

Use Week of:

Unit 9 • Session 2

Deborah and Barak

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Judges 4–5

STORY POINT:

God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 John 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

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

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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

The time of the judges continued after the death of Ehud. The Israelites fell into a continuous cycle of sin, bondage, deliverance, and peace. Every judge was imperfect, yet God worked through the judges. At the time when the Israelites were oppressed by the king of Canaan, Deborah was the judge of Israel. Deborah sent for Barak and encouraged him to take up an army and fight the army of Canaan and its leader, Sisera.

Deborah reminded Barak that God would hand Sisera and his troops over to him. (Judg. 4:6-7) Barak agreed to go, but only if Deborah went with him. Deborah went, but she informed Barak that he would get no glory for the battle.

When Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men, “The LORD threw Sisera ... and all his army into a panic before Barak’s assault” (Judg. 4:15). Everyone in the army died, but Sisera escaped on foot.

Sisera fled to the tent of Jael, who invited him inside and gave him a drink. While Sisera slept, Jael drove a tent peg through his temple and he died.

Judges 5 records a victory song Deborah and Barak sang on that day, praising God for defeating the Canaanites. The land had rest for 40 years.

The Israelites’ sin had resulted in 20 years of defeat. God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to accomplish the Israelites’ victory over Canaan. As you teach kids this week, highlight the actions of Deborah and Barak, who willingly served God and used their gifts for His glory.

Use the Christ Connection to emphasize that God uses people and events to save us not only from our enemies, but to bring about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The BIBLE Story

Deborah and Barak

Judges 4–5

Ehud and Shamgar had been judges over Israel. After they died, the Israelites ignored God and forgot about Him. So God allowed the king of Canaan to overtake them. The commander of the king's army was named Sisera (SIS uh ruh). He was cruel to the Israelites. **God's people remembered how good life was when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to God, "Save us!"**

At this time, Deborah was the judge over Israel. Deborah called for Barak to give him a message from God. God wanted Barak to gather an army and lead them to Mount Tabor. **God would help Barak defeat Sisera there.**

Barak said to Deborah, "I will go if you will come with me. If you won't come, I'm not going."

"I'll go," Deborah said, "but you will receive no honor for the battle." So Deborah, Barak, and the army went to Mount Tabor. Sisera took his chariots and his army to fight against

Israel.

"Go, Barak!" said Deborah. "God will help you defeat Sisera today." **Barak and his army moved down the mountain toward Sisera and his army.** Barak chased the chariots and the army, and everyone in the



army was killed. **None of them survived except Sisera. He had escaped!**

Sisera ran to the tent of Jael (JAY uhl) because he and Jael's husband were friends. Jael said, "Come on in. Don't be afraid." **Jael gave Sisera some milk to drink and covered him with a rug.** Sisera was so exhausted that he fell into a deep sleep.

Jael knew that Sisera was an evil man, an enemy of God. She **took a tent peg and a hammer, and used them to kill Sisera while he slept.**

Barak came, looking for Sisera. Jael greeted him and said, "The man you are looking for is inside." **Barak went into Jael's tent and saw Sisera lying dead.**

That day, God allowed the Israelites to defeat the Canaanites. The Israelites had won the battle! **Deborah and Barak sang a victory song.** They praised God for helping them beat the Canaanites. **The land was peaceful for 40 more years.**

Christ Connection: God does what is for His glory and our good. (Psalm 115:3; Romans 8:28) God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to defeat Canaan. In a similar way, God uses people and events to not only save us from our enemies, but to teach us about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Dramatic dialogue:** Shift the position of your body to portray various people. Stand in one place when Deborah speaks, in another for Barak, and in a third for Jael.
- **Use props:** As you tell the story, show people figures for Deborah, Barak, Sisera, and Jael. Display a tent peg and hammer.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Deborah and Barak

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 4–5

STORY POINT: God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 1:9

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

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share what they like and dislike about working alone and working with others.

Activity page (5 minutes)

- “Deborah & Barak Puzzle” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Invite kids to complete “Deborah & Barak Puzzle” on the activity page. Guide kids to fill in the empty squares so that each picture appears exactly once in each row, column and 2-by-2 box.

SAY • These all appear in today’s Bible story. A woman named Deborah, who sat under a palm tree to judge Israel, gave a message to a man named Barak: “Go fight the Canaanites and their commander, Sisera.” In today’s Bible story, we’ll hear more about what happened.

**LOW
PREP**

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Would you rather?

Explain to kids that you are going to ask them some questions about things they would rather do alone or with

someone else. Instruct kids to sit down if they would rather do the activity alone, and to stand up if they would rather do the activity with someone else.

Use the suggested activities or provide your own: Would you rather [*insert activity*] alone or with someone else?

Suggested activities: *go camping, read a book, do a puzzle, watch a movie, watch a baseball game, cook a meal, go to a museum, go shopping, go swimming.*

SAY • In today's Bible story, Deborah told Barak that he should do something. Barak wanted Deborah to go with him. We'll hear more soon.

OPTION 2: Dizzy race

Form two teams of kids. Instruct them to stand in single-file lines. Explain that the first player in each line should spin around five times. Then the player should take five hops across the room, do three jumping jacks, spin around three times, and hop back to their teams.

Then the next player will take a turn. When all players finish, instruct kids to sit down.

SAY • How hard was it to do a relay when you were dizzy and tired? That felt kind of confusing and chaotic. Imagine trying to fight a battle when you can't think straight! In the Bible story we will hear today, God's people defeated their enemies when God confused the Canaanite army.

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Deborah and Barak

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 4–5

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KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 1:9

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

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• telescope
• Bible

[Leader enters holding a small telescope (real or homemade) and a Bible. Leader peers through the telescope toward the sky before addressing kids.]

LEADER • Hey, everyone! Welcome back! It is so good to see you. I'm [*your name*], amateur astronomer. If this is your first time here, let me explain: an astronomer is someone who studies the cosmos, or the universe. To get started, all you have to do is look up! Have you ever spent a night outside, looking at the stars?

This reminds me of a passage in the Bible. [*Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 8:3-4.*] The universe is huge, and God is even bigger! Still, He cares for us!

The Old Testament tells us about how God cared for His people, the Israelites—even when they turned away from Him. I can't wait for you to hear today's Bible story.

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Does anyone remember our big picture question from last time? [*Allow kids to respond.*] That's right.

What is repentance? Everyone stand up, and we will say the big picture question and answer together.

[*Stand facing one way.*] **Repentance is turning away from sin and** [*turn to face the other way*] **turning to Jesus.**

• Big Picture Question Poster

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

LEADER • We've heard about how the Israelites got to the promised land under the leadership of Joshua. When Joshua died, the people slipped into a cycle of sin. They forgot about God and turned from Him, so God allowed their enemies to rule over them. The people remembered God and cried out to Him, and God raised up a deliverer to rescue them.

Last time we heard about the first three judges of Israel: Othniel, Ehud, and Shamgar. When Shamgar died, the Israelites forgot about God and were ruled by the Canaanites. Today's Bible story is about a judge named Deborah.

• Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Judges 4–5. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Deborah and Barak.”

LEADER • The Israelites once again fell into the cycle of sin that we learned about last week. They stopped following God. For 20 years, they were ruled by a

• Bibles
• “Deborah and Barak” video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Story Point Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster

cruel king of Canaan. The Israelites remembered the peace they had when they loved and followed God, and they cried out to God to rescue them.

God sent Deborah, a judge and prophetess, to deliver the people. Deborah called for Barak to lead God's people to fight the Canaanites. **God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.** Did you notice how the Israelites won the battle? God fought for them again. God confused the enemy's army and Israel won the battle. The Israelites defeated the Canaanites and lived in peace for 40 years.

By raising up a deliverer—a judge—to lead the Israelites to defeat Canaan, God received glory. Deborah and Barak sang praise to Him. The Israelites knew that God had saved them.

Christ connection

LEADER • God does what is for His glory and our good. (Psalm 115:3; Romans 8:28) God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to defeat the Canaanites. In a similar way, God uses people and events to not only save us from our enemies, but to teach us about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Sin separates us from God, but we can repent and have forgiveness and eternal life. Let's review our big picture question: *What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.*

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 9, Session 2" questions from kids video.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 166 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

"Unit 9, Session 2" questions from kids video

Prompt kids to think about what they can do to help someone who is suffering. Guide them to discuss what gifts God has given them that they can use for the glory of God and the good of others.



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • The Dye family are missionaries with the North American Mission Board. When Matt Dye was asked to check out the city of Atlanta as a mission location, he had already made up his mind that was not the city for his family. He believed people in Atlanta already had plenty of churches and access to the gospel.

After the visit to the city though, he realized there were actually many in the city who needed to hear that God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue them. The Dye family didn't run away from the city. Let's watch this video to see what they did.

Show the "Casting the Dye (Part 1)" missions video.

LEADER • The Dye family ran toward the city of Atlanta, trusting the move would be for God's glory.

• "Casting the Dye (Part 1)" missions video

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 John 1:9.

LEADER • The Bible says that everyone has sinned. Sin separates us from God, but He sent Jesus to bring us back to Him. Because Jesus took the punishment we deserve for our sin when He died on the cross, everyone who trusts in Jesus as Lord and Savior has forgiveness and eternal life. When we confess our sin, God forgives us! Let's sing.

• Key Passage Poster
• "Faithful and Righteous" song

Lead boys and girls in singing the “Faithful and Righteous” song.

Sing (4 minutes)

Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 106:47.

LEADER • God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue

His people. After the Israelites defeated Sisera and his army, they praised God. God has saved us from our greatest enemies: sin and death. Let’s praise Him with a song!

Sing together “Onward, Christian Soldiers.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • Lord God, thank You for Your Word. We hear the story of Deborah and Barak and are in awe of how You fight for Your people. Grow our faith so we will trust You in anything You call us to do. Use us in Your plan—for Your glory. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

• “Onward, Christian Soldiers” song

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 4–5

STORY POINT: God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 1:9

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

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- Allergy Alert
- balloon
- masking tape or painter's tape (optional)

Display the key passage poster. Guide boys and girls to read 1 John 1:9 together.

Inflate and tie a balloon. Form two groups of kids and instruct them to stand on opposite sides of the room. You may choose to put a tape line on the floor to divide the room. Invite kids to play a game of balloon volleyball. Each team may tap the balloon up to three times to move it to the other team. Each time a player taps the balloon, he should say a word from the key passage, beginning with the first word and moving through the passage one word at a time. Play until the balloon hits the floor. Then tell kids to play again. Challenge them to volley the balloon back and forth as they say the entire key passage and reference.

SAY • Keep working this week to memorize our key passage.

We'll see who can say it from memory next week.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster
- Small Group Timeline and Map Set (005802970)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Judges 4. Explain that today's Bible story comes from Judges 4–5. Remind kids that the Book of Judges shows Israel's cycle of sin, defeat, cries for help, and deliverance

through a judge. When the judge died, the cycle started over again. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Judges 4:1-3.

SAY • Deborah was the judge in Israel when God said He wanted Barak to gather an army and lead them to Mount Tabor. God would help Barak defeat Sisera there. Mount Tabor was in a northern part of the land of Canaan. [*Point to the area west of the Sea of Galilee (D5) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map.*] Through Israel's battle against the Canaanites, **God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.**

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why do you think God rescued His people after they turned away from Him? *Invite kids to share their thoughts. Emphasize God's grace and mercy toward the undeserving Israelites and toward us—undeserving sinners—because of His great love for us. Remind kids of the covenant God made with Israel.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Lam. 3:22-23.)
2. What kind of people does God use in His plan today? *Lead kids to recognize how God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to defeat the enemy. All three contributed to the defeat of the Canaanite army, but God controlled the outcome. Today God still uses people for His purposes—people who are willing to obey Him.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 2:13.)
3. How can we show we trust God? *Prompt kids to discuss how trusting God means more than just saying you trust God. True trust in God means faith in action. We follow and obey God even when it's not easy because we believe He is in control of all things.*
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 56:3-4.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LOW PREP

- “Dye Family Photograph” printable
- paper
- pens

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

- “Victory Song” printable, 1 per kid
- pencils
- Bibles

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Throw a party

Share the Dye family photo and read the caption. Group kids into teams. Give each team paper and a pen. Instruct each team to plan a party with the intention of showing their friends God’s love and sharing the gospel. Encourage them to make a list for food and party activities they would play as well as sketch out how they would decorate for their party. Give each team an opportunity to share their party plans with the large group.

Challenge kids to take their ideas home to their parents to coordinate something similar for their friends and neighbors.

SAY • The Dye family creates events and opportunities to invite people into their lives so that they can share the gospel with many people. Like in today’s story, God uses all things to bring glory to Himself. We can plan ways to share Jesus with others.

OPTION 2: Victory song

Give each kid a “Victory Song” printable and a pencil. Provide Bibles and instruct kids to find Judges 5. Point out that after the Israelites’ victory, Deborah and Barak sang a song about what had happened. They praised God for the victory.

Encourage kids to think of a time—in their own lives or in a familiar Bible story—that God did something wonderful. Lead them to list a few phrases describing what happened and a few words to describe God’s actions or His character.

Give kids time to write a few sentences of their own victory song. Kids may work individually or in small

groups. Allow volunteers to read or sing their songs.

SAY • God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people. God does what is for His glory and our good. He uses people and events to not only save us from our enemies but to teach us about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ. We can praise Him for victory over sin and death.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

• pencils
• Journal Page
• "Confusion Crossword" activity page, 1 per kid

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, asking God to give kids the courage to help others who may be different from them. Ask Him to show them opportunities where they can share the love of Jesus with others.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "Confusion Crossword" on the activity page. Kids should use the clues to complete the crossword.

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.