

FREEDOM FROM THE PHILISTINES

1 SAMUEL 7



KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 4:19

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Samuel called the people to turn away from false gods and to worship God, and God gave them victory over their enemies. God calls us to turn away from sin and to trust in Jesus who gives us victory over our enemies of sin and death.

STORY POINT: Samuel cried out to the Lord to save the Israelites.



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

First Samuel 7 reveals the Israelites' victory over the Philistines after God's people turned to the Lord and away from their pagan gods and idols. Samuel interceded for the people as they began to long for the Lord after having pursued the ways of the world for so long. The Lord granted His people victory over their enemies in a way that foreshadowed how He has established an eternal victory for those in Christ.

What did Samuel lead the people to do in their helpless state? How is Jesus an even better intercessor than Samuel was?

After so many chapters of disobedience and helplessness, it is refreshing to read that the Israelites finally longed for the Lord. Realizing the emptiness of idol worship, the people stood before Samuel and sought next steps from their leader. His instructions to the people were not dissimilar to the words we need to hear today: return to the Lord with all your heart, get rid of your false gods, set your heart back on the Lord, and worship only Him. In doing so, Samuel explained, they would again see God's deliverance.

The Israelites did as Samuel instructed, and they fasted and confessed their sins. They pleaded with Samuel to continue interceding for them so that they would experience the victory of God's promise. Samuel offered a sacrifice to the Lord on His people's behalf, and it pleased the Lord.

Although Samuel was an upright man called to prophesy and judge God's people, he was not the Messiah. Instead, Samuel's life points us to the only One able to secure a permanent victory over sin and death through a once-and-for-all sacrifice for God's people. Those who are in Christ do not need an earthly judge to mediate between God and man; instead, they can place their hope in the finished work of Jesus.

Share with boys and girls your story of how the Lord has helped you thus far (1 Samuel 7:12). Lead them to see how Christ has transformed your heart and granted you an eternal victory by faith in His name.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- "Decode the Stone" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- 6 plastic cups, each a different color.



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (optional)



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- countdown video
- Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- "Freedom from the Philistines" video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- "Unit 9, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- "Doug and Evelyn in Tanzania" printable

Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- "My God (Philippians 4:19)" song
- worship song of your choice (optional)



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- oven mitts
- helmet
- mouth guard
- knee pads
- sunglasses
- bug spray

Reflection and Prayer

- Bible Story Coloring Page (optional)



WELCOME Kids

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

SAY 🗨️ Have you ever ridden in the car with your parents or an adult and they made a wrong turn? What did they do? Why? 🗨️

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Decode the Stone” activity page.

SAY 🗨️ Today, we will learn how the Israelites recognized that they had turned away from God. We’ll see how Samuel encouraged them to turn back to God with all their hearts. 🗨️

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: MAKE A CHANGE

Gather six plastic cups, each a different color. Place the cups in a specific order in front of the group such as red, blue, clear, green, purple, and yellow. Invite kids to study the order of the cups. Then direct kids to close their eyes while you move one of the cups to a new spot in the order. Lead kids to open their eyes and challenge kids to raise their hands to tell you which cup has changed its location. Repeat, choosing to make the game more challenging by moving multiple cups at a time.

SAY 🗨️ Was it challenging to remember which cup changed its spot? Today, we will learn how the Israelites wanted change. After years of worshiping false gods, they wanted to turn back to God. However, turning back to God didn’t just mean an outward change. We’ll see how **SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES** and told them to turn back to God with all their heart. 🗨️

OPTION 2: FOLLOW THE LEADER



Choose one kid to be It and instruct him or her to leave the room. Next, choose a kid from among the class to serve as the Leader. Lead the rest of the class to imitate the Leader’s actions (jumping, clapping, making funny noises, etc.) as the Leader guides them. When It returns to the classroom, he or she will try to guess the Leader from among the crowd. Once guessed correctly, the previous Leader will now become It and leave the room as a new Leader is chosen to guide the class.

SAY 🗨️ Playing this game can be confusing when you are not sure who is the true leader. In today’s story, we will read as the prophet Samuel leads the Israelites to return to God instead of following false gods. **SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES.** We’ll see how God calls us to turn away from the world and follow only Him. 🗨️

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





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

* Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “ Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m happy you’re here. Today, we are going to see how God’s people wanted to change. They wanted to return to God after following false gods. As we get ready to hear our story, please hold up your Bible. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

* In our story, we’ll see that SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES. [Display the Story Point Poster.] God’s people needed to be rescued from their enemies, and Samuel led the Israelites to turn back to God. Let’s ask God to help us remember the importance of turning back to Him when we have sinned. Let’s pray: ‘Dear heavenly Father, thank You for Your forgiveness. Help us learn how we need to confess our sin, like the Israelites, when we have turned away from You. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

worship

* Praise You Anywhere
* see a victory
* offering

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

* **SAY** “ How does God care for His creation? What was the answer? [Allow responses.] God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan. Let’s say the answer again. [Repeat the big picture answer.]

* We don’t always follow God’s plans because we sin. But God always forgives us when we repent and turn back to Him. Just like the Israelites in our story, we all need to be forgiven and made new in Jesus. God’s plan was ultimately to bring the Savior—Jesus—into the world through Israel so that people could be forgiven of their sins and live to worship Him with hearts made new. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “ From Ruth to Samuel, we have learned how God sees people’s needs and hears their cries for help. God provided for Ruth. He called Samuel. And last week, we learned how God showed His power as the one true God. Today, we will learn more about Samuel and how God used him to help the Israelites turn away from false gods and follow God’s plan. ”



LEARN the Bible Story



1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 7. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Freedom from the Philistines.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

FREEDOM FROM THE PHILISTINES

“Twenty years after the ark was returned from the Philistines, the Israelites began to cry out for God.

Samuel told them, “If you are returning to worship the LORD, then you must stop worshiping the false gods from the nations around us. If you dedicate yourselves to worshiping only the LORD, then He will rescue you from the Philistines.” The people obeyed and removed the statues and poles that were used to worship the false gods, and they only worshiped the Lord.

Then Samuel said, “Gather all the people, and I will pray to the LORD on your behalf.” They fasted that day and confessed their sins to God.

When the Philistines heard that all of Israel had gathered in one place, they decided to attack. The Israelites were afraid and said to Samuel, “Don’t stop crying out to the LORD our God for us. Ask him to save us from the Philistines!”

Samuel made a burnt offering to the Lord and cried out to Him, and the Lord answered him. As the Philistines approached to fight Israel, the Lord thundered loudly against them and made them confused. Israel defeated the Philistines, chasing them away as they retreated.

Samuel set up a large stone to remember what happened that day. He said, “The LORD has helped us to this point.”

Israel took back the land and cities that the Philistines had taken from them, and the Philistines did not invade Israel again. Samuel led the Israelites as their judge, and the Lord’s hand was against the Philistines all of Samuel’s life.

Christ Connection: Samuel called the people to turn away from false gods and to worship God, and God gave them victory over their enemies. God calls us to turn away from sin and to trust in Jesus who gives us victory over our enemies of sin and death. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Invite kids to count how many times they hear the words “cry, crying, or cried” in the Bible story.

Use facial expressions: As you teach, use facial expressions to emphasize key points in the story.



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ The Israelites began to cry out for God. What did Samuel tell them to do? [Allow responses.] Samuel told God’s people to repent of their sins and return to worshipping the one true God. The Israelites obeyed. They got rid of their statues and poles, and did just as Samuel instructed them. Samuel prayed to God on behalf of the Israelites, and they confessed their sins to God. Like the Israelites, God invites us to confess our sins to Him. When we do, God promises to forgive our sins.



While Israelites were gathered to confess their sin, the Philistines chose to attack. The Israelites begged Samuel to plead to God to save them in this battle. **SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES.** How did God fight for His people? [Allow responses.] God sent loud thunder to cause confusion among the Philistine soldiers. Because of God’s help, the Israelites were finally free from the Philistines. Out of thankfulness to God, Samuel set up a large stone to help them remember how the Lord helped them in the battle.

As the leader of the Israelites, Samuel called the people to turn away from false gods and to worship God, and God gave them victory over their enemies. The Israelites were unable to save themselves from their enemies. God showed His love and care for His people by fighting for them in their time of need. What does God call us to turn away from? [Allow responses.] God calls us to turn away from sin and to trust in Jesus who gives us victory over our enemies of sin and death. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Like the Israelites in today’s story, you and I are unable to save ourselves. However, God gives us victory over the enemies of sin and death. By placing faith in Jesus, we can receive salvation and the gift of eternal life. Do you know what it means to turn away from your sin and trust in Jesus? I’d be happy to share more about following Jesus. ”

(Tip: Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)



Gospel Poster

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)



Show the “Unit 9, Session 4” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Did Jesus take all our sins when He died on the cross?
2. How can we receive power to turn away from sin once we are saved by faith in Jesus?



5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Doug and Evelyn in Tanzania” printable.

SAY ☞ Doug and other preachers would go to different places in Tanzania and share the gospel. By 1984, Doug Knapp and African evangelists started more than 160 churches and baptized at least 11,400 people since 1978. Baptism is a next step after a person has repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Doug also selected and trained five Tanzanian pastors to preach and start new churches. But Doug noticed the pastors had difficulty getting to each new church. By God’s grace, Doug was able to provide the five pastors with motorcycles, and the pastors reached many more people with the good news about Jesus. ☞

Pray, thanking God for how He provides for His people. Praise God for the many people who were saved through the Knapps’ ministry efforts. Ask God to help more people around the world repent of sin and trust in Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Philippians 4:19 together.

SAY ☞ God supplied the Israelites with victory over their enemies. God meets all of our needs through His Son, Jesus. We can trust in Jesus and follow Him. ☞

Guide kids through the motions and melody of “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes,” leading them to recite a word from the key passage with each action of the song. Recite the key passage slowly at first, but then move more quickly as they grow more familiar. Consider forming kids into groups, competing to see which group can recite the key passage fastest.

~~Lead kids to sing “My God (Philippians 4:19).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.~~

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY ☞ Dear God, You are faithful to supply us with all we need. Our greatest reminder of this truth is the salvation You give us through faith in Your Son. Help us rely on You for all we need. Amen. ☞

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





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 7. Explain that Samuel was Israel's last judge and also a prophet. Tell kids that Samuel's roles as judge and prophet point to Jesus, who is the perfect Judge and Prophet.

Consider pointing out the location of Mizpah (H4) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map to help kids understand where this story took place. Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 7:5-7 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verses aloud.

SAY 🙏 The people of God were gathered at Mizpah to confess and repent of their sins when the Philistines arrived to attack them in battle. Not far from Mizpah, Samuel set up a stone of remembrance to celebrate and thank God for freeing His people from the Philistines.

When Jesus died on the cross for our sin, the cross became a symbol of the freedom we have in Jesus. We can look to Jesus' finished work on the cross to remember how He took our punishment and how we can have forgiveness of sin when we trust in Him. 🙏

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY 🙏 How did Samuel lead the Israelites to return to the Lord? 🙏

Remind kids how Samuel led the people of God to set their hearts back on the Lord. He instructed the people of God to stop worshiping false gods and idols and to worship God alone. As their leader, he confessed and repented of their sins and removed the false gods from among them.

SAY 🙏 Why can't we worship God and other things? 🙏

Discuss how God alone is to be worshiped because He alone is worthy of worship. Tell kids that other things, like friends, money, or material objects, are worthless compared to God because they cannot hear us or save us. Prompt kids to think about things they may be placing above the Lord, and encourage them to seek the Lord in repentance.

SAY 🙏 Samuel prayed to God on behalf of the Israelites. Did Jesus pray to God for His people? When? 🙏

Tell kids that before Jesus went to the cross, He prayed for everyone who would trust in Him. Discuss how Jesus knew He was going to die for sinners so that they could be with Him (John 17:20-26). Jesus asked the Father to help His people believe in Him and know the love of God through Christ Jesus. Encourage kids to remember how Jesus loves sinners and wants people to turn to Him in repentance.

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





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: HOPSCOTCH MEMORY

Write one word from 1 Samuel 7:12 on individual sheets of paper: *The Lord has helped us to this point. Create a hopscotch board on the floor by arranging the papers in order and taping them to the floor. Instruct kids to recite each word as they hop on the hopscotch trail. To challenge kids, tell them to skip certain words or to only hop on one foot. Increase the speed as kids become more familiar with the verse.*

SAY *“In our hopscotch, we needed to hop in the right direction of the verse. Today’s story was all about the Israelites turning toward God and turning away from the false gods. Remembering how God has helped us through His Son, Jesus, will strengthen us to follow Him. Only Jesus can give us a heart that loves God more than anything else. We live on mission when we worship God with all our hearts and share His love with others.”*

OPTION 2: ULTIMATE PROTECTOR



Place the following items on a table: oven mitts, helmet, mouth guard, knee pads, sunglasses, and bug spray. Hold up each item one at a time and invite kids to share how the item provides protection. For example, the oven mitts protect us from a hot pan while the bug spray protects us from bug bites.

Then read Psalm 121:7-8. Discuss how God protected His people Israel from the Philistines because of His faithful love. Share how we are protected through faith in Jesus. Discuss how this doesn’t mean we will not have trouble or struggles. Tell kids that through faith in Jesus we have ultimate protection because we are forgiven of our sins and have eternal life.

SAY *“SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES, and God protected His people from the Philistines. When we cry out to God to save us through His Son, Jesus, God does! He sent Jesus to be our ultimate Protector. Trusting in Jesus means turning away from sin and the ways of the world. Trusting in Jesus means living to bring Him glory and telling others about His salvation.”*

2 REFLECTION AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

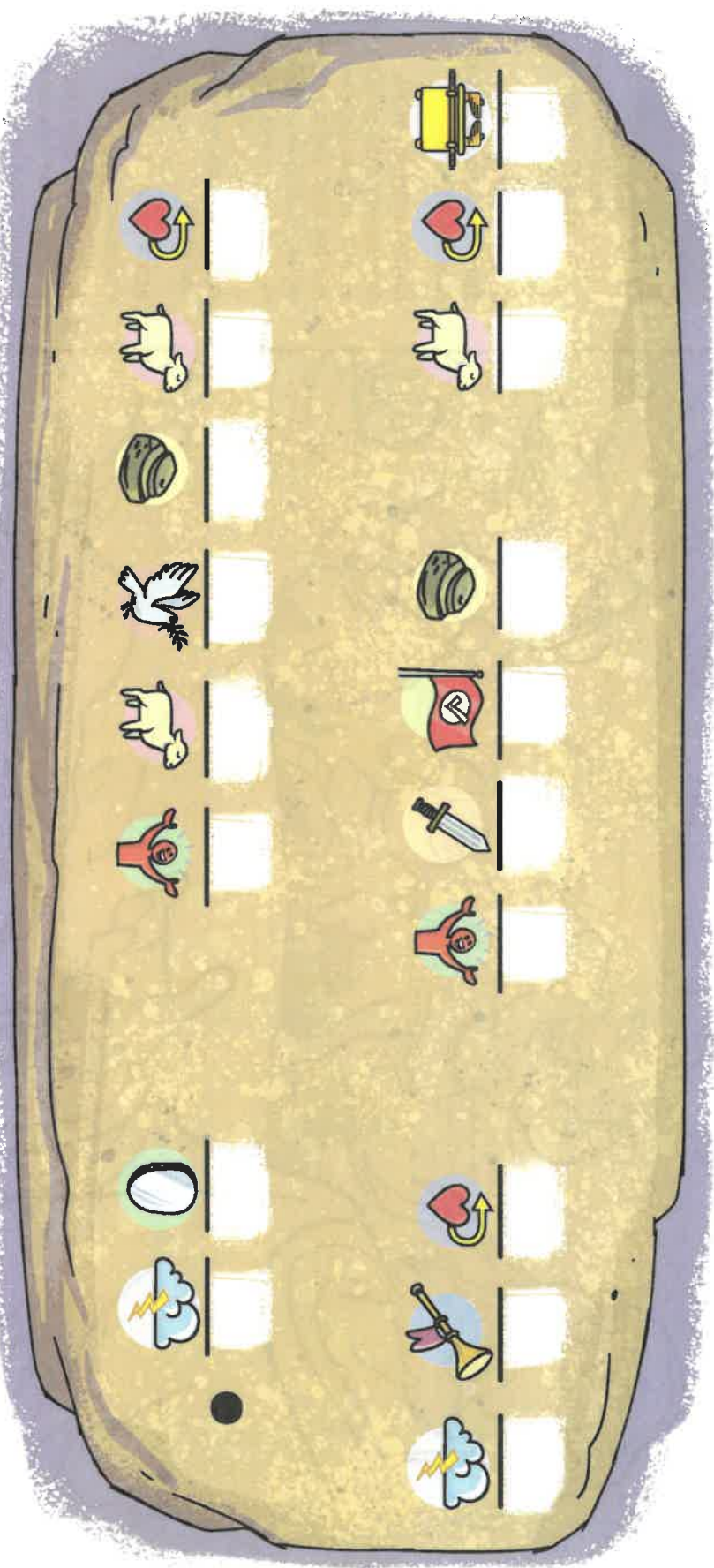
Distribute a sheet of paper and pencil to each kid. Ask kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:












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

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

Decode the Stone

INSTRUCTIONS: Decode the message to learn what Samuel reminded the Israelites after they defeated the Philistines.



A	D	E	H	L	O	P	R	S	T	U
										
Trumpet of victory	Celebrate	Sacrificial lamb	Hearts that return to the Lord	rock	Flag of victory	Peace for the Israelites	Sword for battle	The thunder that confused the Philistines	The Ark	Shield for battle

NAME: _____



Freedom from the Philistines

1 Samuel 7

STORY POINT:

Samuel cried out to the Lord to save the Israelites.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

Samuel called the people to turn away from false gods and to worship God, and God gave them victory over their enemies. God calls us to turn away from sin and to trust in Jesus who gives us victory over our enemies of sin and death.

KEY PASSAGE:

Philippians 4:19

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.



Scan the QR code for resources to use at home!