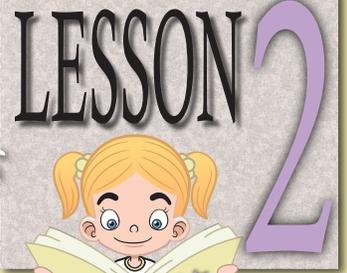


Purpose of the Judges; Overview of Lesser-known Judges



Judges



Old Testament 5

Part 1: Israel's Cycle of Disobedience; The Time of the Judges

SUNDAY MORNING

Old Testament 5 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Joshua 24:29-31; Judges 1 and 2

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: “[K]eep the commandments of the Lord your God” (Deuteronomy 8:6a).

OLDER CHILDREN: “Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways and to fear Him” (Deuteronomy 8:6).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- [“The Judges”](#)
- [“Trust and Obey”](#)
- [“The Judges”](#)
- [“Faith, Obedience, and Authority”](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Judges and King Saul](#) Bible fact cards (provided under “O.T. 5 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)
- “Summary of the Bible” from [“Kids Prep”](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- Judges A Beka Flash-A-Card Series (DISCLAIMERS: use the cards, *not the lesson book*; skip cards 3.2 and 3.3)
- “The Period of the Judges” chart and “Israel's Judges” map from *Nelson's Complete Book of Bible Maps and Charts*, 1993 (pp. 75,77)
- Cut out a large circle from poster board. Cut the circle into four equal sections to show the cycle of the Israelites' behavior in the time of the judges. If possible,



include pictures to go with each part of the cycle (e.g., picture of idol with word “Disobeyed,” picture of soldier with word(s) “Trouble” or “Attacked by Enemies,” picture of person on his knees praying with word “Repented,” and picture of judge with “God sent a DELIVERER.”)

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- If I want to be happy, I must always choose to do what God tells me to do in His Word.

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Talk about how, if we love Jesus, we will want to obey (John 14:15): If Daddy or Mommy tells you not to do something, do you get mad and act ugly? No, because God tells us in His Word to obey our parents. Should you hit your brother or sister? No, because the Bible says to be kind to each other, etc.

Last week, we studied about Moses and Joshua. Joshua was a good leader and he wanted the Israelites to never forget all the great things God had done for them. Joshua wanted them to always obey God. But the Israelites forgot what God had done for them. They chose not to obey God, and many bad things happened. Because of His great love for the Israelites, God chose “judges” to help the people obey Him again. Listen carefully to what happened and then we are going to learn a fun song with all the names of the judges in it.

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Has anyone ever tried to help you when you made a bad choice? Do your parents ever try to help you and keep you from making bad choices? Even though Joshua encouraged the Israelites to always obey God, most of them chose not to listen. Because God loved the Israelites so much, He chose “judges” to help them obey Him again. Today we will talk about some of the judges and how we can learn from the mistakes of the Israelites.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. In last week’s lesson, we talked about Joshua reminding the Israelites how God had kept His promises to them for hundreds of years. Before he died, Joshua called all the leaders of the twelve tribes together and reminded them that “the Lord your God is He who has been fighting for you” (Joshua 23:3). Joshua was afraid that the Israelites would forget about their promises to worship God, and only God, as they became more and more comfortable in Canaan. The people of Canaan worshipped many idols and many different things in nature. [OLDER CHILDREN: Their religion was very immoral and included even the sacrifice of babies to their idols.]
2. At this point in their history, the Israelites had not destroyed all of these wicked people, as God had told them to. There was a very real danger that the Israelites would start to think that the idol-worshipping people weren’t so bad and that their religions weren’t so bad either. If that happened, Joshua knew they would be more and more likely to marry idol-worshippers. And eventually they would completely lose their identity as God’s chosen people. [OLDER CHILDREN: Discuss the meaning of compromising one’s beliefs and its inevitable results.]

3. After Joshua died, his fears became reality, since “another generation arose after them who did not know the Lord, nor the work which He had done for Israel” (Judges 2:10). The Israelites who followed Joshua throughout the conquest of Canaan had not taught their children and grandchildren about God’s promises and the importance of obeying Him, even though Moses had warned them to teach God’s Word diligently to them (Deuteronomy 11:18-20). So after just one generation, the Israelites stopped fighting the idol-worshippers and became more and more friendly with them. They “did evil in the sight of the Lord” (Judges 2:11) and “forsook the Lord God of their fathers” (Judges 2:12).
4. Because of their disobedience, God punished the Israelites. He allowed idol-worshipping people to attack them and take away their crops and belongings. After some time, the Israelites “cried out” (prayed) to God for help and promised to obey Him. So God sent a judge to help them defeat their enemies. This same cycle (disobedience, punishment, repentance, and deliverance) happened over and over again.
5. These judges were not like judges in a courtroom today. They were sent by God to deliver the Israelites from dangerous enemies and to bring the Israelites back to God.

NOTE: The judges were “raised up by God to defeat a particular enemy in a particular territory and give the people rest. These judges were not national leaders; rather, they were local leaders who delivered the people from various oppressors. It is possible that some of the periods of oppression and rest overlap. Not all of the tribes participated in each battle...” (*Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*, p. 231. ISBN: 0-89693-847-6).

Also keep in mind that each of the judges were not necessarily righteous people. Just because the Bible tells what a certain judge did without comment, it does not mean that God always endorsed his behavior (e.g., Samson). God used the judges to fulfill His ultimate purpose of providing deliverance for His people.

6. The people would obey for a time, while the judge was with them. But when the judge died, the people quickly became disobedient again, choosing to turn away “quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord” (Judges 2:17b).
7. The book of Judges is a record of a very sad cycle of the Israelites’ choices not to follow God’s commands:
 - Disobedience: idol worship (often mixed into the worship of God)
 - Punishment: Israelites attacked by their enemies (usually Philistines or Midianites)
 - Repentance: Israelites cried to God for help
 - Deliverance: a judge sent by God; brought time of peace and obedience
 - Return to disobedience and idol worship
8. There were 14-15 judges. The book of Judges tells us very little about most of these people who were chosen by God to deliver the Israelites.
 - **Othniel**—Caleb’s nephew and son-in-law; brought peace for 40 years
 - **Ehud**—left-handed; killed the King of Moab
 - **Shamgar**—killed 600 Philistines with an ox goad; died in the first year of his service
 - **Deborah**—the only woman judge



- **Gideon**—defeated a huge Midianite army with only 300 men
- **Abimelech**—son of Gideon who ruled three years; very wicked; killed 70 brothers [Not always considered a judge, because he was not appointed by God; he took control himself.]
- **Tola**—judged 23 years
- **Jair**—had 30 sons who rode on 30 donkeys; helped maintain peace for 22 years
- **Jephthah**—judged for six years; made a foolish promise
- **Ibzan**—judged seven years
- **Elon**—judged 10 years
- **Abdon**—had 40 sons and 30 grandsons who rode on 70 donkeys; judged eight years
- **Samson**—strong man with weak character; long hair; served as judge for about 20 years; killed more Philistines on his last day than he had killed before
- **Eli**—served 40 years; had two very evil sons
- **Samuel**—served for 12 years; bridged the gap between the judges and Israel’s first king (Saul). [Some scholars do not consider Samuel as one of the judges, but instead, as a priest and prophet only: a transitional figure between the judges and Israel’s monarchy.]



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Jephthah’s Daughter](#)” by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for further study on the difficult passage in Judges 11.

9. The Israelites refused to obey God, choosing instead to become like everyone else around them, worshipping idols. The judges were supposed to be leaders and teachers who would help the Israelites, but the Israelites did not always listen. Today, Christians are God’s chosen people; He also expects us to listen to His Word and obey **only** Him, just as He expected the Israelites to do. If we don’t obey Him, we will become unhappy and have problems we would not otherwise have, just like the Israelites did.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Purpose of the Judges Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Magnetic photos: On Sunday morning, take a picture of each child hugging a Bible. If you cannot print the pictures immediately from your camera or electronic device, develop the pictures and give them to the children on Wednesday night. Let each child glue his/her picture on a 5x7 size piece of cardstock (or designed scrapbook paper) and decorate the border around the picture. Write the memory verse under each picture. Add strips of magnetic tape to the backs. Be sure to write the childrens’ names and the date on the photo.
- Spelling challenge: Cut out the letters for BIBLE and/or GOD’S WORD (depending on the age of the children). Cut out enough sets of the letters for each child to have one. Show the

children the word(s) and ask them to arrange their letters to look like yours ([Word cutouts](#) provided in activity sheets).

1st-2nd Graders:

- “[Judges Made Cents](#)” Game: Cut out shapes for coins and piggy banks (provided in activity sheets; or use cutouts available from teachers’ supply stores). On each piggy bank, write a question about the lesson or about individual judges. On the coins, write the answers to the questions. One or two children can match the questions and answers. To use as a group activity, tape the questions (pigs) to the board. Put the coins in a bag or box and let each child take a turn drawing out one coin. He/she must find the question (pig) that matches that answer (coin).
- “[Name the Judges Crossword Puzzle](#)”(provided in activity sheets)
- “Who Am I?” Game: Write 2-4 clues about various judges on individual index cards. Ask the class to try to identify the Bible character being described on the card.
- Scrambled Judges: On plastic eggs, write the names of the judges—but scramble the letters. Put the plastic eggs in a bag, and let each child have a turn taking out an egg. Give the child a few seconds to compare the scrambled letters with a list of the judges’ names and unscramble the letters to find the correct judge. [Another alternative: Cut out egg shapes from card stock (or use egg-shaped cutouts from a teacher supply store). Write the scrambled names of the judges on the shapes. Tape the shapes to the board, face down. Turn one egg over at a time, giving each child (or team) a chance to decide how to unscramble the letters of the judge’s name.]

3rd-4th Graders:

- “[Judges Made Cents](#)” Game: Cut out shapes for coins and piggy banks (provided in activity sheets; or use cutouts available from teachers’ supply stores). On each piggy bank, write a question about the lesson or about individual judges. On the coins, write the answers to the questions. One or two children can match the questions and answers. To use as a group activity, tape the questions (pigs) to the board. Put the coins in a bag or box and let each child take a turn drawing out one coin. He/she must find the question (pig) that matches that answer (coin).
- “[Purpose of the Judges Crossword Puzzle](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- “[Name the Judges Crossword Puzzle](#)”(provided in activity sheets)
- “Who Am I?” Game: Write 2-4 clues about various judges on individual index cards. Ask the class to try to identify the Bible character being described on the card.
- Scrambled Judges: On plastic eggs, write the names of the judges—but scramble the letters. Put the plastic eggs in a bag, and let each child have a turn taking out an egg. Give the child a few seconds to compare the scrambled letters with a list of the judges’ names and unscramble the letters to find the correct judge. [Another alternative: Cut out egg shapes from card stock (or use egg-shaped cutouts from a teacher supply store). Write the scrambled names of the judges on the shapes. Tape the shapes to the board, face down. Turn one egg over at a time, giving each child (or team) a chance to decide how to unscramble the letters of the judge’s name.]
- Have the children read the following:
 - Joshua chapters 22-24 (as well as 16-21 if they did not do so last week). [This could be assigned Sunday, to be completed by Wednesday.] Print out copies of the Joshua 16-24 quiz from AP’s [Advanced Bible Reader](#) site for the children to take.
 - Judges 1-2
 - Judges articles from the [December, 2004](#) issue of *Discovery Magazine*
 - *Gideon and the Times of the Judges*, by Joy Melissa Jensen, Contemporary Bible Series, Scandinavia Publishing House (DISCLAIMERS: change “bride-to-be” on p. 33 to “wife”; p.

34: the Bible does not say that the foxes were tied together with oil-soaked rags that were lit; p. 42: remove “at least one of”)

FINGERPLAYS:

“Oh, _____, do you love Jesus?”

[Start by using your co-teacher’s name first, to teach children how to sing the song.]

Teacher: “Oh, _____, do you love Jesus?”

Child(ren): “Oh, yes I (we) love Jesus!”

Teacher: “Are you sure you love Jesus?”

Child(ren): “Yes, I’m (we’re) sure I (we) love Jesus!”

Teacher: “Tell us why you love Jesus.”

Child(ren): “This is why I (we) love Jesus.”

Everyone: “Because He first loved me. Oh, how I love Jesus! Oh, how I love Jesus! Oh, how I love Jesus! Because He first loved me.”

[Can sing the song until each child’s name has been called, or sing once or twice through with the class responding as a group instead of individually (using “Oh, boys...” or “Oh, girls....”)]

SONGS:

“THE JUDGES”

Author: Jeff Miller

(Tune: See “[Kids Prep](#)” CD)

There once were Jewish judges,
After Moses and Joshua lived.
They helped to bring God’s judgment,
On the wicked people of Canaan.

Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah,
Gideon, Tola, and then Jair,
Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon,
Samson, Eli, Samuel.

“TRUST AND OBEY” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: John Sammis

(Tune: See church songbook)

(Last verse and chorus with older children; Chorus only with younger children.)

Then in fellowship sweet,
We will sit at His feet,
Or we’ll walk by His side in the way.
What He says we will do.
Where He sends we will go.
Never fear, only trust and obey.

CHORUS:
Trust and obey,
For there's no other way,
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.

“THE JUDGES” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “One Little, Two Little, Three Little Indians”)

God set jud-ges over Is-rael,
One brave wo-man, 14 men.

They helped Is-rael fight their bat-tles,
Led them back to God from sin.

Oth-niel, E-hud, Sham-gar, Debo-rah,
Gid-eon, To-la, and then Jair,
Jeph-thah, Ib-zan, E-lon, Ab-don,
Sam-son, E-li, Sam-u-el.

“FAITH, OBEDIENCE, AND AUTHORITY” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Sarah Richey

(Tune: “Farmer in the Dell”)

Believing in the Lord,
Believing in the Lord,
That's what faith is,
Believing in the Lord.

Doing what He said,
Doing what He said,
That is obedience,
Doing what He said.

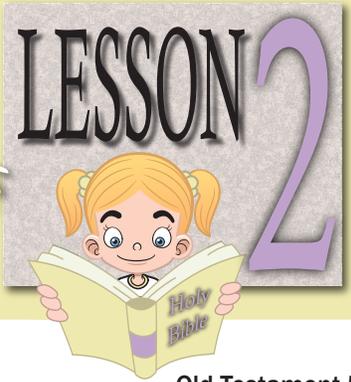
Telling what to do,
Telling what to do,
That is authority,
Telling what to do.

*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

***** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE “SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE CURRICULUM WEB SITE.**



Purpose of the Judges; Overview of Lesser-known Judges



Judges



Old Testament 5

Part 1: Israel's Cycle of Disobedience; The Time of the Judges

WEDNESDAY EVENING

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Joshua 24:29-31; Judges 1 and 2

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show the cycle of the Israelites' behavior in the time of the judges. If possible, include pictures to go with each part of the cycle (e.g., picture of idol with word "Disobeyed," picture of soldier with word(s) "Trouble" or "Attacked by Enemies," picture of person on his knees praying with word "Repented," and picture of judge with "God sent a DELIVERER.")

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

- If I want to be happy, I must always choose to do what God tells me to do in His Word.

INTRODUCTION:

Review [O.T. 5 Bible Facts Flashcard](#) (provided under "O.T. 5 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday's lesson (see [O.T. 5 Review Questions](#) for example questions)
2. Review the names of the judges, in order. Emphasize the importance of doing what God says (even if no one else does, even if we don't feel like it, etc.). Compare to obeying Mom and Dad, teachers at school, police (laws of our state and country), elders, etc. There are consequences when we do not obey!
3. Spend more time, as is age appropriate, talking about the book of Judges as one of the Books of History in the Old Testament and its importance between the book of Joshua and 1 and 2 Samuel.

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning's lesson

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