

June 21 Elementary

Bible Passage: Samson / Judges 13–16

Story Point: God gave Samson strength to defeat the Philistines.

Memory Verse: “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

Big Picture Question: What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

Christ Connection: *Samson’s sin led to his own death, but God used his death to save the Israelites from their enemies. Samson’s story reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but God sent Him to die on the cross and rise again to rescue people from sin and give them eternal life.*

STAY CONNECTED WITH ALL THINGS EMERGENCE!

If you haven’t already, please sign up for **Emergence Connect**, this is the way to stay connected with all things Emergence including kids resources! You can sign up here:

<https://emergencenj.org/login>

If you had an account on Realm and are not yet on Emergence Connect, take a look at your inbox for an activation email. If you have any questions on your Emergence Connect account, please reach out sara.vandyke@emergencenj.org

FOLLOW US ON INSTAGRAM: [emergencenj_kids](#)

Get encouragement, updates, lesson tips, activities and more!

* **BIBLE STUDY TIPS FOR PARENTS:**

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

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

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

A man came and shaved the braids from Samson’s head. He lost his strength and became helpless. The Philistines gouged out his eyes and took him prisoner. They had him stand between the pillars of a pagan temple. In a final plea to God, Samson asked for his strength back. God gave him

strength, and Samson knocked over the pillars, collapsing the temple. In his death, Samson killed more Philistines than he had killed in his life. (Judg. 16:30)

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

***STORY:**

SAY • We've been learning about the judges of Israel. After Moses and Joshua died, the Israelites turned away from God. They were stuck in a cycle of sin. When the Israelites cried out to God for help, He sent a judge to deliver them.

Can you name the judges we have studied so far? (*Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah, Gideon*) Today's Bible story is about a judge named Samson. Samson lived more than a thousand years before Jesus was born. Let's learn more about his story.

Use the Bible storytelling tips below to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video, or both!

Samson: Judges 13–16

The Israelites once again disobeyed God, so God let the Philistines rule over them. One day, the angel of the Lord told a husband and wife that they would have a son who would save the Israelites from the Philistines. God had a special instruction for their son: He should never cut his hair.

The woman had a baby, and she named him Samson. God made Samson strong. When Samson grew up, he saw a Philistine woman and wanted to marry her. He and his parents went to meet her. On the journey, **a lion jumped out at Samson. Samson killed the lion.**

Later, some bees had made honey in the lion's body. Samson ate some of the honey and gave some to his parents.

Philistine men came to Samson's wedding. Samson told them a riddle: "Out of the eater came something to eat, and out of the strong came something sweet."

The riddle was about the lion and the honey, but the men could not figure it out. They asked Samson's bride for help. She told the men the answer. Samson was angry, and he left his wife. When he went back to get her, she was gone. Samson was so upset that he burned the Philistines' fields. This made the Philistines angry.

Samson escaped to another city, where he fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistines gave Delilah money to find out why Samson was so strong.

Samson told Delilah, “If you tie me up with seven fresh bowstrings, I will be weak.” But that was not true. Then Samson said, “If you tie me up with new rope, I will be weak.” But that was not true, either. So Samson said, “If you weave my hair into a loom, I will be weak.” Another lie!

Finally, Samson told Delilah the truth: “If you cut my hair, I will not have my strength.” So when Samson was sleeping, a Philistine man cut his hair. Delilah shouted, “Samson! Wake up! The Philistines are here to kill you!” Samson wasn’t strong anymore. The Philistines grabbed him and took him away in chains.

One day, the Philistines made Samson stand between two pillars in their temple. Samson cried out to God, “Lord, strengthen me once more.” So God strengthened Samson. Samson pushed on the pillars and collapsed the temple. Samson and everyone in the temple died, but Samson had saved the Israelites from the Philistines.

SAY • Before Samson was even born, an angel appeared to Samson’s parents and told them that their son would begin to save Israel from the Philistines. When Samson became judge, the Philistines were ruling over the Israelites. The Philistines were mean.

Samson married a woman who was a Philistine, and he ended up defeating many Philistines by fighting them with the jawbone of a donkey.

Can you tell me how Samson got so strong? God gave Samson power. God told Samson that he must never cut his hair. But Samson told his secret to Delilah, and the Philistines cut Samson’s hair. Samson lost his strength. The Philistines made Samson a prisoner and blinded him.

But God made Samson strong again. **God gave Samson strength to defeat the Philistines.** Samson used his strength to knock down the temple of their false god, and even though Samson died, he killed many Philistines too.

***Christ Connection:**

Christ Connection: Samson’s sin led to his own death, but God used his death to save the Israelites from their enemies. Samson’s story reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but God sent Him to die on the cross and rise again to rescue people from sin and give them eternal life.

SAY • Samson’s sin led to his own death, but God used his death to save the Israelites from their enemies. Samson’s story reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but God sent Him to die on the cross and rise again to rescue people from sin and give them eternal life. Everyone who repents and trusts in Jesus has forgiveness and eternal life. ***What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.***

***GOSPEL PLAN:**

(Included in the Activity Pages)

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

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

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

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

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

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

***PRAYER**

SAY • Thank You, Jesus, for the victory You give us over sin. You give us strength in our weakness. Help us to remember to cry out to You in our times of need. Remind us to give You all the praise. Amen.

***KEY PASSAGE / MEMORY VERSE:**

“If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

SAY • We can recognize ourselves in Samson’s story. God wants us to follow Him, but we often turn away from Him and live the way we want to. But our sin doesn’t disqualify us from being part of God’s good plan. We can confess our sin, and He will forgive us. God is faithful and righteous.

***DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

COMPREHENSION:

- What special instructions did God have for Samson's hair? (*An angel of the Lord told Samson's parents not to cut his hair; Judg. 13:4*)
- Why was Samson never allowed to cut his hair? (*He was to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb; Judges 13:5*)
- Why did Samson want to marry a Philistine woman? What was God's reason for Samson marrying her? (*Samson said she was the right one for him, but the Lord was seeking an opportunity to confront the Philistines; Judges 14:3-4*)
- Each time Samson beat the Philistines, how did he do it? (*The Spirit of the Lord came powerfully upon him; Judges 14:9; 15:14*)
- How did Delilah get Samson to reveal the secret to his strength? (*She nagged him day after day until he told her, Judges 16:16*)
- What did the Philistines do to capture Samson? (*They paid Delilah to find out his secret, cut his hair, and attacked him; Judg. 16:5-20*)
- How did Samson deliver God's people? (*He prayed to God for strength and then pushed over the pillars holding up the roof of a temple, crushing the Philistine leaders and himself; Judg. 16:28-30*)

YOUNGER:

Open to Judges 13–16. Remind them that Judges is part of the History division. Remind kids that Bible divisions are used to help us organize the books of the Bible.

Ask the following questions:

- What was Samson's real source of strength? *Lead the kids to see that, although Samson said cutting his hair would take away his strength, his hair was just a picture of his obedience to God. God was his source of strength.*
- Who else gave His life to rescue many people? *Help the kids make the connection to Jesus, who gave up His life on the cross to save people from sin. Make a point to remind the kids that Jesus was without sin, making His sacrifice even greater. Samson saved the Israelites from the Philistines, but Jesus saved all God's people from sin and death forever.*
- How can we have strength from God? *Guide kids to see that our source of strength is also God. Guide the discussion away from physical strength and to the ideas of strong faith and determination to obey God. Remind them that we grow our spiritual strength by trusting God, praying to Him, reading His Word, and spending time with other believers.*

Say • **God gave Samson strength to defeat the Philistines.** When we trust Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit. He gives us spiritual strength.

OLDER:

Open your Bibles to Judges 13. Explain that today's Bible story comes from Judges 13–16. Challenge kids to tell you how many Bible books are part of the Old Testament History division. (12 books) Remind kids that the Book of Judges tells about Israel's cycle of sin, defeat, cries for help, and deliverance through a judge. Read Judges 13:1.

Say • When God raised up Samson as a judge for Israel, the Israelites were being ruled by the Philistines. They were from an area along the Mediterranean Sea. [*Point to the coastline north of Gaza (12) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map.*] Samson's sin led to his own death, but God used

his death to save the Israelites from their enemies. **God gave Samson strength to defeat the Philistines.**

Ask the following questions:

- Where did Samson's strength come from? *Help kids recognize that Samson's long hair didn't actually give him strength; it was a picture of his devotion to God. God was the ultimate source of Samson's strength. God chose Samson before he was born to deliver the Israelites from their enemies.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Heb. 11:32-34.)
- How can weakness be a good thing? *Lead kids to recognize that weakness requires us to rely on God. God's power is displayed when He uses us in our weakness to accomplish His purposes.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 12:9-10.)
- Samson looked like a great deliverer, but was he? What about Jesus? *Lead kids to discuss how Samson was strong, but he failed to obey God. Still, God can use sinful people to carry out His plan. Jesus, on the other hand, was an unexpected deliverer. He came to the world as a baby in humble circumstances. He entered Jerusalem on a donkey rather than a war horse, and defeated sin and death not through a physical battle but by laying down His life.* (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Phil. 2:5-8.)

***ACTIVITIES:**

***SPECIAL FATHER'S DAY ACTIVITY PAGES INCLUDED!**

ACTIVITY PAGE & COLORING PAGE

Invite kids to complete the "Samson's Strength?" activity page. Invite the kids to add a beard and hair to the bald face. Ask volunteers to share what hairstyle they gave Samson and why.

Say • Today we learned about a judge named Samson. God commanded him to never cut his hair. God also gave Samson incredible physical strength to do amazing things and defeat Israel's enemies. **God gave Samson strength to defeat the Philistines.** When we trust Jesus, God sends the Holy Spirit. He gives us spiritual strength.

RIDDLE TIME ACTIVITY PAGE

Invite kids to complete "Riddle Time" on the activity page. Challenge kids to answer the riddles. After a few minutes, review the answers.

Say • In the Bible story we will hear today, a man named Samson told a riddle to some other people but they could not figure out the answer until they cheated.

DOMINO DEMONSTRATION

Set up dominoes on their ends with your children. Place each domino so that it will hit the next if it tips forward into a maze. After setting up a dozen or so, ask your child to predict what will happen when the first domino falls, then allow him/her to push the first domino over. You can do this again and have your child create a complex domino maze.

Say • Chain reactions can be really fun to watch, but some kinds of chain reactions can be dangerous too. Sin is often like a chain reaction. One sinful choice can lead to another, and another, until you are stuck much deeper than you thought you could be, and you've done things you never thought you would.

As Samson stood blind and imprisoned by the Philistines, he may have wondered about the different sinful choices that led him there. The Bible teaches that sin starts with an evil desire and ends with death [see *Jas. 1:14-15*]. But as bad as that bad news is, there is better news about Jesus. The gospel can be like a chain reaction too!

When we confess our sin, and repent by turning away from it toward Jesus, God forgives our sin and gives us new life. Our hearts begin to love God and want to obey Him. He leads us to tell others about Him and help them grow to love and obey Him. Then those people can tell others, who can love and obey Him to tell even more!

BOOT CAMP

Instruct kids to lie down on the floor. Make sure everyone has room to move around. Explain the drill.

On the count of three, everyone will quickly do one sit-up, one push-up, and one jumping jack. Then players will begin another round: two sit-ups, two push-ups, and two jumping jacks. After each round, kids add a repetition to each activity (three, four, five, and so on). Make it a competition against each other or see how many rounds you can get through together

Say • Whew! This activity required a lot of physical strength. In today's Bible story, Samson was very strong, but his physical strength didn't come from working out. His strength came from God. **God gave Samson strength to defeat the Philistines.** In the end, Samson's sin led to his own death, but God used his death to save the Israelites from their enemies. Samson's story reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but God sent Him to die on the cross and rise again to rescue people from sin and give them eternal life.

KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

Before the session, write the key passage in words or phrases on several index cards. Hide the cards around the room. Display the key passage poster and invite kids to read it aloud. Challenge your kids to find the hidden index cards and arrange them in the correct order.

When kids finish, invite volunteers who have memorized the key passage to say it from memory.

Say • Great work. If you haven't memorized our key passage yet, keep working on it! Memorizing God's Word helps us remember what is true.

OR

Use tape to make a hopscotch board on the floor or use chalk outside. Write words or phrases of the key passage on paper to tape or with chalk in each square of the hopscotch board. Instruct your child to toss the beanbag or paper ball onto the board. Then he will hop through the board, skipping the square in which his beanbag landed. The next kid will toss her beanbag, hopping through and trying to skip both squares. Continue until the kids cannot make it across the board. Then invite volunteers to say the passage from memory.

Say • God is faithful and righteous. When we admit our sin to Him and agree with Him that it is wrong, He begins to heal us of the damage that sin causes.