

SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINES

JUDGES 13-16



CHRIST CONNECTION: Like Samson helped his people, Jesus helps us. Jesus died and came back to life to save us from our mistakes and give us life with God forever.

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

KEY PASSAGE: If my people pray and turn from sin, I will forgive them. 2 Chronicles 7:14

STORY POINT: Samson's strength came from God.



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 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 reveals 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). 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 preschoolers and open the session



LEARN

25–30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel



LOVE

Lead preschoolers to love the God of the gospel

30–40 MINUTES



LIVE

Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



BONUS

60–65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Toss a ring for Samson

- Big Picture Question Poster



LEARN

Tell the Bible story

- "Samson and the Philistines" video (optional)

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture Poster

Learn and practice the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Build two columns

- cardboard blocks or boxes
- worship music

Play out hair salon

- toy hair dryer, 1 per 3 or 4 preschoolers
- toy brush, 1 per 3 or 4 preschoolers
- toy comb, 1 per 3 or 4 preschoolers
- hair rollers, 4 per 3 or 4 preschoolers
- travel shampoo bottles, 1 per 3 or 4 preschoolers



LIVE

Paint with watercolors

- watercolor paints
- paintbrushes
- small cups
- art smocks
- "Key Passage Phrase Labels" printable

Missions Activity

- "Barber Family Photo" printable
- miniature donuts

Snack and Transition

- hand sanitizer (optional)
- "Draw Samson's Hair" activity page, 1 per child
- Big Picture Cards for Families



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Transfer pom-poms

- 12-cup muffin pan
- pom-poms, 12
- tongs

Play with vehicles

- toy vehicles
- painter's tape



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

TOSS A RING FOR SAMSON

Prior to the session, write the letters S,A,M,S,O,N on individual index cards and display the Big Picture Question and Answer Poster. Set out six cones on the floor. Tape an index card to the front of each cone. Instruct children to take turns tossing pool rings onto the cones. Instruct preschoolers to take turns tossing rings.

SAY "Welcome! I'm so glad to see you today. God's people were stuck in a really bad pattern. First, they stopped faithfully following God, and their enemies rose up against them. Then, the people remembered God and prayed to Him for help. God is faithful, and He sent someone to save them from their enemies. This time, their enemies were the Philistines, and Samson was the one God selected to help His people. Samson was very strong. **SAMSON'S STRENGTH CAME FROM GOD.** Samson had some struggles too, but in the end he showed us what it means to turn away from sin and turn to God. That's called repentance! Our big picture question asks, **What is repentance?** **Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.**"

✱
✱

Worship songs
✱ Jump around
✱ This Little Light of Mine

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





LEARN the Bible Story

1 NAME STRONG PEOPLE

Guide children to name people they think are physically strong. Encourage them to think about who the strongest person in the world might be.

SAY “As strong as these people are, Samson was even stronger! The Philistines wanted to know what made Samson so strong so that they could defeat him. Listen carefully to learn how **SAMSON’S STRENGTH CAME FROM GOD.**”



2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY *Video*

Open your Bible to Judges 13–16. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINES

SAY “Over and over again, God’s people—the Israelites—chose to not listen to God. They kept doing things that made God sad. So God let their enemies, the Philistines, rule over them.

One day, something special happened. An angel visited a man and his wife. The angel told them they were going to have a baby boy. This boy, named Samson, would be very strong. Samson would help save God’s people from the Philistines.

God had important instructions for Samson: He should never cut his hair.

When Samson grew up, he met a girl named Delilah. The Philistine leaders wanted to find out why Samson was so strong. They asked Delilah to find out. She kept asking Samson, “Why are you so strong?” Samson would not tell her the truth, but finally he told her, “If you cut my hair, I will lose my strength.”

One night, while Samson was sleeping, Delilah had his hair cut. When she woke him up, Samson was weak. The Philistines caught him and took him away.

As time passed, Samson’s hair started to grow again. The Philistines brought Samson to a big temple. Samson prayed to God, and God gave him his strength back. Samson pushed on the temple’s columns, and it fell down, crushing the Philistines inside. Sadly, Samson died too, but he saved God’s people.”

Christ Connection: Like Samson helped his people, Jesus helps us. Jesus died and came back to life to save us from our mistakes and give us life with God forever.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY



Display the Bible Story Picture Poster and reference it during the activity. On strips of paper write out the following events from the Bible story: The Philistines ruled over the Israelites; Samson told Delilah about the secret of his strength—his hair; Delilah had a man cut Samson's hair; Samson lost his strength; Samson prayed to God for his strength to be returned; God gave Samson strength; Samson pulled down the temple columns. Mix up the strips of paper. One by one, put the events in order with the preschoolers.

SAY “ God’s people were not listening to God again. They kept doing wrong things, so God sent their enemies, the Philistines, to rule over them. An angel visited Samson’s parents and told them they would have a son who would grow up to help save God’s people. God gave Samson a specific rule about his hair: never cut it. When Samson grew up, he made a wrong choice. He told Delilah that his strength came from his hair. Without his hair, he was weak like ordinary people. The Philistines took Samson prisoner. Samson prayed and asked God for help. God allowed Samson to be strong again. Samson used his strength from God and pulled the temple columns down on the Philistines. ”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Oh My Darling, Clementine”:

If my people
Pray and turn from sin
I will forgive them.
If my people
Pray and turn from sin
I will forgive them.

* "If My People Pray" Song

5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE



Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at 2 Chronicles 7:14. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Learn the key passage phrase by repeating it several times while making strong muscle arms.

SAY “ **SAMSON’S STRENGTH CAME FROM GOD.** God used Samson’s hair to make him stronger than all the Philistines. As long as no one knew the secret, Samson was safe. When Samson told Delilah about his hair, she had it cut off while he was sleeping and allowed the Philistines to capture him. Samson prayed, and God allowed him to be strong again. Samson pulled the temple columns down and saved the Israelites from the Philistines. Like Samson helped his people, Jesus helps us. Jesus died and came back to life to save us from our mistakes and give us life with God forever. ”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for Jesus who died and came back to life to save us and give us life with God forever.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 PLAY OUT THE BIBLE STORY



Lead children to retell the important events by playing out events from the Bible story. As you play out a scene, invite children to share with you what is happening in the story.

SAY God used Samson to save His people. **SAMSON'S STRENGTH CAME FROM GOD.** Like Samson helped his people, Jesus helps us. Jesus died and came back to life to save us from our sin and give us life with God forever.

2 BUILD TWO COLUMNS

Use cardboard blocks or boxes to build two columns. Leave the space in between the two columns wide enough for children to stand between them. Allow children to walk through the columns while listening to worship music. When the music stops, push down the towers. As time allows, rebuild and play again.

SAY We learned that Samson was very strong. The Philistines wanted to know where Samson's strength came from. **SAMSON'S STRENGTH CAME FROM GOD.** When Samson's hair was cut, the Philistines were able to capture him. Samson called out to God. Later in Samson's life, God gave him the strength to help God's people once more. Samson used his strength from God to knock down the columns onto the Philistines.

3 PLAY OUT HAIR SALON

Gather hair-care supplies and baby dolls for children to play hair salon. Talk about the significance of Samson's hair in the Bible story as children play.

SAY We learned that **SAMSON'S STRENGTH CAME FROM GOD** through his hair. He was not supposed to tell anyone and was never supposed to cut it. But, Delilah convinced Samson to tell her about his hair. While he was sleeping, she had it cut off and called his enemies, the Philistines. They captured him because he was not strong anymore. Later in Samson's life, God gave him the strength to help God's people again.

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 PAINT ON THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Write the key passage phrase on a length of butcher paper. Tape the paper to a low table. Add washable paint to sturdy plates and lay lengths of yarn and wide-toothed combs nearby. Place art smocks on children to protect clothing. Allow children to paint on the paper as you read the key passage phrase aloud.

SAY “When everyone has had a turn to paint on our big key passage phrase banner, we will hang it up for everyone to see. God heard Samson pray and gave Samson his strength back so Samson could help his people. Like Samson helped his people, Jesus helps us. Jesus died and came back to life to save us from our sin and give us life with God forever.”

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY



Print and display a copy of the “Barber Family Photo” printable. Post an allergy alert near the door. Distribute miniature donuts and paper plates to preschoolers. Tell preschoolers that Portland, Oregon, is home to many unique donut shops. There are even donut tours where people walk and visit all the donut shops along the route. As preschoolers eat their donuts, explain that it is important to start new churches in Portland, because so many people in the area do not go to church and know about Jesus.

SAY “Ricardo and Meyna Barber started One HOPE Fellowship to tell people about Jesus. The church offers a weekly food bank to give food to families in need. When church members help in the community, they can meet people and tell them about Jesus. [Lead a prayer.]”

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY “Like Samson helped his people, Jesus helps us. Jesus died and came back to life to save us from our mistakes and give us life with God forever.”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 PLAY A THIS OR THAT GAME

Lead children in a game of “This or That” by having them move to the side of the room that matches their response to your questions. Examples: Would you rather be strong like Samson or wise like Deborah; strong like Samson or a leader like Gideon, and so forth.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Judges 13–16. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story:

SAMSON AND THE PHILISTINES

- God’s people did not listen to God, so God let their enemies—the Philistines—rule over them. God’s people said, “God, save us!”
- One day, an angel said a baby named Samson would grow up and help save God’s people from their enemies. God’s rule for Samson was “Don’t cut your hair.”
- Samson grew up and was strong. A woman named Delilah asked, “Why are you so strong?” Samson would not tell her. Finally, he said, “If you cut my hair, I will be weak.”
- One night, Delilah had Samson’s hair cut. When Samson woke up, he was weak. The Philistines captured Samson.
- His hair grew again, and he prayed. God made him strong again. Samson knocked down the temple, and the Philistines died. Samson died too, but he saved God’s people.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Oh My Darling, Clementine”:

If my people
Pray and turn from sin
I will forgive them.
If my people
Pray and turn from sin
I will forgive them.

4 SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at 2 Chronicles 7:14. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Learn the key passage phrase by standing up and sitting down on alternating words.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for sending Jesus to save us from our sins.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 PRACTICE EXERCISES

Guide children to show their strength by completing activities for ten seconds. Sample activities: flexing arms, hopping, running in place, squatting, or waving arms.

SAY “Wow, you are all so strong! We learned that **SAMSON’S STRENGTH CAME FROM GOD**. God used Samson’s strength to save His people.”

7 CUT SAMSON’S HAIR

Give children play dough and demonstrate how to roll it into thin pieces like hair. Encourage the children to use their play dough to form the face of Samson and add long hair to his head. Encourage the children to use blunt-tipped scissors to cut the hair like Samson’s hair was cut. Remind preschoolers that only grown-ups can give them a haircut.

SAY “God had told Samson never to cut his hair. A Philistine cut his hair, and Samson was not strong anymore. Eventually, Samson’s hair grew back. Samson called out to God, and God gave him the strength to destroy the temple. **SAMSON’S STRENGTH CAME FROM GOD**. God used Samson to save the Israelites. God sent Jesus to save us from our sin and give us life with God forever.”

8 CUT AND GLUE YARN COLLAGE

Give each child a length of yarn, a piece of paper, glue, and scissors. Allow children to cut smaller pieces from their length of yarn using the scissors. When children are finished cutting, allow them to glue the yarn onto their papers to make a yarn collage.

SAY “The yarn on your paper reminds me of Samson’s hair. Samson’s hair had never been cut—not in his entire life—until the day Delilah had it cut off. God told Samson never to cut his hair. Samson prayed to God and asked for his strength to be given back to him. His hair had started growing back. God heard and answered Samson’s prayer. He gave Samson his strength back so he could help God’s people once more. Samson destroyed the Philistine temple when he pushed the columns over. God’s people were free from the Philistines’ rule.”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.