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# The BIBLE STORY

## Samson

*Judges 13–16*

The Israelites disobeyed God, so God handed them over to their enemies, the Philistines, for 40 years. But not all of the Israelites disobeyed God. Some of them still worshiped Him. Two of those people were Manoah and his wife. One day the Angel of the LORD appeared to Manoah's wife and told her she would have a son. Her son would belong to God. God had special instructions for the baby's life: he should never cut his hair. God said, "Your son will be a Nazirite. He is going to save the Israelites from the Philistines."

Manoah's wife had a baby, and she named him Samson. As Samson grew, God blessed him. God gave Samson great strength.

When Samson grew up, he saw a Philistine woman he wanted to marry. He went to her town to talk to her. As he traveled with his father and mother, a young lion jumped out at him. Samson killed the lion with his bare hands. Samson did not tell his parents what he had done. After some time, Samson traveled again to marry the woman. Samson found the lion's carcass. A swarm of bees had made honey in the carcass. Samson scooped some honey into his hands and gave some to his parents.

The Philistines sent 30 men to help Samson prepare the wedding feast. He told the men a riddle:

Out of the eater came something to eat,  
and out of the strong came something sweet.

Samson was talking about the lion and the honey, but none of the men could solve the riddle. They asked Samson's new wife to help them. Samson's wife cried until Samson told her the answer to the riddle. Then Samson's wife told the men the answer. Samson had been tricked! He was angry, and he left his wife.

Later on, Samson went back to get his wife. But her father had given her to another man. "I thought you hated her," he said. Samson was so mad that he went out and caught 300 foxes. He tied their tails together with a

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torch and sent them out into the Philistines' fields. The foxes burned up the fields. The Philistines went to find Samson to punish him. The men of Judah had tied him up with ropes, but Samson was so strong that he broke through the ropes. He took the jawbone of a donkey and killed 1,000 men with it.

Samson escaped to the capital city of Gaza. The Philistines found him there and planned to kill him. Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistines talked to Delilah. "Get Samson to tell you why he is so strong," they said. "We will each give you 1,100 pieces of silver."

Delilah asked Samson why he was so strong. She tested him with seven fresh bowstrings and with new ropes. She tried weaving the braids on his head, but nothing took away Samson's strength.

Delilah begged Samson to tell her the truth, so Samson did. "If you cut my hair, I will not have my strength." Delilah sent for the Philistine leaders. They waited until Samson was sleeping, then a man cut his hair. Delilah woke him up. "Samson! Wake up! The Philistines are here to kill you!" But Samson's strength had left him. The Philistines seized him and made him blind. They took him away in shackles and made fun of him.

Samson's hair began to grow back. One day, the Philistines made Samson stand between two pillars in the temple of Dagon, the Philistines' god. Samson cried out to God, "Lord GOD, please remember me. Strengthen me once more." So God strengthened Samson. Samson pushed on the pillars and collapsed the temple. Samson and all of the Philistines in it died.

*Christ Connection: God raised up Samson as the last judge to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines. Samson killed more Philistines in his death than he did in his life. Jesus came as the last Deliverer, saving through His life and His death those who would trust in Him.*

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# Large Group LEADER

**Session Title:** Samson

**Bible Passage:** Judges 13–16

**Big Picture Question:** What should I do when I sin? I should ask God for forgiveness.

**Key Passage:** Judges 2:18

**Unit Christ Connection:** God used the judges to deliver His people from their enemies; Christ delivers people from the greatest enemy, Satan.

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• countdown video

## Countdown

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

## Introduce the session (2 minutes)

*[Large Group Leader enters flexing muscles and posing with muscles flexed while walking down the red carpet.]*

**Leader** • I have been at the gym pumping the old iron as they say. I've been building up my muscles because today we are behind the scenes at "Bible Obstacle Course." The contestants race through an obstacle course here on the stage and around the room to complete challenges of physical and mental strength. As the contestants race through the physical challenges of the obstacle course, they have to stop along the way to solve Bible puzzles in order to win the game.

The producers told me that they don't know what the puzzle should be today. He asked me what puzzle they should solve. What do you think? Do you have any ideas? What about the big picture question and answer? That's a great idea! I'll tell him to let the contestants solve a puzzle that shares our big picture question and answer,

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but first we need to discover our big picture question and answer. What group of people have we been learning about? The Israelites' judges.

• Timeline Map

## **Timeline map (1 minute)**

Review the previous Bible stories from this unit.

**Leader** • What role did the judges have in God's story? God sent the judges to help the Israelites. The judges showed that the Israelites needed a leader. God later sent kings to lead the Israelites. And He sent Jesus to be the King of kings and our Savior. Jesus is the only leader to conquer sin and death.

## **Big picture question (1 minute)**

As time allows, review the big picture questions and answers from this unit:

- *How does God accomplish His plan? God works in the lives of people to bring about His plan for redemption.*
- *What is the goal of God's plan? God's plan is to bring about His glory and our good.*
- *How should we respond to God's calling? We should obey God and trust Him to help us.*

**Leader** • Today our big picture question is, *What should I do when I sin?* Our guest judge on the show today is the strong man winner of the year. He has amazing strength. That reminds me of our Bible judge for today. The judge in today's Bible story is Samson. How many of you have heard of Samson before? God gave Samson great strength. Samson's story teaches us a lot about sin and what we should do when we sin. Open your Bibles to Judges 13. Let's find the answer to our big picture question, *What should I do when I sin?*

- Bibles
- “Samson” video
- Bible Story Picture Slide or Poster
- Big Picture Question Slide or Poster

## Tell the Bible story (9 minutes)

Open your Bible to Judges 13 and tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video “Samson.”

**Leader** • God had a plan for Samson. Samson was to be a Nazirite from birth. His mom even followed special instructions to get ready for Samson’s birth.

Did Samson follow God’s instructions? No, not always. Although Samson sinned, God still used him to judge Israel. God used Samson to punish the Philistines for not worshiping God. God even used Samson’s death to punish the Philistines.

The Philistines wrongly believed they could worship a false god and not face consequences. They did not believe God is the one true God. As a consequence, the Philistines died in the temple of their false god.

Our big picture question is, *What should I do when I sin?* The answer is, *I should ask God for forgiveness.*

Did Samson sin in our Bible story? Yes, he did. He broke his Nazirite vow more than once. Did Samson ask God for forgiveness when he sinned? We don’t know. The Bible doesn’t tell us. Samson’s story helps us understand the importance of asking God for forgiveness.

Read our big picture question and answer with me.

***What should I do when I sin? I should ask God for forgiveness.***

We need forgiveness because we all sin. God sent Jesus, the last Deliverer, to save people from sin. None of the earthly judges or deliverers were able to save people from sin. They could save people from the consequences of sin, but they could not rescue people from sin. Jesus never sinned, but He took the punishment for our sin. Only Jesus can rescue people from sin.

- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “As Long As the Judge Was Alive” song

## Key passage (5 minutes)

Invite a volunteer to say the key passage from memory. Ask for a small group leader to say the key passage from memory.

**Leader** •Great work, everyone! You have worked hard to memorize our key passage. We memorize God’s Word to help us remember what the Bible teaches us about God and how God wants us to bring Him glory. What does our key passage tell us about the Israelites and how they brought glory to God? When the judge was alive, they did. But after a judge died, they didn’t bring God glory because they worshiped false gods. Say the key passage with me.

Lead boys and girls to read the key passage with you. Guide kids to say the key passage from memory.

Sing the key passage song, “As Long As the Judge Was Alive.”

- “Unit 9 Session 4” discussion starter video

## Discussion starter video (5 minutes)

**Leader** •Do you ever say “I’m sorry” or ask for forgiveness from someone, but you aren’t really sorry? Watch this video.

Show the “Unit 9 Session 4” discussion starter video.

**Leader** •Does this sound familiar? Have you said that before? Are we always sorry we sinned, or are we sorry we were caught sinning? Sometimes we’re just sorry we were caught.

What about Samson? Do you think Samson was sorry all the times he sinned? Did he ask for forgiveness? We don’t know, do we? Think about our big picture question.

***What should I do when I sin? I should ask God for forgiveness.***

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## **The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me (optional)**

Using the guide provided, share with kids how to become a Christian. Provide counselors for kids to speak with one-on-one. Clearly communicate to kids how they can respond both in large group and after large group.

• “My Deliverer” song

### **Sing (5 minutes)**

**Leader** • God sent Jesus to be the last Deliverer. Jesus’ sacrifice provides salvation to all who trust Him as Lord and Savior. Stand with me and celebrate the deliverance from sin God has provided through His Son, Jesus. Lead kids to sing the unit theme song, “My Deliverer.”

### **Prayer (2 minutes)**

**Leader** • Wow! We have had a great time visiting the set of “Bible Obstacle Course” today. I am sad to say this was our last visit to a reality show theater. The judges have taught us a lot about God’s plan to send Jesus, the last Deliverer.

Our chronological journey through God’s Word will continue next week. Next time we will travel to a new place to continue exploring God’s story. We have many more stories to explore as we study God’s plan to send Jesus to redeem people from sin.

After I close in prayer, watch your small group leader for the signal to take your final walk down the red carpet. Close in prayer.

## **Dismiss to small groups**