

June 7 Elementary

Bible Passage: Deborah and Barak/ Judges 4–5

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

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

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* **BIBLE STUDY TIPS FOR PARENTS:**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

***STORY:**

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

When we understand how bad sin is—that it not only hurts us, but angers God—we should want to turn away from our sin. But that's only the first half. We also need to turn toward Jesus. He is our greatest treasure. He can take away our sin and give us life with God. When we love Jesus, we will hate sin and want to obey Him.

We learned last week that God's people were pretty lost without good leaders. After Joshua died, **God's people repeatedly turned from Him.** Thankfully, God is merciful. When they repented, God sent judges to rescue them from their enemies. This week we will learn about the judge Deborah.

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

Deborah and Barak: Judges 4–5

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

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

Barak said to Deborah, "I will go if you will come with me. If you won't come, I'm not going." "I'll go," Deborah said, "but you will receive no honor for the battle." So **Deborah, Barak, and the army went to Mount Tabor. Sisera took his chariots and his army to fight against Israel.**

"Go, Barak!" said Deborah. "God will help you defeat Sisera today." **Barak and his army moved down the mountain toward Sisera and his army. Barak chased the chariots and the army, and everyone in the army was killed. None of them survived except Sisera. He had escaped!**

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

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

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

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

SAY • Surprise, surprise! God's people turned away from Him again! This time, the people of Canaan took over the Israelites' land. The king of Canaan was cruel, and soon God's people remembered how much better their lives were when they followed God. God raised up Deborah—a prophetess and judge—to guide the people. She told Barak to lead the people into battle. Barak said he would obey if Deborah went with him. It seems Barak may not have trusted God fully to provide the victory. As a result, the honor for the battle would not go to Barak, but to a woman named Jael.

But here's a question for you: Who really got the glory for winning the day? *[Allow responses.]* God did! It was God who threw Sisera's army into confusion and chaos. **God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people,** but it was God who gave them victory. It is amazing to think that God uses us. Even though He is powerful enough to do everything on His own, He invites us to be a part of His perfect plans for the world. How cool is that?

***Christ Connection:**

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

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

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

***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 • God, thank You for saving Your people. We know that all of us are sinners who turn away from You. Thank You for calling us back and sending Jesus to defeat sin and death. Help us to be filled with love for You. Make us quick to repent when we sin, and help us lovingly obey You more each day. 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 • What a great key passage. The Bible teaches us that repentance leads us to life with God. ***What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.*** When we turn away from sin and toward Jesus, God forgives us and gives us righteousness.

***DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

COMPREHENSION:

- True or false: Israel did what was right after Ehud and Shamgar died. (*False, they did what was evil; Judges 4:1*)
- Why did God allow Canaan to overtake the Israelites? (*The people did what was evil in God's sight, so He allowed their enemies to conquer them; Judg. 4:1-2*)
- Who was Deborah? (*Deborah was a prophetess and a judge, Judges 4:4*)
- How did Barak respond to Deborah's instructions? (*Barak wanted Deborah to go with him, Judges 4:8*)
- Why didn't Barak get the honor for defeating Sisera and the army of Caanan? (*He said he would only go where God told him to go if Deborah went with him, Judg. 4:8-9*)
- Who ended up getting the honor for killing Sisera? (*Jael, a woman who was not an Israelite; Judg. 4:22*)
- What happened when Sisera fled after his army's defeat? (*Jael killed Sisera, Judges 4:21*)

YOUNGER:

Open your bibles to Judges 4. Help them use the table of contents and large chapter numbers to find Judges 4–5. Talk about the History division of the Old Testament and briefly review the other books that are part of this division (*Joshua–Esther*). Remind the kids that we use Bible divisions to help us categorize and understand what the Bible teaches us about God and about the gospel.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

- Why did God keep rescuing His people if they kept turning away from Him? *Guide kids to see that God is faithful and merciful. He loves even those who sin against Him. He still planned to use the Israelites to send Jesus, so He showed His love to them.*
- Whom does God use in His plans? *Guide kids to discuss the fact that God can—and does—use all kinds of people. In the story today, God used a man and two women. He used Israelites and non-Israelites. Remind kids that God is all-powerful and can use anyone in His plans. Help them see that when we have faith, God will do great things in us and through us.*
- Why does God use people in His plans? *Guide kids to see that God doesn't need our help to do anything, but He lovingly includes us in His good work. We are blessed by the chance to participate in His plan to rescue sinners and glorify Him. By using people, He shows His power to do amazing things through ordinary people.*

Say • God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people. They defeated Sisera's army, but only Jesus could defeat death and give us freedom from sin.

OLDER:

Open Bibles to Judges 4. Explain that today's Bible story comes from Judges 4–5. Remind kids that the Book of Judges shows Israel's cycle of sin, defeat, cries for help, and deliverance through a judge. When the judge died, the cycle started over again. Read Judges 4:1-3 together.

Say • Deborah was the judge in Israel when God said He wanted Barak to gather an army and lead them to Mount Tabor. God would help Barak defeat Sisera there. Mount Tabor

was in a northern part of the land of Canaan. [*Point to the area west of the Sea of Galilee (D5) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map.*] Through Israel's battle against the Canaanites, **God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.**

Ask the following questions:

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

***ACTIVITY:**

ACTIVITY PAGE & COLORING PAGE

Invite kids to complete the "It Takes Two" activity page. Invite the kids to circle the pictures that depict activities that need two or more people, and draw boxes around the activities that can be enjoyed alone.

Say • Some activities are fun to do on your own, but many things are more fun when you have a friend or group of people to play too. Today we will learn about people who worked together.

DRIVE A CHARIOT

Remove the top and one side of a large box to create a chariot. Draw spokes on large paper plates and glue them to two sides to serve as wheels. Allow kids to pretend to drive the chariot. You may also provide pieces of shiny wrapping paper or aluminum foil to glue to the chariot to decorate + color it!

Say • The army from Canaan was a strong army. Sisera, their leader, probably drove a fast, beautiful chariot. The Israelites may have been afraid because they didn't have a strong army with chariots and horses to pull them, but **God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.** If we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us. Everything God does is for His glory and our good. Because the Israelites repented and turned from their sins, God helped them defeat the army.

WOULD YOU RATHER?

Explain you are going to ask them some questions about things they would rather do alone or with someone else. Instruct kids to sit down if they would rather do the activity alone, and to stand up if they would rather do the activity with someone else.

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

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

Say • In today's Bible story, Deborah told Barak to lead the people into battle. Barak wanted Deborah to go with him. Barak said he would obey if Deborah went with him. It seems Barak may not have trusted God fully to provide the victory. As a result, the honor for the battle would not go to Barak, but to a woman named Jael. **God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.**

VICTORY SONG

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

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

Have the kids read or sing their songs.

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