of dry wool on the floor. If it is wet with dew in the morning but the ground around it is dry, then I know you will save Israel by my hand like you said." The next morning the ground was dry, but just like Gideon had asked, the fleece was wet. He wrung a whole bowl of water from it.

Gideon again begged, "God, please do not be angry with me. I need to be very sure I have heard you right. I will put out fleece again tonight, only this time, cause the fleece to be dry but let the ground all around it be wet. The next morning, it was just as Gideon had asked. The fleece was dry and there was dew on all the ground.

Gideon was faced with circumstances that were not peaceful and was surrounded by people who were not friendly! Yet every time Gideon came into the presence of God, he encountered peace in spite of his feelings. God patiently proved that He was with him.

WHAT DID THE ANGEL SAY TO GIDEON?

Use the key to decode the angel's message.

Α	В	С	D	Е	F	G							_	
14	4	8	17	18	15	3	12	23	3	1	13	2		
Н	I	J	К	L	М	N		16	14	26	26	23	7	26
1	23	25	9	10	12	24								
0	Р	Q	R	S	Т	U	13	1	18	-	10	7	26	17
7	19	6	26	11	13	21			_					-
V	w	X	Y	Z			23	11		16	23	13	1	
5	16	22	2	20			2	7	21	<u>-</u>				

PEACE DURING DIFFICULTY

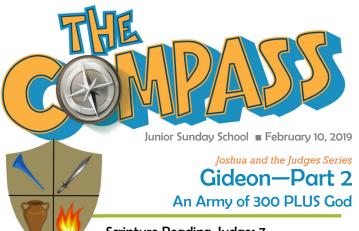
Teachers: Begin with a deflated balloon in your hand. Inflate the balloon about half full and explain that it represents the troubles we face. Sometimes troubles come into life, and the tension builds as we give over a portion of our time, energy, and thought to deal with the situation. One way to deal with tense situations is to pray and trust God to work things out. Trusting God frees us for other things, and we can be at peace again. But when we spend all our time and energy concentrating on difficulties, things can get more and more tense. Inflate the balloon fully and hold it in front of you. When we concentrate on the difficulties, our lives become more and

more crowded and tense, until we finally burst (pop the balloon). Ask the kids for examples of things people become worried about.

Next, take a second balloon and inflate it less than half full. Hold it out in front of you and poke it with your finger, allowing the surface of the balloon to contract and expand. Explain that when we trust God, we're more flexible and less sensitive to other pressures. Inflate the balloon fully and tell the kids that a life filled with pointless worry makes us unable to deal with other pressures that come our way, and can cause even small problems to explode emotionally (for added emphasis, make sure you take your time inflating the balloon and popping it.) Some of the kids will slightly dread the pop, exhibiting a form of worry. Ask the kids for examples of times when they or someone they know overreacted to some small irritation or pressure because they were already worried about something.

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Scripture Reading: Judges 7

Hudson Taylor, a missionary to China, strongly believed God knew his needs and would meet them. On one occasion he only had a meager 87 cents left—three quarters, one dime, and a penny. In a letter to a friend, he wrote, "We have this-and all the promises of God." Perhaps Gideon felt the same way.

After seven years of hiding in mountain dens and being cruelly oppressed by the Midianites, at God's command and with His promise of victory, it was time to go to battle. If Gideon's faith that he would win was in the size of his army, he was in trouble because it didn't look like it was going to be a fair fight. His army numbered 35,000 men while the enemy numbered 135,000! God didn't like the numbers either but for a different reason. Listen to what He told Gideon:

"I want you to win this battle, but you have too many men. I do not want Israel to brag that their own strength saved them.

Memory Verse

But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise: and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty. 1 Corinthians 1:27

Key Thought

God needs unafraid soldiers willing to fight in His army who completely depend on Him.

Lesson Discussion

- How many men started out in Gideon's army? How many men were in the Midianite army? Was it a fair fight? Why or why not?
- Why did God want to reduce the size of the armv?
- What two tests did God give in order to eliminate men from Gideon's original army?
- Does God want fearful soldiers today? Talk about things that have made you afraid. What can you do to overcome fear?
- Talk about how God used "small things" in our lesson today and what those small things were. Can you think of small things God uses to encourage you?

Tell all the men who are afraid to go home." incredible 22,000 men returned home. How would you feel if you were a soldier in Gideon's army after that many had left? Scared? Nervous?

God had a second message for Gideon. He said, "You still have too many men. Take them down to the river. Some of the men will lap water with their tongues the way dogs do. Separate them from the men who get down on their knees to drink." Three hundred men lapped water with their tongues. All but 300 men were sent away.

Now it was 135,000 enemy warriors against Gideon's 300 men-PLUS God.

Later that night, God told Gideon that if he needed courage for the battle, to take his servant and sneak down to the edge of the Midianite camp. Don't you like how God realized that Gideon was human and might need a little more encouragement? There, Gideon overheard two Midianite soldiers talking. One man told the other about a dream he had. In the dream, a round loaf of barley bread rolled into their camp and destroyed a tent. The man's friend explained that the bread was a symbol of Gideon, and he believed that God would fight for Gideon and the Midianites would be destroyed. God used the dream of this man to give Gideon courage!

Gideon rushed back to his own camp and roused his own 300 soldiers from sleep for a surprise attack against the Midianites. He gave each man a trumpet, an earthen pot, and a lamp and then divided them into three groups of one hundred men each. In the dead of night, they surrounded the enemy, believing in God and His promise of victory. At Gideon's command they blew their trumpets and threw their earthen pitchers to the ground, breaking them with a crashing noise. All the while their lamps shone brightly. Gideon's men shouted a battle cry, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon."

The sleeping Midianites were awakened suddenly to blowing trumpets, crashing noises, and brightly shining lights. How terrified they must have been. In their confusion, they started killing each other, and the rest ran away. Gideon's army chased them all down and killed them.

Once again, God had prevailed.

The Israelites were so happy with Gideon that they wanted to make him their king, but Gideon refused. He said, "The Lord will rule over you."

Gideon lived 40 years after the battle with the Midianites during which there was peace in the land. ■





Gideon's Army Midianite Army

Army Lamps Trumpets Battle Midianite Vessels Gideon Surprise Lamps Trumpets Vessels Vessels Vessels
LLITDEZHLZILAMV
TRUMPETSFALWRCE
URQSJCFPJMMIMYS
BATTLEMUQKFPYPS
LPVDESIRPRUSSE
I M C H M M I D I A N I T E L
N O E D I G P H L T L W T G S

BE A USEFUL GLOVE

Teachers Preparation: The day before take one of the gloves and soak it in either paint or glue and let it dry so it will be nice and hard the next day.

Do you want to be strong or weak? (Wait for a response.) The Bible says in 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 that God's strength is made perfect in our weakness.

(Hold up the hardened glove.)

Does this glove seem strong? (Show how it is stiff and can barely move.) This is a really strong glove. Do you think this glove would be very useful though? (Try to put your hand in the glove, but struggle.) Although this glove has a lot of strength on its own, it isn't very useful because I can barely move it. What kind of glove is better? A weaker glove.

(Bring out the other glove.)

This glove isn't as strong as the other glove, but it is flexible. (Put your hand in the glove.) I can do great things with this glove. Why? Because the glove is strong? No! Because the glove is weak and flexible and lets me do the work through it. The glove doesn't actually do the work, but I do.

We should not be like this hard glove, but like this glove that is flexible and allows me to work through it. We should let God work through us. Sometimes we cover over our weaknesses because we think that makes us less useful. However, God says that when we are weak then He is able to work powerfully through us.

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Joshua and the Judges Series

Samson

Scripture Reading: Judges 13-15

Samson was the seventh judge of the Israelites, after Gideon. From the time he was born, his parents

consecrated him to God, taking the vow of a Nazarite. Sampson became very strong. He was not allowed to drink wine or grape juice and was not allowed to cut his hair. He knew that if he broke these rules, his great strength would leave him.

Samson had faith in God, but he also did what he wanted to do, took credit for victories instead of giving credit to God, and took revenge against his enemies when he became angry.

Samson fell in love with a young Philistine woman. His parents were not happy about his choice, but Samson said, "This is the girl I want." (This went directly against God's commandment!) One day Samson traveled to the town where this woman lived, and a lion

came roaring out at

Memory Verse

He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty; and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city. Proverbs 16:32

Key Thought

We should not let our temper get the better of us when we are angry, realizing that God can handle our enemies much better than we can; neither should we brag about what we have accomplished when it is God who gifts it to us.

Lesson Discussion

- Sampson's parents loved and served God. Sampson believed in God himself, following the rules of a Nazarite, yet he did not seek God faithfully. Does "following the rules" of your parents who love and serve God automatically make you a good Christian? Did it for Sampson?
- Rather than get angry and seek revenge when things didn't go his way, what should Sampson have done? Did the

Philistines deserve his anger? Discuss things that make you upset and what you should do when you feel that way.

him. Samson easily killed the lion with his bare hands. Later, he saw bees had made a honeycomb and honey in the lion's carcass.

At Samson's wedding feast, he told 30 young men, "I have a riddle for you. If you can answer the riddle before the wedding feast is over, I will give you each a shirt and a set of clothes." The men tried for seven days to solve the riddle but could not. They told Samson's new wife, "Find the answer to the riddle, and if you don't, we will cause you trouble." Samson's wife cried and coaxed, begging him for the answer. Finally, he could stand her crying no longer and told her the answer. Later, when the men answered the riddle, Samson knew he had been tricked.

Samson was so angry that he left the feast, went to another city, and killed 30 Philistine men—not stopping to ask God what he should do.

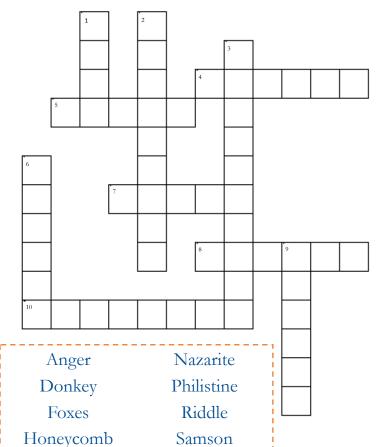
Perhaps he knew God wasn't pleased with his choice of a wife. He took the clothes of the 30 men whom he had slain and gave them to the 30 men at wedding feast. He then went home, leaving his new wife behind. In the meantime, the girl's father gave her to another man in marriage.

Much later, after Samson's temper had cooled, he took a gift and went to see his wife. When Samson found out his wife was married to another man, he was angry all over again. In his anger, he caught 300 foxes, tied their tails together, set them on fire, and turned them loose into the Philistines fields. These foxes destroyed crops, olive trees, and vineyards.

Now the Philistines were angry. When they discovered Samson was the one who had done this, they immediately went to find him. Because the Israelites did not want trouble with the Philistines, they bound Samson's strong arms with new ropes and led him to the Philistines. However, the spirit of the Lord came mightily to Samson, and he easily broke the ropes. He took the jaw bone of a donkey and killed 1000 of the Philistines, taking credit for the victory without acknowledging God.

Later, when the Philistines discovered Samson had come into one of their cities, they locked the gate so that he could not get out. Their plan was to kill him the next morning. However, Samson got up at midnight, took the gate of the city and the two posts to which it was attached, put them on his shoulders, and carried them away. He placed them on the top of a hill in his own city. How amazed the Philistines were the next morning when they saw what he had done.

(To be continued next week.) ■



Thirty

Across

- 4. The number of men Samson killed during his wedding feast.
 - 5. One of Samson's main downfalls.
- 7. He tied these animal's tails together and set them on fire.
- 8. A puzzle Samson put to the men at his wedding feast.
 - 10. The vow that Samson took.

Down

- 1. He killed one of these with his bare hands.
- 2. Samson put this in the carcass of a dead animal.
 - 3. Samson's first wife was a ____.
 - 6. The seventh judge of Israel.
- 9. The jawbone of this animal was one of Samson's chosen weapons.

SAMSON'S RIDDLE

Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet.

Answer: The honeycomb in the lion



Lion

RESPONDING WHEN SQUEEZED!

Ask what sponges are used for. Answers may include many things, but make sure it is mentioned they are used to soak up liquid and then release liquid when squeezed. Demonstrate soaking up water and then squeezing it out.

Life can sometimes "squeeze us," or put pressure on us. In Sampson's case, when his wife tricked him, giving the 30 Philistines the answer to Samson's riddle, Sampson was "squeezed." When he found out his wife had been given to another man in marriage, he was "squeezed." What came out of both of these situations? Anger! What did Samson do with his anger?

When we are betrayed by a friend, when a sibling accidentally ruins a project we have worked hard on, or when we get a bad grade on a test at school, we are squeezed like this sponge. If we are filled with bad attitudes and negative thoughts, those will be the same things that come out.

What comes out of us will also affect the people around us. If we are angry, we are likely to cause others to also become angry. Sampson's anger caused him to do things that caused the Philistines to also become angry. Discuss the best things to do when we sense what is inside is not Christ-like. (*Pray, get quiet, leave the situation.*) We cannot always control how we feel, but with God's help, we can control how we react until our feelings catch up to what we know is right. We want *God* to come out when we are squeezed.

The Beautiful Way (primary) and The Compass (junior) Sunday school literature can be downloaded at sundayschoolliterature.com or churchofgodeveninglight.com/beautiful-way. Please email questions or input to gellenbeck.lindsey@gmail.com. Contributor: Sister Julie Elwell.

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Joshua and the Judges Series

Samson and Delilah Samson Dies

Samson, although a judge of Israel and given strength by the spirit of God, lived a life that was marked

with pride, anger, violence, and a lack of selfcontrol. The Philistines, enemies of the Israelites, were always looking for ways to trap him.

Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah—again contrary to God's commandment. The rulers of the Philistines said to her,

"Find the secret of Samson's strength so that we might capture him.

If you do so, we will each give you 1100 pieces of silver." So, Delilah began to beg and plead with him to tell her the secret of his strength. Every day, Samson lied to her, making her look foolish.

Remember, Samson's hair had never been cut—his long hair was the secret of his God-given strength, and he wore it in seven braids. One day, Delilah said, "If you really loved me you would tell me why you are so strong." She pestered and nagged him until he was so

Memory Verse

GOD'S

WAY

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge: but fools despise wisdom and instruction. Proverbs 1:7

Key Thought

Following our own way rather than seeking to serve God never has a pretty ending.

Lesson Discussion

tired of her repeated

words that he said, "I

- Is it okay to lie like Samson did? Does it sometimes seem easy to lie? What does God think about lying?
- God gave Samson strength—it was a gift. How did Samson
- handle this gift? Has God given you something you are good at? Do you give Him credit?
- Satan paints a pretty picture when it comes to following our own way. What is the end result of doing what we want? What is the end result of following God's way?

have never cut my hair. I have been a Nazarite since I was born. A Nazarite is someone who is set apart by God. If you shave my head, I will be as weak as any other man."

Delilah knew Sampson had finally told her the truth. She sent word to the Philistine rulers to come back one more time and they came, bringing the pieces of silver with them.

Delilah lulled Samson to sleep and then called for a man to cut off his hair.

She then shouted for Samson to wake up because the Philistines were attacking. When Sampson awoke, he thought he would break free like he had always done before. He didn't realize the Lord and his strength had left him!

How glad the Philistines were to finally have Samson in their power. They poked his eyes out, bound him in chains, and put him in prison. The strongest warrior in the land, because of his foolish decisions, spent the remainder of his days grinding grain in a Philistine prison.

While Samson was in prison, his hair began to grow back. One day, the Philistines held a big celebration in honor of their false god, Dagon, in which about 3,000 people were gathered. They thought it would be fun to bring Samson out and make fun of him.

When Samson was brought out in chains, the people thought he could no longer harm them. Samson knew the room was crowded with people. He told the boy who had led him out, "Take me to the pillars of the building so that I might lean against them." Samson then prayed this prayer:

"Remember me, O Lord God. Strengthen me one more time so that I might punish the Philistines for taking out my two eyes."

Notice how Samson, even in his final hour, was thinking about himself and not how he could bring glory to God-even though he believed in God and realized it was God who gave him strength?

Samson took hold of the two pillars on which the house stood, one with his right hand and the other He said, "Let me die with the with his left. Philistines." He then pulled with all his might. The house fell upon all that were gathered, and everyone was killed.

We cannot hold Samson up as a hero that we should try to imitate; however, God did not choose the wrong man when he chose Samson to judge His people. He had a plan to defeat the Philistines through Samson's strength, and that plan was accomplished despite some of Samson's poor choices.

TURNING CHAOS TO BEAUTY

Using the space below, have a classmate, teacher, parent, or sibling draw several marks. They might be squiggly or straight, dots or dashes. Take the paper yourself, and make a picture out of their marks. (Example: a big squiggle might turn into a snake, dashes might turn into a road, etc.) Look at your masterpiece. God is even better at turning random messes into something beautiful!



DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR GIFTS!

Teachers: Needed—a candy bar, or enough for each student and a trash can filled with real trash.

On small, white mailing labels, write natural gifts God gives people. (Example: Singing, Writing, Kindness, Inventing, Artists, etc....whatever "gifts" you feel inspired to write.) Place the labels on the candy bars. Tell the students you want to gift them with a candy bar and pass them out to the students. Explain how God gives each person a different gift and how each of them are special and God can use each one to accomplish His purposes. Give the students time to think of and discuss different gifts. Then tell the students they must throw their candy bars in the trash can and leave them. This might be hard for them to do, but it will also make an impression on them.

Talk about when people (like Samson) throw away or casually treat the gifts God has given them—not using them to bring glory to God or giving God credit for their gifts, it is the same as throwing away something very valuable. Encourage the students to think of things with which God has gifted them and then how to use them to His glory.



Joshua and the Judges Series

Conclusion: Joshua and Judges Israel Does What is Right in Their Own Eyes

After Moses died, Joshua became the new leader of the Israelites. He led them into Canaan, the land God had promised to Abraham many years before. Joshua loved and served God, and the Israelites won many victories under his leadership. Caleb also had great faith in God and conquered the giants who lived in Canaan. While these godly men lived, Israel served God; but after they died the children of Israel began to disobey God's commandments. They bowed down and worshipped the stone gods (idols) of the Canaanites.

They rejected the true and living God who had done so much for them.

Over and over, the Israelites, because of their disobedience, got into trouble. Their enemies ruled over them and treated them badly. Over and over, they remembered God and cried to Him, asking for help. Because of God's great love and mercy for His people, He always forgave them. He sent them judges through the years to deliver them from their enemies. Fourteen judges ruled Israel, three whose lives we have studied: Deborah, Gideon, and Samson.

Memory Verse

In all these things we are more than conquerors through him [Jesus] that loved us. Romans 8:37

Key Thought

Disobedience and following what we want to do will get us in trouble every time. We don't have to always fail like the Israelites; if we make Jesus king of our hearts, He will give us power to do what is right.

Lesson Discussion

• Talk about why you think the Israelites turned away from God over and over and served the idols of Canaan and married their men and women—things God had forbidden them to do. (Think about the fact that God is invisible and our five physical senses,)

- Are you ever tempted to "do what is right in your own eyes".....to do things "your way?" What kinds of things tempt you that are not good, and what can you do to not yield to temptation?
- Who is our King today? Can He help us live right?

There is a phrase repeated several times in the book of Judges; in fact, it is the very last verse of the book. It says,

"In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."



They would soon cry to God for a king, but we will find out that an earthly king did not solve their sin-problem either. Did you know God had a permanent solution for sin?

Many hundreds of years later, Jesus was sent to be the perfect king! He was sent to the Israelites first, but they rejected Him—in fact, they crucified Him. Jesus was offering Himself to God as the perfect sacrifice for sin. He is the King of Kings—greater than the president of the United States or any other ruler who has lived. Earthly kings die, but Jesus does not!

Now let's think about the part of the phrase that says "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." Without a strong leader to remind them of God's way, they selfishly did what they wanted to do without praying to God and asking for His help.

Imagine a little ant. An ant is tiny to us. Things that are very small to us are huge to the ant—things like a blade of grass or a rock. The ant can only see what is right around him, but we can see across the whole yard and beyond. If we really cared about the ant, we could help direct him. We could warn him when danger was ahead and tell him the shortest way to get from one place to the next. Would the ant be wise to listen to us? Yes! Now imagine if the ant said, "I'm not going to listen to your advice. I know what is best." Would it be a smart decision on the part of the ant? Of course not.

It is the same with God and us. We are small—He is big. He created us, He loves us, and He can see the future when we cannot. The Israelites forgot this truth many times. We are prone to making mistakes and following our own selfish way.

The greatest lesson we can learn from the stories we read in Joshua and Judges is that when we follow God's commandments and never take our eyes off Him, it will save us from a lot of trouble.

JUDGES OF ISRAEL

Race with your classmates to find the names of the 15 individuals who judged Israel!

1.	Judges 3:9-11
	40 years
2.	Judges 3:15-30
	80 years
3.	Judges 3:31, Judges 5:6
	Unknown
4.	Judges 4:4-5:31
	40 years
5.	Judges 6:11-8:32
	40 years
6.	Judges 9:1-57, 2 Samuel
	11:21
	3 years
7.	Judges 10:1-2
	23 years
8.	Judges 10:3-5
	22 years

9.	Judges 11:1-12:7
	6 years
10.	Judges 12:8-10
	7 years
11.	Judges 12:11-12
	10 years
12.	Judges 12:13-15
	8 years
13.	Judges 13:1-16:31
	20 years
14.	1 Samuel 1:1-4:18
	40 years
15.	1 Samuel 2:18-4:1
	Approx. 12 years

A BIT OF DUST

Teachers: Needed—A bit of dust and a globe or world map.

Did you know that it is about twenty-five thousand miles around the earth and that the earth contains nearly two hundred million square miles? It weights six billion tons. God says, "Behold, the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance: behold, he taketh up the isles as a very little thing" (Isaiah 40:15). Look at the dust we have today. God's picture of our world is quite different than ours, isn't it? If God sees our world as so small, why do you suppose He sent His only son to die on the cross? John 3:16 answers that question. It says, "Whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." He wants you to be with Him in heaven.

Is He your Savior today?