



APRIL 6, 2025

THE FIRST JUDGES

JUDGES 3

CHRIST CONNECTION

Like God sent judges to help His people, He also sent Jesus to help us. Jesus saves us from our sins when we trust in Him.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION

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

MEMORY VERSE

By his wounds you have been healed. 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?

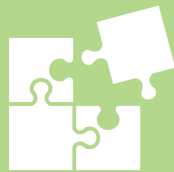
The generations of Israelites who fought to conquer the land and renewed their commitment to God's law had died. Judges 3:4 tells us how God left some nations to test His people and determine if they would walk in obedience to His commands. Unfortunately, the Israelites began to worship the gods of the 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 children 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 children's hearts as they reflect on God's provision to secure everlasting peace and salvation.

OPENING & ACTIVITIES



Connect with children through games and activities.

WELCOME

Play music in the background as you greet children coming into the classroom. Help them transition in and feel welcome as they play games and interact with others.

ACTIVITY #1: SING A SONG

Gather children and sing the song below to the tune of “Skip To My Lou”:

By his wounds you have been healed,
you have been healed,
you have been healed.
By his wounds you have been healed.
1 Peter 2:24

(Repeat)

CONNECT THE DOTS



Our memory verse phrase says, “By his wounds you have been healed.” Like God sent judges to help His people, He also sent Jesus to help us. Jesus saves us from our sins when we trust in Him. By Jesus’ wounds, we have been healed!

CONNECT THE DOTS



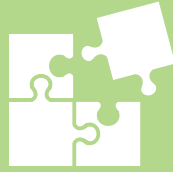
Our Bible story today names the first three judges: Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. Let’s count to three with each item and name the three judges together. God provided His people with judges and used them to free the people from their enemies. These enemies would make trouble for the people whenever they stopped listening to God and worshiped made-up gods.

ACTIVITY #2: GROUPS OF THREE

Gather an assortment of three similar items from around your classroom (e.g., three blocks, three crayons, three markers, etc.).

Mix up the items and lead children to sort them into groups of three by type. As children work, tell or review the Bible story.

OPENING & ACTIVITIES



Connect with children through games and activities.

ACTIVITY #3: PASS A PAPER HEART

Take the provided paper heart and have children sit in a circle.

Pass the heart around the circle and say together, "The people were happier when they loved God."

CONNECT THE DOTS



When the people worshiped made-up gods and were living under the king of Moab's rule, they were very unhappy. They remembered how happy they were when they listened to God and worshiped Him. They prayed to God and asked Him for help. God listened to the people's prayers. God provided His people with judges.



THE FIRST JUDGES

After Joshua, the leader of the Israelites, died, the people stopped listening to God. But God wanted His people to be happy and safe, so He sent special leaders called judges.

The first judge was Othniel (ATHH nih el). He led the people into battles, and God helped them win. Everything was peaceful for many years, but then Othniel died. The people forgot about God again. They started to worship pretend gods instead. This made God sad, so He let the king of Moab make trouble for them. The Israelites had to serve the king for 18 years.

The people remembered that they were happier when they loved God. They asked God for help, so God sent a new judge named Ehud. Ehud had a clever plan. He went to the king of Moab with a sword hidden under his clothes. Ehud told the king he had a message. When Ehud and the king were alone, Ehud used his sword to free God's people.

After that, Ehud led the Israelites to fight against the army of Moab. The Israelites won, and the land was peaceful for a long time.

When Ehud died, the people forgot about God. They got into trouble again, and they asked God for help. So God sent another judge named Shamgar.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Like God sent judges to help His people, He also sent Jesus to help us. Jesus saves us from our sins when we trust in Him.

SNACK & CLOSING



Continue to engage children near the end of the morning.

SNACK & DISCUSSION

Wash hands or use hand sanitizer. Serve a snack. Show children the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions and retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What was your favorite part of today's Bible story?
2. What did you learn about God in today's Bible story?
3. Who did God provide to rescue the Israelites from their enemies?
4. What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Pick up toys and games from around the room and put them away. After the room is cleaned up, set out markers or crayons and let children work on today's Bible story coloring page or activity page until their parents arrive.

You can also choose a book to read to children as they work or for those who don't want to work. Please make the effort to have children quietly engaged in the last few minutes of the service. When parents arrive to pick up their child, share about something their child enjoyed doing or did well today.

BEFORE YOU GO...

Second service leaders, please clean up by doing the following:

1. Spray down toys with disinfectant.
2. Spot sweep if needed.
3. Return toys to closet, close door.
4. Throw away any trash left on counters and in room.
5. Return storage cubes to Rm 108.

THANK YOU FOR SERVING WITH US!