

Lesson 2: The First Three Judges

Objectives: Students will...

- 1) Study the first three judges
- 2) Read the account of Ehud and relate his sword/dagger with our sword today – the Word of God
- 3) Learn that we have armor today like Ehud – Eph. 6:10-18
- 4) Begin to track the judges using a chart to help them memorize each judge

Accommodations: How will I accommodate individual needs of students?

- See Lesson 1 for idea

Supplies:

Teacher Materials (provided in classroom)

- Bible(s)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Chart (See Template)
- Stickers for Attendance
- Map of Judges – one for class to share (keep for other classes later on as well)
- Map of Judges and Oppressors – one for class to share (keep for other classes later on as well)
- Judges Chart – one for younger students (keep in class each week as they will add to it)
- Judges Chart – one for older students (keep in class each week as they will add to it)
- Judges Chart Answer Key – one for teacher
- Ehud and Our Armor Activity Sheet – one per student

Optional:

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

Snack:

- Sword shaped snack (ex: strips of cheese, banana, pretzel stick) 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).

Say to students:

This quarter we will continue to study the Books of History. We are going to focus on Judges, Ruth and begin 1 Samuel this quarter.

Raise your hand and tell me if you remember what the term “Judges” mean in this Old

Testament book. Let students answer. They were military conquerors not courtroom judges and these judges helped Israel defeat other nations that wanted to conquer Israel.

What did we study last week? Let students raise their hands and answer. Some answers might include: Introduction to Judges; studied the cycle of the book of Judges including the Israelites sinning,

being sorrowful and having God save them; began to learn the names of the 13 judges, reviewed the Old Testament, etc.

Does anyone have any questions from last week? Answer if you are able, if not tell the students you will get an answer and let them know next week and then make sure you do 😊

Good job! Now, if you have your Bibles let's find Judges 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.)

2) The First Three Judges and Judges Chart Activity

20-25 minutes

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

*Have map of Judges ready to show class as you read

Let's all turn to Judges Chapter 3 and can I get a volunteer to read 3:7-11? Today we will learn of the first Judge – Othniel.

Thank them for reading and then show them the map of Judges – point to Othniel's area and show what area he judged from.

Discussion Questions:

Who was Othniel? The first judge who was Caleb's younger brother. Remember Caleb and Joshua were the only two men from the 12 spies who said that the Israelites could conquer Canaan.

Who chose Othniel? God did (see verse 10)

How long did the Israelites have rest from enemies once Othniel started to judge? 40 years.

Hand out one **Judges Chart** to each child along with pencils and erasers.

Younger students will get a chart with more pictures on it for those who aren't able to read and write well yet. Older students who can read and write well will get a blank chart that they will fill in mostly on their own.

Tell the students, **"Each week we are going to fill in this chart with information about the 13 judges. We just read about the first judge – what was his name? Othniel. If you look on the chart – he is the first one listed. There is also some other information on the chart we need to fill in each time we study a judge. Can someone raise their hand and tell me what topics are listed at the top of the page?** (Judge, Length of Rule, Fact, Oppressor, and Years of Oppression)

So beside the word Othniel under Length of Rule, what are we going to write there? 40 years.

Can everyone write the number 40 under the orange tab that says length of rule? Help younger students by pointing where to write the number 40 if needed.

What is a fact we can write about Othniel? Let students answer. Acceptable answers might be Caleb's younger brother or first judge. For students too young to write, let them color the picture of the younger brother or circle the picture if you are short on time. They can keep coloring the boy and listen while you and the older students fill in the rest of the chart.

Under the green heading it says oppressor – that means the group of people that were fighting the Israelites to take over their territory. In Judges 3 – who was the oppressors?

Mesopotamians (see verse 8). Help students write Mesopotamians. For younger students the word is already filled in.

Now, finally under “Years of Oppression” the last tab – how long did the Mesopotamians oppress Israel? 8 years. Can you all write the number 8 in that box please? Help students as needed.

Great job everyone. We have completed the first judge. Now let’s go back to the Bible to read about the next judge – Ehud. Can someone read from Judges 3:12-15?

What happened after Othniel died? The Israelites did evil again.

Who did God send to oppress them this time? Moabites.

*Show map of Ehud and the Moabite area.

How long did they oppress Israel? 18 years.

How is the length of 18 years different then the first oppression under the Mesopotamians? It was more than double the time – so instead of 8 years it was now 18 years. Their oppressions are getting longer.

What was the interesting fact about Ehud mentioned in verse 15? He was left handed.

We will see why this is important as we continue the story. Can I get a few volunteers to read Judges 3:16-30 please? Each take 4 verses.

What happened here? Ehud stabbed Eglon to death and escaped ending the oppression of the Israelite’s for 80 years.

Let’s fill in the Judges chart with the information on the next judge – Ehud. Help students as needed.

Answer: Ehud – 80 years – left-handed or killed king with dagger or sword – Moabites – 18 years. Younger students can color the sword/dagger and write 80 and 18 in the correct spots.

Finally, can I get someone to read Judges 3:31 to see the last judge we will study today?

An ox goad is a traditional farming implement, used to spur or guide livestock, usually oxen, which are pulling a plough or a cart; used also to round up cattle. It is a type of a long stick with a pointed end, also known as the cattle prod.

*Here is a picture to show the students on the right

Let’s fill in the Judges chart with the information on the next judge – Shamgar. Help students as needed.

Answer: Shamgar - ? – killed 600 men (younger students can color ox goad in their chart) – attack by Philistines - ?



Say, **“Most likely Shamgar judged during the time of Ehud but in a different location.**

Show map of where Shamgar was located and show that the Philistines that Shamgar fought were probably located in the north east.

So now you know the first three judges – Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar!

Ask students to write their names on their Judges chart and hand them back in so that you can keep them for next week.

3) Ehud and Our Armor Activity Sheet

15 minutes

Say, **“Ehud used a sword/dagger to defeat his enemy. God says we have armor to defeat our enemies too. But, it is not the armor we think of normally, it is even better. It is spiritual armor. Let’s turn to Ephesians 6:10-18 in the New Testament and see what armor we should use today.**

Listen while I read – read Ephesians 6:10-18. While you read stop at each piece of armor that is listed and what it represents – hand out one sheet of the Ehud and Armor activity and have students fill in the blanks on the armed person on the right of the page. Have the students work through the sheet as a group – for younger students ask an older student to help them write the correct word beside the correct armor as you all read them aloud– they don’t have to fill in the blanks to the left – leave that for the older students to do on their own. When the students are done filling in the correct label for each piece of armor have the younger students color each piece of armor a different color to help them remember their armor of God while the older students fill in the words on the left.



Remind the students that: **“just like Ehud the second judge had special armor – so do we!”**

Ask students if they have any questions before moving on. Answer the ones you can and tell them you will find out any question you cannot answer right now and get back to them next time.

4) Optional – Snack: Sword-shaped snack (strips of cheese, pretzel sticks, or banana)

Hand out snack to each child along with a glass of water or juice. Explain that: **Today we studied that Othniel, Ehud and Shamgar fought off the Israelite oppressors and were called the first three judges. To help us remember we are going to have a sword shaped snack. This snack will not only remind us of the judges but remind us of what we learned today in Ephesians 6:10-17 – we have our own armor thanks to God and that armor includes the sword – the Word of God which is our Bibles. Let’s think of these things while we eat our snack.** 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.

5) 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!

6) 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 know that Your Word is our sword and that in order to fight the good fight – we need to use our swords (Your Bible) daily. 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. Help us to see that we can be faithful just like some of the judges were. We pray for those who could not be here today. We pray you will bring them back safely next week. 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!