

Use Week of:

Unit 9 • Session 1

Israel's Unfaithfulness

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Judges 1–3

STORY POINT:

God's people forgot about Him.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 John 1:9a

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

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



INTRODUCE THE STORY
(15–20 MINUTES)
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TEACH THE STORY
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EXPERIENCE THE STORY
(20–25 MINUTES)
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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

Following Joshua's death, the Israelites were without a leader. They fell into a cycle of sin that can be seen during each reign of the judges. The cycle is marked by an A-B-C-D-E pattern. Let's look at the first judge, Othniel, to see this pattern.

First, the people fell into **A**postasy. They turned away from God and served other gods. (Judg. 3:7) Next, they experienced a period of **B**ondage. God was angry with the Israelites, and He gave them into the hand of the king of Aram. (v. 8) Third, the people **C**ried out to God. (v. 9) Then, God sent a **D**eliverer to save them. (vv. 9-10) Finally, they had **E**ase in the land. (v. 11) Then Othniel died.

This pattern continued with Ehud. The people had again turned from God. Their apostasy made God angry. He sent them into bondage by strengthening the king of Moab to defeat Israel. The Israelites served the king of Moab for 18 years.

The Moabites were well-fed, especially the king. They enjoyed the fruit of the Israelites' labor while the Israelites went hungry. By thrusting a sword into the king's belly, Ehud disemboweled the king and left him dead on the floor of his room. The fat covered over the handle of the sword so that Ehud could not remove it.

After Ehud delivered Israel, the Israelites struck down the Moabites and there was peace in the land for eighty years. But Ehud would die, and they would need another judge to lead them.

The Israelites needed someone better than a judge; they needed a king who would save them not only from the consequences of their sin, but the sin itself. That was all part of God's plan. God sent a true Deliverer; His Son, Jesus, died for our sin and delivered us forever from the oppression of sin and death.

The BIBLE Story

Israel's Unfaithfulness

Judges 1–3

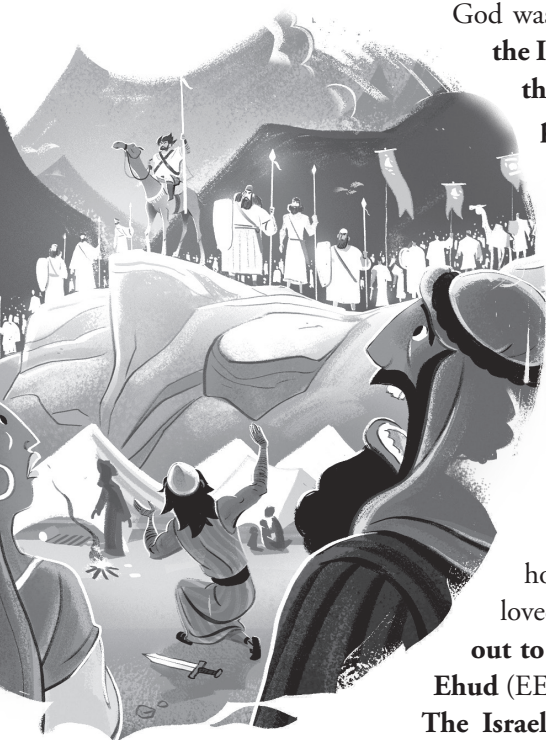
Joshua had died. Without a strong leader, the Israelites disobeyed God. Nothing good ever happened when the Israelites disobeyed God. God wanted the people to love and obey Him, so he gave them a leader called a *judge*.

Othniel (AHTH nih el) was the first judge.

God was with Othniel, and **Othniel led the Israelites into battle. God helped the Israelites win. The land was peaceful for many years, then Othniel died.** With no leader, the Israelites forgot about God again. They worshiped false gods instead. God was unhappy. He let the king of Moab attack the Israelites and defeat them so they would turn back to Him. The Israelites had to serve the king of Moab for 18 years.

The Israelites remembered how good it had been when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to Him, “Save us!” So God chose **Ehud** (EE huhd) to save them.

The Israelites sent Ehud to the king of Moab with a gift of money. Ehud made himself a sword. He hid it under his clothes. Then Ehud went to the king of Moab. Ehud said, “I have a secret message for you.” The king told all his attendants to go away so he was alone with Ehud.



When the king stood up, Ehud reached under his clothes and pulled out his sword. **Ehud killed the king.** Then he ran away, locking the doors of the room behind him.

When Ehud got away, he blew a ram's horn and became the leader of the Israelites. They fought the Moabites and won. They had peace in the land for 80 years.

Ehud died, and the Israelites forgot God again. When they remembered how good they had it when they loved and obeyed God, they cried out to Him, "Save us!" God sent a third judge, Shamgar (SHAM gahr), to save them.

Christ Connection: After God's people sinned, the judges helped God's people obey God again. But the judges could not change the people's hearts and make them love God. God had a plan. He sent His Son, Jesus, to change His people's hearts and save them from sin forever.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Paper plate faces:** Give each child a paper plate before you tell the Bible story. Lead children to draw a sad face on one side of the plate and a happy face on the other. Ask children to hold up the appropriate face to show how the people felt as you tell the Bible story. Pause and give prompts as needed.
- **Pretend to blow a horn:** Encourage the children to pretend to blow a ram's horn when each judge is mentioned.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Israel's Unfaithfulness

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 1–3

STORY POINT: God's people forgot about Him.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 1:9a

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

Welcome time

- "He Watches Over Me" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers, and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Obey or Disobey" activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide preschoolers to circle the children who are obeying God's rules and to draw an X on the children who are not obeying. Comment that when we obey our parents and help others, we are obeying God.

SAY • When we forget about God, we disobey God.

Disobeying God is called sin. God wants us to repent, to turn away from our sin and turn back to Him. Obeying God shows that we love Him. What are some other ways we can obey God's rules? In today's Bible story, **God's people forgot about Him**. Listen to what happened.

LOW PREP

- Bible

Follow directions

Give directions for children to follow like march in place, jump three times, and turn around. Tell the children that if you hold up the Bible, you want them to follow your

directions, but if you do not hold up the Bible, they should freeze. Give a variety of directions with and without holding up the Bible.

SAY • You followed directions very well. You obeyed the things I said to do. Today, our Bible story is about God's people, the Israelites, who forgot about God and did not do the things God told them to do. Listen to our Bible story to learn what happened to the Israelites.

Name ways people help us

Print and cut apart the “Community Helpers” cards, and place them in a gift bag. Guide children to take turns drawing a card from the bag. Show the card and invite the child to name the person on the card and one way that person helps us.

SAY • God gives us many people who help us in many different ways. In our Bible stories for the next few weeks, we will hear about some special people who God chose to help the Israelites. Listen for how these men and women helped God's people.

- “Community Helpers” printable
- scissors (adult use)
- gift bag

Transition to tell the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage preschoolers to obey your directions as they move to Bible study. Give several fun directions one at a time such as walk backwards, turn around twice, take three baby steps, and sit down.

- countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Judges 1 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible is true. Our Bible story today comes from Judges in the Old Testament. The Book of Judges tells about how God chose judges to lead His people.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Tell or watch the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- "Israel's Unfaithfulness" video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • When they did not have a strong leader, **God's people forgot about Him** and began to worship false gods. After God's people sinned, God sent judges who helped God's people obey Him again. But the judges could not change the people's hearts and make them love God. God had a plan. He sent His Son, Jesus, to change His people's hearts and save them from sin forever.

Practice the key passage

Cut out the key passage marker and place it at 1 John 1:9.

Invite a volunteer to open your Bible to the key passage.

Read the key passage aloud. Create motions for preschoolers to use as they say the key passage. Use the key passage song video for inspiration. Repeat the key passage several times.

SAY • God forgives all our sin when we trust in Jesus. Our key passage tells us what to do when we disobey God. We should tell God that we sinned and that we are sorry for disobeying.

Sing the key passage song, “He Is Faithful,” and the theme song “He Watches Over Me.”

- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “He Is Faithful” song
- “He Watches Over Me” song

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question asks, *What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.* *Turning away from sin* means to stop doing what is wrong and start doing what is right. When we repent, God helps us to do the right things.

- Big Picture Question Poster

Tip: Walk one direction and then turn to walk the opposite direction to give preschoolers a visual representation of repentance.



Missions moment

Read the sentences on the “Finish the Facts” printable, leaving the underlined parts unsaid. Instruct a preschooler to stand if he thinks he can finish the sentence.

SAY • Atlanta, Georgia has many church buildings, but still, many people do not know Jesus or worship Him. This is a surprising fact. Many people in Atlanta do not believe the gospel, but missionaries in the city are telling people that Jesus saves us from sin. Let’s pray for the people of Atlanta.

- “Finish the Facts” printable

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE The Story



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LOW PREP

Options:

- Vary the speed with which you say the statements once children have mastered the motions.
- Allow children to take turns helping you lead the group in the motions.

Act out the judges cycle

Lead preschoolers in acting out the judges cycle using the following statements and motions.

- *God's people forgot about Him.* [Put palm on forehead.]
- *God let Israel's enemies defeat them.* [Make a crying face and slump shoulders.]
- *God's people cried out to Him for help.* [Cup hands around mouth and shout "Help!"]
- *God sent a judge to help His people.* [Put fists on hips and puff out chest.]
- *God gave His people peace.* [Lay down on the floor as if resting.]

SAY • **God's people forgot about Him**, so God let Israel's enemies defeat them. God's people cried out to Him for help, and God sent a judge to help His people.

Make play dough hearts

Set out play dough and play dough tools. Be sure to include heart-shaped cookie cutters. Invite preschoolers to form hearts with their play dough.

SAY • We each have a heart that pumps in our chest, but the Bible tell us that we have another kind of heart that you cannot see or touch. Our heart is the part of

- play dough
- play dough tools
- heart-shaped cookie cutters

us that loves God or not. **God's people forgot about Him**, and the judges helped God's people obey God again. But the judges could not change the people's hearts and make them love God. God had a plan. He sent His Son, Jesus to change His people's hearts and save them from sin forever. When we trust in Jesus, God changes our heart to love Him.

Explore locks and keys

Provide several locks and keys and puzzles with locks and latches. Encourage the children to explore the locks and latches and try to open and close them. Consider using matching colored dot stickers to help preschoolers match the correct lock to the correct key.

- locks and keys
- puzzles with locks and latches
- colored dot stickers (optional)

SAY • In our Bible story, Ehud locked the door behind him. The servants waited before they opened the locked door, and then they found the king. **God's people forgot about Him**, but God used Ehud to help His people repent of their sin and turn back to Him. Later, God sent Jesus to change people's hearts and save them from sin forever.

Build Bible skills

Print two copies of the "Genesis–Ruth" printable. Cut the book names apart. Set aside Ruth to be used in session four. Tape one set of book names in order to form a long strip. Lay the strip on the floor. Tape the other set to small blocks. Encourage preschoolers to lay the matching block on the strip in the appropriate place. Point out the images for younger preschoolers. Read the book names as the children work. Mix up the blocks and play again. Show children where Judges is in the Bible.

- "Genesis–Ruth" printable
- scissors (adult use)
- tape
- blocks

Tip: Save the "Genesis–Ruth" printable to use in the next session.

SAY • Our Bible story today is from the Book of Judges. Judges tells us how **God’s people forgot about Him**. When they remembered God, they called to Him for help. God chose people as judges to lead His people. But the judges could not change the people’s hearts and make them love God. God sent His Son, Jesus to change His people’s hearts and save them from sin forever.



Pray for Atlanta

Reread the facts from the “Finish the Facts” printable preschoolers heard during the missions moment in “Teach the Story”. Ask preschoolers to fill in this fact: Where there is a movie there is _____ (POPCORN)!

Show the “Atlanta Prayer Card,” and read the prayer requests aloud. Invite preschoolers to join in saying “popcorn prayers” for the city. Explain that you will begin by saying a one-sentence prayer; then you will say, “popcorn” and the name of a preschooler. That preschooler will voice a one-sentence prayer. Then he will say, “popcorn” and the name of another preschooler who will pray next. Be prepared to suggest prayer needs. Continue until each child who wishes to pray has done so. Give each preschooler an Atlanta prayer card. Encourage children to use the card to pray with their families for the people of Atlanta.

SAY • **God’s people forgot about Him**. Many people in Atlanta are like the Israelites. They don’t even think about God; however, missionaries in the city are telling people the good news that God sent Jesus to change His people’s hearts and save them from sin forever. We can help people in Atlanta hear this good news by praying for them and missionaries there.

• “Finish the Facts”
printable

• “Atlanta Prayer Card”
printable, 1 per child

Option: Serve
popcorn as a treat
after the prayer
time.

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands, and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve horn-shaped corn chips for snack. Comment how Ehud blew a ram's horn when he became the leader of the Israelites. Ehud helped God's people obey God again, but Ehud could not change the people's hearts. Only Jesus can change people's hearts and save them from sin forever.

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. When Joshua died, what did the Israelites do? (**God's people forgot about Him.**)
2. When the Israelites remembered how good it had been when they loved and obeyed God, what did they do? (*They cried out to God, "Save us!"*)
3. How did God answer His people's cries for help? (*He sent a judge to help the people obey Him again.*)
4. What did the Israelites do after Ehud died? (*They forgot God again.*)
5. ***What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.***

Transition

When preschoolers finish their snack, they may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- horn-shaped corn chips (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "He Is Faithful" song
- "He Watches Over Me" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers