

JUDGES

“Deborah and Jael”

Series Objective:

Students will learn:

- How God used Judges to rescue God’s people
- That God’s people would turn away from God and come under oppression
- That God uses unlikely people to fulfill God’s plan
- God’s plan might not make sense, but it is always the right way

Series Theme Verse: “Then the Lord raised up judges, who saved them out of the hand of those who plundered them.” –Judges 2:16 (ESV)

Lesson Objective: For students to understand that Israel needed Judges because they continually sinned against God and the Judges were the ones who led them back to faithful worship of God.

Lesson Passage: Judges 4 and Judges 5:31

Materials Needed: Bibles, white board or butcher paper, play dough, Series Theme Verse poster

Lesson Plan: Remind students that last week you saw how Ehud was used by God as a Judge over Israel. God would continue to use Judges to lead the people of Israel for many years. Israel unfortunately fell into a cycle of sin that meant Judges were needed to save Israel. The pattern was: 1.) Israel sinned. 2.) God gave Israel into the hands of an oppressor. 3.) The people cried out to God for rescue. 4.) God raised up a Judge to lead and save the people. Today we look at another good judge who led Israel to an amazing victory.

Talking Points: Judges 4:1-16

- When Israel did bad things in the eyes of God, who did God allow to take over Israel? (The Canaanites)
- When the people of Israel were in slavery to the King of Canaan, what was their response? (They cried out to God, they asked God to save them)
- How many chariots did the king of Canaan have? (900! You might show the kids a picture of a chariot on your phone or preprinted out)
 - It would be impossible for the people of Israel to win a battle against 900 chariots, right?!
- How long was Israel under the rule of Canaan? (20 years)
- God used a Prophetess to be the next leader or Judge of Israel, what was her name? (Deborah)
 - A Prophetess was someone who spoke for God. God would speak to Deborah and she would tell the people what God said.

- Where did Deborah judge or settle disputes of the people from? (Under a palm tree. You might show the kids what a palm tree looks like and the shade it would give Deborah)
- God tells Deborah how to defeat the Canaanites and save the people of Israel from their slavery, who does Deborah summon or call to explain the plan to? (Barak)
- What was the plan? (10,000 soldiers {about the population of Sweetwater} of Israel would march to a mountain. When the Canaanite commander heard Israel's troops were marching he would come out with his 900 chariots and the rest of his army to attack Israel, but God would give Barak and Israel the victory over Sisera and the Canaanites)
- Was Barak confident in God's plan? (No, he said he would not lead the army unless Deborah went with him)
 - Invite a volunteer up. Wrap the roll of toilet paper around their wrist to bind the wrists together with just one loop of toilet paper.
 - Ask them to break out of their binding...they can do it easily.
 - Now wrap their wrists again, looping the toilet paper numerous times so that they cannot breakout.
 - Ask them to break out of the binding.
 - Just like the toilet paper was stronger the more there was, Barak's faith was strengthened when he was accompanied by Deborah.
 - Sometimes, we need the help of others to strengthen our faith in God.
- Does Deborah go with Barak? (Yes, but because of his lack of faith in God's plan, Barak would no longer get the glory for the victory)
- What did Sisera, the leader of the Canaanite army do when he was told that Israel's army was marching to the Mountain of Tabor for war? (He summoned all his chariots and army to the river by the mountain to fight Israel)
 - 10,000 soldiers for Israel against 900 chariots AND an army for the Canaanites...who do you think will win?
- Who told the Israelite army to attack (vs 14), was it the leader of the army, Barak, or Deborah? (Deborah)
- How did the battle happen? (Israel charged down the mountain at the iron chariots, they had no chance of winning, but God was fighting with Israel and the chariots were overrun by the Israelites. In fact, they army of Sisera fled on foot because they were losing so badly. The Bible says God and Israel routed or totally destroyed the army of the Canaanites. Sisera got away, but not for long, he would be caught and die as his troops did.)
 - Some people believe that God used a great storm and the mud by the river to bog down the heavy chariots and cause them to be stuck so Israel would not have to fight against the chariots. (Judges 5:20-21)

Talking Points: Judges 4:17-24

- Sisera fled to a tent community of Heber the Kenite...where have we heard of Heber the Kenite? (Judges 4:11)
- Why did he go to Heber's tent community? (They had peace with the Canaanites)
- Whose tent did Sisera go to? (Jael, Heber's wife)

- Did Sisera plan on going into Jael's tent? (No, she actually called him over and invited him in)
- What does Sisera ask Jael for? (Water)
- What did she give him? (Milk and a place to sleep)
- Why do you think she gave him milk instead of water? (Maybe to help him sleep)
- What did he tell her to do? (Guard the door and tell people he is not there, because he is going to sleep...the milk is working)
- When he falls asleep, what does Jael do? (She takes a tent peg to his temple, staking him to the ground)
- When Barack came through trying to hunt down Sisera, Jael showed him to Barack...dead. So then the woman who received the glory for the route of Sisera's army was not only Deborah, but also Jael.
- In Judges 5:31, we find out that Israel was at peace for 40 years, after they are freed from their oppression by the Canaanites.

The Story Retold:

- Ask students what some of the key elements of the story are? (Deborah, chariots, tent stake, mountain, etc.)
- Write the answers on a white board or butcher paper.
- Now, bring out the play dough!
- Have kids create all the items in your list using the playdough.
- After creating the items, have the kids use the items to retell the story using as little help from you as possible.
- Use the whole room to retell the story so kids get up and move around.
- After the kids have retold the story, help them see that no one is left out of God's plan, in fact, even when society says we are not equal, God sees us as God's children and a part of God's plan:
 - It is important to realize that God used two women to lead Israel out from under the oppression of the Canaanites. Too often, we think that the male dominated society was what facilitated heroes of God's people, but God continually uses women to bring about God's plans. This is huge because even in a time where women were not equals, God shows that God can and will use anyone if we are faithful to God.

The Story and Me:

- Have the memory verse for the unit written on a piece of poster board.
- Have students make motions for words in the memory verse.
- As a group, say the memory verse a couple times using the motions they created.
- Remind students that the Judges were God's leaders and needed because the people of Israel kept turning away from God.