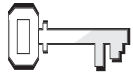


Strong Outside, Weak Inside



References

Judges 16; *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 560-568



Memory Verse

“Create in me a pure heart, O God” (Psalm 51:10, NIV).

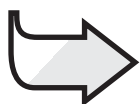


Objectives

The children will: **Know** that what we do and say affects those around us.

Feel sorry when what we do or say troubles others.

Respond by knowing and accepting that God forgives as soon as we ask.



The Message

God loves me and uses me even though I make mistakes.

Monthly Theme

We learn what is important in life.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

God intends Samson to be a leader in Israel. Samson disregards God’s plans. He breaks his special vow to live a pure life by going into the Philistine city of Gaza. The Philistines lock the city gates and plan to kill him. Samson escapes. He falls in love with a Philistine woman, Delilah. The Philistines bribe Delilah to find the secret of Samson’s strength. Three times Samson deceives Delilah. Finally he tells her the truth. While he sleeps, she cuts his hair. He is captured, bound, blinded, and made a slave. God forgives Samson and listens to his prayer for renewed strength. Samson pulls down the Philistine temple, killing himself along with many Philistines, and frees the Israelites from their enemy.

This is a lesson about community.

Our choices and behavior affect our entire community. Because of his choices, Samson was not able to deliver Israel as God had originally planned. When he repented and acted once more in God’s strength, not his own, he was able to rid Israel of their Philistine oppressors. In God’s strength we can make the right choices that will help us affect our community positively.

Teacher Enrichment

“When he had been shaven, Delilah began to annoy him and cause him pain, thus making a trial of his strength; for the Philistines dared not approach him till fully convinced that his power was gone. Then they seized him and, having put out both his eyes, they took him to Gaza. Here he was bound with fetters in their prison house and confined to hard labor. . . .

“There was no virtue in his long hair merely, but it was a token of his loyalty to God; and when the symbol was sacrificed in the indulgence of passion, the blessings of which it was a token were also forfeited.

“In suffering and humiliation, a sport for the Philistines, Samson learned more of his own weakness than he had ever known before; and his afflictions led him to repentance. As his hair grew, his power gradually returned; but his enemies, regarding him as a fettered and helpless prisoner, felt no

apprehensions. . .

“Physically, Samson was the strongest man upon the earth; but in self-control, integrity, and firmness, he was one of the weakest of men” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 566, 567).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Body Building</i> B. <i>Repentance Walk</i>	none none
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children’s Mission</i> offering container none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	door, skeins of yarn, scissors, flash cards, Bible-times costumes, two pillars made of cardboard boxes, bedroll chalkboard, chalk, eraser; small cards Bibles, ball of string or yarn, small cards, box
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Building Spiritual Muscles</i>	variety of weights, door, situations printed on paper
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Right Choices</i>	small paper plates, scissors, yarn, glue

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Body Building

Say: **We are going to do some exercises. Let’s begin with small jumps in place.** Other simple exercises include running in place and jumping jacks. When the children are tired, ask them to sit in a circle.

Debriefing

Ask: **Do you like exercising? What does exercise do to our bodies? Which muscles do we work on when we do [name exercise]? Our Bible story is about the strongest man who ever lived. God gave him special strength because He had a special job for this man to do. The strong man did not always follow God’s plan, but God still loved him and was able to use him. Our message is:**



GOD LOVES ME AND USES ME EVEN THOUGH I MAKE MISTAKES.

Say that with me.

B. Repentance Walk

Have the children form two or three lines at one end of the Sabbath School room or a corridor. Say: **When I say “Walk on,” walk toward me. When I say “Repent,” turn around and walk away.** Repeat the commands several times.

Debriefing

Ask: **What did you do when I asked you to repent? What does it mean to repent?** Allow discussion time. **Repent means to be sorry when we do something wrong. Because we are sorry we turn around—change direction. In our Bible story today, a man did many things he shouldn’t have done. But he repented and asked God to forgive him. Today’s message is:**



GOD LOVES ME AND USES ME EVEN THOUGH I MAKE MISTAKES.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "The Family of God" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 139)
- "Teach Me, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 110)
- "Come Into His Presence" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 14)
- "This Is My Prayer" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 106)
- "He's Able" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 40)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Say: **The people we are learning about are part of God's family. We are all part of God's big family.**



Offering

Say: **Our offering today will be used to let the people in (name the place) know that God loves them, and that they are part of God's family.**

You Need:

- offering container



Prayer

Say: **Think of a time when you made a mistake. How did you feel?** Allow time for the children to share their feelings. Then do a "popcorn" prayer, inviting the children to thank and praise God for His forgiveness. They can say their word at any time, like popcorn popping. Close with a prayer, thanking God for being with us all the time.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- door (real or cardboard)
- skeins of yarn for hair
- scissors
- flash cards
- Bible-times costumes
- two pillars made of cardboard boxes
- bedroll

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Samson, Delilah, two Philistines, chorus

Choose four children to be the main characters. Have the remaining children form a chorus to whisper the words from the flash cards. Have an adult lead them.

In advance, set up the two pillars to create a “temple” area. Also, prepare three large flash cards as follows: (1) We’ll kill him at dawn. (2) Money! Money! (3) Wake up! God has left you!

Setting the scene:

Say: **Samson knew what was right. As a small boy he had learned of God’s plans for him. His mother had told him about the angel who had come to talk about Samson before he was born. The angel told his parents what he should eat and that as long as his hair was not cut, he would be stronger than anyone else. But Samson did not want to follow God’s plan. He had gone to the Philistine city of Gaza to see a Philistine woman there. Now he was trapped.**

Read or tell the story.

It was midnight. Men were whispering outside the house. “The house is surrounded. (Hold up flash card 1.) We’ll kill him at dawn.” (Repeat the whisper several times.)

Even though Samson disobeyed God, God was still with him. Samson ran to the city gates, but they were locked. Then he grabbed the huge, wooden doors, lifted them right out of the ground, and walked away. (“Samson” lifts the door. If it is a real door, a teacher will need to help.) The

Philistines were amazed. (Shake heads in amazement.)

Not long after his escape from Gaza, Samson went to see a Philistine girl named Delilah. When the Philistine leaders saw this, they went to Delilah and whispered to her: “We will give you lots of money if you find out the secret of Samson’s strength.” (Hold up flash card: “Money! Money!” Repeat the whisper several times like a chant.)

Three times Delilah begged Samson for his secret. (Delilah begs on knees before Samson.) Three times he told her a lie. Three times the Philistines tried to tie him up. Three times Samson escaped easily. (Samson flexes muscles.)

“You don’t love me,” Delilah told Samson one night. “If you loved me, you would tell me the secret of your strength. You would tell me everything!” (On knees pleading again.)

Samson finally told her the secret of his strength. (Samson lies down; hair is covered with long skeins of yarn.)

That night Delilah cut Samson’s hair. (Cut yarn hair.) Then she tied him with ropes. “Wake up!” Delilah screamed. (Show flash card: “Wake up! God has left you!” Have chorus whisper, “Wake up! God has left you!”) “The Philistines are attacking you!” This time Samson could not break free. His strength had left him. More importantly, God had left him too. (Two “Philistines” drag Samson off to “temple” area.)

The Philistines put out Samson’s eyes. They brought him back to Gaza, through the very gates he had once carried.

Thousands of people came to see Samson, who was now weak and blind and helpless. They put him to work in their prison. Gradually, his hair began to grow back.

Samson knew he had done wrong. He told God he was sorry and asked for forgiveness.

After some time, at a temple to their god, Dagon, the Philistines threw a party celebrating Samson's capture. They brought him before the crowd and humiliated him.

Finally Samson asked to rest. A boy led him to the pillars in the middle of the temple. (*Guide Samson to the pillars.*) There Samson prayed: "O God, please strengthen me one more time. Let me get revenge on the Philistines."

Samson pushed against two pillars that held up the temple. His strength returned. (*Push pillars down.*) The pillars collapsed, and the temple fell, killing Samson along with thousands of Philistines. God had heard his prayer.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why did Samson tell the secret of his strength?** (He got tired of Delilah's questions.)

What was the consequence of telling his secret? Why did God leave him?

How did God respond when Samson said he was sorry and asked for help? Let's say today's message together:



GOD LOVES ME AND USES ME EVEN THOUGH I MAKE MISTAKES.

Memory Verse

Write the memory verse on the chalkboard. Have the children say the memory verse. Erase the memory verse one word at a time.

Repeat the verse each time a word is erased. By the time all the words are erased, the children should know the verse.

If you use small cards, write one word on each card. Remove one card each time the children say the verse.

Bible Study

In advance, write the following ques-

tions on cards. Tie them to long pieces of string or yarn about 12 inches (30 cm) apart. Put the string in a box with an end sticking out. Ask a child to gently pull a string and read the question to the class. Continue in the same way. Adults assist as necessary. Say: **Samson's hair was thick and strong like a rope or yarn. Let's pull on the strings and see what we can learn about him.**

1. What plans did God have for Samson? (Judges 13:5)
2. What did the angel say about Samson's hair? (Judges 13:5) Why? Was it the hair itself that made Samson strong? What made him strong?
3. Read Judges 16:20. What made Samson lose his strength? (The Lord left him.)
4. What happened to Samson's hair while he was in prison? (Judges 16:22)
5. Read verses 25-30. What happened to Samson himself?
6. Did Samson do the work God had asked him to do? (Judges 16:30)

Debriefing

Ask: **What happened to Samson while he was in prison? What made the difference?** (He began to understand how wrong he had been. He repented and asked God for forgiveness.)

What would have happened if he had followed God all the time? (The Israelites might have freed themselves from the Philistines long before, and he would not have died in a heathen temple.)

Can God use people even when they make mistakes? (yes)

Will we meet Samson in heaven? (Read Hebrews 11:32 aloud. Yes.) **Let's say our message together:**



GOD LOVES ME AND USES ME EVEN THOUGH I MAKE MISTAKES.

You Need:

- ball of string or yarn
- 6 small cards
- Bibles
- box

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- variety of weights
- door
- situations printed on paper (see activity)

Building Spiritual Muscles

Let the children lift the weights and try to lift the door.

Say: **The gates Samson lifted were heavier than the door. What do we need to do to develop muscles?** (eat right and exercise)

Exercise builds up our muscles, but what makes us strong on the inside? (Discuss qualities that make us strong inside.) **When we make right choices, we follow God's plans for us.**

Form three small groups and give each one a paper on which appears a situation.

Say: **Look at your situation and think of the different choices you can make and their results.** Allow time for each group to report to the class and discuss their answers.

1. People in school are using bad language. You know that it is not right, but they tease you and make fun of you.

2. You are in a store with some friends. You want to buy some candies but discover that you do not have

enough money. When you come out of the store, your friend has an extra chocolate bar. He tells you that he stole it and encourages you to do the same.

3. Your Mom has asked you to do your homework, but you want to play ball. She is going out, and you are sure that you could do both. She would never know if you played ball first and then did your homework.

Debriefing

Say: **We make choices every day. What we do and what we say affects those around us.**

Samson's choices influenced the Israelites. Whom do we influence when we make good and bad choices? (our younger brothers and sisters, our friends in church, our friends in school, and everyone we come in contact with)

How does God feel when we make bad choices? (sad) **God is always ready to forgive us and still use us, even when we make a mistake. Let's say today's message together:**



GOD LOVES ME AND USES ME EVEN THOUGH I MAKE MISTAKES.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Right Choices

Let each child draw a face on a paper plate and glue yarn to the plate for hair. One side of the face should have long hair and the other side short.

Say: **Samson made some wrong choices. He told Delilah the secret of his strength.**

Let's divide into pairs. Take turns in holding up your Samson face and sharing with your partner difficult choices you have made in the past or face at the moment. Talk together about how you can make right choices.

Debriefing

Ask: **What are some of the things we can do to help us make right choices?** (Ask God to help us.)

If we make wrong choices, as Samson did, will God forgive us? (yes)
When we are truly sorry for what we

have done and repent, God will forgive us, just as He forgave Samson.

Can God still use us, even when we make mistakes? (yes) **Everyone makes mistakes. Yes, God can use us, even when we make mistakes.**

Take your "face" home and share it with someone this week as you tell them about Samson. Be sure to tell them that God still loves us and will use us, even though we make mistakes.

Let's say our message together again:



GOD LOVES ME AND USES ME EVEN THOUGH I MAKE MISTAKES.

Closing

Have the children stand in a circle and, if appropriate, ask them to hold hands. Pray for forgiveness for mistakes in the past and ask God to use each one in the week ahead.

You Need:

- small paper plates
- scissors
- yarn
- glue

Strong Outside, Weak Inside

References

Judges 16;
Patriarchs and
Prophets,
pp. 560-568

Memory Verse

“Create in me a
pure heart, O God”
(Psalm 51:10, NIV).

The Message

God loves me
and uses me even
though I make mis-
takes.

Have you ever done something that you knew was wrong? How did you feel? That is probably how Samson felt. Again and again he ignored God’s plan. But God did not give up on Samson.

Some of Samson’s earliest memories were of his mother telling him about God’s special plan for his life. She often spoke of the angel who talked to his parents before he was born. The angel told them that Samson’s hair should not be cut. He was to be a Nazirite—set apart to serve God. God had promised, “As long as you do not cut Samson’s hair, I will give him strength.” God wanted Samson to use his strength to lead Israel against the Philistines. But Samson did not follow all of God’s instructions.

Samson wanted his own way. He wanted to follow his own wishes, not God’s. God had asked him to marry an Israelite woman, but he disobeyed. Instead, he went to the Philistine city of Gaza to see a woman there. Now he was trapped in her house.

It was midnight. Some men were whispering outside the house. “The house is surrounded,” they said. “We’ll kill him at dawn.”

Even though Samson had abandoned God, God was still with him. Samson ran to the city gates, but they were locked. Then Samson grabbed the huge, wooden doors, lifted them right out of the ground,

and walked away. The Philistines were amazed.

Not long after his escape from Gaza, Samson went to see a Philistine woman named Delilah. When the Philistine leaders saw this, they went to see Delilah. “We will give you lots of money, if you find out the secret of Samson’s strength,” they promised.

Three times Delilah begged Samson to tell her his secret. Three times he told her a lie. Three times the Philistines tried to tie him up. Three times Samson escaped easily.

“You don’t love me,” Delilah finally told Samson. “If you really loved me, you would tell me the secret of your strength. You would tell me everything!”

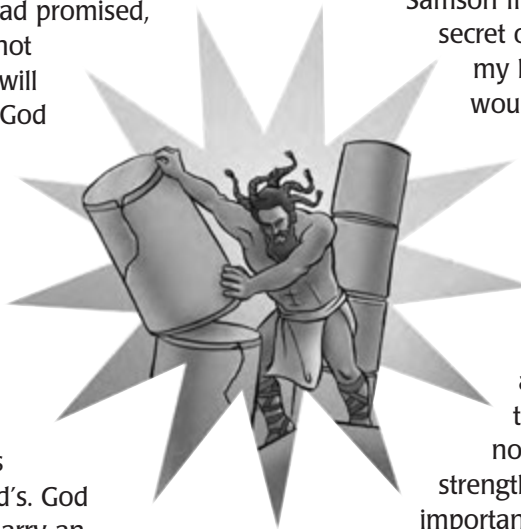
Samson finally told her the secret of his strength. “If my head were shaved, I would be weak,” he said.

That night Delilah cut Samson’s hair. Then she tied him with ropes. “Wake up!” Delilah screamed. “The Philistines are attacking you!” This time Samson could not break the ropes. His strength had left him. More importantly, God had left him too.

The Philistines captured Samson that night and put out his eyes. They took him back to Gaza, through the very gates he had once carried. Thousands of people came to see Samson, who was now weak and blind and helpless.

The Philistines put Samson to work in the prison. Gradually, his hair began to grow back. Samson knew he had done wrong. He told God that he was sorry and asked God to forgive him.

After some time, at a temple to their god, Dagon, the Philistines threw a party.



They were celebrating Samson's capture. During the celebration Samson was led from his prison cell. There, in their temple, men teased Samson and humiliated him.

Finally Samson asked to rest. A boy led him to the pillars in the middle of the temple. There Samson prayed: "O God, please strengthen me one more time."

Samson pushed against two main pillars in the center of the temple. God gave him strength again. The pillars collapsed, and the temple fell. Samson was killed along with thousands of Philistines.

God had given Samson enormous physical strength, but Samson disobeyed God. He was strong, but on the inside, Samson was weak. Let's ask God to strengthen us inside and outside, so we can resist temptation and always do what is right.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, go for a walk with your family. When you get home ask each person to name the most beautiful thing they saw. Imagine how Samson felt when he could no longer see.
- Look for Gaza on a Bible map. Find it on a map of today.
- Thank God for the gift of sight.

Sunday

- Help your mother do the dishes. How is washing away the dirt like asking God to give us a clean heart?
- Make a heart for each member of your family. Write your memory verse on them. Use them to teach your family the memory verse during worship.
- Pray that God will wash away the mistakes you have made.

Monday

- Ask your mother for a large raw potato. Cut the top off and scoop out some of the potato. Draw a face with colored markers. Place a thin layer of cotton in the hole and sprinkle some water and alfalfa seeds on it. Keep the cotton damp and see how quickly the "hair" grows.
- Who has the longest hair in your family? Trace around a coin or other round object and draw each person and their hair. Talk about Samson during worship. What was the real source of his strength?
- Thank God for giving you strength today.

Tuesday

- Read and discuss Judges 16:1-3 during family worship today. Count all the doors in your

house. Write the number. _____

- Write a poem or rap about Samson's strength. Share it during family worship.
- Decide who is the strongest and weakest in the family. Thank God that the strong can help the weak.

Wednesday

- Read and discuss Judges 16:4-20 during worship.
- How many different kinds of rope, string, or thread can you find in your house? Ask your mother for samples. Have a competition to see who can break them.
- Draw what you think Delilah's face looked like when Samson kept breaking the ropes.
- Ask God to help you to be kind when others make mistakes.

Thursday

- Read and discuss Judges 16:21-30 during family worship.
- Samson repented when he was in prison. Write what repentance means in your own words.
- Thank God for hearing and forgiving you when you repent. Ask Him to keep you from sinning again.

Friday

- Act out the story of Samson with your family during worship.
- Sing together "Teach Me, Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 110). Talk about what it means to allow Jesus to teach you. Where did Samson go wrong?
- Say your memory verse together. Then explain it in your own words.
- Ask God to be with you tomorrow on His special day.