

Lesson 1: Introduction to Judges

Objectives: Students will...

- 1) Look at the outline of Judges and understand what the Book of Judges is about
- 2) See how Judges, Ruth and 1 Samuel relate to the "Books of History" of the Old Testament
- 3) Understand that God wants us to turn from evil because He loves and has compassion for us
- 4) Look at the cycles of the Israelites in the Book of Judges
- 5) Review the Old Testament from Genesis to Judges

Accommodations: How will I accommodate individual needs of students?

- Some students at this age will still have trouble writing/reading so during paper activities help ensure children understand by reading instructions aloud so they can follow along.
- Help students who have difficulty sitting for long periods by sitting beside them to help them stay focused.
- Some children may have a hard time writing, ensure you check on students and if you notice one has difficulty offer to help write part of a sentence or a word for them.

Supplies: Coordinator will ensure these supplies are ready for you in advance. If not discuss with him/her.

Teacher Materials (provided in classroom)

- Bible(s)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Chart (See Template)
- Stickers for Attendance
- Old Testament in Review Sheets – one set of sheets per student (keep in class to review as the weeks go by)
- Judges Activity Sheet – one per student

Optional:

- Books of History Maze - one per student
- Storybook or visuals of this story to show kids (if available)

Snack:

- Round Cracker, Orange, or something circular in shape 1-4 pieces for each child
- Napkins for snack one per child
- Juice or water and cup one per child

Lesson:

1) Introduction to Lesson

2-5 minutes

As students enter, welcome them and help find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming.

Take attendance (using attendance chart supplied). Write in the name of each student on the chart and let each child put a sticker beside their name for this week.

Introduce yourself to the students, and if unfamiliar with their names, ask children to go around the room sharing their name so you can learn them. Say to students:

This quarter we will continue to study the Old Testament and the Books of History. If you recall – the first 5 books of the Bible are Books of Law – Can anyone raise their hand and name the first 5 books of the Old Testament? (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy) Last

quarter you studied Joshua – that is the first book in the next series – the Books of History. They are the books that show the history of the Israelite nation after entering the Promised Land. There are 12 books in the Books of History – first you studied Joshua and now we are going to look at Judges, Ruth and begin 1 Samuel this quarter.

Raise your hand and tell me what you think of when you hear the title “Judges”. Let students answer.

Usually we think of a court room with someone in a robe deciding who is right and who is wrong. In the book of Judges – the term is used to mean 13 people that ruled Israel and were known for their leadership and fighting skills. They were military conquerors and these judges helped Israel defeat other nations that wanted to conquer Israel.

2) Old Testament in Review Activity

10-15 minutes

Optional: Storybook or visuals of this story to show kids (if available)

Hand out one set of **Old Testament in Review sheets** to each child. Have each child who is able to read, take turns going through the chart that shows the events from Genesis to Judges. Don't worry about the dates, but have them read the events and what Book of the Old Testament the events came from. Once students get to Judges, they can stop.

Discussion Questions:

Do you remember studying any of these events? Let students answer.

Any you forgot? Let students answer. (Suggest that if they have forgotten some – they should go to the book of the Bible the event is from and read it this week to help them remember)

Say to students, **“This outline goes through the entire Old Testament but we are only going to focus on the events up until Judges. You will get to keep this outline to use for later though – so plan to keep it to help you review all of the Bible to refresh your memory.**

Another outline of the Bible to help us remember is on the next page. There is a chart with 7 areas/periods of time that we have studied so far in class. Can I get volunteers to read each heading and what is written underneath starting with “Before the Flood” Have students read each heading as a review and reminder of what they have studied so far.

When done have them look at the next section. Say, **“There is also a list of some classic events and the Books of the Old Testament broken down into books of Law, History, Major and Minor Prophets and Poetry. I will keep these for now, but like I said – we will review them again and then you can take these home to keep to remind you of all the events, periods and timelines that we have studied so far!**

Last quarter you studied the Old Testament from the book of Joshua. What happened in the book of Joshua? Let students raise their hands and answer. Some answers might include: Joshua defeated Jericho and other cities in Canaan. Joshua led the Israelites faithfully. Caleb and Joshua were rewarded for their faith in God.

Good job! Now, if you have your Bibles let's find Judges - the next book and turn there now. (For students that don't have Bibles provide one or have them share with the person sitting next to them. A

great idea is to see and ask who does not own a Bible and if not, purchase one for them to keep as their own to help encourage studying at home.)

3) The Book of Judges Overview

2-5 minutes

Say, "The books of Judges, Ruth and 1 Samuel tell of the period of Bible history we call the Period of Judges. It begins with the history after the death of Joshua and ends near the death of Samson – the last judge. This history covers slightly more than 300 years, about 1350-1050 B.C. The Judges were not those you find in the courtroom, but were actually military deliverers or leaders who saved the people from invading enemies. After saving the Israelites, the judges then acted as a ruler/lawgiver because there were then no civil rulers or kings in Israel at that time.

The main verse in Judges that sums up the book is the verse in Judges 21:25 – let's turn there and can I get a volunteer to read that?

Judges 21:25

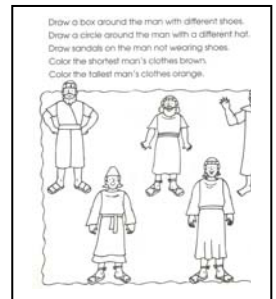
In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

4) Judges Activity Sheet

10-15 minutes

Hand out one sheet to each child *Don't hand out pencil crayons until you have read together through the first half of the sheet so that students don't "jump ahead". Tell the students, "We are going to read through this sheet together as a group. When we are done we will then do the activity at the bottom of the page.

Read through the cycles of the Judges and have student take turns with the names of the thirteen Judges they will be studying this quarter. You may have to state the name first, then have students repeat the name. When done, read each instruction out loud as you hand out pencil crayons; let students find the "judges" by following the directions at the bottom of the page. Help younger students who have trouble reading/following directions by repeating each direction one at a time and help make sure they correctly followed it.



Ask students:

How many judges were there? 13

How many were woman? 1 – Deborah

Let's turn to Judges and read Judges 1:28 and 2:1-3, 11-19. Get volunteers to read each section with the large section being broken into 4-5 verses each.

Discussion Questions:

What did God say they did wrong in 2:2? They were not supposed to make deals/promises or covenants with the people in the land and they were to tear down their false idol worship altars but they did not do that.

What was the consequence for not following God in 2:3? God would not drive out the people that lived there and they would be a pain or a thorn for the Israelites.

Who sent the judges? God.

Why did the Israelites need judges? To save them from the other nations that conquered them after the Israelites sinned and worshipped other gods beside the one true God!

Why did God sent the judges (see verse 18)? God had pity on them. He felt bad or sorry for them.

What does that show about God? He is kind, caring, loving and wants us to turn from evil. But He will punish us when needed to help us learn because He loves us.

Recite **Judges 21:25** a few times with the class to help them remember the verse:

In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

Ask – what is the problem with everyone doing as he feels is best? There is no common law, no right or wrong, some people might think something is good while other's disagree and that causes problems, etc.

The book of Judges is about 13 men and women who ruled Israel during a period of time when Israel rebelled and did not follow God. These judges weren't just deciding laws but helped Israel in battle and made leadership decisions for the people. We looked today at the cycle of the book of Judges – it was a circle with the four different ways the Israelites behaved – first sin, then sorrow, then servitude and then salvation. This cycle or circle was repeated over and over again and was a vicious cycle the Israelites allowed themselves to get into. Let's remember not to do that, but to stay faithful to God always – make a straight path for yourself, rather than just going around in a circle!

5) Optional: Books of History Maze

5-15 minutes

Hand out one page to each student. Read the directions and help those who need it find the start and finish of the maze. When done, read each book of history out loud so that students can hear the book being named as well as see it – as some of these names are quite irregular and unusual. For students who are able, have them write in each book of history as they find it. For students who have difficulty writing, allow them to color the picture or draw different ways that they see God showing His care for them instead of writing the books of history on the right. Let all students draw or write different ways when they are done as well, if there is time.

*****You can also practice singing the songs of the Old Testament** using the ABC alphabet song as a tune.

6) Optional – Snack: Round or Circular Snack – Crackers, Orange or Something Similar

Hand out snack to each child along with a glass of water or juice. Explain that: **Today we studied that the book of Judges is about 13 men and women who ruled Israel during a period of time when Israel rebelled and did not follow God. These judges weren't just deciding laws, but helped Israel in battle and made leadership decisions for the people. We looked today at the cycle of the book of Judges – it was a circle with the four different ways the Israelites behaved – first sin, then sorrow, then servitude and then salvation. This cycle or circle was repeated over and over again. To help us remember, we are going to eat a circular or round snack to remind us of the vicious cycle the Israelites allowed themselves to get into. Let's remember not to do that, but to stay faithful to God always – make a straight path for yourself, rather than just going around in a circle!** Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands.

Discuss any questions while snacking. See if students can remember any of the names of the judges while snacking or see how many books of history they can name.

7) Optional – Songs**5 minutes**

Have children sing songs with you. An example:

Judges –

To the tune of the Alphabet song or the ABC....song

Name the Judges who went to war

Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar

Deborah, Gideon, and Abimelech

Tola, Jair and Jephthah

Ibzan, Elon and Abdon

The last Judge was Samson!

8) Close in prayer

*If desired, ask the children if they have any prayer requests and write them down to help you remember. Then ask all children to bow their heads and fold their hands to pray.

Dear God, help us as we study Your perfect Word in the Old Testament to understand it, use it and see the examples of faithful people that followed You. Help us to remember that Your commands are important and need to be followed to live a life that is pleasing to You. Help us all too always love You with our whole heart, mind, strength and soul! Help us this week as we go from our church family – we pray that you will be with us and our families, help us share the good news of Your love to every one we meet and help us to remember to pray and study the Bible every day. Thank you for the book of Judges that will show us how we still need to be faithful, even if everyone else around us is not. Thank you God for Your love, thank you for Your Son Jesus, thank you for caring for us and providing such a beautiful world for us to live in, and thank you for giving us Your Word – the Bible so we can know how to live and learn what pleases You. In Jesus precious name, Amen.

Thank you for serving Christ in this way!