

Use Week of:

Unit 9 • Session 4

Samson

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Judges 13–16

STORY POINT:

God made Samson strong.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 John 1:9a

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

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

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LEADER Bible Study

Samson was the last of the major judges of Israel. He was born to parents who dedicated him to the Lord as a Nazirite after the Angel of the LORD announced that Samson would be born to save the Israelites from the power of the Philistines. Samson grew up, and God blessed him with great strength. But when Samson requested to marry a Philistine woman, his parents were confused. Samson was supposed to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines. Why would he want to marry one of them? But God had a plan in all of this. (See Judg. 14:4.)

As Samson prepared for the wedding, he gave a riddle to the men with him about an event that occurred on his way to Timnah. (See Judg. 14:9-14.) Days passed, and the men convinced Samson's wife to tell them the answer to the riddle. This action sparked a series of events that would eventually lead to the death of Samson.

When the men solved his riddle, Samson was so angry that he torched the fields of the Philistines. He used the jawbone of a donkey to kill 1,000 men, and he left his wife. The Philistine leaders determined to kill Samson. When Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, the leaders bribed her into telling them where Samson's strength came from.

A man came and shaved the braids from Samson's head. He lost his strength and became helpless. The Philistines gouged out his eyes and took him prisoner. They had him stand between the pillars of a pagan temple. In a final plea to God, Samson asked for his strength back. God gave him strength, and Samson knocked over the pillars, collapsing the temple. In his death, Samson killed more Philistines than he had killed in his life. (Judg. 16:30)

Though Samson disobeyed God, God used him to accomplish His purpose of delivering the Israelites from the Philistines. Jesus would come as the last Deliverer, saving through His obedience in His life and His death those who would trust in Him.

The BIBLE Story

Samson

Judges 13–16

God's people kept getting into trouble. They **disobeyed God again and again**. Each time, **God let their enemies have power over them**. Now **God's people were being controlled by the Philistines**.

One day, the angel of the LORD appeared to two of God's people. The angel told the couple that they were going to have a son. God had a special instruction for the baby: He should never cut his hair. God said, **"Your son is going to save the Israelites from the Philistines."**

When the woman had a baby, she named him Samson. God made Samson very strong. Samson grew up and met a woman named Delilah. Samson fell in love with her. The Philistine leaders told Delilah, **"Find out why Samson is so strong."** The leaders wanted to make Samson weak.

Delilah asked Samson, **"Why are you so strong?"** Samson said, "If you tie me up with seven fresh bowstrings, I will be weak." But that was not true. Delilah tied up Samson with seven fresh bowstrings. When she said, **"Samson! The Philistines are here to get you!"** Samson broke free.

Delilah asked Samson again, **"Why are you so strong?"** Samson said, "If you tie me up with new rope, I will be weak." But that was not true.



Delilah tied up Samson with new rope. When she said, “Samson! The Philistines are here to get you!” Samson broke free.

Delilah asked Samson again, “Why are you so strong?” Samson told Delilah, “If you weave my hair into a loom, I will be weak.” But that was not true. Delilah wove Samson’s hair into a loom. When she said, “Samson! The Philistines are here to get you!” Samson broke free.

Delilah begged Samson to tell her the truth, so Samson did: “If you cut my hair, I will not have my strength.”

When Samson was sleeping, a Philistine man came and cut his hair. Delilah woke up Samson. “Samson!” she said, “The Philistines are here to get you!” But Samson was not strong anymore. The Philistines grabbed him and took him away in chains.

But Samson’s hair began to grow back. One day, the Philistines made Samson stand between two columns in their temple. Samson cried out to God, and God made Samson strong. Samson pushed on the columns, and the temple fell down. Samson and everyone in the temple died, but Samson had saved the Israelites from the Philistines.

Christ Connection: Samson died because of his sin, but God used Samson’s death to help His people. Samson reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but He died for our sin. Jesus died and rose again to rescue God’s people from sin and give them life with God forever.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Flex your muscles:** Encourage children to flex their muscles or make strong arms every time they hear the word *strong* in the Bible story.
- **Use different voices:** Use different voices for Samson and Delilah as you tell the Bible story.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Samson

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 13–16

STORY POINT: God made Samson strong.

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

- “Match the Opposites” activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Guide children to draw a line connecting each image with its opposite. Match strong and weak, long and short, asleep and awake, and up and down.

SAY • You will hear some opposites in our Bible story today. God made a man named Samson very strong! We will hear what made Samson weak.

LOW PREP

Jump for gifts

Invite preschoolers to spread out at least an arm’s length away from one another. Explain that you will name different gifts. If a child has received that gift before, he should jump. If a child has not received that gift before, he should stand still. Suggested gifts include shoes, car, bicycle, teddy bear, doll house, video game, wagon, a baseball bat, or a puzzle

SAY • In today’s Bible story, God gave a man named

Samson a very special gift. This gift was not something you could buy. God gave Samson the gift of strength. **God made Samson strong.** Listen to our Bible story to hear how God used Samson's strength to rescue His people from their enemies.

Make Bible book chains

Print a copy of "Genesis–Ruth" for each preschooler. Invite preschoolers to cut out the strips. Offer assistance as needed. Help preschoolers put the Bible books in order, and then loop them through each other to make a paper chain. Say the book names several times as you help the children put their chains together. Comment that these are the names of the first Books of the Bible and that they are in the Old Testament.

SAY • Today is our fourth week to hear a story about a judge that God used to help the Israelites. Do you remember what book of the Bible the stories about the judges are in? Right, Judges! The judge we are learning about today was very strong! We have one new book in our chain, it is Ruth. We will hear the story of Ruth next week.

- "Genesis–Ruth" printable, 1 per child
- blunt-tipped scissors

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

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 the children to exercise as they move to Bible study. Suggest that they touch their toes, do arm circles, and jumping jacks.

- countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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

Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Judges 13 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible is God’s words and all the stories in it are true. Today’s Bible story is from the Book of Judges in the Old Testament part of the Bible.

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
- “Samson” 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 • Just like before, God’s people forgot about Him, and God let their enemies rule over them. This time it was the Philistines. Samson was the next judge of Israel. **God made Samson strong.** Samson made many wrong choices, and he died because of his sin, but God used Samson’s death to help His people. Jesus never sinned, but Jesus died and rose again to rescue us from sin and give us life with God forever.

Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 John 1:9 in your Bible, and invite a child to open it. Say the key passage together. Allow children take turns choosing a word to replace with a clap. Continue until children are clapping the entire verse.

SAY • Our key passage reminds us that God is faithful. God does what He says He will do even when we do not. Samson made many wrong choices, but God kept His promise to use Samson to save the Israelites.

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 • Remember our big picture question? *What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.* *Turning to Jesus* means to stop trusting in what we can do to save us, but to put our trust in what Jesus did. Jesus never sinned, but He took the punishment for our sin. When we turn to Jesus, He gives us life with God forever.

- Big Picture Question Poster



Missions moment

SAY • Samson prayed that God would make him strong again, and God did! We have been hearing about the Dye family, missionaries in Atlanta, Georgia. They pray often for their city. Let’s pray for the city where God has placed us!

Say the name of a place preschoolers may go this week. Ask children to share something they could pray for in that place. Pray for the requests together.

- Places to mention:
- home
- park
- grocery store
- school
- church.

Pray and transition to experience the story

EXPERIENCE the Story



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LOW PREP

• blocks

Build block columns

Encourage children to work together to build two block columns. Take turns being the one to stand between the blocks and push the columns down. Be sure preschoolers do not build the columns higher than chin level and that other children stand clear of falling blocks.

SAY • God made Samson strong. He was able to push on the columns and the temple fell down. Samson and other people died, but the Israelites were saved from the Philistines! God had used Samson to save His people again. Samson reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but He died for our sin. Jesus died and rose again to rescue God's people from sin and give them life with God forever.

Pretend to cut hair

Guide preschoolers to draw a face in the middle of a small paper plate. Invite preschoolers to place play dough in a garlic press and squeeze to make hair. Add the play dough hair to the edges of the paper plate face. Preschoolers may use blunt-tipped scissors to cut the hair. If a garlic press is not available, use a rolling pin to roll out a flat sheet of play dough and cut it into long strips with a plastic knife. Be sure to wash the garlic press and the scissors before the play

- play dough
- garlic press
- blunt-tipped scissors
- small paper plates
- markers

dough dries.

SAY • God had special instructions for Samson: He should never cut his hair. Samson let Delilah trick him into telling her why he was so strong. She told the Philistines, and they cut Samson's hair while he was asleep. Samson lost his strength. When Samson called out to God, **God made Samson strong** again. *What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.* We can call out to God when we sin, and He will forgive us because of Jesus.

Participate in a contest

Prepare contests for boys and girls to test their abilities.

- Provide a heavy book for preschoolers to take turns holding for a length of time.
- Take turns throwing a paper airplane down a long hallway or across the room. Mark where each airplane lands.
- Take turns tossing a beanbag into a basket. Tell each child to back up one step until he or she misses the basket.
- If your space allows, lead preschoolers to race across the room or down the hall.

· heavy book
· paper airplanes
· basket
· beanbags

Affirm each child's abilities.

SAY • **God made Samson strong;** however, he made wrong choices. Samson died because of his sin, but God used Samson's death to help His people. Samson reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but He died for our sin. Jesus died and rose again to rescue God's people from sin and give them life with God forever.

Act out the Bible story and video it

- biblical costumes
- props
- smart phone or video camera

Provide biblical costumes and props such as a baby doll for baby Samson, cardboard columns, and so forth. Assign children different roles. Tell the Bible story and guide preschoolers to act it out. Reassign roles and act it out again. Consider videoing the children and sharing the videos with parents. Be sure to use follow your church's security procedures regarding videoing children.

SAY • God made Samson strong, but Samson did not use His strength to honor God. Samson died because of his sin, but God used Samson's death to help His people. Samson reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but He died for our sin. Jesus died and rose again to rescue God's people from sin and give them life with God forever.



Mark your place

- "Map It" printable
- map or globe
- sticky note or thumbtack
- markers
- star stickers
- index cards (optional)

Display a map on the wall or a show a globe. Give each preschooler a "Map It" printable. Read each statement and fill in the answers for preschoolers. Consider writing the answers on index cards for older preschoolers to copy. Point to each location mentioned on the map. Place a sticky note or thumbtack at your location map. Guide preschoolers to color the map on their paper and put a star sticker on their location.

SAY • God made Samson strong and placed Samson exactly where He wanted him. God used Samson to defeat the Philistines and save His people. God has also chosen this exact place for you to live! You can make a big difference for God in this place by telling others about Jesus and His strong love.

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 mini barbells made with pretzel sticks and cheese cubes for snack. Comment that **God made Samson strong**. Samson died because of his sin, but God used Samson's death to help His people. Samson reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but He died and rose again to rescue God's people from sin and give them life with God forever.

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

1. What was the special instruction God gave Samson's parents? (*Samson should never cut his hair.*)
2. What did Delilah ask Samson over and over? (*Why are you so strong?*)
3. After Samson's hair was cut, what did the Philistines do? (*took him away in chains*)
4. What did Samson do to the temple? (*He pushed the columns and the temple fell down.*)
5. ***What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.***

Transition

When children finish their snack, preschoolers 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
- pretzel sticks (optional)
- cheese cubes (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