



Introduction

About ABC

Mission

Answers Bible Curriculum was developed to present the gospel, beginning in Genesis, to all generations; to train believers to know, obey, and defend God’s Word; and to encourage believers to become conformed to the image of Christ.

Overview

The 2009 book *Already Gone* by Ken Ham and Britt Beemer (and the scientific study on which the book is based) reveals the reasons why young people are leaving the church. In much of the teaching today in our churches, the Bible is disconnected from the real world, and the authority of Scripture is undermined and replaced with secular reasoning using man’s ideas.

The church has failed to teach the Bible as relevant fact. We have—intentionally or unintentionally—taught the Scriptures as nothing but “stories” that relate to spiritual matters but have avoided engaging the challenging questions from the secular world that bombard churched children and adults the other 166 hours of their week. As a result, children are beginning to doubt the Bible—and the gospel message that it presents—as early as elementary school. Many studies confirm that more than 60% of young people leave the church after they graduate from high school.

Answers Bible Curriculum is designed and written to provide answers to the questions and issues that confront youth (and adults) in school, in the media, from friends, at work, etc. It is our hope and prayer that God will be pleased to use this curriculum to instill a lifelong trust in the Bible and in the God who authored it.

Guiding Principles

Certain principles guided our writers, editors, and reviewers as we developed Answers Bible Curriculum. These principles are reflected in the teaching, activities, and illustrations presented throughout the curriculum.

We can trust all of God's Word beginning in Genesis.

- God's Word is true; God does not lie.
- The historical record of the Bible is confirmed often by historical, archaeological, and scientific support.

God's attributes are displayed throughout the Bible.

- God's sovereignty is demonstrated in history as he fulfills his purposes through people and events.
- God's attributes (including his holiness, justice, love, and mercy) are demonstrated through his dealings with people.

The Bible presents true history.

- The Bible presents real history, showing the unfolding plan of God to redeem a people for himself.
- The historical accounts of the Bible intersect with secular history.

We must carefully and accurately interpret the Bible.

- The proper use of hermeneutics helps us understand the Bible accurately.
- Understanding the Bible requires time and effort.

God's plan of redemption is woven throughout Scripture.

- God's plan of redemption is presented throughout the Bible, beginning in Genesis.
- Many accounts in the Old Testament connect to the New Testament and point to Jesus and the gospel message.

We must be ready to give a defense for what we believe.

- Students and adults must be equipped with answers to questions skeptics ask.
- We can use science, history, archaeology, etc. to confirm the accuracy of the biblical record.

We are to live in light of what the Bible teaches.

- God's Word is applicable today.
- We can learn from scriptural examples of obedience (and disobedience) to God's Word.
- Believers are called to walk in obedience to God's Word.

Bible Version

Answers Bible Curriculum uses the English Standard Version (ESV) of the Bible.

Scope & Sequence

Answers Bible Curriculum is a 200-lesson curriculum that covers the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, in chronological fashion. The first 120 lessons survey the Old Testament, and the final 80 lessons survey the New Testament. Where appropriate, lessons include apologetics material confirming the accuracy of the biblical record, as well as historical background and life application.

Summary

- 200-lesson, four-year curriculum (50 lessons per year); but take as long as you need to complete it
- Available in six age levels: Pre-K-1, Grades 2-3, Grades 4-5, Middle School, High School, Adult
- Chronological Bible teaching for all levels
- Synchronized lessons—all ages study the same scriptures each week
- Based on the ESV

How to Use ABC

Teacher Kit Components

Answers Bible Curriculum includes all the necessary elements for you to teach your students with excellence while engaging them in the learning process. The Teacher Kit for each unit of lessons includes the following items:

Teacher Guide—Ten lessons with lesson overview, background material, preparation chart, scripted lesson, and game instructions. The tenth lesson of each unit is a review lesson.

Student Take Home Sheets—Sample set of nine full-color, two-page take home sheets with lesson review and memory verse activities.

Lesson Theme Posters—Nine full-color, illustrated, 8.5 x 11 posters depicting the main point of each lesson. On the back of each poster is the Lesson Focus, Key Passages, and What You Heard in the Word. These posters are used for teaching and reviewing the lessons.

Memory Verse Posters—Two 17 x 22 posters per unit with the memory verses.

Classroom Posters—These large classroom posters enhance the lessons and provide visual reminders of important truths. The posters for this unit include:

- The Attributes of God
- The Books of the Bible
- Exodus to Malachi Timeline
- Game Board

Optional Resources

The following additional resources may be purchased from AnswersBookstore.com or by calling (800) 778-3390.

Books of the Bible Flashcards—Sixty-seven 5 x 7 flashcards. Each card has a colorful illustration on the front, and the back features key facts about each book's author, date of writing, key people, main message, and what each book reveals about God and his character.

Books of the Bible Trading Cards—The same as the flashcards, but each card measures 2.75 x 4.

Books of the Bible Coloring Book—Students will have fun coloring these scenes based on the accounts of Scripture. All 66 books of the Old and New Testaments are represented.

Seven C's of History Timeline—This large wall chart covers biblical and historical events from Creation (4004 BC) to the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. It follows the chronology of Archbishop James Ussher and helps students to understand the flow of history and to see how biblical events fit with secular events.

Teacher Digital Resources

When you purchased Answers Bible Curriculum, you received access to a digital library that contains items such as student class notes, game and activity instructions, lesson illustrations, video clips, PowerPoint presentations, review questions, and skits. Be sure to leave enough time to look at the Lesson Preparation section of the lesson so that any needed items can be printed or gathered prior to class.

Access these resources at MyAnswers.com/abc-resources using the **Resources Code** inside the back cover of this Teacher Guide.

You may also purchase these resources on a USB flash drive from AnswersBookstore.com or by calling (800) 778-3390.

Memory Verse Songs

We teamed up with Seeds Family Worship to produce original Memory Verse songs available as MP3s, lyric videos, and split-screen hand-motion/lyric videos.

Access the songs at MyAnswers.com/abc-resources using the **Songs Code** inside the back cover of this Teacher Guide.

CDs and DVDs for students and teachers are available for purchase at AnswersBookstore.com or by calling (800) 778-3390.

Teacher Guide

We have designed the lessons so that they are easy to teach and provide everything needed to successfully guide your students in understanding the Bible and knowing God—the author of the Bible. Here is a breakdown of what is included in each lesson and how to get the most out of it.

Lesson Overview

Lesson Focus—Each lesson has a short statement with the main theme of the lesson for that week.

Key Passages—These are the Bible passages that will be studied in the lesson. Your teaching will be more rewarding if you familiarize yourself with the key passages before class.

Objectives—Each lesson teaches specific learning objectives. These are what we expect the students will understand by the end of the lesson.

Memory Verse—Students will work on memorizing two passages per unit. Our hope is that this will enable the students to really learn these scriptures—to hide them in their hearts—and to know them well enough that they will be able to recite them from memory not only at the end of the unit but also at the end of the year!

Lesson Preparation

This chart shows everything you need to do to prepare for each week's lesson. Be sure to consult this several days before class so you can choose games, gather supplies, and print materials from the Teacher Digital Resources.

Optional Supplements—Many of the lessons include optional hands-on activities, a PowerPoint presentation, and video clips. These should be previewed and then incorporated into the lesson where appropriate. Slide numbers in the lessons coincide with the PowerPoint presentations. To properly view the slides, download the PowerPoint fonts from the Teacher Digital Resources and install them.

All pages that are instructions for the teacher will have the word “Teacher” in the footer,

while student pages will have the word “Student.” This should make it easy for an assistant to know which pages get multiple copies for students.

Large Group/Small Group Suggestions—While the lessons are written for graded classrooms, we have included suggestions for what order to teach the lesson elements for churches that use a large group/small group format.

Prepare to Share

We have provided background information to help you understand the biblical and historical context of the passage being studied. Where appropriate, we have also included apologetics information that will confirm the truth of the Scriptures.

Lesson Elements

The lessons are broken down into several elements to make it easier for you to teach and to allow for flexibility. We realize that some teachers have a full hour or more for Sunday school, while others may have only 20 minutes of teaching time. We have planned our lessons to take about 45–50 minutes to teach. Of course, this will vary greatly depending on your class size, student maturity level, etc.

Come On In—The Come On In activity is something for the students to do when they arrive. The intent is to provide order as children come into the room by giving a specific assignment. The game materials and instructions are included in the Teacher Digital Resources and in the Appendix at the back of this Teacher Guide. These games use the Question Cards printed from the Teacher Digital Resources.

Memory Verse—Practice the memory verse every week using the Memory Verse Poster and the Memory Verse Song. There are also a number of games you can choose for the students to play. Game instructions are included in the Teacher Digital Resources and in the Appendix in the back of this Teacher Guide.

Studying God's Word—This is the main teaching part of the lesson including the introduction, Bible study, and application.

The lesson is written in a Say-Ask format so inexperienced teachers or substitutes will easily be able to step in and teach by following the script, while experienced teachers may want to “make it their own.” Throughout the lesson you will see margin notes with teacher tips, definitions, and other reminders to assist you in planning and teaching.

Group Prayer Time—We encourage you to pray with your students and take prayer requests as time allows.

Lesson Review—Each lesson includes a set of Review Questions to use with the lesson review

games. Game instructions can be found in the Teacher Digital Resources or in the Appendix at the back of this Teacher Guide.

Student Take Home Sheets

Nine lessons in each unit (Pre-K–Grade 5) include a full-color, two-page Student Take Home Sheet. The Student Take Home Sheets are designed to encourage lesson review, family discussion, and application to real-life situations. A sample set comes in the Teacher Kit. Additional sheets are available for purchase.

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identified as the actual purchaser. There is no limit to the number of printed copies for use within the single local church or organization which is the actual purchaser. None of the material in this curriculum may be reproduced for any commercial promotion, advertising, or sale of a product or service, or to share with any other persons, churches, groups, or organizations.

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Leading a Child to Christ

Many of the lessons present an ideal opportunity to share the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ with your students. Every teacher should be ready to clearly present the gospel and counsel those wanting to learn more. Children are usually soft-hearted toward things of the Lord, and some will be interested in becoming followers of Christ. Be ready, because eternal matters matter most!

Before

Pray. Salvation is God's work, not ours. We cannot bring about salvation for anyone. We need to ask God to prepare the children and open their hearts to him.

Prepare. Learn more about presenting the gospel and counseling a child about salvation.

During

The gospel is clearly presented in many of the lessons. You may give a group invitation or choose to share with a child one-on-one or with a small group of children. When you explain the gospel, please keep the following in mind:

- Becoming a child of God involves repenting of one's sin and having faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Repentance involves understanding what sin is (disobeying God's commands) and desiring to turn from that sin.
- Use your Bible to explain the plan of salvation. Children need to see and hear God's Word, so have your Bible open and marked ahead of time with the appropriate scriptures.
- Avoid abstract phrases like "asking Jesus into your heart." Instead, use terminology like "becoming a child of God." Most children still think in concrete terms and need examples that are easy to understand.
- If a child indicates an interest to know more after hearing the gospel, determine if the child has an understanding of his sin. This is very important. A child who cannot verbalize sin, who does not seem to be repentant toward God because he is a sinner, or who does not realize that he must turn away from

his sin cannot fully understand his need for a Savior. Ask questions about sin that require more than "yes" or "no" answers:

- Do you know what sin is? Can you explain it to me?
 - Can you think of some sins you have done?
 - Are you sorry for your sins? Who are you sorry to?
 - Why are you sorry for your sins?
 - What do you think you should do about these sins in your life?
- If you are not satisfied that God has revealed to this child that his sin is an offense against our holy God, we recommend that you present a booklet we have developed for children that explains the gospel further. It is called *How Can I Become a Child of God?* and can be ordered from AnswersBookstore.com.
 - If the child does seem to be sincerely sorry for his sins, you can proceed with more questions like the following:
 - Why did Jesus come to earth? Why did Jesus need to die? Why did Jesus rise again?
 - Why do you want Jesus to be your Savior?
 - Why should God let you into his family? (Make sure the child understands that salvation is not based on what he does but is a gracious gift of God through faith in the death and resurrection of Jesus.)
 - When a child seems to have a basic understanding of salvation (belief in Jesus' death and resurrection, admission of and repentance from sin, and a desire to follow the Lord), encourage him to talk to his parents (if they are followers of Christ) about what it means to become a child of God. Encourage a child who comes from a non-Christian home to verbalize his understanding to the Lord through prayer. There is no specific prayer that should be prayed. Encourage him to ask the Lord to forgive him and help him know he is a child of God.

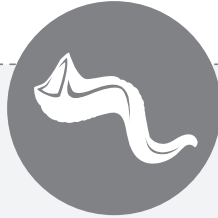
- Let him see in your words and your face that you are excited that he wants to become a child of God! Read Luke 15:10 to him.
- Some children may not be ready to make a decision for Christ but may want to learn more, to be assured of salvation, or to confess sin. Read Romans 10:9–10 and John 10:28–29 with children who are seeking assurance of their salvation. Encourage them to ask the Lord to help them know they are His children. Read 1 John 1:9 with children who want to confess sin and encourage them to ask the Lord to help them know they are forgiven when they repent.

After

- Review what it means to be a child of God.
 - How long does God keep his children? (Hebrews 13:5b, John 10:28–29)
 - Can anything separate God from his children? (Romans 8:38–39)
 - What happens when God’s children sin? (1 John 1:9)
- What do children of God believe? (Romans 10:9)
- Explain that Jesus loves his children and wants to spend time with them. Discuss practical ways to grow as a child of God. Provide him with the booklet *Growing Up in God’s Family* (available at AnswersBookstore.com), and share the following:
 - Read your Bible, and obey what you read. (Make sure he has a Bible at home, and if not, provide one. Write his name, the date, and the occasion on the presentation page.)
 - Pray every day. Prayer is talking to God.
 - Go to a church that believes and teaches the Bible as the Word of God.
 - Tell others about Jesus. Tell your friends, family, and neighbors how they can become children of God.
- Stay in touch with the child through postcards, visits, or phone calls.

Unit 8 Syllabus

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|------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Lesson 71 | God Uses Gideon | Judges 6:1–2, 6:12–16, 7:2–7, 7:16–20 |
| Lesson 72 | Samson Receives Strength | Judges 13:1–5, 14:5–6, 15:14–15, 16:19–22, 16:28–30 |
| Lesson 73 | God Blesses Ruth | Ruth 1:16–17, 4:13–14, 4:16–17; Ephesians 1:7 |
| Lesson 74 | God Calls Samuel | 1 Samuel 2:23–26, 4:10–11 |
| Lesson 75 | Israel’s First King | 1 Samuel 8:6–7, 10:20–24, 13:5–12, 15:7–9, 15:22 |
| Lesson 76 | God Chooses David | 1 Samuel 13:14, 16:6–19 |
| Lesson 77 | David Defeats Goliath | 1 Samuel 17 (selected verses) |
| Lesson 78 | Jonathan Warns David | 1 Samuel 18:1–5, 18:10–12, 19:1–3, 20:31–33, 20:35–38 |
| Lesson 79 | Saul Hunts David | 1 Samuel 21:12–15, 24:4–7 |
| Lesson 80 | Unit Review | |



God Uses Gideon

God used Gideon to defeat the Midianites and deliver the Israelites.

Lesson Focus

The Israelites sinned and worshipped false gods, but they cried to God to deliver them from the oppression of the Midianites. God chose Gideon as the judge who would lead the Israelites in battle. God was patient with Gideon's fears and doubts and gave him and his 300 men the victory over the vast Midianite army.

Key Passages

Judges 6:1–2, 6:12–16, 7:2–7, 7:16–20

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe God's encouragement to Gideon as a leader.
- Recognize God's role in defeating the Midianites.

Memory Verse

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Card Keep
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Oh No

Memory Verse

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Down the Line
- Egg Hunt
- Look Behind You
- Now You See It
- Popcorn
- Review Card Relay
- Stack Em Up
- Your Turn

Play the Memory Verse Song to help your students learn the verse.

Find extra verses to practice in the Additional Memory Verses list.

Studying God's Word

Print one Class Notes for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

Prepare the following:

- Markers and eraser for the board
- Draw Xs on the board to represent the two armies. (See Introduction for details.)

Lesson Review

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Choose a Lesson Review Game and gather necessary items.

- Bible Baseball
- Box Toss
- Draw Dice
- Four in a Row
- Goofy Golf
- Pick a Point
- Racetrack
- Toss for It

Go to Prayer

Dear God, thank you for your sovereignty. Thank you for choosing imperfect people to accomplish your purposes. Help me teach this lesson on Gideon's fears and faith so that my students will understand how you equip those you call to serve. May my students develop strong faith in you and turn to you with their doubts and fears.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 71*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

- Studying God's Word
- Group Prayer

Small Group

- Come On In
- Memory Verse
- Optional Activity
- Lesson Review
- Take Home Sheet

Optional Supplements

Hands-On Activities

Do these activities when you think best—before, during, or after the lesson.

- Edible Torches
Students will assemble torches made from ice cream cones.
- Battle Torches
Students will color and assemble a paper torch with tissue paper flames.
- Gideon’s Battle Role Play
Students will act out the battle between Gideon’s army and the Midianites using the torches they made.
- Coloring Sheet
Students will color as you review the lesson with them.
- Justin & Jessie Story—*The Thing About Cats & Hamsters*
Jessie accepts a petsitting job for her neighbor and finds out what it feels like to be outnumbered.

PowerPoint

You may want to use the PowerPoint presentation provided to enhance your teaching.

Notes

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

The recurring cycle of Israel's history during the time of the judges continued for about 300 years. This cycle included the Israelites' disobedience and idolatry, God's judgment on them through neighboring nations, their cry to God for deliverance, God's mercy and compassion in raising up judges to deliver them, and their peace until they again fell back into idolatry. In Judges 6 we find that because the Israelites were once again doing evil in the sight of the Lord, God allowed them to be oppressed by the Midianites. They finally cried out to him for help, and God sent a prophet to tell them why they were being oppressed (Judges 6:6–10). The Lord was about to provide an unlikely hero for them through Gideon.

The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, who was threshing wheat in secret so that the raiding Midianites would not take it (not a very valiant act). Surprisingly, the angel of the Lord called Gideon a “mighty man of valor.” He told Gideon that he would lead Israel to defeat its current oppressors, the Midianites. Gideon revealed his fear and lack of trust in the Lord as he responded that he was from the weakest clan of Israel and the least in his family (Judges 6:15). But the Lord responded with confidence, explaining that he would be with him. In Judges 6:14, the Lord had told Gideon to “Go in this might of yours,” but God also clearly told him the source of that might—himself. And in verse 34, as Gideon gathered men for battle, it was because the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon. Scripture is clear that it was the Lord moving in these events, using Gideon; it was not Gideon's own strength or ability that won the victory. We see, as the account unfolds, that God wanted his power alone to be demonstrated.

In Judges 7, a substantial number of men had rallied to Gideon (though they would still have been outnumbered by the Midianites). God gave Gideon orders to reduce the number of men who would participate in the battle. First, any who were fearful were

commanded to leave. Next, God directed Gideon to accept only those who drank by lapping the water from their hands. Thus, the fighting force was reduced to a mere 300 to face the Midianite army of 135,000. God wanted the victory of this battle to point to him alone as deliverer. He did not want the Israelites to think that this victory was theirs. God knew the Israelites would be tempted to think that they had saved themselves (Judges 7:2).

The account of the battle is dramatic. Gideon's 300 men stealthily approached the Midianites with covered torches. Suddenly, at Gideon's signal, they blew their trumpets, broke the jars that covered their torches and shouted, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon,” inciting panic among the Midianites (Judges 7:20–21). In the midst of this panic, God ordained that the Midianites would turn their swords on each other—this was God's battle, and the victory was accomplished by his power, working through Gideon's obedience (Judges 7:22).

God used Gideon, a simple man, to accomplish a great victory against a fearful opponent. Gideon was obedient and proved to be strong, due to the Lord's strength in him. Gideon was the fifth and one of the greatest judges of Israel. Because of his faith in the Lord, he is mentioned with the great and faithful saints in Hebrews 11.

It could only have been the Lord who would allow 300 men to defeat the vast Midianite army. Gideon realized this. The people, however, were quick to forget, as evidenced when they requested that Gideon rule over them (Judges 8:22). Gideon's loyalty to God shone bright as he turned down this honor and reminded the people of God's sovereignty in his rule over them (Judges 8:23).

Sadly, Gideon compromised his faith by requesting and accepting offerings of gold, plundered by Israel from their enemies, and he used the gold to make an ephod (a kind of ceremonial breastplate). This ephod, set up in Gideon's city of Ophrah, became a snare to Gideon and his family (Judges 8:27).

Historical/Apologetics Background

Gideon acted faithfully and courageously in battle, but God desires to be the object of his people's worship and gratitude, and he will not share

that worship: “I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols” (Isaiah 42:8). God used people all through history

and continues to use people today to accomplish his will. But he makes it clear that even when he does so, it is he who ultimately deserves the credit: “For it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). Both the desire and the ability to obey God are the results of God working in us.

In Judges 8, we find that the men of Ephraim wanted to share the credit that belonged to God for the battle won. We then find that the men of Succoth and Peniel would not credit God (or anyone) without proof of a certain outcome. And finally, we see that Israel, rather than giving credit to God for using Gideon, gave Gideon credit instead of God. This inclination to overlook and disbelieve that it was God who orchestrated the victory was at the root of Israel’s tendency to fall back into sin, even after a deliverance such as this. God uses his people to accomplish his perfect plans. But when the plans

are accomplished, we must not forget that we are his workmanship created to do the good works he has prepared for us to do (Ephesians 2:10).

Gideon judged Israel for 40 years, and the land had peace from the Midianites (Judges 8:28). Unfortunately, Gideon fell into polygamy, which was never God’s plan for marriage (Genesis 2:24). Gideon’s many wives bore him 70 sons, and a concubine in Shechem bore him a son named Abimelech (Judges 8:30–31). Abimelech became king of Shechem after murdering his 69 brothers (Judges 9:5–6). He judged Israel for three years before God punished him for his sins (Judges 9:22, 9:56). Gideon’s family suffered and was nearly destroyed because of Gideon’s failure to follow God’s plan for marriage. We see a similar pattern of jealousy and murder as a result of polygamy in the families of Jacob and King David. May God guard us from seeking to rob him of glory or walking in willful disobedience to him.

Slide #1

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

Slide #2

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.
- ▶ Before class, prepare the board to show the size of the Midianite and Israelite armies.

Slide #3

- ▶ Wait until the end of the lesson to pass out the Class Notes.

Come On In

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

Memory Verse

We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Studying God's Word

Introduction

Before class begins, prepare the board to illustrate the size of the Midianite army versus the Israelites. Draw a line down the middle and fill one side with as many letter Xs as possible. Leave room at the top to write "Midianites" later. On the other side, draw Xs to represent the Israelites, roughly one-fourth the number you have for the Midianites. You may want to use a different color for each army.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. The Israelites were living in the promised land. But after Joshua died, they turned away from the Lord and ignored his commandments. Their sin began a cycle that went like this: 1) The Israelites would turn away from God and worship false gods. 2) God would punish them by sending enemies to oppress them and make their lives difficult. 3) The people would cry out to God, and God would show his mercy by sending a judge to rescue them from their enemies. 4) Then the Israelites would have peace, usually as long as the judge lived. 5) But they would disobey and start worshipping idols all over again. This cycle went on for about 300 years!

God was merciful. He listened to the Israelites' cries for help and delivered them from their enemies even when they kept on sinning. The judges God raised up to help the people usually led them into battle against the enemy. But these leaders had doubts and fears just like us!

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. In today's lesson, we'll see how God chose a leader who started out feeling afraid but learned to trust God.

God Punishes the Israelites

First, let's look at what started the problems for Israel.

Judges 6:1–2

 Slide #4

? Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Who will read Judges 6:1–2? Assign readers.

? Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. What parts of the cycle do we see happening in verse 1? 1) The Israelites sinned against the Lord. 2) The Lord sent enemies against them.

The Israelites sinned, and then God brought enemies against them as punishment.

? Where were the enemies from this time? *Midian.*

The Midianites were herdsmen from the east. They were so powerful, and there were so many of them that whenever they came to Israel, the Israelites couldn't even stay in their homes!

? Where does verse 2 say the Israelites lived? *Dens in the mountains, caves, and strongholds.*

The Israelites lived in fear. They had to run and hide in caves! Every time they planted crops, the Midianites would come against them and take everything—all the food in their fields and all their animals. The Israelites were left with nothing!

? How many years did the Midianites terrorize the Israelites? Look at the end of verse 1. *Seven.*

Seven years was a long time to go hungry and to live in fear of their enemies. Finally, the Israelites cried to the Lord for help. God sent a prophet to tell them why they were being oppressed by the Midianites. It was because they had forgotten the miracles God had done for them, bringing them from Egypt and giving them the promised land. They had turned from God and worshipped false gods. The Israelites had forgotten God, but they were sorry for their sin.

God Calls Gideon

? So God chose a man to deliver the Israelites. What kind of man do you think God chose? How many of you think he was a “superhero” kind of guy? *Show of hands.*

? How many of you think he was pretty scared? *Show of hands.*

Actually, the Bible tells us that God chose a man named Gideon to lead his people into battle against this huge, scary enemy. Judges 6 introduces us to Gideon as he was beating out wheat. Beating out wheat was another term for threshing wheat to get all the grains off the stem. The grains were then ground into flour to make bread.

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. But guess where Gideon was threshing his wheat? It wasn't in the usual place—he was in a winepress! A winepress

 Slide #5

was where people turned grapes into wine. It probably wasn't the season for grapes, which made this a great hiding place because the enemy wouldn't think to come there to steal anything. Gideon was hiding the small bit of wheat he had from the Midianites. But someone found him there. Let's find out who it was.

 Slides #6–7

Judges 6:12–16

? Who will read Judges 6:12–16? *Assign readers.*

? Who found Gideon in verse 12? *The angel of the Lord.*

The angel of the Lord is God appearing in human form to Gideon, so we could call him Jesus.

 Slide #8

? And what did the angel of the Lord say to Gideon in verse 12? *The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor.*

? Does anyone know what “valor” is? *Allow answers.*

Valor: great courage

Valor means great courage, especially in battle.

? What did Gideon ask the angel of the Lord in verse 13? *Why has this happened to us?*

? That's right. Look at the end of Judges 6:13. What did Gideon think the Lord had done? *Forsaken or forgotten them. Given them into the hand of the Midianites.*

? Was that true? Did the Lord forget about the Israelites? *No.*

No. The Lord hadn't forgotten—he was standing right there ready to do something about this problem.

? Look at Judges 6:14. What did God tell Gideon to do? *Go and save Israel.*

? And who was sending Gideon? *The Lord.*

? Gideon didn't think this was such a good idea. What reasons did he give for not agreeing with the Lord? Look in verse 15. *He was from the weakest clan, Manasseh, and he was the least in his home.*

? Gideon couldn't believe God was sending him! What did the Lord say to assure Gideon in verse 16? *He would be with Gideon. Gideon would defeat the Midianites.*

? Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Do you remember what sovereign means? *Have a student read the definition.*

God in his sovereignty chose to use Gideon. Gideon was NOT mighty or courageous when God came to him. In fact, he was feeling pretty desperate because of the Midianites. Their constant attacks had shaken Gideon's trust in God. The Lord promised to go with Gideon and help him win, but the credit for the victory would belong to God, not to Gideon.

 Slide #9

On the half of the board filled with Xs, write “Midianites” at the top and the number “135,000.” It wasn't long before the Midianites invaded again with

a huge army and camped in the land of Israel. Their army had 135,000 men! The Bible says they spread out along a valley like many locusts, or grasshoppers, and their camels were like sand on the seashore. How much sand is on the seashore? A lot! So many they couldn't be counted. They were a frightening sight to the Israelites!

- ? What do you think they were there for? *To attack the Israelites and steal all their food and belongings.*

They probably thought this time would be like all the other years when they came into the land of Israel, stole whatever they wanted, and killed anyone who stood in their way. But this time would be different—they would be in for a big surprise because God was fighting for Israel!

The Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew the trumpet to call the Israelite men to him. Men came from Gideon's tribe of Manasseh and from Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali—32,000 in all!

On the other half of the board, write "Israelites" at the top and the number "32,000." This was a great turnout for so many Israelites to come, but they were still greatly outnumbered by the Midianites.

- ? How do you think Gideon felt when he looked at their numbers?
Allow answers.

Gideon began to doubt if he really was supposed to do this. He asked God for a sign to prove that he was with him. Gideon placed a fleece of wool, or sheepskin, on the ground outside and asked God to make the fleece wet with dew but keep the ground around it dry.

- ? Who knows what dew is? *Allow answers. Moisture that settles on outdoor surfaces, such as grass during the night.*

Gideon's faith was still weak, but God was patient and gave him the sign he asked for. The next morning, the sheepskin was soaked with dew, but the ground around it was dry!

But Gideon was still filled with doubts, so he asked God for another sign. This time he wanted the sheepskin to be dry and the ground around it to be wet with dew. The next morning, God sent dew on the ground but kept Gideon's fleece dry. Finally, Gideon was sure God was with him, and he set out for battle with his 32,000 men.

Judges 7:2–3

Gideon and his army were ready to obey God and go out and fight. But the Lord had a different plan in mind. He stopped Gideon with more instructions—God was about to make his army much smaller! Let's find out why.

- ? Who will read Judges 7:2–3? *Assign readers.*
- ? Why did God want to make Gideon's army smaller? What would the people of Israel say if they won the battle now? Look at the last part of verse 2. *They would boast that they saved themselves without God's help.*

 Slides #10–11

God did not want them to think they were the heroes and didn't need to trust in God. God wanted the credit for the victory.

- ? What did God tell Gideon to proclaim to the people? *Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return home.*
- ? And how many left for home? *22,000.*
- ? How big was Gideon's army now? How many remained? *10,000.*

 Slide #12

Erase about two-thirds of the Xs from the Israelites' side of the board. Replace the "32,000" on the board with "10,000." Yikes! There were only 10,000 men left to fight against 135,000.

Judges 7:4–7

So, what did God tell Gideon to do now? Let's find out in Judges 7:4–7. *Assign readers.*

 Slides #13–15

- ▶ Have a board eraser ready.

- ? What did God say to Gideon about the army in verse 4? *The people are still too many.*

The army was still too big, and God was going to make it even smaller!

- ? Where did God tell Gideon to bring the army? *Down to the water.*

God tested the men by how they drank their water. Those who drank the water from their hands and lapped it up like a dog were chosen to go with Gideon into battle.

 Slide #16

- ? *Begin erasing Xs on the Israelites' side until there are only 3 left. How many men put their hands to their mouths and lapped water like a dog? Look in verse 6. 300.*
- ? *Replace "10,000" with "300" on the board. Only 300 men were left! And what did the Lord tell Gideon he would do with these 300 men in verse 7? God would give him victory over the Midianites.*

Refer to the 3 Xs on the board. Each X equals 100 men here for the Israelites—just 300 against over a hundred thousand Midianites! They were greatly outnumbered. With such a small army, the Israelites would know the victory wasn't because of anything they did. They would definitely know the victory was the Lord's!

God Gives the Victory

So, what will happen in this battle? How can 300 Israelites win against 135,000 Midianites? Gideon gathered his 300 men and told them the plan.

Judges 7:16–20

 Slides #17–20

Follow along in your Bibles as I read Judges 7:16–20. *Read the verses.*

- ? Gideon divided his 300 men into three groups of 100. What three things did he give them for the battle? *Judges 7:16. Trumpets, empty jars, and torches.*

Huh? Gideon’s men probably wondered what these things were for. But the men took the trumpets and hid their torches inside the jars, so they couldn’t be seen, and followed Gideon.

In the dark of night, Gideon and his men spread out around the enemy camp. When they were all in place, Gideon blew his trumpet and smashed the jar holding his torch, letting the light shine brightly into the night. That was the signal, and everyone else smashed their jars and blew their trumpets! Suddenly, the Midianites were surrounded by torches and the sound of trumpets. Then they heard a great shout!

- ? Who remembers what Gideon told his men to shout when the trumpets blew? Look in Judges 7:18. *“For the LORD and for Gideon.”*

The Midianites cried out, “We’re surrounded! Let’s get out of here!” And they started to run. But God made them panic, and they began fighting and killing each other. When they tried to get away from there, Gideon and his men chased them. Men from other Israelite tribes came out to help, and soon the Midianites were defeated!

What a battle! God wanted the glory for this victory, and he would get it! No one could say that 300 men with trumpets, jars, and torches could beat such a huge army on their own. This was a great miracle showing God’s power to save his people.

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Remember how Gideon was afraid to follow God at first? He was hiding from the Midianites when God came to him and called him to lead. But Gideon and his men were obedient to follow God’s instructions, even when they didn’t seem to make any sense. And God was faithful to protect them and give them the victory just as he said he would. After this battle, Gideon became a mighty man of valor and led Israel as a judge for 40 years!

Let’s see how much you remember now. Look at your Class Notes. You will circle the correct answer for each question.

- ? Who will read #1 and give us the answer? *Choose a reader. Worshipping idols. Have students complete #1.*
- ? Who will read #2? Who came up against Israel? *Choose a reader. Midianites. Have students complete #2.*
- ? And #3, where did God find Gideon when he came to speak to him? *Choose a reader. Winepress. Have students complete #3.*
- ? Who will read #4 about Gideon’s test? *Choose a reader. Wool fleece. Have students complete #4.*
- ? How many men did the Midianites have? This is #5. *Choose a reader. 135,000. Have students complete #5.*
- ? How many Israelites went with Gideon to the battle? Someone read #6. *Choose a reader. 300. Have students complete #6.*


 Slide #21

► Pass out the Class Notes.

 Slides #22–25

- ? And #7, why did God want to reduce the size of Gideon’s army? Choose a reader. God won! Have students complete #7.
- ? Who will read #8? What equipment did Gideon give his men? Choose a reader. Trumpets. Have students complete #8.
- ? What happened during the battle? Someone read #9. Choose a reader. Panic and run. Have students complete #9.
- ? Who will read #10? God made Gideon a judge over Israel. What kind of man had he become? Choose a reader. Valor. Have students complete #10.

Application

 Slide #26

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster and the Exodus to Malachi Timeline Poster. Today we learned that God chose Gideon as a judge to save the Israelites. Gideon was hiding from the Midianites when God came to him. He was not a mighty man, yet God chose him to lead the army. God was going to show the Israelites that he would help them, and the victory would belong to God alone.

God loves using his people to accomplish his purposes. And he did just that with Gideon! Gideon followed God’s instructions and defeated the Midianites with only 300 men.

God alone, through his grace, works out his plan, yet he often uses people to do it. God used Gideon. He will use you, too, if you are obedient to him. Even if you feel scared, that’s okay! God will give you the help and the strength to follow him. God changed the frightened Gideon into a courageous man of valor. He can change us, too.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

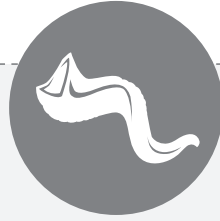
- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.

- Thank God for his patience with our doubts and fears.
- Praise God for his sovereignty and the grace he gives us to accomplish his will.



Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.



Samson Receives Strength

God gave Samson supernatural strength to fight the Philistines.

Lesson Focus

God set Samson apart from birth to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines. Samson defeated the Philistines and judged Israel for 20 years. Samson lost his strength when women became more important to him than God, and he was captured by the Philistines. When Samson prayed for forgiveness and strength, God enabled him to collapse a building, destroying 3,000 Philistines.

Key Passages

Judges 13:1–5, 14:5–6, 15:14–15, 16:19–22, 16:28–30

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain what God promised through Samson.
- Describe how God used Samson to conquer the Philistines.

Memory Verse

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Card Keep
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Oh No

Memory Verse

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Down the Line
- Egg Hunt
- Look Behind You
- Now You See It
- Popcorn
- Review Card Relay
- Stack Em Up
- Your Turn

Play the Memory Verse Song to help your students learn the verse.

Find extra verses to practice in the Additional Memory Verses list.

Studying God's Word

Print the following:

- One Class Notes for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.
- One Map of Philistia

Do the following for the strength competition (see Introduction):

- Choose one or more simple exercises.
- Bring a stopwatch/timer.
- Optional: bring ribbons or small prizes for participants.

Lesson Review

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Choose a Lesson Review Game and gather necessary items.

- Bible Baseball
- Box Toss
- Draw Dice
- Four in a Row
- Goofy Golf
- Pick a Point
- Racetrack
- Toss for It

Go to Prayer

Dear God, thank you for never leaving us. Thank you for forgiving us when we repent. Please help me teach this lesson on Samson—his victories and his failings. May my students see how Samson failed to keep you first, and he lost the power of his relationship with you. Help them understand that it's never too late to repent and cry out for help.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 72*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

Studying God's Word
Group Prayer

Small Group

Come On In
Memory Verse
Optional Activity
Lesson Review
Take Home Sheet

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

The period of the 14 judges extended over about 300 years. It began around 1400 BC with the first judge, Othniel, and ended with the prophet and judge Samuel (see table below). The period of judges occurred during a very dark time of backsliding in Israel's history. Within the book of Judges, we see the repeated themes of the Israelites' disobedience to God and God's faithfulness to forgive and deliver the people when they repented. We also see the recurring theme that God uses people—even the wicked, idolatrous enemy nations of Israel and the imperfect judges—to bring judgment, to promote reconciliation with his people, and to fulfill his perfect will however he deems necessary.

| Judge | Reference | Period |
|----------|-------------------|----------|
| Othniel | Judges 3:9–11 | 40 years |
| Ehud | Judges 3:15–30 | 80 years |
| Shamgar | Judges 3:31 | 10 years |
| Deborah | Judges 4:4–5:31 | 40 years |
| Gideon | Judges 6:7–8:35 | 40 years |
| Tola | Judges 10:1–2 | 23 years |
| Jair | Judges 10:3–5 | 22 years |
| Jephthah | Judges 11:1–12:7 | 6 years |
| Ibzan | Judges 12:8–10 | 7 years |
| Elon | Judges 12:11–12 | 10 years |
| Abdon | Judges 12:13–15 | 8 years |
| Samson | Judges 13:2–16:31 | 20 years |
| Eli | 1 Samuel 4:18 | 40 years |
| Samuel | 1 Samuel 7 | 21 years |

Despite Israel's repeated sin, the Lord raised up judges who delivered them out of the hand of those who plundered them. Yet they would not listen to their judges but abandoned the Lord and bowed down to false gods. They turned quickly from the way in which their fathers walked, in obeying the commandments of the Lord. And when the Lord

raised up judges for them, the Lord was with the judge and delivered them out of the hand of their enemies all the days of the judge. When the judge was dead, they reverted and behaved more corruptly than their fathers by following other gods, to serve them and bow down to them. They did not cease from evil or from their stubborn ways.

The evil of idolatry caused the Lord to deliver the Israelites into the hand of the Philistines for 40 years (Judges 13:1). It was at this time that God appeared to the barren wife of Manoah and promised a son who would deliver the people. God also specified that the boy would be set apart by following the laws of a Nazirite, which included drinking no wine, eating no unclean thing, and not shaving his head (Judges 13:4–5). The son born to Manoah and his wife was Samson, who received God's blessing and supernatural strength. Samson was the twelfth judge and the last one recorded in the book of Judges. God used even Samson's sinful choices to accomplish his will against the Philistines. Samson's failed marriage to a Philistine woman eventually led to a battle in which Samson defeated 1,000 Philistines using just the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:14–15). He judged Israel for 20 years.

Despite his victories and feats of strength, Samson had a weakness for ungodly women with loyalty to the Philistines. His love for Delilah led to him revealing his special relationship to God as a Nazirite. Delilah betrayed him to the Philistines, and God removed his empowering Spirit. Samson was captured, blinded, and forced to grind at the mill in a Philistine prison (Judges 16:15–22). Because of God's mercy, Samson's account does not end there. God listened to Samson's prayer for strength to destroy about 3,000 Philistines who gathered to worship their false god, Dagon, and to mock Samson and the true God. Blind Samson, positioned between two pillars, was given the strength to collapse the whole building filled with Philistines (Judges 16:23–30). Samson had his failings, but he repented and showed great faith, as noted in Hebrews 11:32–34.

Historical/Apologetics Background

Samson was born to a barren woman and dedicated to God from the womb. The Nazirite vow described in Numbers 6:1–21 was typically done for a specified time. The term “Nazirite” comes from a Hebrew term that indicates dedication by separation. The Nazirite vow, which could be made by a man or a woman, included separation to the Lord by avoiding grape products, hair-cutting, and contact with a dead body. In Judges 13, Manoah’s wife followed Nazirite restrictions while she was pregnant, and God told her and her husband that Samson would be a Nazirite to the day of his death (Judges 13:7). It is important to note that Samson’s long hair was not the source of his strength—God was. Scripture repeats that the Spirit of the Lord enabled Samson to do his miraculous deeds, including killing a lion with his bare hands (Judges 14:6), striking Philistines (Judges 14:19, 15:14–15), transporting a city gate (Judges 16:3), and bringing down a building (Judges 16:28–30). Samson acknowledged God’s hand in his victory when he prayed for water after killing 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (Judges 15:18). However, his desire to fulfill the lusts of the flesh led to poor choices in women: first the Philistine woman in Timnah, then a Philistine prostitute in Gaza, and finally Delilah in the Valley of Sorek,

who would be his downfall. These women showed loyalty to the Philistines over Samson.

The Philistines are first mentioned in the listing of nations descended from Noah’s son Ham (Genesis 10:13–14). The Greek version of their name is where we get the name Palestine. It is believed that the Philistines migrated from the island of Crete and the Aegean region to the area of Canaan along the Mediterranean coast. They controlled land in Canaan as early as the time of Abraham and Isaac (see Genesis 21:32–34, 26:1). God later directed Moses and the Israelites around the land of the Philistines to avoid war (Exodus 13:17). By the time of the conquest, the Philistines had moved inland and controlled five city-states: Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron (Joshua 13:3). Each city was controlled by a “lord” or “king.” It was significant that the lords of the Philistines, likely the rulers of these cities, came to Delilah and each offered her a large sum of silver if she would discover the source of Samson’s strength and tell them (Judges 16:4–6). Delilah appeared to care more for material gain than for Samson, while Samson cared more for Delilah than being obedient to God. May God strengthen us to avoid the desires of the flesh and of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:16), which all end in destruction.

Slide #1

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

Slide #2

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Slide #3

- ▶ Have exercises, stopwatch/timer, and optional ribbons or prizes ready.

Come On In

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

Memory Verse

We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Studying God's Word

Introduction

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline and Lesson 71 Theme Poster. So far in Judges, we've seen how God punished the Israelites for idolatry by sending enemies against them. But when they repented and cried to God for help, he would raise up a judge to deliver them. In our last lesson, God chose Gideon.

The Midianites had come into Israel with a huge army! God promised to be with Gideon and help him win against the Midianites and defeat them. But God kept making Gideon's army smaller and smaller until there were just 300 men.

- ? Why did God do that? *He didn't want the people to think they won by themselves.*

God deserved to get the credit and the glory for the victory, not Gideon or his men.

One night, Gideon and his men surrounded the Midianite camp. They smashed their jars, raised their torches, and blew their trumpets. Then God caused the Midianites to panic and fight each other. With just 300 men against thousands, this was a victory that could only happen through the Lord's power!

In today's lesson, we're going to talk about strength, so let's start with some strength-testing competitions! I need two volunteers to start.

Choose two students to come up front. If you have a large class, you may choose more volunteers.

Okay! You have 30 seconds to do as many _____ (insert exercise here: jumping jacks, pushups, squats, crunches, burpees, etc.) as you can. Demonstrate how to do the chosen exercise properly to help students avoid injury and follow good form. I'll set the timer and tell you when to start. Class, you'll need to cheer them on! I also need helpers to count how many they each complete. Assign one or more students to watch and count for each volunteer.

Ready? Go! Start timer and encourage the volunteers. Give a countdown for the final ten seconds.

- ? **Great job! How many did they each complete?** Have counters give you the total for each volunteer. You may want to give prizes (e.g., small treats or ribbons) to the volunteers before they return to their seats.

Some of these exercises were tough! We tested your strength in this competition because today we'll see how God gave a man supernatural strength.

Samson's Birth

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. This man was also a judge. Turn to the book of Judges chapter 13. Let's find out why God gave him supernatural strength!

Judges 13:1

- ? Who will read Judges 13:1? Assign a reader.
- ? What did the Israelites do again? Evil in the sight of the Lord.

This evil was the first step in the Judges cycle—worshipping false gods.

- ? What enemies did God give them over to for 40 years? Philistines.

Show Map of Philistia. The Philistines were a warlike people who took over land along the southwestern coast of Israel. They controlled five big cities, and from these cities they would go into Israel and take their food and animals and make trouble for the Israelites. They also had better metal-working skills than the Israelites, so their weapons were stronger, which made it really hard to win battles against them.

- ? Why do you think God let the Philistines oppress, or rule over, the Israelites and cause them to suffer? He wanted the Israelites to recognize their sin of idolatry and repent.

Remember, God always had a purpose for punishing his people. He didn't do it just to be "mean." God wanted them to repent and turn back to worshipping him. After 40 years under the terrible rule of the Philistines, the Israelites needed God's help to be rescued from the wicked Philistines. Let's see how God would help them this time.

Judges 13:2–5

- ? Who will read Judges 13:2–5? Assign readers.
- ? Who did the angel of the Lord appear to? Manoah's wife.
- ? What did God say Manoah's wife would have? A son.

Manoah's wife had no children, but God promised her a son.

 Slides #4–5

 Slides #6–7

- ▶ Pass out the Class Notes now to complete them throughout the lesson, or wait and complete them at the end to review.

 Slide #8

- ? In verse 5, what would be special about this boy? What would he be and do? *He'd be a Nazirite to God. He'd begin to save Israel from the Philistines.*

God promised that her son would become a judge and begin to save Israel from the wicked Philistines. He would be a Nazirite, who was a person “set apart” to God for a special purpose. To show his devotion to God, this son would need to follow certain rules. These rules included not cutting his hair or eating or drinking anything made from grapes.

Things happened the way God said. Manoah and his wife had a son, and they named him Samson. And God blessed Samson as he grew up.

- ? Let's start the Class Notes. You will write the correct answer in the crossword puzzle. Who will read #1? *Choose a reader. Nazirite. Have students complete #1.*
- ? Who will read #2? What were the rules of a Nazirite? *Choose a reader. Hair. Have students complete #2.*
- ? And #3? What would God help Samson do? *Choose a reader. Philistines. Have students complete #3.*

Samson's Strength

When Samson was a man, something amazing happened while he was walking along the road with his parents.

Judges 14:5–6

 Slide #9

- ? Let's read what happened on the journey. Who will read Judges 14:5–6? *Assign a reader.*
 - ? This account is amazing! What attacked Samson on the road? *A young lion.*
 - ? And what did Samson do to the lion? *Tore it to pieces with his bare hands.*
- Samson had no weapon or anything to fight the lion with, except his hands.
- ? What gave Samson the power to defeat this lion? Look in verse 6. *The Spirit of the Lord.*

God sent his Spirit to give Samson the strength to defend himself against this dangerous lion.

Judges 15:14–15

 Slide #10

Let's read about another time when God gave Samson great strength. Samson had been captured and tied up with ropes. The men who captured him were going to turn him over to the Philistines.

- ? Who would like to read what happened from Judges 15:14–15? *Assign readers.*

- ? What happened when the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson this time? *Samson broke the ropes that bound him, picked up a jawbone of a donkey, and killed 1,000 Philistines.*

God gave Samson strength to break free of the ropes that bound him. Samson had no weapon, so he picked up a donkey’s jawbone that lay nearby and used it to kill 1,000 Philistines! God gave Samson an amazing victory over the enemy!

- ? Let’s answer some more of the Class Notes questions. Who will read #4? *Choose a reader. Lion. Have students complete #4.*
- ? And #5? What did Samson use to fight when he was captured? *Choose a reader. Donkey. Have students complete #5.*

 Slide #11

Samson’s Downfall

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. We’ve seen how God supernaturally helped Samson to kill a lion and defeat many Philistines with a piece of bone! Samson judged Israel for 20 years, but his downfall came when he fell in love with an ungodly woman named Delilah. The Philistines told Delilah they’d give her lots of money if she could find out the secret of Samson’s strength.

 Slide #12

- ? What was the secret of Samson’s strength? Who made him strong? *God.*

Delilah asked Samson to tell her where his strength came from and how he could be defeated. Samson told her three lies. He said he would become weak if he were bound by fresh bowstrings (cords), tied with new ropes, or if his hair were woven into a loom. Delilah tried each of these ways to bind Samson and then had men jump out to attack him. But every time, Samson jumped up, broke free, and defeated the men.

Delilah was getting desperate. She wanted the money she had been promised. Day after day, she begged Samson to tell her his secret until finally, the Bible says Samson’s soul “was vexed to death!” Samson couldn’t stand listening to her begging anymore.

So he decided to tell Delilah the secret of his strength. “I am a Nazirite to God,” he said. “I have never cut my hair. But if my head were shaved, my strength would leave me.”

This time, Delilah knew Samson was telling her the truth. She quickly called for the Philistines saying, “Hurry, he’s told me the secret of his strength. I know it will work this time.”

Judges 16:19–22

Uh-oh! Is this going to get Samson into trouble? Let’s find out what happened. Listen as I read Judges 16:19–22. *Read the verses.*

 Slides #13–14

- ? Delilah lulled Samson to sleep. Who shaved Samson’s hair? Look in verse 19. *A man Delilah called.*
- ? After Samson’s hair was cut, Delilah woke him up. What was Samson thinking he would do in verse 20? *He thought he’d shake free as he’d done before.*
- ? Did Samson know that God wasn’t with him when the Philistines attacked this time? *No.*

Samson received power from God to fight the Philistines, so his strength didn’t come from his long hair. But, God told Samson’s parents that he would be a Nazirite, someone who was set apart for God’s special purpose, and Samson’s long hair was a sign of his special relationship with God. When Delilah became more important to Samson than his relationship with God, God left him.

The Philistines captured Samson. They blinded him and bound him in shackles, and he was taken to Gaza where he was forced to work in a prison.

It sure seemed like it was all over for Samson. He sinned by letting Delilah become more important to him than obeying God. Now he was blind and imprisoned by his enemies. How could he help deliver the Israelites now?

Well, as we’ve seen many times before, God was in control—and he wasn’t done with Samson yet. There came a time when many Philistines gathered at a feast to worship their false god Dagon. They called for Samson to come up from prison so they could make fun of him. Samson asked the boy who guided him to help him place his hands on the two pillars that held up the house. The Bible uses the word “house,” but since it says over 3,000 people were on the roof, it was probably a temple or a round amphitheater with people on the roof looking down at Samson.

- ? What do you think Samson did? Any guesses? *Allow guesses.*


Judges 16:28–30

- ? Let’s find out. Who will read Judges 16:28–30? *Assign readers.*
- ? What did Samson do in verse 28? *He prayed for God to remember him and give him strength one more time.*

Samson cried out to God for help and strength. And God answered!

- ? What did Samson do with the last bit of strength God gave him? *He pushed the two middle pillars supporting the house, and the house collapsed, killing Samson along with all the Philistines.*

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Samson was willing to die to have one final victory for the Lord against the Philistines. God gave Samson the strength to knock down two enormous pillars making the whole building collapse! More people died here than in all his other battles against the Philistines.

 Slides #15–16

 Slide #17

Samson's life was different from other judges because God gave him strength to fight the Philistines alone—the other Israelites didn't join him to fight. Samson fell into the same sin of idolatry as the rest of the Israelites. But instead of worshipping false gods, Samson put Delilah above God, and God finally took his blessing away from Samson. However, when Samson repented and turned back to God, God heard his prayer and answered it one last time.

- ? Let's finish our Class Notes. Who will read #6? *Choose a reader. Delilah. Have students complete #6.*
- ? How was Samson finally captured? Who will read #7? *Choose a reader. Shaved. Have students complete #7.*
- ? And #8, what happened to Samson once he was captured? *Choose a reader. Prison. Have students complete #8.*
- ? What's the answer to #9? Who will read that? *Choose a reader. God. Have students complete #9.*
- ? And #10, what did Samson ask for when he stood between the two pillars? *Choose a reader. Strength. Have students complete #10.*

 Slides #18–19

Application

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God used Samson to show the Israelites that he had not forgotten them. God gave Samson supernatural strength to defeat the Philistines without being captured many times.

 Slide #20

But we may be tempted to think, “Wow, Samson sure made a lot of bad choices!” But we make sinful choices, too, don't we? Our weaknesses may be different from Samson's, but they can be just as bad. If Samson had stayed obedient to the Lord and kept away from sin, he wouldn't have been trapped by Delilah.

The same is true for us today. When we are careful to obey God's Word and stay away from worldly things that don't please God, we can avoid the terrible consequences of sin. Samson let things of the world distract him from what God really wanted him to do.

- ? What are some things that can distract us from serving God today? What do we spend most of our time doing or thinking about? *Allow discussion. Having fun, trying to be popular, being selfish, trying to win friends, wanting to have and do the latest and greatest, watching TV/movies, playing video games, playing sports, etc.*

God wants us to learn from the accounts he has given us in the Bible. From Samson's life, we see great faith and courage to fight for the Lord but also weakness for wanting things of the world. Let's pray and ask God to help us keep from distractions so we can be used greatly for his glory.



Group Prayer Time

- ▶ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.

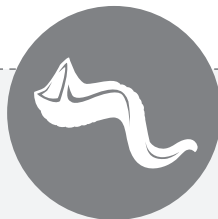
Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

- Thank God for examples of courageous men like Samson.
- Ask God to help us avoid sin and things in the world that can distract us.



Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.



God Blesses Ruth

God blessed Ruth's love and faith by giving her a husband, Boaz.

Lesson Focus

Ruth proved her loyalty to her mother-in-law, Naomi, and to God by returning with Naomi to the land of Israel. God rewarded Ruth's faithfulness by providing a redeemer, Boaz, who married Ruth and took care of her and Naomi. Boaz's redemption of Ruth is a picture of Jesus' redemption of sinners.

Key Passages

Ruth 1:16–17, 4:13–14, 4:16–17; Ephesians 1:7

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Compare Boaz's kindness toward Ruth with Jesus' kindness toward sinners.
- Identify Ruth's place in the genealogy of Jesus.

Memory Verse

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Card Keep
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Oh No

Memory Verse

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Down the Line
- Egg Hunt
- Look Behind You
- Now You See It
- Popcorn
- Review Card Relay
- Stack Em Up
- Your Turn

Play the Memory Verse Song to help your students learn the verse.

Find extra verses to practice in the Additional Memory Verses list.

Studying God's Word

Print the following:

- One Class Notes for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.
- One Map of Moab
- One set of Family Pictures
- One Redeem Coupon for each student

Bring wrapped treats for each student.

Lesson Review

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Choose a Lesson Review Game and gather necessary items.

- Bible Baseball
- Box Toss
- Draw Dice
- Four in a Row
- Goofy Golf
- Pick a Point
- Racetrack
- Toss for It

Go to Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for your compassion to sinners. Thank you for the account of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz. Help me emphasize the love and faithfulness of Ruth and the compassion of Boaz in a way my students will understand. May they see the parallels between Boaz's redemption of Ruth and Jesus' redemption of us. Open their hearts to receive the gift of salvation.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 73*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

- Studying God's Word
- Optional Video Clip
- Real World Skit
- Group Prayer

Small Group

- Come On In
- Memory Verse
- Optional Activity
- Lesson Review
- Take Home Sheet

Optional Supplements

Hands-On Activities

Do these activities when you think best—before, during, or after the lesson.

- Real World Skit
You and an assistant will read a skit about how to respond when bad things happen to Christians. Bring props to add interest!
- My Redeemer Door Hanger
Students will decorate a door hanger with pom-poms and raffia/yarn.
- Glean the Grain
Students will race in pairs to collect “grain” similar to how Ruth gleaned in Boaz’s field.
- Coloring Sheet
Students will color as you review today’s lesson with them.
- Justin & Jessie Story—*Cookies & Cream*
Justin learns what it's like to be a redeemer when he finds a stray dog.

Video Clips

Preview the recommended video(s) before class. If appropriate, show to your class and discuss before, during, or after the lesson.

- The Ultimate Adventure (8:26)

PowerPoint

You may want to use the PowerPoint presentation provided to enhance your teaching.

Notes

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

During the time of the judges (Ruth 1:1), Naomi and Elimelech, natives of Bethlehem in Judah, with their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, moved to the country of Moab to avoid a famine. Elimelech died in the land of Moab, and afterward the two sons married Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. After about 10 years, the two sons died, leaving Naomi alone with her daughters-in-law.

In that time and culture, life was very difficult for a widow. Naomi told Ruth and Orpah to return to their own people as Naomi intended to return to hers. She explained that she was too old to have more sons, and even if she did, it would take too long for the sons to grow up to be the husbands of her daughters-in-law. Both daughters-in-law protested. Orpah finally did return to her people. But Ruth adamantly refused, declaring determined allegiance not only to Naomi but also to her people and to her God (Ruth 1:16–17). This is to be understood as more than personal loyalty and love to Naomi. Rather, Ruth declared her intent to forsake her family and the false religion of the Moabites and to attach herself to the true God and his covenant people. In that culture, Ruth took a radical and courageous step. Certainly, she must have loved Naomi, but this kind of commitment to Israel and to God, regardless of the lack of familial connections in Israel, was a nearly certain path to poverty. Though beloved by Ruth, Naomi was not in a position to provide for her material needs. Ruth's courage is much to be admired.

When Ruth and Naomi returned to make their home in Bethlehem, they were in the position of little more than beggars. This was evidenced in the manner Ruth obtained food for them, following harvesting field workers and picking up (“gleaning”)

Historical/Apologetics Background

The redemption of Ruth by Boaz is a touching story of commitment and compassion, but it is much more than that. Boaz is certainly a type of Christ, our Redeemer. While it was costly for Boaz to redeem Ruth, Jesus Christ paid so much more for his bride. He set aside the privileges of his deity (Godhood)

what little they dropped as they harvested. It was customary (and commanded in Leviticus 23:22) to allow the poor to gather food this way. The owner of the field, Boaz, compassionately instructed his young men to leave more than usual for Ruth, and Boaz recognized and admired the path this young Moabite woman had followed. His blessing to her makes it clear that she had not only been loyal to Naomi but had also entrusted herself to the Lord God of Israel: “A full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, *under whose wings you have come to take refuge*” (Ruth 2:12).

Boaz was a close relative of Naomi's husband, one who could be expected to take responsibility for the care of Ruth and Naomi. In chapter 3, after being instructed by Naomi, Ruth came to Boaz by night at the threshing floor in a manner intended to show that she wished to be under his care; and Boaz responded favorably, impressed with Ruth's virtue and her kindness in not pursuing younger men. Boaz was apparently much older than Ruth (Ruth 3:10–11).

The account culminates in chapter 4 when Boaz confronted a closer relative of Naomi with the opportunity he had to “redeem”—to buy back into the close family—the land that had belonged to Naomi's husband. The redemption of the land included, by custom in Israel, the responsibility to care for the widow of Elimelech (Naomi). The care also included Ruth since she was part of the family and, because she was a young woman, involved marriage to her for the continuation of the family name (Ruth 4:5). Naomi's closer relative was unwilling to get involved since it would affect the inheritance in his own family. Boaz was willing to marry Ruth, however, and God blessed them with a son (Ruth 4:13). Boaz's redemption and marriage to Ruth led to her occupying a place in Jesus' ancestry. Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David (Ruth 4:17; Matthew 1:1).

for our benefit (Philippians 2:5–11). For our sakes, he who was rich became poor (2 Corinthians 8:9). He who was without sin became sin for us so that “in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Boaz went beyond the call of duty to show his love and concern for Ruth,

and Jesus more so. Because of Jesus' shed blood, we can have our sins forgiven (Ephesians 1:7) and be adopted into the family of God (Galatians 4:4-5).

Boaz demonstrated a heart of compassion for Naomi and Ruth when he redeemed them from their hopeless situation. According to the laws God gave to Moses, a close relative could redeem (buy back) a family member sold into slavery (Leviticus 25:47-49), land that was sold due to hardship (Leviticus 25:23-28), and the family name through levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Levirate marriage (meaning "husband's brother") was intended to provide an heir for an Israelite man who died childless. This option applied to unmarried close male relatives, such as brothers and cousins, who wanted to keep the property in the family. In the case of Naomi, Boaz had to defer to a closer relative and give him the option of buying Naomi's land and marrying Ruth. This relative refused because of his own children and gave

up his legal right to the land and Ruth (Ruth 4:3-6), clearing the way for Boaz to redeem the land and marry Ruth to raise up an heir for Mahlon (Ruth 4:9-10).

Both Boaz and Ruth are described as "worthy" (Ruth 2:1, 3:11), which shows their godly character. Some may question the scene described at the threshing floor where Ruth lay at Boaz's feet in the night (Ruth 3:6-14). But Ruth's action did not signify any immorality but rather her desire to marry Boaz, a marriage he probably would not have initiated with a younger woman.

It is also significant in this account that Ruth was a Gentile (a non-Israelite). The picture of her being drawn into covenant in the nation of Israel recalls God's promise to Abraham in Genesis 17:4 that he would be the father of many nations. It also foreshadows God's promise that the Messiah, Jesus, would be a "light for revelation to the Gentiles" (Luke 2:32).

Slide #1

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

Come On In

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

Memory Verse

We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.

Slide #2

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Studying God's Word

Introduction

Refer to Lesson 72 Theme Poster. The judge we learned about in our last lesson was Samson. He was a Nazirite set apart by God to help save the Israelites from the Philistines. God gave Samson supernatural strength. He was able to do many mighty things. But he sinned by letting a woman he loved become more important to him than God. When Samson told Delilah the secret to his strength, she betrayed him to the Philistines for money they promised to give her.

God left Samson, and he was captured, blinded, and imprisoned. When Samson was brought before a large crowd of Philistines, he prayed for strength one more time. God answered his prayer, and Samson pushed down the pillars of the building they were in, killing about 3,000 Philistines!

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Today we're going to look at another book of the Bible called the book of Ruth. The family we're going to read about lived during the same time as the judges. *NOTE: According to the timeline, the lessons may seem out of order. We chose to cover Gideon and Samson first since they are both in the book of Judges. Ruth and Samuel were contemporaries but are found in different books.*

We'll start today's lesson with a few words you'll need to know.

- ? **When a woman marries a man, what does she call her husband's mother?** *Mother-in-law.*

Show Family Picture #1. A mother-in-law is the mother of someone's husband or wife.

- ? **What does the husband's mother call the wife of her son?** *Daughter-in-law.*

Show Family Picture #2. The wife is now a daughter because she has married into the family.

- ? *Show Family Picture #3.* Last question: what is the word used for a woman whose husband has died? *Widow.*

Slide #3

Slides #4–6

So, you've probably guessed that we're going to talk about a widow and a daughter-in-law. But we're also going to talk about another very important word, *redeem*. To help us with that, I'm going to pass out a treat to each of you. But DO NOT open it. Leave it there in front of you.

- ? Think of these treats as good things God blesses us with. What are some things God has given to us? *Allow answers as you pass out treats to each student. Home, family, food, toys, etc.*

Ruth's Choice

Refer to the Map of Moab. Let's begin with some background. There was a famine in Israel. Remember, a famine is when there's not enough food for everyone. Because of this famine, a man named Elimelech moved his family from Bethlehem to the country of Moab where there was more food.

Elimelech lived in Moab with his wife, Naomi, and two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. Life seemed to go pretty well for them in Moab, they had food and a place to live. But things started going bad when Elimelech died, leaving Naomi to live as a widow.

Refer to Family Picture #2. Later, Naomi's two sons met and married women from Moab. Chilion married Orpah, and Mahlon married Ruth.

Refer to the Family Picture #3. Then some years later, both of Naomi's sons died, too. Now Naomi was left alone with her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, who were also widows!

Wow! It seemed like Naomi lost everything. And that means you will all lose your treats. But hang in there! There may be a way you can buy them back. *Collect the treats and set aside.*

This was a sad and scary time for these three women. It was very difficult to survive as a woman without a husband back then. Women couldn't go out and get a job to provide for themselves like they can now. But one day, Naomi heard that there was food again in Israel. So she decided to go back to her hometown of Bethlehem. She told Ruth and Orpah to go back to their families where they would be cared for. Orpah did as Naomi said, but Ruth did not want to leave Naomi alone.

Ruth 1:16–17

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn in your Bibles to the book of Ruth, chapter 1, in the Old Testament. It is after Joshua and Judges.

- ? Who will read Ruth 1:16–17? *Assign readers.*
- ? Where did Ruth say she would go? *Wherever Naomi went.*

Ruth loved Naomi and promised to stay with her. Ruth also loved the true God—the same God Naomi worshipped.

 Slides #7–9

 Slide #10

 Slide #11

- ? How long did Ruth say she would stay with her mother-in-law? Look at verse 17. *Until they died.*

Ruth was faithful to Naomi. She was willing to leave her family, her people, and their false gods in Moab and make Naomi’s people, the Israelites, her own. She trusted in the true God and believed he was faithful to care for them, and she stayed with Naomi.

Refer to the Map of Moab. So, Ruth traveled with Naomi back to Bethlehem in Judah. See their path here on the map? Show the path from Moab to Bethlehem.

When they got back to Bethlehem, these two women were poor and hungry. They didn’t have any way to make a living—they were in big trouble! But Ruth was a hard worker and decided that she would go and pick up grain that was left after the workers harvested in the fields. Back then, that was how poor people could get food. The workers in the fields were supposed to leave some grain so that poor people could collect it. This was called “gleaning.”

- ? How many of you think Ruth and Naomi were on their own to survive? *Show of hands.*
- ? How many believe God was in control and had a plan to help them? *Show of hands.*

Just as God planned it, Ruth ended up working in the field owned by a man named Boaz, who was a close relative of Naomi’s husband, Elimelech. Remember that—it’s important!

Boaz noticed Ruth and told his servants to leave more grain for her. Then Boaz spoke to Ruth and told her, “Don’t go to anyone else’s fields. Stay here in my fields to collect food so my workers can protect you and share their water with you.”

Ruth was surprised and asked, “Why would someone like you show me such kindness, especially since I’m a foreigner from Moab?”

“Well,” Boaz replied, “because I have heard about all that you’ve done to help Naomi.” Then he prayed a blessing on Ruth, asking the Lord to reward and protect her.

Hey! Things are looking up, aren’t they? Do you see how God sovereignly brought Boaz and Ruth together?

- ? *Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Who remembers what sovereign means? God is in complete control of everything.*

We will see that God would use Boaz to greatly bless Ruth and Naomi. God would reward them just as Boaz had prayed.

Let’s start the Class Notes. We will read the sentences and the three possible answers together. You will have to circle the letter of the correct answer.

- Pass out the Class Notes now to complete them throughout the lesson, or wait and complete them at the end to review.

- ? Who will read #1 for us? Choose a reader. A. Moab. Have students complete #1.
- ? Who will read #2 about the women Naomi’s sons married? Choose a reader. B. Ruth and Orpah. Have students complete #2.
- ? And #3? What happened to Naomi’s husband and sons? Choose a reader. B. Died. Have students complete #3.
- ? Who will read #4? Choose a reader. C. Go back to their families. Have students complete #4.
- ? And #5? What did Ruth choose to do? Choose a reader. A. Go with Naomi to Bethlehem. Have students complete #5.
- ? Someone read #6. Whose field did Ruth end up working in? Choose a reader. B. Boaz. Have students complete #6.

 Slides #12–14

Boaz’s Decision

- ? Show Lesson Theme Poster. Does anyone want to guess what happened after God brought Boaz and Ruth together? Allow guesses.
- ? What was the important point I told you to remember about Boaz? He was a close relative of Naomi’s husband.

 Slide #15

Yes! Boaz was a relative of Naomi. Back in those days, the Israelite laws said that when a man died, his closest relative was responsible to see that the man’s wife (widow) was cared for. This relative was called a redeemer. Let’s learn what it means to redeem.

- ? Pass out one Redeem Coupon to each student. Remember how you received treats earlier? Then what happened to them? They were taken away.
- ? Right. But what do these coupons say on them? “Redeem for one treat.”
- ? Hmm. What do you think that means? Allow discussion.

 Slide #16

There are a couple meanings to this word redeem. The first meaning is “to buy something back.”

You could each buy back your treat by redeeming it with one of these coupons. Use your coupon as payment to buy back your treat. But don’t eat it yet. Allow students to turn in coupons for a treat.

What about the second meaning? Besides buying something back, redeem also means to free someone from trouble or distress. Naomi and Ruth were in desperate need. Both of them were widows, so they had no husbands to protect them or provide for them!

Since Boaz was a close relative, he knew he could do something about this problem. First, Naomi’s husband had some land, but she couldn’t farm it by herself, and she had no money to pay anyone to do it. So Boaz redeemed Naomi’s land. He bought it and would farm it to help provide

Redeem: to buy something back; to free someone from trouble or distress

- Have students save their treats until the end of the lesson.

for Naomi. Then he married Ruth and brought her and Naomi into his family, redeeming both of them out of their distress.

Ruth 4:13–14

 Slide #17

Turn to Ruth chapter 4. Follow along and listen carefully as I read these verses. *Read Ruth 4:13–14.*

Did you get all that? There's a lot of important information packed into those verses.

- ? Look at the first sentence in verse 13. What did Ruth become? *Boaz's wife.*
- ? God soon blessed Boaz's kindness and Ruth's faithfulness by giving them a child. Was it a boy or a girl? Look at the last word in that verse. *A boy.*
- ? In verse 14, the women of Bethlehem praised the Lord. What did they say? Naomi was not left without a what? *A redeemer.*
- ? Who was Naomi and Ruth's redeemer? *Boaz.*

Ruth 4:16–17

 Slide #18

? Verses 16 and 17 give us some interesting information about this family. Who will read those verses for us? *Assign readers.*

? In verse 16, what does it say Naomi became to Boaz and Ruth's child? *His nurse.*

Naomi was no longer afraid and alone. She had her daughter-in-law, Ruth, her relative Boaz, and now a precious baby to help care for! She would be the baby's grandmother!

- ? What was the baby's name? *Obed.*
- ? This was a very special family. Look at the end of verse 17. Who was the grandson of Obed? *David.*
- ? How many of you have ever heard of David before? He's the one that fought Goliath. *Show of hands.*

Boaz and Ruth's son Obed grew up and had a son named Jesse, and Jesse was the father of David, who later became king of Israel!

? Ruth was the great-grandmother of King David. And guess who they were related to? I'll give you a hint: we learn about his special birth in the New Testament. *Jesus.*

David was in the family line of Jesus Christ! And because Ruth was faithful to God, he blessed her in a very special way by including her in the line of Jesus, the promised Messiah.

 Slides #19–20

? Look at #7 on your Class Notes. What does it mean to redeem? Choose a reader. C. To buy something back or free someone from distress. Have students complete #7.

? Who will read #8? Choose a reader. A. Redeemed Naomi and married Ruth. Have students complete #8.

- ? What was the name of the child for #9? Choose a reader. B. Obed. Have students complete #9.
- ? Who will read #10? Choose a reader. C. Great-grandmother of David. Have students complete #10.

Christ's Sacrifice

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. In the book of Ruth, we see that Boaz was a redeemer. He agreed to buy Naomi's land, work it, and provide for both her and Ruth because he was a close relative. This was the custom in those days. The closest relative would come and rescue, or redeem, his family from a bad situation. What a marvelous picture of Jesus, the one who redeems sinners!

 Slide #21

There are many verses that describe Jesus as our Redeemer. But today, we'll look at one in the book of Ephesians.

Ephesians 1:7

- ? Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn to Ephesians 1:7 in the New Testament. Who will read that? Choose a reader.
- ? Who is this verse talking about when it says, "In him we have redemption"? Who is the "him"? *Jesus.*
- ? How does this verse say Jesus redeemed us? Through what? *Through his blood.*
Jesus redeemed us—bought us back and rescued us from sin—with his own blood.
- ? Look at the verse again. Because Jesus died for us, what do we receive? *The forgiveness of our trespasses.*
Trespasses is another word for sins. So this verse tells us that we are redeemed, or saved, from our sins because Jesus died in our place—he shed his blood for us on the cross. Notice the last part of that verse: Jesus redeemed us according to the riches of his grace.
- ? Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Who will read the definitions of gracious and merciful from the Attributes of God Poster? Choose volunteers to read. *Gracious: gives great gifts to his children even when they are not deserved. Merciful: kind to those in misery; withholds deserved punishment.*

 Slide #22

It's not because of anything we did but because of God's grace and mercy that we are saved through Jesus Christ.

Application

Refer to the Map of Moab. Our lesson started during the time of the judges with a family of four leaving Israel because of a famine. Naomi

 Slides #23–24

experienced great sadness when she lost her husband and then her two sons. But God provided Ruth, her faithful daughter-in-law, to come with her back to Bethlehem.

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. When Naomi and Ruth were in trouble, Boaz saved them from the bad situation they were in—even though they had no way to pay him back. And because Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz were all faithful to God, he blessed their family with a baby—Obed, and their family line would one day include Jesus Christ.

Are you ready for a pop quiz?

- ? First question: What did we call Boaz because he bought the land and rescued Ruth and Naomi from their terrible situation? *A redeemer.*
- ? Next question: What do we call Jesus because he bought us back and rescued us from our terrible situation of being separated from God because of sin? *Our Redeemer.*

That's right! We are all sinners and have nothing to offer Jesus. We deserve only one thing—hell (separation from God)—because of our sins. But Jesus bought us back from sin. He paid the price when he died on the cross. Jesus is our Redeemer. He took the punishment for sin that we deserve and offers eternal life to everyone who trusts in him. Isn't that fabulous news? Let's eat our treats now and celebrate what Jesus did for us. *Allow students to eat their treats.*



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

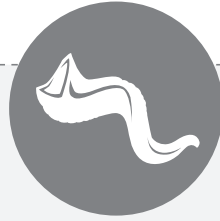
- Thank God for the real people in the Bible who were faithful and obedient to him, even in tough times.
- Praise God for giving Jesus to be our Redeemer.



Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.



God Calls Samuel

God gave Samuel a message of judgment on Israel and the house of Eli.

Lesson Focus

God called Samuel as a young man and gave him a message of judgment on Eli's family and the nation of Israel. God's prophecy came to pass during a battle between the Israelites and the Philistines. God let the Philistines defeat the Israelites, kill the wicked sons of Eli, and capture the ark of the covenant.

Key Passages

1 Samuel 2:23–26, 4:10–11

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe how Samuel responded to God.
- Describe how God judged Israel under Eli.

Memory Verse

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Card Keep
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Oh No

Memory Verse

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Down the Line
- Egg Hunt
- Look Behind You
- Now You See It
- Popcorn
- Review Card Relay
- Stack Em Up
- Your Turn

Play the Memory Verse Song to help your students learn the verse.

Find extra verses to practice in the Additional Memory Verses list.

Studying God's Word

Print the following:

- One Class Notes for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.
- One copy of the God Calls Samuel Skit

Bring the following:

- Name tags for each student (sticky labels or card stock with tape/string)
- Small treats (at least one for each student)
- Markers
- Props for the skit: two bathrobes (or pajamas), two pillows, two towels/blankets

Lesson Review

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Choose a Lesson Review Game and gather necessary items.

- Bible Baseball
- Box Toss
- Draw Dice
- Four in a Row
- Goofy Golf
- Pick a Point
- Racetrack
- Toss for It

Go to Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for calling ordinary people to be used by you. May I respond with joyful obedience to what you've called me to do. Please help me to teach this lesson on Samuel and Eli so that my students will see the importance of listening to and obeying you. May they not wait until they're older to follow you but seek to listen and obey you while they're young.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 74*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

Studying God's Word
Group Prayer

Small Group

Come On In
Memory Verse
Optional Activity
Lesson Review
Take Home Sheet

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

As the book of 1 Samuel opens, we meet Hannah, wife of Elkanah. She was in distress at being childless. During an annual visit to the tabernacle in Shiloh, Hannah breathed a prayer to God, asking him for a son. She vowed to the Lord that if he would grant her a son, he would be given to the Lord's service for his whole life, and no razor would touch his head. Her wordless prayer was mistaken by the high priest Eli for drunkenness. But after Hannah shared her grief and prayer with the priest, he blessed her, asking God to grant her request. The Lord did remember her, and she conceived. Her son was born, and she "called his name Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked for him from the Lord'" (1 Samuel 1:20). Hannah cared for him in the family's home until he was weaned. Then she gave him into the care of Eli so that Samuel would be devoted to serving the Lord as a helper to the priest, just as Hannah had promised the Lord.

Eli seemed to be a devout man, but he was weak regarding his responsibilities. His sons were wicked, corrupt, immoral, and self-serving (1 Samuel 2:12–17, 2:22), and though Eli admonished them, he failed to restrain them (1 Samuel 3:13). God's judgment was pronounced not only on Eli's house but also on Israel (1 Samuel 2:27–36) because the people had again turned to idols.

The entire period of the judges shows a cycle of behavior in Israel: wickedness and idolatry, judgment, cries for mercy, deliverance by God through the means of a judge, and then a lapse back into wickedness, which started the cycle all over again. During Eli's lifetime, God sent the Philistines against the Israelites as punishment for turning to false gods.

Through these events, Samuel played a faithful part. God had chosen to reveal his plan of judgment to this young man under Eli's care. Samuel was lying down and thought that he heard Eli call him. The priest had not called, and at the third visit from Samuel, Eli realized that the Lord was the one speaking. Eli instructed Samuel to be receptive and obedient: "You shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant hears'" (1 Samuel 3:9). In this context, Samuel was "hearing" with a will to obey. Samuel received fearful news from the Lord that night, news of God's

plan to judge Eli's household (1 Samuel 3:11–12). The judgment foretold to Samuel would prove to be God's final judgment on Israel during this dark era of history under the judges. Sadly, even in the next period of Israel's history under kings instead of judges, Israel continued to be unfaithful to God, and both Israel and Judah ended up in captivity.

Eli's response to the judgment intended for him and his family may seem noble at first: "It is the LORD. Let him do what seems good to him" (1 Samuel 3:18). But at closer look, Eli's history of failing to manage his own household after repeated pronouncement of judgment indicates that Eli was unrepentant and inappropriately passive—unmoved to act by the Lord's warning, just as he had been previously.

After the pronouncement of God's judgment, Israel went out to battle against the Philistines (1 Samuel 4). Israel was defeated. The people responded by sending for the ark of the covenant to be brought to the battlefield (1 Samuel 4:3–4), apparently thinking that it would serve as a kind of spiritual force of protection and power.

The people believed that the Lord's power was necessary to defeat the Philistines. But this belief seems distorted when we consider the corruption in the tabernacle, perpetrated by Eli's sons, and the continuing cycle of the nation's idolatry recorded in the book of Judges. Their intent in this instance was to use the ark as assurance of victory through God's power. However, the living and true God will not be used; he will not allow even his covenant people victory if they attempt to use him for their own ends rather than serving and glorifying him. God intends that his power and might—not the power and might of men—be revealed and praised.

The Philistines did, in fact, fear the outcome of the battle when the ark was brought to the camp of the Israelites. But they had no idea that God's judgment on his people was about to be executed. The Philistines won that battle, killing 30,000 Israelite soldiers, and captured the ark of the covenant. Both of Eli's sons died in the battle (1 Samuel 4:10–11). Eli, upon hearing that his sons were dead and the ark was taken, fell backward off his seat, broke his neck, and died (1 Samuel 4:18). These events fulfilled the word of the Lord delivered by Samuel, whom God raised up to be a faithful prophet, priest, and judge.

Historical/Apologetics Background

There are many parallels between Samuel and Christ. Both were conceived by God's intervention, though only Jesus was conceived in a virgin by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:34–35). Both were to be instrumental in the deliverance of Israel, though the kinds of deliverance were different (1 Samuel 7:3–13; Matthew 1:21). Both were used by God to usher in a kingdom. Both arrived on the scene at a time in history when God's dealing with Israel was to change dramatically. Both spoke God's words; they were his prophets (Samuel was also a priest and judge while Christ is a priest and king). Their mothers showed great faith and obedience to God. The song of Hannah bears remarkable resemblance to the song of Mary, who likely was familiar with Hannah's

prayer of praise and borrowed from its imagery. (1 Samuel 2:1–10; Luke 1:46–55).

There are other similarities in descriptions and phrases, such as both being described from childhood as growing in stature and in favor with God and men (1 Samuel 2:26; Luke 2:52). Samuel is a type—a pattern, a living illustration—foreshadowing God's unfolding plan to bring Jesus to save his people from their sins. By definition, types are necessarily incomplete, imperfect illustrations, but the similarities are still striking; and as we look back from our time, they show how God was graciously preparing Israel for the time in which the Messiah would come.

Slide #1

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

Come On In

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

Memory Verse

We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.

Slide #2

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.
- ▶ Have name tags and treats ready.

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Studying God's Word

Introduction

Pass out name tags to each student. Write your name on your name tag and put it on. You may be wondering why we took time to create name tags, so I'll explain the name game we'll play. In our lesson today, God called a young man by name and gave him an important message to share. When God called his name, he answered, "Speak, for your servant hears." His answer showed respect and obedience to God. This young man would become the last judge of Israel, a prophet, and a priest!

Keep the treats nearby so you can give them to students quickly as they answer questions during the lesson. I will call on each of you throughout the lesson to answer a question, if you answer correctly, you will get a treat. So, make sure you're paying attention! If you answer incorrectly, I'll call on another student. There's a limited number of questions, so you'll want to get yours right on your turn. There are 20 questions to address to individual students throughout the lesson, not including Class Notes questions. Depending on your class size and number of treats, you may be able to ask several questions to each student or you may need to pair/group students and let them answer together.

Okay! Let's start with a quick review of what we've been learning.

Refer to Lessons 71–72 Theme Posters and the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. During the time of the judges, Israel repeated a cycle of idolatry (worshipping false gods), punishment from God by bringing enemies, repentance when the people cried out to God for help, and then deliverance when God raised up a judge to fight the enemies. God chose Gideon to lead the Israelites to victory against the Midianites. Later God chose Samson and gave him special strength to fight against the Philistines.

Refer to Lesson 73 Theme Poster. Last time we learned about Ruth who lived during the time of the judges. Ruth was from the country of Moab, and

Slides #3–5

she married one of Naomi's sons. Sadly, Naomi's husband and two sons died while they lived in Moab. Ruth would not leave Naomi; she insisted on traveling with her back to Naomi's hometown in Israel. Ruth left her country, her family, and her false gods to live with the Israelites and follow the one true God.

- ? ____ (insert a student's name), what was the name of the town Ruth and Naomi journeyed back to? *Bethlehem*. Give (or toss) a treat to the student if he or she answered correctly.

Back in Bethlehem, Naomi and Ruth were in a terrible situation because they had no husbands to care for them. They were poor and needed food. But God arranged for Ruth to work in Boaz's field. Boaz was a close relative of Naomi's husband, and he was able to buy Naomi's land, marry Ruth, and take care of both women. God blessed Boaz's kindness and Ruth's faithfulness by giving them a son.

Both Boaz and Jesus were redeemers. Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi when he saved them from a helpless situation.

- ? ____ (insert a student's name), who did Jesus redeem? *Sinners*. Give a treat if answered correctly.

Samuel's Birth

Refer to the *Exodus to Malachi Timeline*. Today our lesson is near the end of the time of judges, about 300 years after God gave the Israelites the promised land and helped Joshua conquer it. The judge who was leading Israel at this time was a priest named Eli. He served in the tabernacle of the Lord, which was set up in a town called Shiloh. Some of your Bibles may call this tabernacle a temple. But we know that the large temple in Jerusalem was not built until many years later. Whichever word your Bible uses, this was the place where people came to worship the God of Israel.

- ? ____ (insert a student's name), think back to when God told Moses how to build the tabernacle. What was kept in the most holy place? It was a big box covered in gold with two angels on top and held the Ten Commandments. *The ark of the covenant*. Give a treat if answered correctly.

The ark of the covenant was kept in the most holy place in the tabernacle. The people of Israel came to the tabernacle to offer sacrifices to God and celebrate feasts every year. At one of these feasts, Eli spotted a woman who was praying. Her name was Hannah. She was deeply troubled because she had no children and wanted a son so badly. She cried and promised the Lord that if he gave her a son, she would give him back to God to be his servant. God answered Hannah's prayer and gave her a son. Hannah named him Samuel.

- Continue to address each question in the lesson to specific students by name. Award treats for correct answers.

When Samuel was still a young boy, Hannah kept her promise to give her son back to the Lord. She brought Samuel to the tabernacle and gave him to Eli, the priest, so he could stay and serve God there as Eli's helper.

It must have been hard for Hannah to give up her son and live apart from him. But she visited him every year and brought him new clothes. God blessed Hannah and her husband with other sons and daughters, too.

Eli was grateful to have Samuel there because he was a great help. But Eli's two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were not helpful at all; they were wicked men. As priests, they were supposed to love and serve God, but they were greedy and selfish. They even stole offerings that were dedicated to God! God was not pleased with Hophni and Phinehas, and neither was their father, Eli.

1 Samuel 2:23–26

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 2:23. Listen carefully as I read what Eli said to his sons. Read 1 Samuel 2:23–26.

Eli knew that his sons were doing evil. They were not helping the people honor God. In fact, they were leading the people into sin. Eli tried to convince them to stop sinning. He knew they would face God's judgment.

? ____ (insert a student's name), how did Eli's sons respond to what he said? Look in verse 25. *They would not listen.*

? ____ (insert a student's name), what was God planning to do to Hophni and Phinehas? Look at the end of verse 25. *Put them to death.*

Eli's sons were rebellious against God and their father. They would not listen to his warning to repent and change their ways.

? ____ (insert a student's name), what about Samuel? How was he growing up? Look in verse 26. *He was growing up in favor with the Lord and man.*

God loved Samuel, and Samuel was obedient. Other people liked Samuel, too. God was preparing Samuel to be the last judge, a holy priest, and a faithful prophet.

? Let's review what we've covered so far in the Class Notes. You will match the shapes then fill in the answer. Who will read #1 and give the answer? Choose a reader. *Eli. Have students complete #1.*

? Who will read #2? Choose a reader. *Covenant. Have students complete #2.*

? And #3? Who prayed for a son? Choose a reader. *Hannah. Have students complete #3.*

? What was her son's name in #4? Choose a reader. *Samuel. Have students complete #4.*

? And #5? Who will read that? Choose a reader. *Wicked. Have students complete #5.*

 Slides #6–7

- ▶ Pass out the Class Notes now to complete them throughout the lesson, or wait and complete them at the end to review.

 Slides #8–9

Samuel's Calling

God first spoke to Samuel when he was a young man, probably a young teenager. He was still living with Eli and serving in the tabernacle. Let's find out how Samuel reacted when he first heard the Lord speak to him.

► Have the script and props/costumes ready for the skit.

God Calls Samuel Skit

I need two volunteers to help act out what happened from 1 Samuel 3. One of you will be young Samuel, and one will be the elderly Eli, whose eyesight is failing. Choose two volunteers then follow the instructions and script in the God Calls Samuel Skit. After the skit, continue with the lesson below.

Turn to 1 Samuel 3 so you can look in the verses to help you answer questions from the skit.

- ? ____ (insert a student's name), where was Samuel when God called to him? Lying in bed.
- ? ____ (insert a student's name), who did Samuel think was calling him? Eli.
- ? ____ (insert a student's name), why was Samuel confused about who was calling him? The answer is in verse 7. He did not yet know the Lord.

Samuel knew of the Lord, but he did not know God personally. That was going to change, and so was Samuel's life!

- ? ____ (insert a student's name), how many times did the Lord call Samuel before Eli figured out what was happening? Look in verse 8. Three times.
- ? ____ (insert a student's name), what did Eli tell Samuel to say in verse 9 if God called him again? "Speak, Lord, for your servant hears."

Eli directed Samuel to give a respectful and obedient answer to the Lord. So the next time God called him in his sleep, Samuel said the words Eli told him to say.

The Lord's message to Samuel had two parts. The first part was a warning against the Israelites because of their sin. The Lord said that the message would make the ears of the people tingle! That is a figure of speech that means the people would not like hearing about the coming judgment.

- ? ____ (insert a student's name), who was the second part of the warning about? It's in verses 12–13. Eli and his house.
- ? ____ (insert a student's name), why was God going to punish Eli and his family? Look in verse 13. Because of the iniquity and blasphemy of his sons and because Eli did not restrain them.

Remember, Eli knew about the sins of his sons, but he didn't make them stop. They were supposed to be God's priests, but they were doing evil things.

- ? ____ (insert a student's name), how did Samuel feel after hearing this message from God? Was he excited to share it? No. He was afraid to tell Eli.

 Slide #10

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God came to Samuel in a dream and spoke to him. Samuel was called to be one of God’s prophets, chosen to share God’s message with the people. But this was a terrible message! God was going to punish all the people of Israel for their sin. Not only that, he was also going to judge Eli and his evil sons! Now it was Samuel’s job to deliver the awful news.

- ? ____ (*insert a student’s name*), how did Eli respond after Samuel told him the message? What did he say? *It is from the Lord. Let him do what seems good to him.*

Eli accepted God’s judgment. He knew his sin and the sins of his sons.

- ? *Refer to the Attributes of God Poster.* Which attribute of God reminds us that God’s judgment against wickedness and sin is fair? *God is just. Choose a student to read the definition.*

Because God is holy, he is just to punish all sin. God’s message through Samuel made it clear that he would finally judge the Israelites for turning away from him to worship false gods. God also wouldn’t ignore the wickedness of Eli’s sons.

 Slide #11

- ? Let’s complete some more of the Class Notes. Who will read #6? *Choose a reader. Sleeping. Have students complete #6.*
- ? And #7? Who will read about God’s message to Samuel? *Choose a reader. Israelites. Have students complete #7.*

God’s Judgment

So, Samuel received his first prophecy, a message from the Lord, and Eli believed it. But how would this judgment come on Israel and Eli’s household? Well, remember the Philistines? The Philistines hated God’s people and wanted to destroy them. Israel often had to fight them to keep them from taking over their lands.

During one of their battles, Israel lost badly. About 4,000 men were killed by the Philistines. The Israelite leaders couldn’t figure out why the Lord allowed them to lose.

They decided for the next battle, they should bring the ark of the covenant with them, hoping it would save them from the power of their enemies. So the people sent for the ark of the covenant, and it was brought from the tabernacle to their camp, along with the priests, Hophni and Phinehas. The Israelite soldiers were so happy to have it there with them—surely they would win against the Philistines now.

- ? How many of you think this was a good idea? *Show of hands.*
- ? Why would this not be such a great plan? Where were they putting their trust? *Allow discussion.*

The Israelites were using the ark of the covenant like a good luck charm. They thought if they brought it to the battle, they would win! But they had more faith in this object than they did in God himself!

1 Samuel 4:10–11

- ? This doesn't look good. Let's find out if their plan worked. Who will read 1 Samuel 4:10–11 about the battle? *Assign a reader.*
- ? ____ (insert a student's name), who was defeated? *Israel.*
- ? ____ (insert a student's name), where did every man flee? *To his home.*
- ? ____ (insert a student's name), how many Israelite soldiers died in the battle? *30,000!*
- ? ____ (insert a student's name), what was captured by the Philistines? *The ark of God (ark of the covenant).*
- ? ____ (insert a student's name), who else was killed during the battle? *Hophni and Phinehas.*

 Slide #12

The message God gave Samuel was fulfilled on this day just as God said. God judged the people of Israel for their sin and also Eli and his sons. The Israelites were defeated and ran away; the Philistines took the ark of the covenant; and Hophni and Phinehas died.

After the battle, the Bible says that Eli died, too. When he heard that his sons were killed and the ark had been captured, he was shocked, fell, and broke his neck. Everything God told Samuel happened like he said it would.

People now knew that Samuel was God's prophet. God chose Samuel to be not only a prophet but also a priest and the last judge of Israel. He was the only man to be all three!

- ? Let's finish our Class Notes. Who will read #8? What seemed like a good idea, but wasn't really? *Choose a reader. Charm. Have students complete #8.*
- ? How many Israelites died in the battle against the Philistines? Who will read #9? *Choose a reader. 30,000. Have students complete #9.*
- ? And #10, what happened to the ark? *Choose a reader. Captured. Have students complete #10.*
- ? Who will read #11 about what happened to Eli? *Choose a reader. Died. Have students complete #11.*
- ? What three jobs did God give to Samuel in #12? *Choose a reader. Judge. Have students complete #12.*

 Slides #13–14

Application

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God gave Samuel the message that judgment was coming because the people continued in their sin and

 Slide #15

wickedness. And we saw that, as always, God was faithful to keep his word. The nation of Israel was defeated by the Philistines and lost the ark of the covenant. Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were killed in the battle, and Eli died when he heard the news of all that had happened.

Refer to Samuel on the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. This wasn't an easy first job for Samuel. But even though he was afraid to tell Eli of God's judgment, Samuel obeyed. God continued to use him as a prophet and judge. And later, God would use Samuel to anoint the first two kings of Israel!

Because we now have the complete written Word of God, prophets like Samuel are no longer needed today. However, God uses people in our lives to teach us, warn us, instruct us, and correct us.

- ? Who are some of those people God uses in our lives? *Parents, teachers, friends, family, and pastors.*

God's instructions can come from many different people. Our job is to listen and learn from them as they tell us the truth of God's Word. We can trust that if we listen to God's Word, learn from it, and obey it, God will use us to accomplish his purposes, too.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

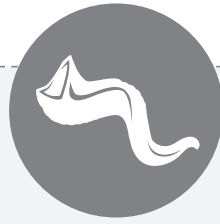
- Thank God for giving us people in our lives to help us to learn his Word.
- Ask God to help us hear and obey him when he calls us.



Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.



Israel's First King

*God chose Saul to be Israel's first king,
but Saul disobeyed the Lord.*

Lesson Focus

Israel rejected God as king and instead asked Samuel for a human king. Samuel warned them of what would happen with their kings, but the people insisted. God chose Saul to be Israel's first king. Saul began his reign in humble obedience to God, but then he disobeyed specific commands God gave him. For his disobedience, Saul would lose the kingdom, the Spirit of God, and his friendship with Samuel.

Key Passages

1 Samuel 8:6–7, 10:20–24, 13:5–12, 15:7–9, 15:22

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify the first king over Israel.
- Describe the consequences of Saul's disobedience to God.

Memory Verse

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Card Keep
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Oh No

Memory Verse

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Down the Line
- Egg Hunt
- Look Behind You
- Now You See It
- Popcorn
- Review Card Relay
- Stack Em Up
- Your Turn

Play the Memory Verse Song to help your students learn the verse.

Find extra verses to practice in the Additional Memory Verses list.

Studying God's Word

Print one Class Notes for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.

Gather the following materials for the “This or That” game in the Introduction:

- One box (labeled “This”) with something in it that the class can share such as candy or small prizes
- One box (labeled “That”) with something distasteful in it, such as a banana peel, stinky sock, empty candy wrapper

Lesson Review

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Choose a Lesson Review Game and gather necessary items.

- Bible Baseball
- Box Toss
- Draw Dice
- Four in a Row
- Goofy Golf
- Pick a Point
- Racetrack
- Toss for It

Go to Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for your mercy and grace when I make poor choices. Help me pass the tests of obedience you put in my life. May my students understand the danger of trying to copy the world as the Israelites did when they wanted a king. From the account of Saul, help my students see how important it is to obey you, even in challenging circumstances. Increase their faith and love for you.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 75*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

- Studying God's Word
- Real World Skit
- Group Prayer

Small Group

- Come On In
- Memory Verse
- Optional Activity
- Lesson Review
- Take Home Sheet

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

Samuel's allegiance to God during his leadership in Israel established a time of peace between Israel and the Philistines (1 Samuel 7:13–14). Samuel appointed his sons as judges after him. Unfortunately, they did not follow Samuel's example. They became greedy, taking bribes and perverting justice (1 Samuel 8:3). This was when the elders of Israel gathered to ask Samuel to appoint a king who would rule them like all the other nations (1 Samuel 8:3–5).

The Israelites' desire for a king—a permanent ruler who would be responsible for the well-being of the nation in a comprehensive way and who would therefore have comprehensive authority—revealed their desire to switch their loyalty to a man rather than depending on and obeying God. It was this inclination that God addressed when he said to Samuel, “They have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them” (1 Samuel 8:7). Samuel warned the people that the king would tax them and take their children and possessions. Despite the warnings, the people reaffirmed that they wanted an earthly king to lead them and fight their battles; they wanted to be like all the other nations. God declared that he would grant their desire; Samuel was to appoint a king (1 Samuel 8:10–22).

1 Samuel 9 and 10 give the details of Samuel choosing and anointing Israel's first king, Saul. In God's providence, they met and Samuel anointed Saul (1 Samuel 10:1). God's message to Saul through Samuel was that the Spirit of God would come upon him and he would become another man (1 Samuel 10:6). In this way, God transformed Saul and prepared him to be king.

1 Samuel 13 picks up two years after Saul became the king. Israel was afraid of the multitude of Philistines who seemed about to attack. Saul was in Gilgal, and the people with him were trembling with fear (1 Samuel 13:7). Saul felt the need to offer a burnt offering to request the Lord's protection in the coming conflict. However, Samuel had told Saul to wait for him seven days (1 Samuel 13:8), and Samuel had not yet arrived.

Disregarding Samuel's instructions, Saul decided that it would be better to offer the sacrifices himself

rather than to wait for Samuel (1 Samuel 13:9). This might appear reasonable. Saul was apparently seeking to honor the Lord and to ask for his protection, and the people were scattering from him (1 Samuel 13:11). However, when Samuel arrived, he made it clear that Saul had acted foolishly (1 Samuel 13:13). Saul had not obeyed the Lord. In spite of what Saul perceived as real, imminent danger, he should have obeyed and trusted God to prevail. The anxiety and concern Saul felt over the Philistines was the product of his lack of trust in God, which led to his disobedience. And we will see that God's priority is always a trusting, obedient heart, not the outward performance of religious duty.

God still gave Saul and his son Jonathan victory over the Philistines (1 Samuel 14), and Saul fought against his enemies on every side (1 Samuel 14:47–48). He had not, however, learned the lesson of obedience to God. The events of 1 Samuel 15 show again Saul's tendency to trust his own judgment rather than to obey God. In this chapter, Israel fought against and defeated the Amalekites. God had clearly commanded Saul to destroy all of that tribe, including women, children, and animals (1 Samuel 15:3). But again Saul considered his own wisdom greater than God's wisdom. In disobedience to God's direct command, Saul kept the king and the best of the animals alive, presumably for the purpose of showing off the defeated king and making sacrifices to God (1 Samuel 15:15). Samuel confronted Saul again with God's priority, declaring plainly that God desires obedience from his people more than even the sacrifices that are meant to honor him (1 Samuel 15:22). Saul not only disobeyed, but he also set an example for the people of Israel that God would not tolerate, trusting self as opposed to trusting God.

Saul suffered severe consequences for his disobedience. The Lord rejected him from being king over Israel (1 Samuel 15:26). The Lord promised that the kingdom would be taken from him and given to a better man, a man after God's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14, 15:28). Saul would no longer benefit from the wise counsel of Samuel, his friend and God's prophet and priest (1 Samuel 15:35). The Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and a harmful spirit from the Lord troubled him (1 Samuel 16:14).

As we consider the life of Saul and his failure to trust and obey God, we know that the unchanging God still demands obedience from his people. In simple terms, John 14:15 states this critical biblical principle: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” A

Historical/Apologetics Background

In order to appreciate what the people were asking when they wanted a king, it is helpful to consider the difference between a judge and a king. A judge was called by God for one main purpose—deliverance from enemies. A king, in that culture, was sovereign over all the affairs of the tribe or nation. A judge led by persuasion—the people followed him or disregarded him as they thought best. (The book of Judges repeats the phrase “everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”) A king ruled by right—the people owed unconditional allegiance to the king. A judge’s rule was limited to accomplish a particular purpose of deliverance. A king’s rule was unlimited and included succession from generation to generation. The judges, we have seen, were led by God to deliver Israel in a way that would specifically show its dependence on God alone.

Saul’s anointing as Israel’s king begs the question: why would God grant this desire of Israel’s people for a king, when we know that the desire constituted a rejection of God? Consider that King David succeeded Saul after Saul failed. Now consider the details of God’s covenant made to David—that his throne would be established forever (2 Samuel 7:16). That throne would one day be occupied by Jesus

heart that loves God will produce a life that keeps his commands—not perfectly, but characteristically. And if good fruit is lacking, the answer is not in self-effort, but examining oneself to see if he really is in the faith, turning in repentance and faith to Christ.

Christ, who is the King of kings and the Lord of lords (Revelation 19:16). Jesus is not only man, but God. He is the Word of God who became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14).

The inescapable conclusion is that God turned the sinful desire of Israel to his own purposes. The people rejected God’s reign in favor of a man (Saul) to be king. But that rejection of God led to the fulfillment of God’s plan of redemption through Jesus Christ—the final and everlasting King. How often God works in this way! Man’s sins are not excused at all, but regardless of man’s failures, God works out his perfect will. Joseph was sold cruelly into slavery by his brothers, but that act was used by God for good, to save the brothers later (Genesis 50:20). Peter and John were beaten for teaching about Jesus, but their faithful, courageous endurance of suffering was used to bring great boldness to the church (Acts 4:18–31). And most importantly, Jesus, the Christ, was delivered to be tortured and crucified. But that very act, the worst murder ever committed, was carried out according to God’s “definite plan and foreknowledge” (Acts 2:22–23) to be the atoning sacrifice that saves God’s people from their sins and brings them God’s righteousness (see 2 Corinthians 5:21).

Slide #1

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

Come On In

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

Memory Verse

We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.

Slide #2

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

Studying God's Word **Introduction**

Refer to Lesson 74 Theme Poster. In the last lesson, we were introduced to Samuel, who went to live at the tabernacle when he was a young boy.

- ? What was the name of the priest whom Samuel helped at the tabernacle? *Eli.*

Yes, Eli was the high priest, and it was his job to lead the Israelites in worshipping the Lord. But Eli failed to stop his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, from doing wicked things.

- ? What was Samuel doing when God first spoke to him? *Sleeping.*

Samuel was sleeping when he heard his name called. He kept running to Eli, thinking he had called him. After the third time, Eli figured out it was God calling Samuel. God gave Samuel a serious message of judgment: Israel and Eli's family would be judged for their sin.

This message was fulfilled when the Israelites lost a battle against the Philistines. Many soldiers were killed, and the ark of the covenant was captured. Eli's sons also died in the battle, and when Eli heard the news, he fell and died. Everything happened just as God said.

Samuel continued to listen to God as he grew up. He became a prophet, a priest, and a judge. God gave him victory over the Philistines and helped him in all he did.

In today's lesson, we'll see how some important decisions changed the course of Israel's history! Often when we make a choice about something, we don't know how that decision will affect the future. Some choices are small, like choosing what to order at a restaurant. But even choices that seem "small" can have consequences. For example, if you order a triple-scoop, hot fudge, double-decker brownie sundae—and eat it all—you could end up with a bad stomachache.

Sometimes we make choices while under pressure. People might be pestering us saying, "Hurry up, I need to know now!" Or maybe we get

impatient and don't want to wait for God to guide us, or we think we have a better idea. When we make choices in these kinds of situations, they often are poor choices with bad consequences.

We're going to play a game today to help us better understand this. I need a volunteer. *Choose a volunteer to stand beside you at the front of the room. Bring out the two boxes labeled "This" and "That." This game is called "This or That." You will have to choose this box or that box. In one box, there is something good that you and the class could share. But in the other box is something that I promise you will not like. Since the whole class will share the prize with you, they will help you decide by shouting out which box they think you should choose. You have 30 seconds to decide, and your time starts now! Set the timer or start the stopwatch. Encourage the class to shout out which box they want. When time is up, allow the volunteer to open the box he chose and share the contents with the class—good or bad.*

► Have the two boxes with "prizes" in them ready for the "This or That" game.

- ? Was it hard to decide which box you should choose? What made it difficult/easy? *Allow volunteer to answer.*
- ? Does anyone have other examples of choices you make every day? Or maybe one big choice or decision that was hard to make? *Allow discussion or share a personal example.*

We face choices every day. Most are pretty easy to make, but some can be difficult. Some choices like whether to sin or to do what's right are especially important because they will have a big impact on our lives. We may make a lot of good decisions, but one or two bad ones can ruin everything. Today, we're going to look at some choices that had some terrible consequences.

Israel's Choice

God had chosen Samuel to lead Israel as the last judge. During Samuel's lifetime, Israel had a time of peace and godliness. Many people turned back to the Lord and stopped worshipping idols. When Samuel got older, he appointed his sons to judge Israel. But his sons were not like him. They were greedy and dishonest. The Israelites didn't want them to lead after Samuel. So, the people came to Samuel with a new idea. They were tired of having judges. They wanted to be like all the other nations around them; they wanted a king!

1 Samuel 8:6–7

- ? *Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's read what happened next. Turn to 1 Samuel 8. Who will read verses 6 and 7? Assign a reader.*
- ? How did Samuel feel about the people's request for a king? *He was displeased. Yes. Samuel was unhappy with the people's request.*
- ? What was the first thing Samuel did after he heard it? *He prayed to the Lord.*

 Slide #4

- ? What did the Lord tell Samuel to do? *Obey the voice of the people.*
- ? Who did the Lord say the people were rejecting when they asked for a king: Samuel or God? *God.*

God knew that the people were rejecting him as their king. After all God had done for the Israelites—freeing them from slavery in Egypt and giving them the land of Canaan—they still wanted to be like the nations around them. They wanted a man to be their king.

- ? Were the Israelites making a good choice here when they asked for a king? *Allow discussion.*

The Israelites' choice was not good. They were being impatient and unwise, wanting to do things their own way instead of trusting God. They were rejecting the Creator God as their king, and their choice would have consequences.

God told Samuel to give the people a king, but he also told him to warn them about what their kings would do. Samuel told them their kings would take young men and women for his service to fight in the army and work in the fields. They would make the people pay taxes on their crops and animals, and they would take the best land, animals, and servants for themselves. When their kings did these things and the people cried out for God's help, God said he would not answer.

- ? How many of you think having a king sounds like a good idea? *Allow discussion.*

The Israelites wouldn't listen to Samuel's warning; they wanted a human king to rule them and lead them into battle just like the other nations. The Israelites wanted to be like everyone else even though they were God's chosen people.

Let's find out who God chose to be Israel's first king.

1 Samuel 10:20–24

Turn to 1 Samuel 10:20. Follow along as I read verses 20–24. *Read the verses.*

Samuel gathered all the Israelites together so God could show him which tribe the king would come from.

- ? Who was chosen to be the first king of Israel? Look in verse 21. *Saul the son of Kish.*
- ? What tribe was Saul from? *The tribe of Benjamin.*
- ? Where was Saul when he was chosen? *Hiding among the baggage.*
- ? How is Saul described in verse 23? *Taller than any of the people.*
- ? Look in verse 24. Who chose Saul to be king? *The Lord.*

We learn a bit about Saul from these verses. He was a tall man from the tribe of Benjamin. He must have been overwhelmed or humbled at being chosen king since he was hiding near the baggage.

 Slides #5–7

- ? What did the people shout when Saul was brought before them? *Long live the king!*
- ? Let's start the Class Notes. You will choose an answer from the word bank and write it in the crossword puzzle. Who will read #1 and give the answer? *Choose a reader. God. Have students complete #1.*
- ? Who will read #2 about what Samuel told the people? *Choose a reader. Warned. Have students complete #2.*
- ? And #3? Who did the Israelites want to be like? *Choose a reader. Nations. Have students complete #3.*
- ? So, who was Israel's first king? That's #4. *Choose a reader. Saul. Have students complete #4.*

► Pass out the Class Notes now to complete them throughout the lesson, or wait and complete them at the end to review.

 Slides #8–9

Saul's Choices

Saul was given a special privilege and a big responsibility when he was made king. Things started out pretty well. Samuel helped Saul and prayed for him to follow God and make good choices. God sent his Spirit to help Saul and gave him victory over his enemies. But Saul soon began to make unwise choices that were not pleasing to the Lord.

1 Samuel 13:5–12

Turn to 1 Samuel 13:5. Follow along while I read verses 5–12. *Read the passage.*

 Slides #10–14

- ? What enemy gathered against Saul and the Israelites in verse 5? *Philistines.*
- ? How large was the Philistine army? *30,000 chariots, 6,000 horsemen, troops like the sand on the seashore.*

Yikes! The Philistines had fought against the Israelites for years. They were fierce warriors who had chariots and better weapons than the Israelites.

- ? What did the Israelites do when they saw this army? *They hid in caves, holes, rocks, tombs, and cisterns.*

The Israelites were terrified of the Philistine army! They were hiding wherever they could! Some even crossed the Jordan River to get away from the upcoming battle. The men who stayed with Saul were so scared, they were trembling.

- ? King Saul knew that they were in trouble. But he was waiting for someone to come to meet him at Gilgal. Who was it? Look in verse 8. *Samuel.*
- ? How long had he already waited? *Seven days.*
- ? Look at verse 9. What did King Saul do when he saw that his men were scattering from him? *He offered the burnt offering.*
- ? Who came right after Saul made the offering? *Samuel.*

 Slide #15

? Was Samuel okay with Saul making the offering? *No!*

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Saul wanted to offer a sacrifice so God would bless and protect him and the men going to battle. But according to God’s laws, only a priest—like Samuel—could offer a sacrifice. Saul should have waited for Samuel to do it. Instead, he made a bad choice and disobeyed God’s commands.

Let’s look at another choice Saul made. Turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 15:7. In this account, Saul was headed for another battle. This time, the Israelites were attacking the Amalekites. Samuel told Saul that God wanted them to completely destroy the Amalekites. He wanted everyone and everything gone! So, Saul gathered the Israelites and led the attack.

1 Samuel 15:7–9

 Slides #16–17

? Who will read 1 Samuel 15:7–9? *Assign readers.*

? Saul attacked the Amalekites as God told him to. But did Saul obey completely? *No.*

? What did Saul and the people keep alive? Look in verse 9. *Agag the king of the Amalekites and the best of the animals (sheep, oxen, calves, lambs, and all that was good).*

Saul and the Israelites destroyed everything that they thought was worthless, but they kept everything they thought was good.

? Did Saul make a good choice? Why or why not? *Allow discussion.*

Saul made another bad choice. He directly disobeyed God’s command to completely destroy the Amalekites and everything they owned. Instead of trusting and obeying the Lord, Saul trusted himself and his own ideas.

When Samuel asked Saul about his disobedience, Saul tried to make his choice sound better by saying he planned to use the animals as offerings to God. But Saul didn’t repent or take responsibility for his actions.

1 Samuel 15:22

 Slide #18

Then Samuel told Saul what God wanted him to do. Listen for what pleases God as I read 1 Samuel 15:22. *Read the verse.*

? Which pleases God more? Obeying partway (so he could use the animals for offerings and sacrifices) or listening and obeying the Lord completely? *Listening and obeying completely.*

 Slides #19–20

? Let’s go back to our crossword on the Class Notes. Who will read #5? What did Saul do before the battle against the Philistines? *Choose a reader. Offering. Have students complete #5.*

? Who was supposed to offer the sacrifice? That’s #6. *Choose a reader. Priests. Have students complete #6.*

? Who will read #7 about Saul’s next bad choice? *Choose a reader. King. Have students complete #7*

That's right. He let Agag, king of the Amalekites, live, along with all the best animals.

- ? What did Samuel tell Saul for #8? *Choose a reader. Obedience. Have students complete #8.*

Saul's Consequences

God put Saul in several situations to test whether he would be obedient or not. Samuel had made it clear that Saul **MUST** obey God completely. And, as we already saw, Saul failed the tests and disobeyed. Any disobedience to God is sin—even when we think our way is a really great idea. Saul's life changed because he trusted his own wisdom instead of God's wisdom. Saul's choices would have consequences—and they wouldn't be good!

Samuel explained to Saul that since he had failed to keep the command of the Lord, his kingdom would not continue. God would choose someone else to be king—a man after God's own heart. Not only this, but Saul would never see Samuel again. Saul lost a good friend and counselor. But even worse than that—Saul lost the Spirit of the Lord, which was working in his life to do great things! All these gifts were taken from Saul, and he was left with a harmful spirit that troubled him.

Wow! Did you know how important obedience is to God? God would rather we obey him than try to please him our own way. God demanded complete obedience from Saul, and he expects the same from us.

- ? Let's finish our Class Notes. Who will read #9 about what God took away from Saul? *Choose a reader. Kingdom. Have students complete #9.*
- ? Who will read #10? *Choose a reader. Spirit. Have students complete #10.*

 Slide #21

Application

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. The Israelites rejected God as their king and asked for a human king instead. God warned them that things would not go well for them under their human kings. Yet they ignored God's warning and demanded a king. God gave the people what they wanted and chose Saul to be the first king of Israel. This happened in 1095 BC and ended the time of the judges.

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Saul disobeyed God when he took matters into his own hands and made bad choices. Because of his disobedience, he would lose his kingdom; he lost his friend and advisor, Samuel; and he lost the Spirit of the Lord.

 Slide #22

We might think that what Saul did doesn't make much difference to us today since it all happened a long time ago. But think about it.

? Refer to the *Attributes of God Poster*. What does it mean that God is **immutable**? Choose a student to read the definition. *Immutable: will never change.*

God is the very same God today as he was in Saul’s time. He will never change. He has given us his commands in the Bible, and we must obey them, too!

Jesus explained obedience very simply in John 14:15. He said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” If our hearts really love God, we will keep his commandments. We won’t do a perfect job because we are sinners, but our lives should be different because we love God and want to obey him. As we get to know God better, we will love him more, and he will give us the ability to obey and make good choices that will please him.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

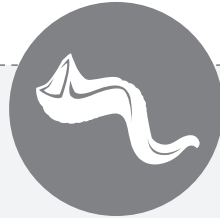
- ▶ Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.

- Ask God to change our hearts so that we follow Jesus instead of trying to be like others around us.
- Ask God to help us show our love for him by obeying his commands.



Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.



God Chooses David

God sent Samuel to anoint David as the next king of Israel.

Lesson Focus

God sent Samuel to Jesse's family in Bethlehem to anoint the next king of Israel. Jesse's least likely and youngest son, David, was the one God chose because he had a heart after God's own heart. After Samuel anointed him king, David was called into Saul's service as a musician according to God's plan.

Key Passages

1 Samuel 13:14, 16:6–19

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify God's reason for choosing David.
- Describe David's characteristics.

Memory Verse

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Card Keep
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Oh No

Memory Verse

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Down the Line
- Egg Hunt
- Look Behind You
- Now You See It
- Popcorn
- Review Card Relay
- Stack Em Up
- Your Turn

Play the Memory Verse Song to help your students learn the verse.

Find extra verses to practice in the Additional Memory Verses list.

Studying God's Word

Print the following:

- One Class Notes for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.
- One Illustration

Prepare the following for the Introduction:

- Two heart-shaped cookies, one well-decorated salty cookie and one poorly decorated tasty cookie (see Introduction for details)
- Optional: cup of water

Lesson Review

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Choose a Lesson Review Game and gather necessary items.

- Bible Baseball
- Box Toss
- Draw Dice
- Four in a Row
- Goofy Golf
- Pick a Point
- Racetrack
- Toss for It

Go to Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for choosing the small, the overlooked, and the weak as yours. You chose David as king, and you've chosen me to teach these students. Give me your wisdom, patience, and love so that I will bless my students with the accurate teaching of your Word. Help my students understand that loving and following you is more important than the outward things the world values.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 76*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

Studying God's Word
Group Prayer

Small Group

Come On In
Memory Verse
Optional Activity
Lesson Review
Take Home Sheet

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

Recall in the last lesson that the first king God chose to rule Israel, King Saul, demonstrated through his disobedience that he thought himself wiser than God. Saul's heart was not right with the Lord, and because of his rebellion, God would take his kingdom away. But who would take Saul's place? God sought a man after his own heart to lead his people (1 Samuel 13:14). God found such a man in David.

God sent Samuel to anoint the man God had determined to take Saul's place. This new king would come from the household of Jesse, a man from the tribe of Judah living in Bethlehem (1 Samuel 16:1). God promised to reveal to Samuel which of Jesse's eight sons was the one whom God had selected (1 Samuel 16:3).

As Jesse presented his sons to Samuel, we see that they must have been impressive young men! Samuel immediately thought that surely God must have chosen Eliab, Jesse's oldest son, as Israel's new king (1 Samuel 16:6). But the Lord revealed that what impressed Samuel was not important to God. Eliab's good looks and height were the focus of Samuel's admiration, but the Lord sees things differently: "man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

Rejecting the seven older sons, God was about to reveal Jesse's youngest son, David, as the one to replace Saul as king. Jesse apparently didn't even think enough of David to bring him in from the fields where he was shepherding to attend this sacrifice and meeting with Samuel. And yet, because of David's heart, he was the one God had chosen. God knew that David would seek him.

David was skillful in playing music, a mighty man of valor, a man of war, and prudent in speech; the Lord was with him (1 Samuel 16:18). David was ruddy and handsome, but he was not chosen for his appearance but his heart. David was the one God intended to be the next king (1 Samuel 16:12). At David's anointing, the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in a special way "from that day forward" (1 Samuel 16:13). The Spirit would give David the power he needed to accomplish God's will.

While the Spirit of God entered David, God's Spirit left Saul, and a harmful spirit overcame him, causing him much anguish (1 Samuel 16:14). In God's sovereign plan, David was called to Saul's court to comfort and soothe Saul by playing the lyre. David obediently came to serve the king, and Saul loved him and eventually made him his armor-bearer (1 Samuel 16:21).

Looking ahead in David's life, we find that he did fall into sin during his reign (e.g., his adultery with Bathsheba and murder of her husband in 2 Samuel 11). David's heart was not perfect—no man's heart is. But David loved and trusted God rather than his own ways and judgments, as shown in his repentance over his sin (Psalm 51). This cannot be said of Saul, who rebelled against God and made excuses rather than seeking forgiveness through humble repentance.

A striking passage that shows David's heart is found in 1 Chronicles 29. Here, David exhorted Israel to give gifts to support the building of the temple. The people responded generously, and David gave thanks in 1 Chronicles 29:10–19. David asked the Lord, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you" (1 Chronicles 29:14). David knew that all things come from God, including the gifts they were giving for the temple. Though he was king, David knew that God was the true Ruler of all: "Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all" (1 Chronicles 29:11).

This heart of faith and adoration is what led David to be brave in battle with Goliath: "The LORD who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine" (1 Samuel 17:37). It is this heart that led David to act honorably toward King Saul and spare his life when Saul was seeking to kill him (1 Samuel 24:12). The characteristic pattern of David's heart was to trust that the Lord was in control over all things. David served, honored, and loved the true God with all his heart. Such is a heart that is fashioned after God's own.

Historical/Apologetics Background

In 1 Samuel 16, we learn that Jesse had eight sons, with David being the youngest. Seven sons passed before Samuel and were rejected by God as the next king. Only when Samuel asked if all his sons were present did Jesse remember David, who was keeping the sheep (1 Samuel 16:10–11). The listing of only seven sons of Jesse in 1 Chronicles 2:13–15 indicates that one of the eight likely died after David’s anointing. David isn’t the only example of God choosing the youngest son; God often chose the younger or the least (e.g., Jacob, Joseph, Gideon) to lead.

David’s first anointing was before his family. His second anointing would be before his tribe, Judah, and the third would be before the nation of Israel. When the Spirit of the Lord rushed upon David, this operation of the Holy Spirit was to empower him to accomplish God’s plan for Israel. As David’s ascent to the throne began, so did Saul’s descent (1 Samuel 16:13–14). God sovereignly allowed an evil spirit to torment Saul for the purpose of bringing David into Saul’s service and eventually to his throne. This demon spirit attacked Saul from without and does not appear to have possessed or indwelt Saul. This

was not the only time God demonstrated his power and authority over demons. God used evil spirits and Satan for specific purposes in the lives of Abimelech (Judges 9:23), King Ahab (1 Kings 22:19–23), and Job (Job 1:6–12).

God’s sovereignty is also seen in the fulfillment of prophecy. In Genesis 49, as Jacob was approaching death, he called his sons together and prophetically blessed them. These blessings were not just for the individual sons, but for their families, which would become the tribes of Israel. Jacob’s blessing on Judah is recorded in Genesis 49:8–12. In verse 8, Jacob said, “Your father’s sons shall bow down before you,” and in verse 10 he said, “The scepter shall not depart from Judah.” Israel’s first king, Saul, was from the tribe of Benjamin—not the tribe of Judah. We see the fulfillment of Jacob’s blessing as the “scepter,” or kingdom, was taken from Saul and passed to David, who was of the tribe of Judah. The Lord’s intent was that a descendant from the tribe of Judah would reign permanently. And ultimately, that descendant from the tribe of Judah and the Son of David is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior forever.

 Slide #1

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

 Slide #2

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

- ▶ Note: This taste test uses the same supplies as the Heart Cookies activity, so you can prepare for both at the same time.

- ▶ If you plan to do the Heart Cookies activity, you may want to tell students that they'll get to decorate their own heart cookie later.

 **Come On In**

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

 **Memory Verse**

We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

 **Studying God's Word**

Introduction

Bake two heart-shaped cookies before class and frost them. Add extra salt to the frosting on one cookie (either mixed into frosting or sprinkled on top) and decorate it to look nicer than the other cookie. Make the other cookie with the unsalted frosting look messy with no sprinkles or decorations. Have cookies covered on a plate nearby. Optional: have a cup of water available for volunteer.

To start today, I need a volunteer. *Choose a volunteer.*

I have two cookies here for you to sample. *Show class the two cookies.*

? **Which cookie looks better?** *Class should choose the nicely decorated cookie.*

Go ahead and take a bite. *Have volunteer take a bite of nicely decorated (but salty!) cookie.*

? **How did it taste? Good or bad? Sweet or salty?** *Allow volunteer to describe the taste.*

Now, take a bite of this cookie. *Have volunteer sample the poorly decorated (but tasty!) cookie.*

? **How did this one taste? Better than the other one?** *Allow answer.*

Refer to the cookie samples. One cookie looked really nice on the outside; its frosting and decorations were nice. But it didn't taste good! It was too salty. But the other cookie that wasn't decorated well tasted the way a cookie should—sweet! Let volunteer finish the good cookie and return to seat.

? **What do you think I wanted you to learn from the two cookies? How do we usually judge whether something is good or bad? What do we look at?** *Allow discussion. How it looks on the outside.*

We judge things all the time by outward appearance. We look at food, toys, books, and other items and decide if they are tasty or gross, good or

bad, pretty or ugly, valuable or cheap. Sometimes our judgment is correct, but sometimes what we think about something by looking at it can be wrong.

You know, we also do this with people. We may see people who look different from us and think they are strange. We may not want to be near a person who looks poor or dirty. We may be nervous around someone who has a physical disability like blindness or not being able to walk. Then, we may do the opposite and want to be near people we think are smart, athletic, good-looking, or important.

In our lesson today, we'll see that Samuel did the same thing! He looked at the outward appearance of a man and thought he would be a good king. But God had to remind him that he looks at what a person is like on the inside—the heart.

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Let's review where we are in our timeline. Samuel was God's prophet, a priest, and a judge. But the Israelites didn't want to be ruled by judges or by God. They asked Samuel for a human king. Even after Samuel warned them, the people still insisted; they wanted to be like other nations with a king.

- ? What was the name of the first king God chose? *Saul.*

Refer to Lesson 75 Theme Poster. Yes, God chose Saul to be Israel's first king. But Saul's heart was not right with the Lord, and he failed to trust and obey God. He offered a sacrifice without waiting for Samuel. Then when he was told to completely destroy the Amalekites, Saul let the king and the best animals live.

 Slide #3

- ? Who remembers one of the consequences Saul had because of his disobedience? *Allow answers. He lost the kingdom, his friendship with Samuel, and the Spirit of God. A harmful spirit was sent to trouble him.*

God told Saul that his kingdom would be taken away. But who would take Saul's place? It makes sense that God would choose a man with an obedient, faithful heart since Saul failed in these areas. And that is what God did—he chose someone who wanted to do his will. Today, we'll find out who the Lord chose.

- ? Who thinks they know whom God chose to be the next king? *Allow discussion.*
Let's find out who's right.

Samuel Anoints David

Samuel was sad that King Saul was no longer following and trusting God. But the Lord told Samuel to quit feeling sorry about Saul and go see Jesse, a man who lived in Bethlehem. God had chosen one of Jesse's sons to be the next king.

 Slide #4

Refer to Lesson 73 Theme Poster. Remember Ruth from several lessons ago? She was from Moab, but she left her country and family to return to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, Naomi.

? Who did Ruth end up marrying? *Boaz.*

Right! Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed, and Obed's son was Jesse. So, Jesse was Ruth and Boaz's grandson! And that's who Samuel was going to see.

When Samuel arrived in Bethlehem, he invited Jesse and his sons to join him for a sacrifice. When Jesse and his sons got there, Samuel wondered which one of these fine-looking young men would be the next king.

1 Samuel 16:6–10

 Slides #5–6

? Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Turn to 1 Samuel 16. Who will help us read verses 6–10? *Assign readers.*

Let's answer some questions to better understand what God is saying!

? Look at verse 6. Who did Samuel think would be the next king at first? *Eliab.*

? Was Eliab the one God had chosen? What did God say in verse 7? *No. "I have rejected him."*

? What was Samuel looking at when he thought Eliab would be the next king? *His outward appearance.*

? That's right! What does God look at? *The heart.*

God sees differently than man sees, doesn't he? Samuel saw that Eliab was a tall, strong young man, so he immediately thought that Eliab was the best choice for a king. But God looked deeper than the outward appearance of Eliab. God looked into his heart to see if he loved the Lord and wanted to follow him. But God rejected Eliab.

? How many sons passed before Samuel in verse 10? *Seven.*

? Right. Seven sons came one by one before Samuel. But what did God say about each one? *No. None of them were chosen.*

Hmm. Samuel knew he was in the right place, but so far, he hadn't gotten the okay from God to anoint any of them as the new king.

1 Samuel 16:11–13

 Slides #7–8

? So now what? Let's keep reading. Who will read verses 11–13 for us? *Assign readers.*

? What did Samuel ask Jesse? *Are all your sons here?*

? Which of Jesse's sons had not come before Samuel? *The youngest son.*

? What was the youngest son doing? *Keeping the sheep.*

? How was he described in 1 Samuel 16:12? What did he look like? *Ruddy, beautiful eyes, and handsome.*

? Does anyone have a guess what "ruddy" means here? *Allow answers.*

Ruddy means healthy-looking or rosy, kind of like when your cheeks are rosy after you've been outside on a chilly day.

- ? Was this son chosen to be the next king? *Yes!*
- ? What was this young man's name? Look in verse 13. *David.*

David was the one God had chosen to be the next king. He was the youngest—the one who was out caring for the sheep.

- ? What did the Lord tell Samuel when David was brought before him? The answer is at the end of verse 12. *Arise, anoint him, for this is he!*

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. Samuel poured oil on David's head to anoint him as the next king. His family was probably surprised that God's prophet chose David. Remember that the oldest son in the family was usually chosen to lead back then, but here God chose the youngest son that was out with the sheep to lead the entire nation of Israel!

- ? What happened to David after Samuel anointed him in verse 13? *The Spirit of the Lord rushed upon him.*

God sent his Spirit upon David, which would lead and guide him. So, we have learned that David was a shepherd, the youngest son, and handsome. But these outward things were not why God chose him.

1 Samuel 13:14

Why would God choose David? Turn back to 1 Samuel 13:14. This was when Samuel told Saul his kingdom would be taken away from him. It tells us what kind of person the Lord wanted to be king instead of Saul. Listen carefully. *Read the verse.*

- ? Did you hear that? The Lord sought a man after his own what? *Heart.*

The word "heart" here is talking about the part of a person that controls how he feels, what he thinks, what he wants, and the choices he makes. The man God would choose as the next king would want the same things that God does. And God knew that man was David. He had a heart that would seek after what God wanted. And for his entire life, he would try to follow the will of the Lord.

Let's review what we've covered so far in the Class Notes. Each sentence has two choices. Decide which one is the correct answer and circle it.

- ? Who will read and answer #1? *Choose a reader. Jesse. Have students complete #1.*
- ? And #2, who did Samuel think would be chosen at first? *Choose a reader. Eliab. Complete #2.*
- ? Who did God choose? That's #3. *Choose a reader. Youngest. Complete #3.*
- ? How is David described in #4? *Choose a reader. Shepherd. Complete #4.*
- ? Why did God choose David? Who will read #5? *Choose a reader. Heart. Complete #5.*

 Slide #9

 Slide #10

- Pass out the Class Notes now to complete them throughout the lesson, or wait and complete them at the end to review.

 Slides #11–12

David Comes into Saul's Service

Even though David had been anointed to be the next king, God wanted Saul to be king for a while longer. You know how we read that the Spirit of the Lord had come upon David? Well, a different spirit came upon Saul. We talked about it in the last lesson as a consequence of Saul's disobedience.

1 Samuel 16:14–19

 Slides #13–15

- ? Who will read 1 Samuel 16:14–19 for us? *Assign readers.*
- ? What was wrong with King Saul? *1 Samuel 16:14. The Spirit of the Lord had left him, and a harmful spirit from the Lord tormented him.*

King Saul was very troubled by this harmful spirit, and his servants noticed it. They wanted to help him. They had an idea about what might make the king feel better.

- ? What was their idea? *1 Samuel 16:16. Find someone who could play the lyre when the king was troubled. This would make the king well.*
- ? What is a lyre? Anybody know? *Allow guesses.*

 Slide #16

Show Illustration. A lyre is a stringed instrument like a small harp.

- ? Who did the servants suggest come and play the harp to make the king feel better? *Jesse's son, David.*
- ? Interesting! 1 Samuel 16:18 tells us more about David. What do we learn about him here? *Skillful in playing music; man of valor; man of war; prudent in speech; man of good presence; the Lord is with him.*

 Slide #17

Let's define a couple of those words. A "man of valor" means someone who is brave or courageous. And "prudent" means wise or sensible.

David was still a young man (probably about 15 years old), but some people already knew about his musical ability, bravery, and wise speech.

God is truly amazing! He is sovereign, in control of all things. Saul probably knew nothing about David before this time. And now, after being anointed as the next king to take over after Saul, David was called to Saul's royal home. David's music helped Saul, and Saul loved David.

Not only that, but Saul eventually made David his armor-bearer—which meant that David spent even more time around King Saul. See how God was working every detail of history into place so that his plan would be accomplished?

 Slides #18–19

- ? Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #6 about David? *Choose a reader. Music. Have students complete #6.*
- ? And #7? Why did Saul bring David into his service? *Choose a reader. Lyre. Have students complete #7.*

- ? See the sentence at the bottom? What should you draw in the box to complete the sentence? *Choose a reader. Heart. Have students draw a heart in the box.*

Application

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Samuel came to Bethlehem and anointed David to be the next king of Israel.

 Slide #20

- ? Why did God choose him over his seven brothers? *Allow discussion.*

David was the youngest brother who watched over the sheep. He was the least likely of his brothers to be chosen by God—according to what the world would say. And yet, because his heart trusted God, David was chosen by God to become the next king after Saul.

We often think that God will only use the smartest, the bravest, and the strongest people. But that's not so. The Lord doesn't look at how tall or short we are, whether we have dark hair or light hair, or how beautiful or handsome we may think we are. Those are all outward appearances.

We aren't called by God because we are smart or strong or rich or beautiful. We are called if, like David, our hearts are soft and obedient to God. The Bible says that God chooses the smallest and the lowest to do his work so that he will get the glory.

Do you want to be used by God? Be humble. Don't try to be the greatest just to show off. But do your best for God. Give God the glory for the talents and abilities he's given you! Then wait for God to show you what he wants you to do with them. He's always looking for obedient hearts to use.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

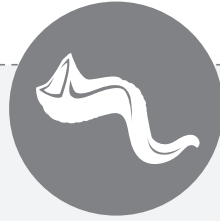
- Thank God for not looking at us on the outside like people do but looking at our hearts.
- Ask God to help us have faithful, obedient hearts like David.

- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.



Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.



David Defeats Goliath

God gave David victory over the giant, Goliath, because David trusted in him.

Lesson Focus

Goliath, the Philistine champion, challenged Saul's entire army, causing great fear. But David wasn't afraid. His faith in Israel's mighty God led him to fight Goliath. God's name was glorified when David defeated the giant with just one stone.

Key Passages

1 Samuel 17 (selected verses)

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Contrast the faith of David with the Israelite soldiers.
- Identify the source of David's confidence in battle.

Memory Verse

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Card Keep
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Oh No

Memory Verse

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Down the Line
- Egg Hunt
- Look Behind You
- Now You See It
- Popcorn
- Review Card Relay
- Stack Em Up
- Your Turn

Play the Memory Verse Song to help your students learn the verse.

Find extra verses to practice in the Additional Memory Verses list.

Studying God's Word

Print the following:

- One Battle Report (Class Notes) for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.
- One Illustration
- One Battle Scene Introduction

Bring materials for the option you chose from the Battle Scene Introduction.

Lesson Review

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Choose a Lesson Review Game and gather necessary items.

- Bible Baseball
- Box Toss
- Draw Dice
- Four in a Row
- Goofy Golf
- Pick a Point
- Racetrack
- Toss for It

Go to Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for the account of David and Goliath. Help me to look to you instead of the “giant” circumstances in my life. Please help me prepare and teach this lesson in a way that will really impact my students. Give them a desire to have a relationship with you like David had. Draw them to you so they will trust you as their Savior and Lord.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 77*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

Studying God's Word
Group Prayer

Small Group

Come On In
Memory Verse
Optional Activity
Lesson Review
Take Home Sheet

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

David had great faith in God, and God used him in a mighty way to accomplish his perfect plans. David had been chosen by God to take the throne of Israel after Saul had failed to lead Israel in a God-honoring way (1 Samuel 15:10–26). Samuel had anointed David in the presence of his father, Jesse, and his older brothers, and David was now the king in waiting (1 Samuel 16:11–13).

From the time of David's anointing, the Spirit of the Lord was with him, but the Spirit of the Lord had departed from Saul (1 Samuel 16:13–14). God had rejected Saul and set his favor on David. In his wisdom, God had sent a harmful spirit to harass Saul, and David was brought into Saul's service to play soothing music for him. When David played his lyre, the evil spirit left Saul, and he was refreshed. David became a part of Saul's household and was appointed as his armor-bearer (1 Samuel 16:21–23).

Although Saul loved David greatly at the beginning (1 Samuel 16:21), he soon became envious and despised the talented, courageous, godly young man. Saul's jealousy toward David began in the account we are studying today—the account of David's defeat of Goliath, the Philistine from Gath (1 Samuel 17:23).

How is it that the shepherd David, the youngest of the sons of Jesse, would be the one used by God

Historical/Apologetics Background

Even though David was the youngest son of Jesse, he was not small and frail by any means. The common depictions of David and Goliath in Sunday school materials, coloring books, animated movies, and even paintings are of a tiny young boy facing a giant man. While this makes for a good “story,” it is not what the Bible presents. In 1 Samuel 16:18 one of Saul's servants gives a description of David some time before his encounter with Goliath:

One of the young men answered, “Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, who is skillful in playing, a man of valor, a man of war, prudent in speech, and a man of good presence, and the LORD is with him.”

to display trust, courage, and faith? The entire army of Israel was not able to exhibit this degree of valor against its enemy (1 Samuel 17:24). The Israelite soldiers had no courage because their confidence was not in the omnipotent God of Israel. Yet David, who had no armor or sword or status as a soldier, volunteered to go and fight the one who would dare to defy the army of the living God (1 Samuel 17:36).

And on he went—armed with the tools of a shepherd and trust in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel (1 Samuel 17:40, 17:45). David's faith was in his God, not in sword and spear. His purpose was not glory and honor for himself but a desire to display that God's power alone can save (1 Samuel 17:47). God rewarded David's faith and gave him the victory over Goliath with one perfectly aimed stone to the giant's forehead. With their champion dead, the Philistines fled, and the Israelites pursued them (1 Samuel 17:49–52).

Throughout history, we see God using imperfect people to accomplish his plans. While the entire Israelite army feared one Philistine giant, a God-fearing young man came forward to kill the enemy. From the family line of this young man, David, would come the Messiah (Jesus Christ) to provide forgiveness, mercy, and grace to sinners—and the promise of eternal life.

This description portrays David as a valiant young man who was quite capable of fighting.

Another point often raised is the description of David trying to wear Saul's armor. We know that Saul was a head taller than the average Israelite (1 Samuel 9:2). Many people assume that David refused to wear Saul's armor into battle because it was much too big for him (1 Samuel 17:38–39). Looking carefully at the text, however, David said that he had not “tested” the armor—he was not comfortable fighting in gear he had not trained in. Also, Saul would not suggest David wear his armor if it was much too big for him. To do so would put David at a disadvantage. We need to purge the little-boy image and have a biblical perspective of the young man,

David, who was probably in his late teens when he faced Goliath.

Although David was no undersized boy, he might have appeared so next to Goliath. This warrior from Gath was probably a descendant of the giants who caused the 10 spies to be fearful of entering the promised land. Like those spies, the warriors of Israel did not trust God to fight for them, and they stood in fear of a mere man. The details of Goliath are indeed impressive—he stood 9 feet 9 inches tall, his coat of mail weighed 125 pounds, and his spearhead weighed 15 pounds. There was not a man among the Israelites in his own strength who could defeat Goliath.

We should note that there is some debate about Goliath's height due to the textual variants in ancient manuscripts. Most English translations follow the Masoretic Text in listing his height at "six cubits and a span" (approximately 9 feet 9 inches). However, the NET Bible puts Goliath at "close to seven feet tall." The reason for the discrepancy is that the Masoretic

Text differs from some ancient texts, including the Septuagint and an ancient manuscript found among the Dead Sea Scrolls, which list Goliath's height as "four cubits and a span" (approximately 6 feet 9 inches). More than nine feet definitely qualifies as a giant, but even a man approximately 6 feet, 9 inches in David's time, when the average height was around approximately 5 feet 4 inches, might have been considered a giant.

Over the years, many falsified photos have circulated showing giant skeletons being excavated around the world. Unfortunately, some well-meaning Christians have used these to "prove" that someone as tall as Goliath could have lived in the Middle East. We must remember that we can trust God's Word when it refers to giants, and we should not start with outside sources to demonstrate the Bible's trustworthiness. If these archaeological finds (were they even real) could prove the Bible to be true, then we'd no longer be looking to the Bible as the authority. We must always look to Scripture as our ultimate authority.

 Slide #1

- After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

 Slide #2

- Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

- Print and gather materials from the Battle Scene Introduction to start the lesson.

- Pass out the Battle Reports (Class Notes).

 **Come On In**

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

 **Memory Verse**

We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

 **Studying God's Word**

Introduction

Prepare the materials and follow the instructions and discussion for Option 1 or 2 in the Battle Scene Introduction. After students have collected the evidence cards and visited the scene or viewed the illustration, continue with the questions below.

- ? What clues did you learn from the battle scene?** *Allow discussion. Answers should include an outline of a large body missing the head (someone died), a stone, and footprints leading away from the scene (someone lived).*
- ? What do you think happened?** *Two people fought. One was killed and one left the scene.*
- ? Who knows what account from the Bible our scene represents? What very tall person fell because of a stone?** *Allow guesses. David fighting Goliath.*

Great job! Now, let's get more details from the evidence cards you collected. Raise your hand if you have a card, and we'll get in groups for each one. Bring your Bible with you to your group. Divide students into pairs/groups to work on the evidence cards.

Each card has evidence that was found at the battle scene and Bible verses that tell about that evidence. But the verses have some words that have been crossed out. In your groups, your next task as detectives is to look up the verses and write the missing words above the crossed-out sections. Then we'll put all these clues together to figure out what happened. Allow time for groups to look up verses and complete their cards.

Background Evidence

Okay! Let's see what evidence you uncovered to help us understand what happened at the battle scene. We'll fill in our Battle Reports as we go. We

looked up the evidence in the most trustworthy source—the Bible, so we know it's true! Keep your Bibles open to 1 Samuel 17.

1 Samuel 17:3

- ? Will someone from the group with card #1 read your evidence? *Choose a reader from that group.*

 Slides #3–5

Your evidence was about the area around the battle scene. There were two army camps found on mountains across from each other with a valley in between.

- ? What did you find out in your verse about the two groups who were fighting? Who were they? *Philistines and Israel.*

We've heard of the Philistines before. They were a mean, warlike people. And once again, they had gathered their armies together to fight the Israelites, who were led by King Saul.

- ? Let's go to our Battle Reports. How would you fill in the blank for #1? Who will read that? *Choose a reader. Valley. Have students complete #1.*

1 Samuel 17:4, 17:24

- ? Who will read the evidence and the verses from card #2? *Choose a reader from that group.*

 Slides #6–7

- ? Uh-oh! The Israelites were afraid of someone. Who was it? *Goliath of Gath.*

- ? How tall does it say he was? *Six cubits and a span.*

This guy was a giant! He was nearly 10 feet tall!

- ? Does this description match anything you saw at our scene? *The outline on the floor.*

Yes! The outline you saw was about 9 feet, and that was without the head!

- ? What did the Israelites think of Goliath? *They were afraid and fled.*

As detectives, we want to not only examine evidence but also answer the question “why?” Why were the soldiers so afraid of Goliath? The Bible tells us why.

Refer to Goliath and his armor on the Lesson Theme Poster. Besides being a man of giant height, he had a huge amount of armor and weapons. Goliath had a helmet, a coat of mail, and even armor on his legs. He had a javelin (throwing spear) on his back, another spear, a sword, and a shield. His coat of mail weighed 125 pounds, and the head of his spear weighed 15 pounds. He had to be strong to handle armor and weapons that heavy. No wonder he was the champion of the Philistine army!

 Slide #8

As champion, Goliath challenged the Israelites, daring them to send someone to fight him. He wanted a one-on-one fight between himself and a brave Israelite. The army of the loser would be the servants of the army of the winner. He was confident he would win, no matter who came from the Israelites' camp.

Think about it: by daring the Israelites this way, Goliath was also mocking and insulting the God of Israel. Goliath wanted to see if the Israelites really believed that their God was more powerful than he and the Philistines were. But the Israelites were all too scared of Goliath to fight him!

 Slide #9

- ? So how would you fill in the blank for #2 in the Battle Report? *Goliath.*
Have students complete #2.

1 Samuel 17:17–18

 Slides #10–11

- ? So, we know about the Philistine giant who scared the Israelites. Let's find out who else was at the scene. Who will read the evidence on card #3? *Choose a reader.*

Bread crumbs and cheese leftovers? What do they have to do with this battle scene? Tell us what you found out from your verses. Read them for us. *Choose a reader.*

- ? Who did Jesse send to the army camp? *David.*
- ? What did he bring for his brothers? *Grain, loaves of bread, and cheese.*

 Slide #12

Show Lesson 76 Theme Poster. Remember, we learned that Jesse had eight sons, and it was David, the youngest son, that Samuel anointed as the next king.

But David wasn't king yet. He was still going back and forth from his home, where he cared for the sheep, and Saul's royal court, where he played his lyre for Saul and served as his armor-bearer.

David's three oldest brothers were soldiers in Saul's army, and that's who Jesse sent him to see.

 Slide #13

- ? What is the answer for #3 in the Battle Report? *Food.* *Have students complete #3.*

We know that David came to the battleground with supplies. While he was there, Goliath came into the valley and shouted his challenge to the Israelites, which he had been doing every day for 40 days!

David understood that Goliath's challenge to Israel was actually mocking God. But his people were too scared to do anything about it! So, it wasn't long before David stood before King Saul.

1 Samuel 17:32–33

 Slide #14

- ? Who will read the evidence from card #4? *Choose a reader.*
- ? Who do you suppose that was? *David.*

 Slides #15–16

- ? What did Saul say when David volunteered to fight Goliath? Someone read the verses. *Choose a reader.* *He said David couldn't go because he was a youth and Goliath had been fighting for longer than him.*

These verses call David a youth, but that doesn't mean he was a little boy. You may have seen pictures of David as a small boy facing Goliath, but that's not accurate. Earlier in chapter 16, David was described as a man of valor and a man of war (1 Samuel 16:18). He was not a child but a young man in his late teens. Still, compared to Goliath, he would've seemed small.

- ? Who will read #4 in the Battle Report about David? *Choose a reader. Young man. Have students complete #4.*

To convince Saul to let him fight, David told Saul of times as a shepherd when he protected his sheep from dangerous animals like lions and bears, and he believed God would help him strike down this giant, too. Saul agreed to let David fight, and he even said David could wear his armor for protection. After trying it on though, David decided he shouldn't wear something into battle that he wasn't used to.

Battle Evidence

Let's see if that matches the evidence from our scene.

1 Samuel 17:40

- ? Who will read the evidence and verse from card #5? *Choose readers.*
- ? What weapons did David choose to take to fight Goliath instead of Saul's armor? *Staff, five smooth stones, and his sling.*
- ? This evidence explains how the footprints at a nearby brook (stream) match the ones at our scene. Whose footprints were at both places? *David's.*
- Right! David went to the stream to collect stones to use in his sling.
- ? How will you answer #5 in the Battle Report? What weapons did David take? *Sling. Have students complete #5.*

 Slides #17–19

Goliath shouted and mocked David when he saw him coming with his shepherd's weapons. Compared to Goliath and his strong, shiny armor and heavy weapons, David looked like he didn't have a chance!

1 Samuel 17:49

- ? Let's find out more. Who will read the evidence from card #6? *Choose a reader.*
- That matches up with the fact that David collected stones for his sling. Someone read the verse now. *Choose a reader.*
- ? How many stones did it take for David to knock down Goliath? *Just one.*
- Show Illustration.* Slings back in Bible times were important weapons, not like the toy slingshots we have today. A good slinger could hurl a stone as far as a good archer with a bow and arrow. Surprisingly, some archaeologists believe that stones were slung with an underhand motion (like a softball pitch windup) rather than overhead. Slinging underhanded was more accurate, and stones could leave the sling at speeds of over 60 miles per hour! That's fast—like driving on a freeway.
- ? Where did David's stone hit the giant? *In the forehead.*

 Slides #20–21

 Slides #22–23

A perfect shot! David had God guiding his aim.

- ? How does the verse match the evidence we saw at our scene? *We found one stone, and the outline of the body matches Goliath falling flat.*
- ? Who will read #6 in the Battle Report? *Choose a reader. Stone. Have students complete #6.*

1 Samuel 17:51

 Slides #24–26

- ? So, we solved the evidence of the stone from our scene. But what about the missing head? Who will read card #7? *Choose readers.*
- ? What happened to Goliath’s head? *David cut it off with Goliath’s own sword!*
- ? What did the Philistine army do when they saw David kill their champion? *They fled.*
- ? Let’s enter this evidence into the Battle Report. Who will read #7? *Choose a reader. Head. Have students complete #7.*

After watching David’s courageous victory over Goliath, the Israelites shouted and chased the Philistines, wounding many who were trying to escape back to their own cities.

Great work, everyone! We have figured out who was fighting in the battle, David and Goliath; who won, David; what weapons he used, sling and a stone; and what happened to Goliath’s head, David removed it. But let’s answer one final, important question. What made David so brave? Why could he face Goliath when all the other Israelites were so afraid?

1 Samuel 17:45–47

 Slides #27–29

Listen to what David said to Goliath before the fight. *Read the verses dramatically.*

- ? Goliath came at David with a sword and spear, but David came with someone more powerful than this giant on his side! Who was it? *1 Samuel 17:45. The Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel.*
- ? David promised to take something from Goliath. What was it? *1 Samuel 17:46. His head!*

And we saw from the evidence that David kept his word! David was confident that he would win because the battle was the Lord’s. He trusted that God would give Goliath into his hand.

 Slides #30–32

- ? How will you complete #8 in the Battle Report? *Trusted. Have students complete #8.*

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. God sovereignly arranged for David to be sent to the battle to hear Goliath’s challenge. David didn’t like to hear the Philistine champion mocking the Lord, so he chose to fight. He knew that it wasn’t up to him to win; God would give the victory. And God showed that he was stronger than the enemy by using David to defeat the giant, Goliath.

- ? Let's complete #9 on our Battle Report. What did we learn about God from the account in 1 Samuel 17? *Powerful. Have students complete #9.*
- ? Refer to the Attributes of God Poster. Which attribute from our poster describes God as all-powerful? *Omnipotent. Have a student read the definition.*

Application

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. We saw today that God used David in a big way! David was not fighting to show off or to get rewards. He was fighting to uphold the power and glory of God! And because of this, God gave David great courage. This is an important lesson for us.

We can only do what God asks us if we put our faith in God and know that he alone has the power to help us. We **MUST** trust him, remembering that he has helped his people in the past and will help us, too. God is the same today as he was back in David's time.

- ? We won't face actual human "giants" in our lives, but what are some problems or fears that may seem "giant" to us today? Something we can't do on our own? *Allow discussion or share a personal example of a trial you couldn't handle in your own strength and wisdom.*

The more we know about God through prayer and reading his Word, the more we will be able to trust him to get us through any situation with strength and courage.

 Slide #33

Group Prayer Time

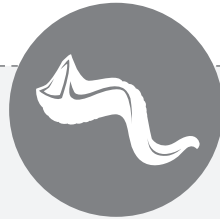
Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

- Praise God because he is able to defeat every "giant" problem that would come against us.
- Ask God to help us trust him like David did, believing he will help us to do his will.

► Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.

Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.



Jonathan Warns David

Jonathan warned his friend David that Saul wanted to kill him.

Lesson Focus

David and Jonathan (King Saul's son) became close friends. God gave David success in everything he did, which made Saul jealous. Saul tried to kill David several times, but God protected him, and Jonathan warned him when he needed to flee.

Key Passages

1 Samuel 18:1–5, 18:10–12, 19:1–3, 20:31–33, 20:35–38

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Describe David and Jonathan's friendship.
- Describe Saul's growing jealousy of David.

Memory Verse

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Card Keep
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Oh No

Memory Verse

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Down the Line
- Egg Hunt
- Look Behind You
- Now You See It
- Popcorn
- Review Card Relay
- Stack Em Up
- Your Turn

Play the Memory Verse Song to help your students learn the verse.

Find extra verses to practice in the Additional Memory Verses list.

Studying God's Word

Print the following:

- One Class Notes for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.
- One Friend Bingo card for each student.

Lesson Review

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Choose a Lesson Review Game and gather necessary items.

- Bible Baseball
- Box Toss
- Draw Dice
- Four in a Row
- Goofy Golf
- Pick a Point
- Racetrack
- Toss for It

Go to Prayer

Dear God, thank you for Christian friends. Thank you for the example of David and Jonathan's friendship, which demonstrated selfless love and loyalty. Help me teach this lesson so my students will see your sovereignty at work to protect David from Saul's growing jealousy and hatred. May my students grow in their friendships and realize that though friends may fail, you will always be there for them.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 78*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

- Studying God's Word
- Real World Skit
- Group Prayer

Small Group

- Come On In
- Memory Verse
- Optional Activity
- Lesson Review
- Take Home Sheet

Optional Supplements

Hands-On Activities

Do these activities when you think best—before, during, or after the lesson.

- Real World Skit
You and two assistants will read a skit about making new friends. Bring props to add interest!
- Friends and More Friends
Students will have to work together to complete the required actions with arms linked together.
- Coloring Sheet
Students will color as you review today's lesson with them.
- Justin & Jessie Story—*Lost Kitties & Real Friends*
Justin helps his friend Matt understand what a real friend is really like.

PowerPoint

You may want to use the PowerPoint presentation provided to enhance your teaching.

Notes

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

The account in 1 Samuel 18 picks up right after David's victory over the Philistine champion, Goliath. The Israelites returned from chasing the Philistines, and King Saul inquired about David's background, likely because he had promised his daughter in marriage to the victor and wanted to know his lineage. David would enter Saul's service and no longer return home. He would also meet Jonathan and start a long-lasting friendship based on mutual love and trust in the Lord. Their covenant friendship demonstrated true, selfless love. Jonathan gave David his robe, armor, and weapons, which were symbols of his princely status. It is likely that Jonathan was recognizing David would be the next king in his place.

While David and Jonathan's friendship grew, so did Saul's jealousy of David. In whatever David did, God gave him success, and the people loved him. David was made commander of a thousand and married Saul's younger daughter, Michal. But Saul's jealousy turned to violence when David was playing the lyre in his presence and Saul tried to kill him with a spear (1 Samuel 18:10–11). Warning David to hide, Jonathan dared to speak to his father and convince him to spare David's life. Saul listened to his plea and promised he would not kill David (1 Samuel 19:1–7). However, this promise didn't last long. After another spear-throwing attempt on David's life, Saul commanded his messengers to watch David's house to kill him in the morning (1 Samuel 19:9–11). But David's wife Michal helped him escape their house and stalled for time by claiming David was sick. Her deception using a teraphim in bed to deceive the messengers into thinking it was David is reminiscent of Rachel's theft of her father's teraphim and deception to cover it up (1 Samuel 19:12–17; Genesis 31:19, 31:34–35). Both women deceived their fathers out of loyalty to their husbands.

David fled to Samuel at Ramah, and they went together to Naioth, where a company of prophets, led by Samuel, were prophesying. The messengers Saul sent to capture David were unable to fulfill their mission because the Spirit of God came upon them

and they prophesied (1 Samuel 19:18–21). After his third group of messengers failed to reach David, Saul went himself. But he, too, was overcome by the Spirit of God and prophesied, which enabled David to escape.

David met up with Jonathan and asked why Saul continued to seek his life, but Jonathan thought his father would tell him if that were so. David realized that Saul was keeping his plans from Jonathan because of their friendship. David came up with a plan to ascertain if Saul was still determined to kill him. Jonathan would go to the new moon meal while David remained hidden. When Saul asked where David was, Jonathan would reply that David had gone to Bethlehem to attend a sacrifice with his family. If Saul was fine with David's absence, they would know David's life was safe; but if Saul was angry, they would know Saul still wanted him dead (1 Samuel 20:5–8). Jonathan would then report Saul's response to David. Before Jonathan returned to the city, he asked David to show kindness to his descendants when God made him king and cut off his enemies. David promised, and the friends parted.

At the new moon celebration, Saul did not ask about David's absence until the second night. When Jonathan told him David had gone to Bethlehem, Saul was furious. He insulted Jonathan and told him that he would never have the kingdom as long as David lived. Then he threw a spear at Jonathan and missed. After this, Jonathan knew that his father was determined to kill his friend David (1 Samuel 20:27–33).

Jonathan then had to warn his friend without drawing attention. He took his bow and arrows and a boy to the field in the morning to look like he was going to practice. As he shot the arrows and called to the boy that the arrows were beyond him, he was actually communicating with David, warning him to flee. Jonathan sent the unsuspecting boy back to the city, and then David came out from hiding. The friends wept, renewed the promise of their friendship, and parted ways (1 Samuel 20:41–42). Like Michal, Jonathan chose to be loyal to David over his father, Saul, who was sinning by seeking to kill an innocent man out of jealousy.

Historical/Apologetics Background

In today's culture, marriage and gender are being redefined by those who reject God's Word. Homosexual and lesbian relationships are granted equal status as heterosexual ones, and the push for acceptance of alternative lifestyles has inundated television, movies, school textbooks, and the church. In an attempt to justify homosexual behavior, some even claim that the Bible condones it, and one of the passages twisted for this purpose is the friendship of David and Jonathan (1 Samuel 18:1–4). However, the love described between David and Jonathan is a friendship, not a sexual kind of love. David clearly loved Bathsheba and his wives, but his covenant friendship with Jonathan was rooted in both men's love and service for the Lord.

By looking at the whole of Scripture, we see that homosexual behavior goes completely against God's design for human relationships. The basis for marriage is found in Genesis 1–2 when God created male and female and commanded them to be fruitful and multiply. This command can only be fulfilled through heterosexual marriage, and the male and female roles in the family complement each other biologically, spiritually, socially, and emotionally. Jesus himself referred to Genesis when questioned about marriage (Matthew 19:1–12; Mark 10:1–12).

Old Testament commands clearly state that homosexual behavior is an abomination (Leviticus 18:22, 20:13), and God's judgment on Sodom and

Gomorrah, as well as Israel's attack on the tribe of Benjamin, were initiated by the great wickedness, including sodomy, in those places (see Genesis 19 and Judges 19–20). In the New Testament, homosexual behavior and other sexual sins are clearly condemned as punishment for rejecting God and are a sign of unbelievers (Romans 1:24–28; 1 Corinthians 6:9–11).

Our first parents, Adam and Eve, lived in a perfect world where there was no sin. But now, after the fall, sinful desires and behaviors characterize mankind. Because of our fallen nature, all people are born as slaves to sin and have desires contrary to God's law (Romans 6:15–21; Galatians 5:16–21). Some people report that they experience same-sex attraction, but this does not make it normal or moral. People also experience other sinful desires (e.g., greed, improper heterosexual desires, covetousness, envy, etc.). All of our desires and behaviors must be evaluated by God's Word.

Christians who condone a homosexual lifestyle (or any sinful lifestyle) are rejecting the truth given in Scripture. It is not hateful to share the truth in love with them. Those trapped in the lie that they can't control their sexual desires can experience God's forgiveness, grace, and power to live in victory over their sin. Let us be faithful and courageous to share this message in love.

 Slide #1

 **Come On In**

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

 **Memory Verse**

We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.

 Slide #2

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

 **Studying God's Word**

Introduction

In today's lesson, we'll be talking about a great friendship. The Bible has a lot to say about friendship and choosing friends, because our friends have a big influence on us for either good or bad. We're going to play a game of Friend Bingo to learn more about our friends in this class!

Pass out the Friend Bingo cards and pencils/pens to the students. When I say "Go!" your job is to move around the room and get different classmates to sign in the boxes that apply to them. They must write their full first name (no initials!), and no student may sign each card more than _____ time(s) (specify the number of times they may sign each card based on your class size, e.g., once or twice for larger classes, more for smaller classes). When your whole card is filled, yell BINGO! Everyone ready? Go! Allow students to race around, completing the Bingo cards. You may choose to stop the game after the first student reaches BINGO or play for a set time.

- ? Great job, everyone! What was the easiest box to fill? *Allow answers.*
- ? What was the hardest box to fill? *Allow answers.*
- ? How many of you learned something you didn't know about someone in our class? *Show of hands. Allow some students to share what they learned.*

Getting to know people and asking questions about them is a great way to start a friendship. It may surprise you how many things you have in common! Before we find out about the friendship in today's lesson, let's review our last lesson.

David had been going back and forth between keeping the sheep for his father and serving King Saul by playing the lyre and being his armor-bearer.

Refer to Lesson 77 Theme Poster. When war broke out between the Israelites and the Philistines, David took supplies to his three oldest brothers

 Slide #3

who served in Saul's army. When he came to their camp, David heard the Philistine champion, Goliath, challenge the Israelite army to send someone to fight him.

The Israelites were afraid of Goliath, but David was upset that Goliath was mocking God, so he volunteered to fight. David faced the giant with just his shepherd's weapons: a staff, his sling, and five stones.

- ? Where did David get the courage to face Goliath? *From God.*

David trusted that the battle was the Lord's, and God would give him victory. All it took was one stone from David's sling. It sank into Goliath's forehead, and the giant was defeated. Then the Israelites chased the Philistine army back to their cities.

Jonathan and David's Friendship

Turn to 1 Samuel 18 in your Bibles while I tell you what happened at the end of chapter 17. After David defeated Goliath he was brought before King Saul. Saul had promised a great reward to whoever defeated Goliath. He would give him wealth and his daughter in marriage.

1 Samuel 18:1-5

- ? Let's continue the account in 1 Samuel 18. Who will read verses 1-5?
Assign readers.

 Slides #4-5

We meet an important person in these verses. Jonathan was King Saul's son. He was a brave warrior, like David.

- ? What do you think it means when it says that Jonathan loved David as his own soul? *Allow answers.*

Jonathan's love for David was not the romantic kind of love. This love was based on being loyal, trustworthy, and devoted like a best friend; they could count on each other.

- ? How many of you have a best friend that you can trust and count on?
Show of hands.

David and Jonathan promised to be true friends before the Lord, which meant they took this promise very seriously.

- ? What did Jonathan give David in verse 4? *His robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt.*

These gifts were very valuable. Jonathan was a prince of Israel. By giving his royal robe and weapons to David, he was showing that he understood David would be the next king instead of him.

Wow! That's a great friend! Not many people would give up the power of being king to someone else. But Jonathan loved and trusted God, and it seems that he understood that David was chosen by God to be king.

- ▶ Pass out the Class Notes now to complete them throughout the lesson, or wait and complete them at the end to review.

 Slide #6

Remember that David had been traveling back and forth between Saul’s court and his father’s home in Bethlehem. Now, King Saul brought David into his court to stay and serve him full time.

- ? How did David do wherever Saul sent him? Look in verse 5. *He was successful.*

Let’s start on the Class Notes. Find the answers at the bottom of your sheet and write them in the blanks.

- ? Who will read #1? Who became best friends? *Choose a reader. Jonathan. Have students complete #1.*
- ? And #2, who was Jonathan? *Choose a reader. Prince. Complete #2.*
- ? What did Jonathan give to David in #3? *Choose a reader. Robe. Complete #3.*

Saul’s Jealousy

Things looked like they were going well for David. He was a hero for killing Goliath, he was best friends with Jonathan, and he was successful in all his work in the battles he fought for the king. The women of Israel even sang songs about David, the hero!

- ? How do you think Saul felt when he heard these songs being sung about David? *Allow guesses.*

King Saul became angry and jealous! Uh-oh! This means trouble.

1 Samuel 18:10–12

Let’s read 1 Samuel 18:10–12 together. *Assign readers.*

- ? What was wrong with King Saul that made him attack David? *A harmful spirit from God came upon him.*
- ? Normally, when David played the lyre, it would calm Saul whenever the harmful spirit troubled him. But on this day, Saul was too angry and jealous. What was Saul trying to do when he threw the spear at David? *Kill him! Pin him to the wall.*
- ? How many times did David dodge the spear and get away? *Twice.*

Saul went from thinking jealous thoughts to lashing out in anger against David. But God protected David. Soon Saul became afraid when he realized that God was helping David.

- ? Saul decided to make David the commander over a thousand soldiers. Why do you think Saul would give David this command? Did he want him to do well? *Allow discussion.*

Verse 13 makes it sound like Saul just wanted to get David out of his sight. And he may have been hoping that David wouldn’t succeed so he wouldn’t be a hero anymore or that he would get hurt or killed fighting

 Slides #7–8

the Philistines. But the Lord helped David to be even more successful, and the people loved him, which made Saul more jealous and fearful.

Saul later gave Michal, his younger daughter, to David in marriage. Life seemed to be pretty good for David: he was now the king's son-in-law, his friendship with Jonathan was strong, and he was winning battles against the Philistines and becoming famous in Israel.

1 Samuel 19:1–3

- ? Finally, Saul had enough of David's success, and he figured out another plan to harm David. Who will read 1 Samuel 19:1–3? *Assign readers.*
- ? Who did Saul command to kill David in verse 1? *Jonathan, his son, and all his servants.*
- ? What did Jonathan do when he heard his father's command? *Told David what Saul planned; warned David to be on his guard and hide until he could talk to his father.*

 Slides #9–10

Jonathan spoke to Saul and reminded him that David had done nothing wrong, but had done good deeds, and even killed Goliath. He also reminded Saul that he would be sinning if he killed David.

- ? Do you think it was hard for Jonathan to tell his father that he was wrong for wanting to kill David? *Allow discussion.*

Jonathan's father was the king, and he was known for his temper (throwing spears!). But Jonathan cared enough about David to talk to Saul. That was brave! Saul listened to Jonathan and allowed David to come back to his house.

- ? Let's do #4 in the Class Notes. What happened to Saul when he saw David's success? *Choose a reader. Jealous. Complete #4.*
- ? And #5? What did Saul do when David was playing the lyre to calm his harmful spirit? *Choose a reader. Spear. Complete #5.*
- ? Who will read #6? Who became David's wife? *Choose a reader. Married. Complete #6.*
- ? What did Jonathan say to Saul after he commanded him and his other servants to kill David? *Choose a reader. Sin. Complete #7.*

 Slides #11–12

Jonathan's Warning

After another victory against the Philistines, David was back at the king's home, playing the lyre when the harmful spirit came upon Saul. Suddenly, Saul threw his spear at David again! David dodged and ran, and the spear stuck into the wall. Then Saul sent messengers to get David so he could kill him. But David's wife helped him escape out a window. When the messengers came back empty-handed, King Saul was furious!

Poor David feared for his life! He kept running from Saul, and finally met up with his friend, Jonathan. He asked Jonathan why Saul wanted him dead. Jonathan didn't believe that his father still wanted to kill David. But David knew that Saul was keeping his plans a secret from Jonathan because of their friendship. So, they came up with a plan to find out for sure what Saul was up to.

Instead of coming to a special meal, David would hide out in a field. Jonathan would go to the meal. If Saul didn't mind that David was gone, they would know that he was safe. But if Saul became angry, they would know that he really did want to kill David.

This was a life-and-death situation. Both friends were worried about each other's safety. Before they parted ways, they made a special promise to protect each other and their families. Then Jonathan returned to the city and went to the meal.

- ? The first night that David missed the special dinner, Saul didn't say anything. Hmm. How many of you think David was safe now? *Show of hands.*

Well, on the second night at dinner, Saul asked Jonathan where David was. Jonathan said David had gone to visit his family. This time, Saul became angry and said rude, hateful things to Jonathan!

1 Samuel 20:31–33

Listen to what happened next! Follow along as I read starting in 1 Samuel 20:31. *Read verses 31–33.*

- ? What did Saul say Jonathan would never get as long as David lived? *Verse 31. The kingdom.*

Saul wanted Jonathan to reign as king after him, and he thought David was in the way. But we already saw that Jonathan knew David would be king, and he had accepted that fact.


- ? Jonathan asked what David had done to deserve death, but Saul had no answer. Instead, what did Saul do next in verse 33? *He threw a spear at Jonathan!*

Wow! Saul had thrown a spear at least three times at David, and now he threw one at his own son! Jonathan left the table feeling angry and sad that his father was acting so disgracefully.

Remember that David was hiding in the field, waiting to hear from Jonathan. Because Saul's servants were all around, Jonathan had to warn David secretly without them knowing. So he had set up a special way to warn David if Saul really wanted him dead.

1 Samuel 20:35–38

- ? Let's see how Jonathan warned David. Who will read 1 Samuel 20:35–38? *Assign readers.*

 Slides #13–14

 Slides #15–16

So, Jonathan went out to the field in the morning with a young boy. He took his bow and arrows so it would look like he was going to the field to practice.

- ? What did Jonathan tell the boy to do? What was his job? *To run and find the arrows he shot.*

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. David and Jonathan had worked out two messages Jonathan could give when he shot his arrows. One would be the signal that it was safe for David to return to Saul, and the other would warn David that he must flee. So, whatever Jonathan called out to the boy chasing arrows was actually a message for David!

 Slide #17

- ? What did Jonathan say to the boy? *Verses 37–38. “Is not the arrow beyond you? Hurry! Be quick! Do not stay!”*

- ? What message was Jonathan giving David: was he safe or in danger? *In danger.*

Yes. Jonathan warned David that Saul was still angry, and he would have to run for his life.

The boy didn't know that David was hiding nearby or that Jonathan was warning him. Jonathan sent the boy back to the city. Then David came out from his hiding spot to say goodbye to Jonathan. They didn't know if they'd ever see each other again. David and Jonathan were grown men, but because they were such close friends they wept as they said goodbye.

Jonathan returned to the city, but David had to flee. In our next lesson, we'll follow David as he's chased by King Saul.

- ? Let's finish the Class Notes. Who will read #8 about what happened at the second meal? *Choose a reader. Angry. Have students complete #8.*
- ? And #9? What did Jonathan do with his bow and arrows? *Choose a reader. Warn. Have students complete #9.*
- ? What about #10? Who will read that? *Choose a reader. Hiding. Have students complete #10.*
- ? What would David have to do since Saul still wanted to kill him? Who will read #11? *Choose a reader. Run. Have students complete #11.*
- ? And #12? What did the two friends do when they said goodbye? *Choose a reader. Wept. Have students complete #12.*

 Slides #18–19

Application

Today we saw an example of true, godly friendship between David and Jonathan. They both loved and followed the Lord, they were both brave warriors, and they both promised to show kindness to each other's families. Their friendship was tested because of Saul's growing jealousy of David.

 Slide #20

It was dangerous for Jonathan to go against Saul’s command and warn David, but Jonathan chose to do what was right. He knew God had chosen David to be the next king, and he knew David hadn’t done anything wrong to Saul. Jonathan was faithful and loyal to David.

- ? Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. David and Jonathan were brave, loyal, and honest. What are some qualities you think are important in a friend? Allow discussion. Answers may include loyalty, honesty, kindness, sharing, forgiveness, similar interests, etc.

Friendship is a gift from God. Our friends can have a great influence in our lives, which is why we must choose our friends carefully.

- ? What are some ways our friends can influence, or affect, us? Allow discussion. The way we talk and act, the activities we choose to do, our attitudes toward others, etc.

Now think about what kind of influence you are to your friends. Do you encourage them to do what’s right and follow God? Are you kind? Do you care about others? Are you loyal and honest like a good friend should be?

You may go through times when you feel like you don’t have a good friend. If that happens, remember that Jesus is the best friend you could ever have! He’s always there to listen to your prayers, and he loves you more than anyone can. Our friends here on earth may disappoint us, but Jesus never will.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

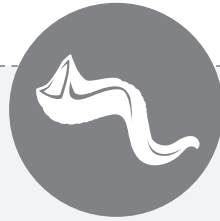
- Thank God for the example of David and Jonathan’s friendship in the Bible.
- Ask God for help to choose friends wisely and to be a good friend to others.



Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.



Saul Hunts David

Saul sought to kill David, but David trusted God for protection.

Lesson Focus

Saul's jealousy led him to hunt David and attempt to destroy him, but God protected David and his men. David had several opportunities to kill Saul, but he chose to trust God and wait for his timing to receive the kingdom.

Key Passages

1 Samuel 21:12–15, 24:4–7

Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Explain how Saul pursued David.
- Describe how David responded to Saul's hatred with mercy.

Memory Verse

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Lesson Preparation

Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Card Keep
- Oh No

Memory Verse

Choose a Memory Verse Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Down the Line
- Popcorn
- Egg Hunt
- Review Card Relay
- Look Behind You
- Stack Em Up
- Now You See It
- Your Turn

Play the Memory Verse Song to help your students learn the verse.

Find extra verses to practice in the Additional Memory Verses list.

Studying God's Word

Print the following:

- One Class Notes for each student. Keep the answer key for your use.
- One set of Illustrations (before class, fold and tape the Illustrations in hidden spots in the room or another location for students to find)
- Seven (or more) copies of the Sleeping Saul Skit

Bring the following:

- Tape or poster putty
- Pitcher/cup
- Broom handle or stick for Saul's spear
- Optional: pillow, crown, costumes

Lesson Review

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Choose a Lesson Review Game and gather necessary items.

- Bible Baseball
- Goofy Golf
- Box Toss
- Pick a Point
- Draw Dice
- Racetrack
- Four in a Row
- Toss for It

Go to Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for your protection. Please help me trust you when it seems like there's no escape. May my students see from this lesson how you intervened to protect David and how David trusted in you. Give my students faith and patience to wait for your timing to fulfill your promises. May they show mercy toward those who hurt them rather than seeking revenge.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 79*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

Studying God's Word
Group Prayer

Small Group

Come On In
Memory Verse
Optional Activity
Lesson Review
Take Home Sheet

Optional Supplements

Hands-On Activities

Do these activities when you think best—before, during, or after the lesson.

- Sneak into Camp
Students will take turns sneaking and hiding Saul's spear or jar.
- Coloring Sheet
Students will color as you review today's lesson with them.
- Justin & Jessie Story—*Jessie's Revenge*
Jessie is frustrated with the way the new girl at school is acting and decides to get revenge.

PowerPoint

You may want to use the PowerPoint presentation provided to enhance your teaching.

Notes

Prepare to Share

Scriptural Background

Prepare to teach by preparing your heart. Read the key passages for this lesson along with this background.

After Jonathan warned David to flee from Saul and the city of Gibeah, David began a journey that would have him crisscrossing the country, even venturing into Moab and Philistia to escape Saul's mad hunt. David's first stop at the priests' city of Nob enabled him to get bread and Goliath's sword from the priest, Ahimelech, who was unaware that David was no longer a trusted commander and son-in-law to King Saul. Ahimelech, a great grandson of Eli, gave David and his men the consecrated bread that was for the priests. Unfortunately, Saul's chief herdsman, Doeg the Edomite, saw David receiving supplies and would later report this to Saul. Saul reacted with anger and violence when he thought the priests were loyal to David and had them killed (1 Samuel 22:11–19). Saul's own servants refused to strike the priests, but Doeg obeyed Saul's command to destroy the city, which fulfilled the curse God pronounced on the descendants of Eli (see 1 Samuel 2:31). Only one priest, Abiathar, escaped and told David what happened. Abiathar served the house of David until Solomon had him removed from the priesthood (1 Kings 2:26–27).

After leaving Nob, David fled to the Philistine city of Gath, Goliath's hometown. The servants of King Achish recognized David as an Israelite commander, so David feared for his life and feigned insanity to be sent away (1 Samuel 21:10–15). After escaping from Gath, David went to a cave in Adullam where his family and a band of disgruntled men gathered to him. David then took his parents to Moab for their safety. David and his men saved the city of Keilah from the Philistines, but God warned him not to stay there. David hid in strongholds in the wilderness while Saul continued to hunt for him (1 Samuel 23:14).

Jonathan visited and encouraged David in the Lord, but then the Ziphites told Saul of David's location. While David and his men were fleeing from Saul on a mountain, Saul was closing in on them, probably with his men divided into two groups to surround him. Again, we see God's providential protection of David when a messenger arrived to

tell Saul that the Philistines had made a raid, forcing Saul to give up his pursuit of David and leave (1 Samuel 23:26–28).

David's first opportunity to get revenge occurred in a cave at the oasis of Engedi. When Saul entered the cave to relieve himself, he was unaware that David and his men were hidden farther back inside the cave. Ignoring the advice of his men to kill Saul, David cut off a piece of Saul's robe and then later showed it to Saul to prove he could have taken his life but chose not to (1 Samuel 24:8–15). Saul showed remorse for his actions and returned home.

Before Saul's next attempt to capture David, the faithful prophet Samuel died and was mourned by all of Israel (1 Samuel 25:1). David also met Abigail, the wise wife of foolish Nabal, who refused to give supplies to David's men. Abigail appealed to David and talked him out of taking vengeance on Nabal's household. David listened to her and left with the supplies she gave, and God punished Nabal with death (1 Samuel 25:37–38). David asked Abigail to be his wife, and she agreed. David's other wife, Ahinoam of Jezreel, is also mentioned at the end of 1 Samuel 25.

Reneging on his word, Saul again pursued David when the Ziphites came and gave his location. Saul, Abner (the commander of the army), and 3,000 men of Israel went into the wilderness and camped on a hill. David's spies reported their location, and David went with his nephew Abishai into the camp of Saul. Because God caused all of Saul's camp to sleep deeply, David and Abishai made it to the king undetected. When Abishai wanted to kill Saul with his spear, David refused. He understood that Saul's death was in God's hands, not his, and it would be a sin to kill God's anointed ruler. Instead, they took Saul's spear and jar of water (1 Samuel 26:7–12). After climbing a safe distance from Saul's camp, David called to Abner and reprimanded him for failing to protect the king. He showed the spear and jar to prove that he had once again been given the opportunity to kill Saul but hadn't (1 Samuel 26:13–16). Saul said he'd sinned and wanted David to return, but David knew better than to trust Saul's word. He returned Saul's spear and went on his way, knowing he'd done what was right by sparing Saul's life.

Historical/Apologetics Background

Engedi is an oasis in the midst of the wilderness that surrounds the Dead Sea. It has fresh water, plants, and limestone caves. It was an area that David used to supply his group and to hide from Saul. Today, Engedi is a nature preserve where visitors can see waterfalls, wildlife, vegetation, and caves like the ones where David and his men hid.

David made some sinful choices during this difficult period of fleeing from Saul. He lied to Ahimelech about his standing with Saul and reason for needing supplies, but he recognized his responsibility in what happened to the priests because of his lie. He also failed to trust God for protection when he fled to Gath and instead relied on his performance as a madman. However, David showed great faith in God and mercy to Saul on two occasions when he could have taken vengeance. David trusted that God would deal with Saul in his timing and that he should not sin by killing the man anointed to rule Israel. The pressure from his men would have been tough, but David restrained them and showed

himself to be more righteous than Saul, who continued to hunt him.

We can see David's faith and reliance on the Lord by reading the psalms he wrote during this difficult time of his life. Psalm 34, which may have been written when David acted insane in Gath, says, "This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him and saved him out of all his troubles" (v. 6). Psalm 52 was written when Doeg the Edomite reported that David had been to see Ahimelech at Nob. David wrote, "I trust in the steadfast love of God forever and ever" (Psalm 52:8). Shortly after that, he wrote Psalm 54 when the Ziphites gave his location to Saul. His plea to God for help and deliverance is a blessing to us today. Many psalms refer to God as a fortress and rock just like the strongholds David sought for protection from Saul (see Psalm 18:1–2 and 31:3–5). By choosing to focus on the Lord in times of trouble, David stands as an example to all believers to cry out to the Lord, wait patiently for him, trust him, and praise him for deliverance.

Slide #1

- ▶ After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

Slide #2

- ▶ Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Slide #3

- ▶ Before class, fold and tape the Illustrations in hidden spots in the room or another location for students to find.

- ▶ Pass out the Class Notes.

Come On In

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

Memory Verse

We encourage you to practice the memory verse with your students by playing a memory verse game or singing the memory verse song.

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Studying God's Word

Introduction

Refer to Lesson 78 Theme Poster. In our last lesson we saw a great friendship between David and Jonathan.

- ? **Who was Jonathan's father?** *King Saul.*

Both friends loved and trusted God. They were both brave warriors, and they encouraged each other in the Lord. God also used their friendship to protect David from Saul, who was growing more jealous of David's success.

- ? **How did Jonathan warn David that his father wanted to kill him?** *Pretended to practice shooting arrows in the field where David was hiding. His instructions to the boy gathering the arrows were really messages for David.*

The two friends were very sad when David had to flee from Gibeah, the city where Saul lived.

Today, we're going to pick up from where we left off in Gibeah. On your Class Notes, we will be following David. An important event occurred at each place along David's journey, and you'll be copying pictures to remind you of what happened in each place. These six pictures are hidden in the room (or in another location). Since we'll be learning about how Saul hunted for David, you'll have to "hunt" for the pictures and bring them up to the board. Let's see how quickly you can find them all! **Ready? Go!** *Allow students to search for the hidden Illustrations and bring them to the board. Use tape or poster putty to display them in the order they are found.*

David Flees from Saul

David was running for his life with Saul chasing him every step of the way. First, David fled to a city of priests called Nob. The high priest,

Ahimelech, gave David bread and Goliath's sword, which was kept there. He didn't know David was running from Saul.

- ? Look at your Class Notes. For Nob, the city where the priests lived, what illustration goes with the things Ahimelech gave to David? *Bread and sword. Have students complete #1 drawing on the Class Notes.*

 Slide #4

Then David ran to the Philistine city of Gath, but the servants of the king there recognized him as the Israelite commander who had killed thousands of Philistines. David feared for his life! He had to think of something—quick!

1 Samuel 21:12–15

Listen to what David did so the Philistine king wouldn't kill him. *Read 1 Samuel 21:12–15.*

 Slides #5–6

- ? What did David pretend to be before King Achish and the people of Gath? *Insane. Mad.*

Yes! David was so desperate that he pretended to be a crazy person! He scratched at the gate and drooled on his beard so they would send him away without harming him.

- ? What did Achish say when he saw how David was acting? *He thought he was mad (crazy) and wanted him out of his house.*
- ? What picture do you think goes in #2 for Gath? *Crazy face emoji. Have students complete #2 drawing.*

Next, David escaped to the Cave of Adullam where his family and a group of about 400 men joined him. These men chose to follow David, so he now had command of these men.

 Slides #7–8

- ? What will you draw for #3? *Cave. Have students complete #3 drawing.*

Meanwhile, Saul's anger and jealousy toward David caused him to make a terrible decision. He had all the priests and their families from Nob put to death just because the priests had helped David.

David continued to help others even while he was being chased by Saul. He and his men saved a city called Keilah from the Philistines. When Saul found out that David was in Keilah, he thought he had him trapped there in the city. But God warned David to leave, so he and his men had to run again.

Saul eventually caught up to David in the wilderness of Maon and was chasing him on a mountain. Saul was on one side of the mountain while David and his men were hurrying to get away on the other side of the mountain. Just when Saul's men were closing in, a messenger came to Saul and told him the Philistines had attacked. Saul and his men left the mountain, and David was safe—for now.

- ? What will you draw for #4? *Mountain with arrows. Have students copy #4 drawing.*

 Slide #9

David Spares Saul in the Cave

Saul soon took up the hunt for David again. Saul learned that David was in the wilderness of Engedi, a place that had fresh water, plants, trees, and lots of caves where they could hide.

David and his men were hiding in the very back of a big cave when Saul came into their cave alone and didn't know David and his men were there!

1 Samuel 24:4–7

 Slides #10–11

? Let's see what David's men wanted him to do. Who will read 1 Samuel 24:4–7? *Assign readers.*

? What did David's men say to him? *The Lord has given your enemy (Saul) into your hand to kill.*

David's men were excited about this opportunity to kill Saul, who'd been chasing them all over the country. They told David that God was giving him this chance to kill Saul.

? What did David do? *Cut off a corner of Saul's robe.*

? How did David feel after he cut off a piece of Saul's robe? *His heart struck him; he felt bad about it.*

? David felt bad about what he'd done, even though he'd spared Saul's life and did not let his men kill Saul. Why did David's conscience bother him? What did he feel that he had done? Look in verse 6. *He felt like he'd put out his hand against the Lord's anointed.*

David showed great faith in God. He understood that God had made Saul king and that he would be the next king. But he was willing to wait for God's timing and respect Saul as king, even though Saul was trying to kill him!

David also showed mercy by sparing Saul, and he showed courage and leadership to stop his men from taking revenge on Saul for all he had done.

After Saul left the cave, David came out and called to him. He showed Saul the section of robe he had cut off to prove he had been close enough to kill him—but didn't.

 Slide #12

? What picture will you draw for Engedi and what happened in the cave for #5? *Knife and piece of robe. Have students complete #5 drawing.*

David Spares Saul in the Camp

Sometime later, some people found out that David was hiding in the hills and reported this to King Saul. Ignoring his promise to leave David alone, Saul and his army commander, Abner, gathered 3,000 men of Israel to hunt

David again. Saul came out to the wilderness, and he and his men camped on a hill. David's spies reported that Saul was camped nearby.

We'll act out what happened next. I need some volunteers for a skit.

Choose students for the parts and give them each a copy of the skit. Keep one copy for you as the Narrator. Set up the scene as directed and hand out props.

Sleeping Saul Skit (Based on 1 Samuel 26)

► Have copies of the Sleeping Saul Skit and props ready.

The Lord caused Saul and his men to fall into a deep sleep. Let's see what happened while they slept. *Have students perform the skit then continue with the lesson.*

Let's give our actors a hand! *Put props away and have students return to seats.*

- ❓ Turn in your Bibles to 1 Samuel 26, which is where our skit came from. Who sneaked into Saul's camp with David? His name is in verse 6. *Abishai.*

Abishai was David's nephew. He and his brother, Joab, were loyal fighters for David. Abishai was brave to volunteer to sneak into an enemy camp filled with 3,000 men who wanted to kill them!

Show the Lesson Theme Poster. David and Abishai were able to creep into Saul's camp and get right next to Saul without anyone waking up because God caused everyone to fall into such a deep sleep!

🖥️ Slide #13

- ❓ What did David say when Abishai offered to kill Saul with his own spear? *David told him no.*

- ❓ What two things did they take to prove they had been in Saul's camp, close enough to kill Saul? *Spear and jar of water.*

Right. The men took the spear and jar and left the camp. David went up a hill across from Saul's camp and called out to them.

- ❓ What did David say Abner had failed to do? *Keep watch over Saul.*

As the commander of Saul's army, Abner was responsible for Saul's safety. David scolded him for failing in his duty to guard the king since he or Abishai could have easily killed him.

- ❓ What did David say to King Saul? *He asked what evil he'd done.*

- ❓ How did Saul respond to the fact that his spear and jar were taken by David? *He realized that David had spared his life and that he had sinned by chasing him.*

- ❓ What will you draw for #6 in your Class Notes to represent what happened on the hill where Saul camped? *Spear and water jar. Have students complete #6 drawing.*

🖥️ Slide #14

This was the second time David spared Saul's life when he could have killed him. David showed mercy again, even though Saul continued to break his word and hunt David. But David believed it was more important to be righteous and obedient to God rather than taking his own revenge.

Application

Look at the pictures you drew on your Class Notes. David ran to a lot of different places in today's lesson.

Slide #15

Refer to the Lesson Theme Poster. Then David and Abishai, sneaked into Saul's camp and got right next to Saul without anyone waking up!

- ? What did Abishai want to do? *Kill Saul with his own spear.*

But David didn't let him. Instead, David trusted God to make him king at the right time. He did not want to sin by getting revenge on King Saul.

- ? What is revenge? *Allow answers.*

Revenge is trying to hurt someone who has wronged you—trying to make them pay for what they've done.

Slide #16

Revenge: trying to hurt someone who has wronged you

David had some opportunities to get revenge. He could have killed Saul twice! Saul had tried to kill David many times for no reason, which was clearly wrong. But David chose to show mercy and forgiveness.

- ? Why did David do this? *He wanted to obey God. He was waiting for God's timing.*

The world thinks that revenge is okay and that people who hurt us deserve to be hurt in return. We see this idea a lot in movies and on TV. But this is the opposite of what the Bible teaches. God wants us to forgive others and to love our enemies.

- ? Do any of you have an example of a time when you wanted to get revenge on someone, but didn't? *Allow discussion or share a personal example of a time you did or didn't get revenge.*

We will all be hurt or wronged by someone at some point in our lives. That's because we live in a sinful world. But, like David, we have the choice to do what's right and show mercy and forgiveness or to sin by getting revenge. God can help us do what's right if we ask him.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

- Pass out the Student Take Home Sheets and remind students to practice the memory verse this week.

- Thank God for his protection and help in times of trouble.
- Ask God for help to show mercy and forgiveness to those who wrong us.



Lesson Review

We encourage you to play a lesson review game.



Unit Review

A review of Lessons 71–79.

Come On In

Students will review the material they have been learning with a Come On In Game.

Memory Verse

Students will take turns quoting the memory verses. You may want to offer prizes or treats to students who can recite them without help. You will start a new verse next week.

Lesson Theme Poster Review

You will give a quick overview of Lessons 71–79 using the Lesson Theme Posters.

Review Game

Board Game: Students will make their way along the game board path by answering review questions.

Lesson Preparation



Come On In

Choose a Come On In Game and print/gather necessary items.

- Board Game
- Crazy Dice Board Game
- Card Keep
- Oh No



Memory Verse

Bring prizes or treats for students who can recite the verses.

Play the Memory Verse Songs to review the verses with your students.



Lesson Theme Poster Review

Gather the Lesson Theme Posters from Lessons 71–79.



Review Game—Board Game

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Bring the following:

- Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- Buttons or other small objects for each team to use as markers on the board
- Dice or game spinner



Go to Prayer

Dear Lord, thank you for your Word. Thank you for people of courage and faith including Gideon, Ruth, Samuel, David, and Jonathan. May my students avoid the sins that led Samson and Saul to lose the power of God in their lives. Help them apply the lessons they are learning to decisions they make and circumstances they face. May they develop a heart after your own heart, like David had.

Optional Supplements

Hands-On Activities

Choose a favorite or skipped activity from any of the previous nine lessons.

PowerPoint

You may want to use the PowerPoint presentation provided to enhance your teaching.



The required lesson and supplementary materials can be accessed from the **Teacher Digital Resources** under *Lesson 80*. Game instructions are also included in the *Appendix* in the back of this Teacher Guide.

We recommend the following order for churches using a **large group/small group** format:

Large Group

- Lesson Theme Poster Review
- Group Prayer

Small Group

- Come On In
- Memory Verse
- Review Game
- Optional Activity

Come On In

As students arrive, direct them to the activity you chose for today.

Memory Verse

Let's review the memory verses and then see who can recite them. Review verses using the Memory Verse Posters and the songs.

- ? Who would like to try saying the verses without any help? Allow students to recite the verses individually. Award prizes or treats to students who can say them by memory.

Psalm 34:17–18 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles. The LORD is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit.

1 John 1:8–9 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Lesson Theme Poster Review

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. Israel went through a time of judges for about 300 years. This wasn't a great time in Israel's history. The people kept disobeying God, getting punished by enemies, and then repenting. God was faithful to rescue them when they cried out to him, and he would choose a judge to help them.

Lesson 71

In this lesson, the Midianites invaded Israel and stole their food and animals. There were so many Midianites that the Israelites could not drive them out. So they ran from their homes and hid.

- ? What sin had the Israelites done that caused God to punish them by sending the Midianites? *They were worshipping false gods—idolatry.*

The Israelites broke God's command to worship him alone, and God sent the Midianites as punishment to turn the people back to him. When they cried out to God for help, he heard them and chose Gideon to lead them in battle against the enemy.

Show the Lesson 71 Theme Poster. Gideon wasn't courageous or mighty when God found him; he was hiding from the enemy! But God promised to be with him and help him defeat the Midianites.

Gideon first gathered over 30,000 Israelites, but God kept making his army smaller and smaller until there were just 300 men.

Slide #1

- After all the students arrive, pray with them before beginning the lesson.

Slides #2–3

- Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline as you review people and events.

Slide #4

- ? Why did God do that? *He didn't want the people to think they won by themselves without God's help.*
- ? Who remembers the strange things they took to the battle? *Trumpets, empty jars, and torches.*

One night, Gideon and his men surrounded the Midianite camp. They smashed their jars, raised their torches, and blew their trumpets. God caused the Midianites to panic and fight each other. Then the army scattered, and the Israelites were able to chase them down and defeat them. This was a victory that could only happen through God's power!

Lesson 72

Show the Lesson 72 Theme Poster. The next judge we learned about was Samson, who was a Nazirite set apart by God to help save the Israelites from the Philistines. God gave Samson supernatural strength. He was able to do many mighty things. For example, Samson tore a lion apart with his bare hands when it attacked him. He also killed 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey!

- ? But Samson sinned by putting women above his love and obedience to God. What was the name of the woman who led to his capture? *Delilah.*

Samson loved Delilah, but she pestered him to tell her the secret of his strength because the Philistines offered to give her money. At first, Samson lied about what would make him weak, but he finally gave in and told Delilah that he was a Nazirite. She betrayed Samson and had his hair cut while he was asleep.

God left Samson, and he was captured, blinded, and put in prison. Later, when Samson was brought before a large crowd of Philistines, he prayed for strength one more time. God answered his prayer, and Samson pushed down the pillars of the building they were in, killing about 3,000 Philistines!

Lesson 73

Show the Lesson 73 Theme Poster. We also learned about Ruth who was from the country of Moab. She married one of Naomi's sons. Sadly, Naomi's husband and two sons died while they lived in Moab. Ruth refused to leave Naomi, so she traveled with her back to Israel. Ruth left her country, her family, and her false gods to live with the Israelites and follow the one true God.

- ? What was the name of the town they went back to? *Bethlehem.*

Back in Bethlehem, Naomi and Ruth had no husbands to care for them. They were poor and needed food. But God arranged for Ruth to work in the field of Boaz. Boaz was a close relative of Naomi's husband, and he was able to buy Naomi's land, marry Ruth, and take care of both women. God blessed Boaz's kindness and Ruth's faithfulness by giving them a son named Obed.

- ? What was the name of Obed's famous grandson? *King David.*

 Slide #5

 Slide #6

Yes! Obed had a son named Jesse, and one of Jesse's sons was David, who became king of Israel. Many years later, Jesus was born into the family of David. Boaz and Ruth became the ancestors of King David and Jesus.

Both Boaz and Jesus were redeemers. Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi when he saved them from a helpless situation, and Jesus redeems sinners!

Lesson 74

Show the Lesson 74 Theme Poster. In the next lesson, we were introduced to Samuel. Samuel's mother, Hannah, prayed for a son and promised to give him back to God to serve him. When Samuel was a young boy, Hannah took him to live at the tabernacle.

 Slide #7

- ? Who was the the priest Samuel helped at the tabernacle? *Eli.*

Eli was the high priest; it was his job to lead the Israelites in worshipping the Lord. But Eli's sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were wicked men.

God had a message of judgment for Eli and all Israel. He chose to give this message through Samuel, his next prophet. Samuel first heard God speaking to him at night while he was sleeping. He kept running to Eli's room because he thought Eli was calling him. After the third time, Eli figured out it was God calling, and he told Samuel what to say if he heard his name again. God did call Samuel in a dream and gave him a serious message to deliver.

Even though he was afraid to tell Eli, Samuel was obedient and gave him the message from God. It was fulfilled when the Israelites lost a battle against the Philistines. About 30,000 soldiers were killed and the ark of the covenant was captured. Hophni and Phinehas also died in the battle. When Eli heard the news, he fell and died. Everything happened just as God had said.

Samuel continued to listen to God as he grew up. God helped him in all he did. Samuel became a prophet, a priest, and a judge.

Lesson 75

Samuel judged Israel faithfully throughout his life. But the Israelites came to Samuel and asked for a king. They didn't want to be ruled by judges anymore.

- ? Who were the Israelites actually rejecting when they asked for a king: Samuel or God? *God.*

Even after Samuel's warnings of what a king would do, the people still insisted; they wanted a king just like the other nations around them.

Show the Lesson 75 Theme Poster. God chose Saul to be Israel's first king. But Saul's heart was not right with the Lord, and he failed to trust and obey God. He offered a sacrifice himself instead of waiting for Samuel. Then when he was told to completely destroy the Amalekites, Saul let the king and the best animals live.

 Slide #8

- ? Who remembers one of the consequences of Saul’s disobedience? *He lost the kingdom, his friendship with Samuel, and the Spirit of God. A harmful spirit was sent to trouble him.*

Saul lost the Spirit of God in his life and was instead troubled by a harmful spirit. God told him that his kingdom would be taken away and given to a man after God’s own heart.

Lesson 76

We found out who that was in the next lesson. God told Samuel to go see Jesse in Bethlehem and anoint one of his sons as the next king of Israel.

- ? How many sons did Jesse have? *Eight.*

Show the Lesson 76 Theme Poster. Jesse’s first seven sons passed before Samuel. The oldest son, Eliab, was tall and strong, and Samuel thought he must be the one God wanted to be king. But God said it wasn’t him.

- ? What did God say he was looking at? *The heart.*

God doesn’t look at the outward appearance; he looks at the heart—the part of a person that controls how he feels, what he thinks, what he wants, and the choices he makes.

After God rejected each of the seven sons, Jesse’s youngest son was brought before Samuel. God told Samuel to anoint him.

- ? Who was the youngest son? *David.*

Yes! God saw that David had a heart that loved him, so David would be the next king of Israel. But David wasn’t king yet. He began to go back and forth from his home, where he cared for the sheep, and Saul’s royal court, where he played his lyre for Saul and served as his armor-bearer.

Lesson 77

Then war broke out between the Israelites and the Philistines. David’s three oldest brothers served in Saul’s army, and David took supplies to them. When he came to their camp, David heard the challenge of the Philistine champion, Goliath, to send an Israelite to fight him.

- ? How did King Saul and the Israelites respond to Goliath’s challenge? *They were afraid. They fled.*

Show the Lesson 77 Theme Poster. David was upset that Goliath was mocking God, and he volunteered to fight. David came up against the well-armed Goliath with just his shepherd’s weapons: a staff, his sling, and five stones.

- ? Where did David get the courage to face the giant Goliath? *From God.*

David trusted that the battle was the Lord’s, and God would give him victory. All it took was one stone from David’s sling. It sank into Goliath’s forehead, and the giant was defeated. Then the Israelites chased the Philistine army back to their cities.

 Slide #9

 Slide #10

Lesson 78

Show the Lesson 78 Theme Poster. In this lesson, we saw a great friendship between David and Jonathan.

 Slide #11

- ? Who was Jonathan? *King Saul's son. A prince of Israel.*

Jonathan gave his robe, armor, sword, bow, and belt to David. He knew David was chosen to be the next king and had accepted that fact. Both friends loved and trusted God. God used their friendship to protect David from Saul, who was growing more and more jealous of David's success.

- ? Because of his anger and jealousy, what did Saul do when David was playing the lyre for him? *Threw his spear at him to kill him.*

David had to run from Saul. But Jonathan spoke to his father and got him to promise not to harm David. However, when Saul got angry and jealous again, he threw another spear at David. So Jonathan and David came up with a plan to find out for sure if Saul really wanted to kill David or not. When David didn't come to a special meal, Saul got angry and threw a spear at Jonathan. That's when Jonathan knew he needed to warn David to run from his father.

- ? But Saul's servants were everywhere. How did Jonathan warn David without anyone knowing? *He went to the field and shot arrows. The things he said to the boy chasing the arrows were messages for David, who was hiding nearby.*

The two friends said goodbye. Then Jonathan went back to the city while David ran for his life.

Lesson 79

David ran from place to place, trying to stay one step ahead of Saul, who was hunting for him. David got supplies from the priest in the city of Nob, but when Saul found out, he had all the priests and their families killed.

David fled to the Philistine city of Gath, which was a mistake since they recognized him there. He acted like a crazy man so the Philistine king wouldn't kill him but send him away instead. Eventually, David was joined by a group of men who stayed with him and helped him.

- ? David and his men were hiding in a cave one time when Saul entered the cave alone. What did David's men want him to do? *Kill Saul.*

David could have gotten revenge on Saul, but instead he cut off a piece of Saul's robe. When Saul left, David came out of the cave and showed it to Saul in hopes that Saul would see that he didn't mean him any harm. Saul left, but it wasn't long before he began the chase again when he found out David and his men were in the wilderness.

Show the Lesson 79 Theme Poster. One night, when Saul was sleeping in his camp with his army all around him, God caused them all to fall into a

 Slide #12

deep sleep. David and his nephew, Abishai, sneaked into the camp and got right next to Saul without anyone waking up!

- ? What did Abishai want to do? *Kill Saul with his own spear.*
- ? But David didn't let him do it. Instead, what did David take from Saul's camp? *Saul's spear and jar of water.*

David left the camp and called to Saul and his men. He showed them the items he'd taken to prove he had been close enough to kill Saul, but didn't. Saul understood that David had spared him again, and he left with his men.

David did what was right and showed mercy and forgiveness. It would have been tempting to kill Saul those times in the cave and in the camp. But David believed it was more important to be righteous and obedient to God rather than taking his own revenge.



Group Prayer Time

Be sure to pray with your students and take requests if time allows.

- Thank God for the ways he protects and delivers us when we call to him.
- Pray that we will have a heart that trusts God completely.



Review Game—Board Game

We encourage you to play the following review game.

Materials

Review Questions

Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)

Dice or game spinner

Buttons or other small objects for each team to use as markers on the board

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions.

Divide your class into teams. Team members will take turns answering the review questions. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice or spin and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. Follow directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. If someone does not know or does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help.

Alternate between teams as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team to make it all the way to the Finish wins.

 Slides #13–35



Appendix

Come On In Games

Choose one of these games for students to play at the beginning of class.

Memory Verse Games

Choose one of these games to practice the memory verse with your class.

Lesson Review Games

Choose one of these games to review with your class at the end of each lesson.

All game instructions and materials can also be accessed from the Teacher Digital Resources.

Come On In Games

These games are intended for students to play with minimal teacher supervision as they arrive.

All games use the Question Cards in the Teacher Digital Resources to help your students learn or review the

Attributes of God, the Ten Commandments, or the books of the Old or New Testament. We recommend focusing on one set of cards then gradually adding more as students master them.

Board Game

Students answer questions and make their way to the Finish on the Game Board.

Materials

- Question Cards
- Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- Dice or spinner
- Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

Instructions

Print and cut out one or more sets of Question Cards. Shuffle the cards and place them facedown by the Game Board.

Divide students into teams or allow them to play individually. Select game pieces and place at Start. Highest number rolled or spun goes first.

Students will be read a question card by the team/student on their right. If they answer correctly, they will roll or spin and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. If they do not know or do not answer correctly, they do not roll or spin to move ahead. Alternate between teams/students as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. Follow the directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team/student. The first team/student to make it all the way to the Finish wins.

Card Keep

Students answer questions and keep the cards they answer correctly.

Materials

- Question Cards

Instructions

Print and cut out one or more sets of Question Cards. Shuffle the cards and place them facedown in a pile.

Students will be read a question card by the team/student on their right. If they answer correctly, they keep the card. If they answer incorrectly, give the answer and return the card to the bottom of the pile. Continue asking and answering questions until all the cards are collected. Count up cards at the end. The student with the most cards wins.

Reshuffle the cards and play again as time allows.

Crazy Dice Board Game

Watch out for those crazy dice as students make their way along the Game Board!

Materials

- Question Cards
- Game Board (provided in the Teacher Kit)
- Two dice
- Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

Instructions

Print and cut out one or more sets of Question Cards. Shuffle the cards and place them facedown by the Game Board.

Divide students into teams, or allow them to play individually. Select game pieces and place at Start. Have teams/students roll the dice. Highest number goes first.

Students will be read a question card by the team/student on their right. If they do not know or do not answer correctly, they do not roll. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice and follow the instructions below according to their roll.

If students roll:

- 2 jump one space ahead of the nearest game piece
- 3 move back 3 spaces
- 4 move to the nearest space with the #4 in it (14, 34, 64)
- 5 move to share the same space as the nearest game piece
- 6 move to the closest “switch places” space and trade places with another team/student
- 7 move ahead 7
- 8 move back 4 spaces
- 9 move ahead 9
- 10 move ahead to the next multiple of 10 space (10, 20, 30, 70, etc.)
- 11 move back 1 space
- 12 move ahead 12 spaces

Follow the directions on the board to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. Alternate between teams/students as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team/student to make it all the way to the Finish wins.

Oh No

Not every roll of the dice is good! Answer the question, roll the dice, and be prepared to say, “Oh no!”

Materials

- Question Cards
- Two dice
- Paper or board for keeping score

Instructions

Print and cut out one or more sets of Question Cards. Shuffle the cards and place them facedown in a pile.

Divide the students into teams or let them play individually. Students will be read a question card by the team/student

on their right. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice to determine their points. If they do not answer correctly, play moves to the next player or other team. Keep track of scores. (Note: no student/team can have less than 0 points.)

Numbers aren’t always a winner! If students roll:

- 2 or 3 give 5 points to the student/team on your left
- 4 take 5 points from the student/team on your right
- 5–10 add the total number on the dice to your score
- 11 subtract 10 points from your score
- 12 double your score

Memory Verse Games

Allow students to refer to the Memory Verse Poster during the games.

You may want to cover it up after a few weeks for more of a challenge.

Down the Line

Say your part of the verse while passing the spoon—under your left leg with your right hand, that is!

Materials

- Passing Cards
- Cotton ball
- Plastic spoon
- Container

Instructions

Print and cut out one set of the Passing Cards and put them into a container. Have the students line up facing you. Put a cotton ball into the plastic spoon and give it to the student on one end of the line.

Draw a card from the container. The students must pass the spoon from one end of the line and back again according to what the card says, keeping the cotton ball on the spoon (without touching it). For example, they may have to pass the spoon with their left hand or under their right leg! As they pass the spoon, they each must say the next word in the memory verse. If the cotton ball falls or someone says the wrong word, you may have the students start the verse over. Repeat with a new card until the verse has been recited several times.

Try using a larger spoon and balancing a small orange or boiled egg on it!

Egg Hunt

Hunt for all the parts of the memory verse hidden in the eggs! This game can be played all year round. The plastic eggs just happen to be great little containers that can be hidden easily.

Materials

- Strips of paper
- Plastic Easter eggs

Instructions

Write the memory verse on strips of paper with one or two words on each strip. Put one strip inside of each plastic egg. Hide all the eggs around the room.

Have the students search for the eggs and bring them back to their table. They will open the eggs and work together to put the verse in the proper order.

For a larger class, prepare more than one set of eggs (sorted by colors for different teams). Students can work in teams to collect and construct the verse.

Look Behind You

“What does mine say?” “Turn around!” “You go here.” Students help each other get in the right order according to the cards on their backs in this crazy group game.

Materials

- Index cards
- Masking tape

Instructions

Write one or two words from the memory verse on each index card. Tape cards onto students' backs. Students will work together to put themselves in order according to the memory verse. Once they think they are standing in order, check the verse by reading the words out loud according to how they are standing.

If you have more cards than students, tape more than one card in the proper order on some students. Repeat the game so all students get to participate.

Now You See It

Start out with all the words, erase them one by one. Can you still say the verse?

Materials

- Whiteboard
- Marker and eraser for whiteboard

Instructions

Write the memory verse on the board. Recite the verse together. Choose a student to come up to the board and erase one or two words at a time. Have the class recite the entire verse each time another word is erased. Continue erasing words and reciting until all of the words are gone. Then ask students to try reciting the whole verse without any words left on the board.

Popcorn

Students “pop” up as they say their part of the memory verse. Start out slowly and see how fast you can go!

Materials

None

Instructions

Have students squat down in a circle. Begin by saying the first word in the memory verse. As you go around the circle,

have each student take turns “popping” up as they say the next word then squat back down. Repeat.

You may want to divide the class into two groups. Have the first group pop up and say the first word then squat back down. Then the second group pops up saying the next word and squats back down and so on until the verse is completed. Repeat—going faster and faster!

Review Card Relay

“On your mark, get set, go!” Teams will race to put the memory verse cards in order.

Materials

- Index cards
- Tape or poster putty

Instructions

Write one or two words from the memory verse on each index card. Make one set for each team. Divide the class

into teams. Randomly lay out each set of cards facedown on the floor—one set for each team. Put a piece of poster putty or tape on each one.

Have teams line up away from the cards. When the relay begins, the first student in each line will race to the cards, pick one up, and put it on the wall or board. As the relay continues, students will put each card on the board in the proper order. They may need to rearrange the cards to fit others.

When finished, have the class read the verse aloud together.

Stack Em Up

Teams of two will stack the cups in the right order. Add a timer or make it a race!

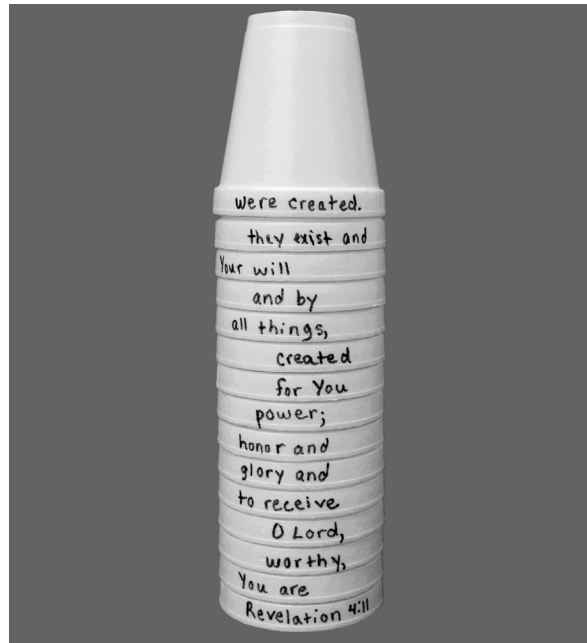
Materials

- Colored markers
- Foam or plastic cups with the memory verse written on them for each team
- Optional: timer

Instructions

Turn each cup upside down so the stack will have a wide base. On the rim of each cup, write one or two words from the memory verse, including the reference. Make sure the words show when the next cup is stacked on top of it. (See picture at right.)

Mix up the cups and have teams stack them up in the correct order. Have teams race against each other or time them as they stack the cups in the correct order.



Your Turn

Students recite the verse taking turns back and forth. Will they remember their parts?

Materials

- Optional: timer

Instructions

Pair the students together. Have each pair stand back to back. Allow pairs to take turns reciting the verse. One

student begins with the first word of the memory verse. Then the other student must say the next word. Keep going back and forth until the verse is completed. If a student makes a mistake or can't remember the right word, allow another pair to try.

After everyone has had a turn, mix up the pairs and repeat. Have students race against a timer for an extra challenge.

Lesson Review Games

These games are written for team play; however, they can easily be adapted for smaller classes.

Allow students to refer to the Lesson Theme Poster during the games.

Bible Baseball

Ready to run the bases? Students answer questions, roll the die, and make their way around the bases to earn points for their team.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Masking tape or chairs for bases
- One die

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions. Set up three bases, home plate, and the pitcher's mound using masking tape or chairs arranged in a diamond with the pitcher's mound in the middle.

Divide the class into two teams. Have the first team line up at home plate. The other team may wait in their seats or stand along the "sideline."

The student at bat will roll the die to determine the "hit" based on the list below (which you may want to write on the board for easy reference). A walk means he can go to first base without answering a question. A foul ball means to roll again. Three foul balls in a row is a strike!

1=single 2=double 3=triple

4=home run 5=walk 6=foul ball

Once the hit is determined (#1–4), ask a review question from the pitcher's mound. If the student answers correctly, he can advance around the bases according to his roll. If he answers incorrectly, it is a strike for his team, and he goes to the back of the line. After three strikes, a team is out. Unless they strike out, allow all team members to come to bat once and then switch teams at bat.

Remember that the hits will move any team members who are already on base. For example, if a student is on second base and the next teammate rolls a double and answers a question correctly, the student on second goes to home plate and scores a run for the team while the batter goes to second base.

Keep the game moving by having students roll quickly when they come to bat and "run" the bases for each correct answer. Keep track of strikes and runs for each team. Play for a set number of innings or as time allows, repeating questions as necessary.

Box Toss

Students will answer review questions then toss the beanbag at the holes in the box to gain points for their team.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Scissors or knife
- Medium-sized cardboard box
- Four beanbags
- Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use scissors or a knife to cut two or three holes in the bottom of the box. Make sure they are large enough for a beanbag to easily pass through. Label each circle with a point

number: 5, 10, and 15. Use masking tape to make a tossing line several feet away from the box.

Divide the class into teams. Have the teams line up behind the line across from the box. Give each team two beanbags. Alternate asking each team a review question. Students who answer correctly will toss the beanbags at the target holes in the box to earn points for their team. If they answer incorrectly, they may toss the beanbags for fun without the points counting. Students will go to the end of the line after tossing the beanbags. Keep score for both teams. Continue play until all questions have been answered correctly and students have all had a chance to toss the beanbags.

Draw Dice

Teams will answer questions and roll the dice to complete a simple drawing to win. Who will finish their drawing first?

Materials

- Review Questions
- One drawing area for each team (paper, whiteboard, etc.)
- Pencils or whiteboard markers
- Two dice

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into two teams. Give each team one die and a sheet of paper and a pencil, or divide the whiteboard in half. Draw a mouse on the board as an example.

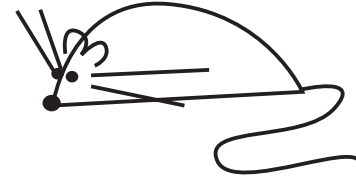
Ask the first team a question from the lesson. If they answer correctly, have them roll the die.

To begin drawing their mouse, each team must wait until they roll a six. They will then draw the mouse's body on their paper or the board. After they have drawn the body,

as they give correct answers to the questions, they can continue to draw the other parts of the mouse according to the numbers they roll.

They can draw according to the numbers below:

- 6 = body
- 5 = nose
- 4 = whiskers
- 3 = eyes
- 2 = ears
- 1 = tail



Continue giving each team a turn to answer a question and roll the die. Repeat the questions as necessary. The first team to finish their mouse wins.

You may choose to draw a simple object from the lesson, such as a crown, an open Bible, a fish, etc. Be sure to assign numbers (as above) to each part of the object to be drawn before the game begins.

Four in a Row

Students will answer questions and add a marker for their team onto the grid. Which team will be the first to get four in a row?

Materials

- Review Questions
- Masking tape
- Red and black paper circles or other markers for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a 16-section grid on the floor. The grid should be four sections wide by four sections long. Each section should be equal in size. Use eight red circles and eight black circles cut from construction paper or other markers for the two teams.

Divide the students into two teams. Give each team eight markers. They will take turns answering the questions. If they answer correctly, they can put a marker in a square on the grid. The first team to get four markers in a row wins the game.

Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

Materials

- Review Questions
- Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers
- Rolled up socks
- Masking tape
- Ten sheets of paper
- Markers

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of

paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

Pick a Point

Answer the questions correctly to earn the right to pick a point.

Materials

- Review Questions
- Cup or basket
- Small paper strips

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Write various numbers in increments of 5 or 10 on strips of paper

to use as point cards. Put the point cards into the cup or basket. Divide students into teams of 4–5 students each. Have each team take turns answering a review question. After each correct answer, let a member of the team draw a point card from the cup.

The number of points on the cards will vary, so the score will have nothing to do with how skilled one team might be. Total points at the end and declare a winner.

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the Finish by answering review questions.

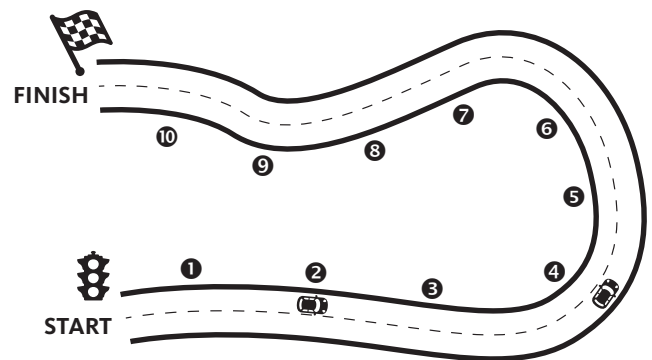
Materials

- Review Questions
- Whiteboard or chalkboard
- Markers/chalk
- Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.), tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label “Start” and “Finish” (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each



team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

Materials

- Review Questions
- A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and “wild” written on index cards
- One beanbag
- Masking tape
- Two baskets or containers for cards

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Add more cards to the grid as necessary. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Total each team's points to declare a winner.

