

JUDGES

“The Sin Cycle”

Series Objective:

Students will learn:

- The pattern of sin that Israel went through in Judges
- The story of Jephthah’s arrogance
- The story of Ruth’s faithfulness
- The story of Samson’s Nazarite vows

Series Theme Verse: “Whenever the Lord raised up a judge for them, he was with the judge and saved them out of the hands of their enemies as long as the judge lived.” – Judges 2:18

Lesson Objective: For students to understand that God is the one who rescues us, and that God used Judges to rescue the people of God.

Lesson Passage: Judges 2:11-23; 4; 5:31

Materials Needed: Bibles, Series Theme Verse on poster, whiteboard and marker

Lesson Plan: Remind students that God would choose people to lead God’s people as they grew together as the community of God. We have talked about Moses and Joshua, but after Joshua’s death, we turn to the stories of a group of people who were called Judges. The Book of Judges shows a pattern that happens in the life of the people of Israel.

Talking Points: Judges 2:11-23

- Use a white board to develop the pattern or cycle for the students as they discuss the Scripture.
- The Sin Cycle:
 - Vs. 11 – Israel does evil in the eyes of the Lord or sins (Usually worshipping idols)
 - Vs. 14 – God gives the people over to an oppressor or plunderer (A nation/people group that was not driven out by Joshua)
 - Vs. 18b – The people groaned or cried out to God (repented)
 - Vs. 16 – The Lord delivered the people through a Judge
- You can summarize the story of Ehud in Judges 3 here to illustrate the pattern if you would like, then transition to Judges 4.

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 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 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 and Me:

- Have the memory verse for the unit written on a piece of poster board.
- Have the students sit in a big circle on the floor.
- Read the memory verse to the students.
- Explain to students that the memory verse tells us that God used judges to save God's people, but ultimately, God is the one who rescues us.
- Now have the group say the memory verse together.
- Have the boys say the verse together.
- Have the girls say the verse together.
- Go around the circle and have each individual say the memory verse.