



APRIL 6, 2025

# THE FIRST JUDGES

JUDGES 3

## CHRIST CONNECTION

There are consequences for our sins, but God sent Jesus to save us from our sins once and for all.

## BIG PICTURE QUESTION

What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

## MEMORY VERSE

1 Peter 2:24

# PREPARE



Take time to reflect on today's lesson.

## LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Today's story ushers in a new chapter for God's people: the era of the judges. These short-term rescuers pointed to the need for an eternal Rescuer and Savior with the power to redeem and transform the hearts of God's people once and for all.

What pattern began to unfold in the lives of the Israelites? How did God prove Himself faithful and gracious in the lives of the Israelites, despite their sin?

The generations of Israelites who fought to conquer the land and renewed their commitment to God's law had died. Judges 3:4 tells us how God left some nations to test His people and determine if they would walk in obedience to His commands. Unfortunately, the Israelites began to worship the gods of the nations around them.

The same phrase is repeated throughout Judges: "The Israelites did what was evil in the Lord's sight." They forgot the Lord who swore to never forget His people. God allowed His people to be ruled and oppressed by foreign nations as a consequence for their sin. The cycle of apostasy was at work: Israel sinned, received consequences, and cried out to God for help; He sent a judge or deliverer, the people repented, and the cycle began anew.

In this chapter, we are introduced to three judges: Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. Through their leadership, God continued to prove Himself faithful by intervening and delivering His people, always preserving and setting them apart from the world. These earthly judges, however, could never save the people from their sins or produce new hearts with the desire to obey God. The peace these judges provided could not offer lasting change.

Lead kids to see that only Jesus has the power to give us new hearts and transform us into His image. While judges provided temporary peace, Jesus has established an eternal peace for those who place their faith in His finished work on the cross. Even the mightiest earthly hero pales in comparison to the Prince of Peace who was resurrected to bring us new life! Pray that awe would mark kids' hearts as they reflect on God's provision to secure everlasting peace and salvation.

# WELCOME



Connect with kids  
as they arrive.

## OPENING ACTIVITIES

Greet each kid as they arrive. Use this time to build relationships and help new kids connect to your group. Before heading to Large Group, you can play a game, chat with kids, or do the Memory Verse Activity below as a class!

## MEMORY VERSE

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.

**1 Peter 2:24, ESV**

## MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY

This is the first week of a new unit, which means we have a new memory verse! On the TVs in your classroom, select and play the motion video to teach kids the hand motions to aid in memorizing this unit's memory verse.

As a class, repeat the motions on the video 2-3 times to get the hang of it.

*Note: Our next Bible Bucks Day will be on April 27!*

# LARGE GROUP LESSON



Review what we're learning in Large Group.

## THE FIRST JUDGES

After Joshua died, the Israelites began to do what was evil in the Lord's sight. The people failed to obey God's law to worship Him alone. They worshiped the gods of the people who lived near them, and God was angry with their sin. So, God sent a foreign king to capture the people as a consequence.

The Israelites cried out to the Lord to save them. God raised up Othniel (ATHH nih el) to save them. Othniel was the first judge of Israel, a leader who led Israel to follow God and saved them from their enemies. The Spirit of the Lord was with Othniel, and he defeated this foreign king in battle. God's people turned away from sin and had peace for 40 years. Then Othniel died.

After Othniel's death, the people went back to worshiping other gods and doing evil in the Lord's sight. So, God sent King Eglon of Moab to attack and defeat His people as a consequence for their sin. Then the Israelites cried out for God to save them from slavery. So, God raised up another judge — Ehud — who would save the people from King Eglon.

Ehud made a short sword and hid it on his thigh under his clothes. He went to visit King Eglon with a gift. When no one else was around, Ehud used his hidden sword to defeat the king, and then Ehud secretly escaped. King Eglon's servants returned and found him dead on the floor.

After Ehud escaped, he sounded the ram's horn and all of Israel met him. Ehud said, "The Lord has handed over your enemies, the Moabites." The Israelites fought against Moab and won. Then Israel had peace for 80 years. Later, God raised up a third judge named Shamgar. He delivered Israel from their enemies, the Philistines.

## CHRIST CONNECTION

God brought consequences to His people for their sins, but He also raised up judges to save them from their enemies. **We also have consequences for our sins, but God sent Jesus to save us from our sins once and for all.**

# K12 ACTIVITIES



Do crafts and games with younger kids after Large Group.

## MAIN ACTIVITY

Pass out the provided circle templates to each kid (one is a full circle divided into sections; the other is a single section with a small cutout).

Allow kids to color in and decorate their craft, then have them put the templates together using a brad in the middle. The result should be a spinning diagram outlining the cycle of sin in the book of Judges.

## CONNECT THE DOTS



Throughout the book of Judges, we see the same cycle over and over. It's important for us to know this because it can help us when we find ourselves in a cycle of choosing our own way over God's way. We all sin, but God is always there to help us come back to Him. We need to constantly remind ourselves of God's goodness and the sadness we have without Him.



## CONNECT THE DOTS



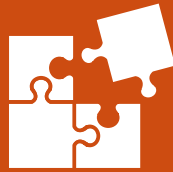
The Bible is the Word of God! It's important for us to learn from and about the Bible. One way we can do that is by learning more about the Old and New Testament and all the different Bible books that make up the Bible.

## BONUS ACTIVITY

On the TV in your room, open the file labeled "Old or New Testament?". Tell kids that each slide will have a book of the Bible, and they will have to work together to decide whether the book is from the Old Testament or the New Testament.

You can either divide kids into two teams or have them all work together as a class. Encourage kids to play without using the Bible or any other references.

# 345 ACTIVITIES



Do crafts and games with older kids after Large Group.

## MAIN ACTIVITY

Divide your class into two teams. Give the teams two of each colored cup and a cardboard box to use as a shield.

Have one person from each team take one set of their colored cups, go behind the shield, and set the cups up in any order. The rest of their team must then take the rest of the cups and set them up to match the order of cups behind the shield.

Continue playing until each kid has had the chance to be the pattern-maker.

## CONNECT THE DOTS



Each round, you had to figure out what the new pattern was. In the book of Judges, we see the Israelites choose the same pattern over and over again. They continually forgot God in times of peace and chose their own way, which led them into hardship. We can avoid following the same pattern by always remembering the goodness of God and turning back to Him in repentance when we sin and make mistakes.

## CONNECT THE DOTS



The Bible is the Word of God! It's important for us to learn from and about the Bible. One way we can do that is by becoming familiar with the Bible and what it tells us about Jesus. Jesus came to forgive our sins and show us how to follow God.

## BONUS ACTIVITY

Put the 36 provided cards in a 6x6 grid, with the backs of the cards facing up. Number each column and row 1-6.

Divide your class into two teams and give each team a set of dice. Taking turns, each team will roll the dice to decide which trivia card they will get. The first die they roll will decide which column they choose from, and the second die determines the row. *(i.e., If they roll a three and then a five, they'll pick up the card in the third column and fifth row.)*

Teams will earn five points for each trivia question they answer correctly. If a team gets the answer wrong, the other team may steal and answer the question, earning five points if they get it correct. When you're out of cards, the team with the most points wins!

# CLOSING ACTIVITIES



Continue to engage kids before parent pick-up.

## BIBLE STORY REVIEW

**Ask the following questions and lead your class to discuss.**

1. What punishment does our sin deserve?
2. The Israelites turned to false gods. What are some things we might turn to today instead of worshiping God?
3. How can we turn away from a cycle of rebellion?
4. What makes Jesus different from the judges in the Old Testament? Why is Jesus a greater Rescuer than the judges?
5. What can we do when we sin, even after we trust in Jesus?

## HAVE EXTRA TIME?

Go to the Leader Folder on one of the TVs in your classroom. (*Hit the back button until you see it.*) There, you'll find games and activities to do with your class!



## BEFORE YOU GO...

**Second hour leaders, please clean up by doing the following:**

1. Put all extra supplies and binders back in the curriculum bins.
2. Clean all trash off the tables.
3. Put all crayons, markers, etc. back in the appropriate containers and cubbies.
4. Erase the whiteboards and put markers/erasers back in the holder.
5. Turn off the TVs as you leave.

**THANK YOU FOR SERVING WITH US!**