

King's Kids

Unit Nine:

Judges

Basic Truth(s): The Lord is, and always has been, full of mercy and faithfulness.

Unit Overview: The promised land wasn't completely conquered; After Joshua the Lord used Judges to rule the people and rescue them from the other nations that remained by them.

New Testament Connections: The Lord's prayer; The faith of the Canaanite woman; Jesus is baptized; The Prodigal Son

Unit Memory Verse:

Psalm 145:8

"The LORD is gracious and compassionate,
slow to anger and rich in love."

King's Kids: Unit Nine: Judges

Lesson One

Lesson One Focus: The Israelites did not completely follow the Lord's instructions when they conquered the Promised Land.

Lesson One Introduction Activity: Bring in a project that you started a long time ago but haven't yet finished, if you have one. Tell the students that it is easy to start something with great optimism and excitement, only to begin to lose that before you have completed the task. Explain what happened with your project. Ask them if they have personal experiences with that. Give them time to share. Then tell them that it is okay when that happens sometimes, but sometimes getting distracted from what the Lord has asked us to do can have a high cost. Tell them the Israelites had to learn that same lesson over and over again.

Lesson One Teaching: *This lesson is based off of Judges 1:27-2:5. Read this passage and then prepare or find a version to share with the children. Then discuss it with them as follows.*

Sometimes when the Lord asks us to do something, it is easy to begin by being obedient and then forget to follow through completely with what He said. This was kind of what happened to the Israelites. They started off being obedient, but then didn't completely follow through with all that they were supposed to do.

What they forgot to remember most of all, is that the Lord always has reasons for why He asks us to do things. He isn't just trying to control us or show off His power. He genuinely wants what is best for us and He can see things that we can't. He can see when something may cause us problems before we can see it.

The same was true of the Israelites. The Lord knew that if there were other people that were allowed to remain in the land, they would cause problems for the Israelites. And they sure did! First of all, their ways were not God's ways. The people of the land didn't worship God. They worshiped false gods. It wasn't long before the Israelites began to do some of the same things that the other people did that displeased the Lord. Secondly, some of the people actually ended up putting the Israelites into slavery for them. Would either of these things happened had the Israelites been completely obedient to the Lord?

The Lord is slow to anger. He doesn't react to our sin the way that people might. Instead, He is very patient and loving toward us. Even when we sin. His patience can sometimes be misunderstood as approval to what we are doing. Just because there aren't immediate consequences to sin does not mean that they aren't there. The Lord is hoping that His patience will allow for us to turn from our sin on our own before we have to be disciplined by Him. This was the case for the Israelites, too. It wasn't ever His plan that the Israelites had to face the consequences of their actions. Their actions were never part of His plan! The Lord's great kindness actually prevented them from facing the entire consequences of their actions. Instead of leaving them in the situations that they got themselves into, do you know what God did? He raised up people to rescue the Israelites--time and time again.

Do you know what? That is what the Lord has done for us too. Except for us, there is only one rescuer needed, because He rescued us from everything, once and for all. Jesus is the way for us to be rescued from our sins and the troubles that come as a result of our sin. Sometimes we still have consequences or discipline. But the Lord's desire is that our hearts would change, and we would be free from sin and all of its effects. Isn't He a good God?

Not only does He forgive us and rescue us from our mistakes, but He also tells us what to do in the first place so that we won't get into trouble in the first place! Let's learn from the Israelites and be careful to be obedient to *all* that the Lord has commanded.

Close in prayer: Praise the Lord for His goodness. Thank Him for His great love. Ask Him to help each child be faithful to Him, and that they would be blessed because of it.

Optional Journal Activity: Play "soaking" music and give the students time to get "alone" with the Lord. Have them process today's lesson with the Lord. They should ask the Lord if there is any area where they have gotten distracted, or haven't stayed faithful to complete what the Lord asked them to do. If He reveals anything, they can journal about it. Then, if you would like, have the students split up into small groups and share what the Lord showed them. The time should end with the students praying for one another and releasing blessing for victory in that area.

Lesson One Optional Activities:

1. Do any activities from Unit Eight that were not previously completed.
2. Play a game/games in which following the directions is important to success.

King's Kids: Unit Nine: Judges
Lesson One: New Testament Connection

New Testament Connection Focus: The Importance of The Lord's Prayer

Introduction Activity: Make up some sentences that are ridiculously long to say something quite simple. Read them to the children and give them a chance to guess at what you are really saying. Then tell them that it is kind of silly to make something that could be easy so complicated. Explain that sometimes when people talk to the Lord they make it complicated, when it really is quite simple. Tell them that today you are going to learn how Jesus taught people to pray.

New Testament Connection Lesson: Start by reading Matthew 6:9-13. Then discuss it with them as follows.

Jesus once told His disciples that He didn't say anything unless He first heard the Father saying it. So, that means that everything He taught people was from the heart of Father God. The same was true when He taught people to pray. When we pray, who do we pray to? We pray to the Father. And He told us what He wanted us to pray. Therefore, it is probably pretty important to learn this lesson.

Do you think that when Jesus taught this He was hoping that we would all memorize this and simply recite it each day? Or do you think that He had something more in mind? While it is good to repeat these words in prayer, we need to do more than just say them. We have to understand them and believe them in our hearts when we pray them. So, what is the point of this prayer?

Well, let's look at it again. (Read through the passage again.) How often do you think that the Lord wants us to pray this prayer? There is a hint--give us how much of our bread? Give us today's bread. We are to ask each day for what we need *that* day. If we are praying for what we need for today, that must be true of the whole prayer. It is all for *today*.

The Lord loves it when we talk to Him. (In fact, the Bible tells us to pray without ever stopping!) He loves to talk to us, too. Jesus wasn't trying to tell us that we couldn't pray to the Lord in other words and ways than this prayer. He wants us to talk to Him about everything! But, He was telling us that each day we should make sure to pray for the following things:

- Praise Father God for who He is
- That earth would become more like heaven as the Lord's desires and ways are followed
- That all our needs today would be taken care of
- That everything we owe to others would be forgiven
- That we would forgive anyone who owes us anything
- That we would not be lead into temptation, but instead would be delivered from evil

What do you think would happen if you began to pray like this every day? Do you think that you would see your prayers answered? Of course you would! The Lord hears our prayers

and answers them. Our prayers are very powerful. And, if the Lord is the one who taught us to pray this way to Him, He is probably wanting to answer this prayer. Don't you think?

Do you remember when we learned about how the Israelites didn't do all that the Lord had commanded them to do and so they faced consequences? What do you think would have happened if they prayed like this every day? Do you think that things might have turned out differently? This prayer represents God's heart, His hopes for us. As we faithfully pray them, we will begin to see His hopes come true in our lives. Isn't He a good God?

Close in prayer. Lead the children through the Lord's prayer. Lead them, but give them opportunity to pray in their own words.

Optional Activities:

1. Create or find a coloring page with the Lord's Prayer on it. After the children have colored it, cut it apart to make it into a puzzle. (You may want to mount it on to tag board or cardboard first.)
2. Let each child take one section of the prayer and create a drawing or piece of art that represents it.

King's Kids: Unit Nine: Judges

Lesson Two

Lesson Two Focus: Deborah and Barak, God's plans are accomplished through all kinds of people.

Lesson Two Introduction Activity: There is no introductory activity for this lesson.

Lesson Two Teaching: *This lesson is based on Judges 4. If you can, find out a person to act out each of the following parts: Deborah, Barak, Jael & Sisera. Tell the students that you have some very special guests that are going to teach the lesson today, and then introduce them to the class.*

Deborah: Most of you probably know about Joshua. He was the great leader that led my people into the Promised Land. He was a brave and faithful man. While he was alive, everyone followed the Lord and did as he commanded. After he died, however, things began to change. For one thing, there wasn't a clear and strong leader over everyone like there had been with Moses and Joshua. Instead there were a series of "judges". I had the honor of being one of them--but I'll tell you more about that in a little bit. Another thing that changed was that people stopped doing things God's way and began to do them their own way instead. And, as you may know, that can only lead to trouble.

Barak: During my time, Israel had once again stopped doing things God's ways. As a result, we were oppressed by a king named Jabin. He had a very great army. The commander of that army's name was Sisera. These people ruled over us and we were miserable! We cried out to God to save us and, even though we didn't deserve it, God heard our prayers and he answered us! The answer just wasn't quite what I was expecting.

Deborah: As I mentioned, I was a judge in Israel at this time. That means that I helped the Israelites when they had disagreements with each other. The Lord would also speak to me and give me instructions for the people. One day He told me some great news! He said that he was going to rescue us from Sisera. As the Lord instructed I sent for Barak. Once Barak arrived I could hardly wait to tell him the good news!

Barak: And the news she shared was good. It was great! But it took me some time to adjust. Deborah told me that I was supposed to march to Mount Tabor with 10,000 men and there the Lord would deliver Sisera into my hand. I was speechless at first! This is what we had all be praying for. And the Lord was answering that prayer--and through me! Immediately, though, I had several concerns. First of all, their army was stronger than ours. They had chariots and we didn't. In fact, they had 900 chariots. How could we win against them? Also, the Israelites weren't exactly doing a good job of working together. Some parts of Israel were more oppressed than others, and the other tribes didn't seem all that interested in helping out those who were the worst off. So, I asked Deborah to go with me. Maybe I shouldn't have done it, but I did.

Deborah: And I understand why Barak asked me, although I have to admit, I was saddened by his request. I was a judge over Israel and I could help get others to support Barak in his

mission. Also, I was the one who had given him the word and it was probably reassuring to him that I really believed in what the Lord said.

Barak: It may have been understandable, but I still shouldn't have asked her to come with. This was a mission that the Lord had given to *me*. He promised to give me victory and I should have believed Him. Thankfully, the Lord didn't change what He promised, but the plan to accomplish it did change.

Jael: This is where I come into the story. Barak did as the Lord asked, and he and his men had a great victory over Sisera's army! Sisera himself, however, ran away. As he was fleeing from Barak, he came across my tent. He stopped, looking for a place to rest and hide. I welcomed him in and gave him a cup of milk to drink. He drank it and then went to sleep. He was exhausted by this time. He thought that he would be safe--after all, there was peace between my husband and his king. Yet I knew that this man was not supposed to have victory. I knew he wasn't supposed to escape the fate of his army. So, after he had fallen asleep, I...well, I don't want to go into the details of what happened, but Sisera never again woke up.

Deborah: When Barak refused to go into battle with out me, the Lord's plans changed. Instead of Barak gaining victory by himself, the Lord was going to deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman. When I said that I think that most people thought I meant myself. To be honest, I didn't know quite what I meant myself. I just knew what the Lord said. It turned out to be Jael here--a woman nobody expected.

Barak: Even though I knew what Deborah had said, I was still quite surprised when Jael told me what happened. I couldn't be too sad about how things ended, though. What a victory that was for our people! The Lord had once again proven His faithfulness to us.

Jael: The Lord also showed us all how He can use anyone and everyone. His faithfulness isn't dependent on a person. He can change plans if needed, but still bring about the desired result. He is bigger than we are, and He can see things that we can't. That means that He isn't tied down to only what we see as being possible. With Him, *all* things are possible!

Deborah: That is true. To the Lord it doesn't matter if you are a boy or a girl, what your family is like, how much money you have or how smart you think you are. All He needs is someone that believes Him and will obey Him when He asks. If you are willing, God will use each one of you in ways just as important as He used us.

Barak: It doesn't even matter if you make mistakes. Mistakes can change the plans and cost you--so it is best if you don't make them--but God is big enough to cover over our mistakes! What a good God He is!

Thank your special guests for coming and sharing their story. Ask them if they would pray over your class, that their faith would be strengthened and they would be used by God in great ways. Then lead your class in generously thanking the guests for coming to class. Close in prayer.

Optional Activities:

1. Have the children color or paint a picture of Deborah.
2. Make a palm tree. (Deborah sat by one when she was judge.) Have one toilet paper tube for each child. Let them cut out palm branches from green paper and glue it at the top of the tube to make the tree. (You can also let them color the tube brown, or glue brown paper on it, if desired.)
3. Have the children make a self-portrait. Hang them up, under the label "Victorious in God".

King's Kids: Unit Nine: Judges
Lesson Two: New Testament Connection

(This lesson is the same as the Pre-K lesson. You may want to combine the classrooms for all or a part of this lesson.)

New Testament Connection Focus: The faith of the Canaanite Woman.

New Testament Connection Introduction Activity: Bring in a giant container of juice or some sort of snack / treat. Tell the class that you brought it in for a couple of the children in the class. (Name a couple specific children.) Ask them if they think they would be able to eat / drink it all. Then ask the other children if they would like to share some also. Tell them that even though you brought it in for just a couple students, there really is enough for everyone. Then tell them that you were just using this as an example, you really want to share with everyone, and everyone will get some at the end of the lesson time. Explain that you wanted them to see what happened when Jesus came to earth. When Jesus came, He came to rescue the Israelites--God's chosen people. But, Jesus is so good and He had so much to give that there was way more than just what the Israelites needed. So, instead of only the Israelites (or Jewish people) getting what Jesus had, others got it as well. And now, it isn't just the Jewish people that are God's children. Everyone who knows Jesus is a part of His family!

New Testament Connection Lesson: *This lesson is based off of Matthew 15:21-28. Read it so that you are familiar with it before the class time. Then share it with the children as follows.*

One day when Jesus was out walking with His disciples a woman from Canaan came up to Him, crying out for help. The enemy had caused her daughter was very sick and she wanted Jesus to rescue her. Jesus didn't answer her, but she kept asking for His help anyway. The disciples asked Jesus to make her go away because she was shouting at them, too. Jesus didn't send her away, but He did say that He wasn't there to help people from Canaan. He said that He was sent only to Israel--God's chosen people. The woman continued to ask for His help. She told Him that she didn't need to receive everything that the Jewish people (the Israelites) received from Him, but couldn't she just have some left over scraps?

Jesus was so pleased at what she said. He told her that her daughter was healed because of her faith. You see, this woman had so much faith that she wouldn't take no for an answer. There were other people, people that could have had everything that Jesus offered to them, but they weren't interested. Or maybe they wanted a little bit of what He had, but not everything. So, they end up without getting everything that Jesus has for them.

Do you remember the story about Deborah and Barak? Barak did what the Lord asked of Him, but not completely. So, the victory wasn't all His. The Lord wants us to have faith like the Canaanite woman. Faith enough that we ask for everything that we can from the Lord. Faith enough that we will do whatever He asks, because we trust Him so much. He is gracious and will forgive us our mistakes, but when we don't have enough faith, we don't get to do or have everything that the Lord wants us to do and have. This woman's daughter would not have been healed if her faith hadn't been so big.

What do you think might happen if you have faith like the woman from Canaan? *Help the children see that the Lord wants to do miracles for them like He did the woman from Canaan and through them like He had planned for Barak.*

God is so good! All we need to do is believe in His goodness and then watch and be amazed by what happens.

Close in prayer: Praise the Lord for His goodness. Ask Him to increase the faith of the children and that they would see their faith bear much fruit.

Optional Activities:

1. Find a coloring page to go with the story.
2. Make a faith poster to bring home as a reminder of the importance of faith. Simply have the letters F A I T H cut out (or printed out for the children to cut around) in different colors of construction paper. Have the children glue them onto a piece of paper and decorate it as desired with provided supplies like glitter, sequins, stickers, crayons to color it, etc.
3. Make a "Faith can..." booklet. See the example that follows. Have the children color on each page, then cut the pages apart, and staple them together into a small booklet.

King's Kids: Unit Nine: Judges
Lesson: Three

Lesson Three Focus: Gideon, the Lord sees us differently than we do.

Lesson Three Introduction Activity: Give each child a word that is a description of the way that the Lord sees them. Don't let them know the description is about them, however! Then go around the room and let them each share what they think a person with that title is like. (For example: Prince / Princess, Warrior, Champion, Holy One, etc.) After you have gone around the room, ask them who they think of when they hear titles like that. Then ask them if they know that the person they were really describing is themselves. Tell them each one of those is a name that the Lord calls them. Tell them that today you are going to learn about someone who didn't see himself as God did. Once he learned who he was, however, everything changed.

Lesson Three Teaching: This lesson is based off of Judges 6-8. Read it and prepare or find a version of this story to share with the children. Then discuss it with them as follows.

This is a pretty exciting story with an unlikely hero. When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon to tell him that God was going to save Israel from Midian--and use Gideon to do it--how did Gideon react? He wondered how it could be true because he was from an "unimportant family" in Israel. Not only that, but he was the youngest in his family. It didn't seem like God was choosing the right man for the job, did it?

But, God knew differently. Do you remember what the Lord called Gideon? The first thing the angel of the Lord said to him was, "The LORD is with you, O valiant warrior.". Do you know what it means to be valiant? Valiant means brave. The Lord was calling Gideon "brave warrior" (or fighter). Do you think that when Gideon looked in the mirror he saw a valiant warrior looking back at him? Not in his mind. But God could see more than Gideon could see. After all, God is the one who created him. God knew him even better than he knew himself. And, who ended up being right? How does the story end?

God was right! Gideon was a very brave warrior. It would take a very brave warrior to take an army of only 300 men to fight against an army of many, many thousands. The victory that Gideon won led to peace in the land for forty years. He changed history for his people! Isn't that amazing?

Do you know that when God sees you, he sees more than what you see when you look in the mirror? He sees more than who you are now or where you come from. He sees everything that He created you to be. What kinds of things do you think God created you to be? *Help the children brainstorm who God created them to be: His child, His friend, a mighty warrior, sinless, like Jesus, etc.*

God knew who Gideon really was, and so He gave Gideon the opportunity to prove it. He will do the same thing for you. No matter what situation you find yourself in, God is giving

you the chance to prove that you are all of those things that He sees. Just like He was with Gideon, He is with you. He will help you to not just be those things inside, but outside too.

Close in prayer. Thank the Lord that He creates everyone so amazingly. Ask Him to show the children who they really are. Then ask for grace to be released that each child will learn how to behave according to their true identity. Thank the Lord for His goodness in always being with us.

Lesson Three Optional Activities:

1. Make Gideon's torch. Take black or brown paper and roll it into a cone shape. (Let the kids decorate it first, if desired.) Then glue red and orange tissue paper into the middle of it to look like the fire. (Have enough supplies so each child can make their own.)
2. Make a paper mache pot. Have a balloon blown up only partially. Cover it with the paper mache. (An easy recipe for this is simply mixing flour and water together. Feel free to use any recipe that you desire, however.) After the pot has dried, pop the balloon and then paint the pot. (Either allow each child to make their own, or else make a couple group pots that the class works on together or in small groups.)
3. Make a pot picture. Use clear contact paper or wax paper. Have the outline of a pot drawn on it. (You'll need one for each child.) Then have the children paint glue on the pot and then decorate it with bits of different colored tissue paper.
4. Have the children color or paint a picture of Gideon. (You can find one on the internet.)
5. Make a trumpet. Have a toilet paper roll (one per child) glued between two trumpet shapes. Or, take a soda or water bottle with no cap on it. Cut off the bottom, so about 2/3rds of it is left depending on the size of the bottle. (You'll have to make sure there are no sharp parts left.) Let the children decorate it with stickers.
6. Watch the VeggieTales Movie "Gideon: Tuba Warrior"
7. Make bookmarks with the names used in the Intro. Activity. At the top of it, it should say "I am..." Laminate the bookmarks and then punch a hole in the top. Give the children ribbon to tie at through the bow.

King's Kids: Unit Nine: Judges
Lesson Three: New Testament Connection

Lesson Three New Testament Connection Focus: Jesus is baptized. (We should be too!)

New Testament Connection Introduction Activity: Bring in a picture of an olympic competition. (Or a short clip of an olympic competition.) Ask the children if any of them have seen the Olympics before. Discuss with them what type of training Olympic Athletes go through (or any professional athlete). Ask them how they think they would do in a competition against them. How would they prepare? Tell them that as Christians, we are supposed to be equipped for victory, too. The difference is that the most valuable part of our "training" isn't anything we do at all. Rather, it is inviting the Presence of Someone very important into our lives: The Holy Spirit. Tell them that today you are going to learn about one way to do that.

New Testament Connection Lesson: This lesson is based off of Matthew 3:13-17. Read it to the children, then discuss it with them as follows.

Jesus was the Son of God. Doesn't it seem strange that He wanted to be baptized? He wasn't repenting of any sins, because He had never sinned. That is what people were usually doing when they were baptized by John. He wasn't making the commitment to follow Himself. So, what was He doing? He said that it was needed to fulfill all righteousness. What does that mean?

Jesus being baptized was the next step in the plan for His life on earth being fulfilled. When He was baptized, what happened. He heard the Father's voice and a dove landed upon Him. Except it wasn't actually a dove, it was Holy Spirit, right? When Jesus got baptized it was more than just Him getting wet. After He was baptized, He goes into the wilderness and is tempted by Satan. Do you think His baptism may have been important to giving Him the strength that He needed during that time in the wilderness?

When you get baptized, more happens than just getting wet. You are inviting the Lord to empower you and enter your life at a deeper level. You are publicly declaring yourself to belong to the Lord and opening your heart to Him. It is important to get baptized. It is an important step on your journey with the Lord when the time is right. It is a way to prepare--just like athletes--for the life ahead of you.

Close in prayer:

Optional Activities:

1. Do a coloring page of Jesus being baptized.
2. Make a Dove picture. Give each child a picture of a dove. Have them paint it and then add pieces of white tissue paper to the picture while the paint is wet. Otherwise, provide craft feathers for them to glue on to the picture.

King's Kids: Unit Nine: Judges **Lesson Four**

Lesson Four Focus: Samson: The cost of sin and mercy of God.

Lesson Four Introduction Activity: Let the children create their own superhero persona--one with a supernatural twist. Discuss with them the things we are called to do--cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, bring freedom and life to those trapped in darkness, bring healing to people, etc. Have the children brainstorm a list with you. Then let each of them create a picture of themselves as a superhero. Let them do this either with crayons or paint or clay or you could even have some magazines or pictures they could cut up to use to make their picture. When they are finished, let them share their creations. Then tell them that today you are going to learn about someone who seemed a bit like a superhero, except His biggest enemy actually turned out to be himself, when he didn't obey the Lord.

Lesson Four Teaching: *This lesson is based on Judges 13-16. Read it and prepare a version to share with the children. Then discuss it with them.*

Samson was a very special man, don't you think? He was chosen even before he was born to do great things. Because of this, there were special rules that the Lord gave Samson to follow. What were those rules? Did Samson do a good job of following them? In fact, Samson had such a hard time following those rules that it eventually cost him his life.

It didn't start out like that though. The first bad choice that we know that Samson made was when he chose to eat honey out of the lion. Doing that was breaking one of God's rules for him because God had said that he should not eat anything that was "unclean". Because the honey had been inside the lion's body, it was considered unclean. Samson knew that he wasn't supposed to eat it, but he did anyway. In fact, he even deceived his parents by not telling them where the honey was from and they ended up eating it too. It doesn't seem that Samson ever repented for his actions either. The Bible doesn't tell us that he felt bad about what he did and asked forgiveness and then changed his mind to do things God's way. And it also didn't seem like there was any real consequence when he broke God's rule, did it?

Sometimes life is like that. You make a bad choice and do something you shouldn't and nothing really happens. At least not on the outside. What happens on the inside though? Samson continued to make bad choices. He fell in love with a woman named Delilah. A woman that didn't know the Lord. And that doesn't turn out very well for him, does it? Sadly, Samson's life is not what it could have been. However, in God's grace and mercy, Samson's strength does return and he finds his greatest victory over them at the very end of his life. Isn't God good?

I want you to think about the process of sin, though. Even though God's mercy and forgiveness cover over our sin, and He gives us new chances, sin *always* has consequences. You may not realize it at first, but even if you "get away" with something on the outside, you can never escape its affects on your spirit. For example: Let's say that you do something you aren't supposed to do, like play baseball in the house. You know you aren't supposed to do it,

but your mom isn't around and you do it anyway. She doesn't catch you doing it, so you begin to do it more and more often. At first you felt kind of scared and guilty while you were doing it, but after awhile it doesn't bother you at all. One day, though, there is an accident and the ball hits the wall and breaks a picture that was hanging there. When you explain to your mom what happened, you don't tell the truth. You make up a story so that you don't get in trouble. Do you see what happened? You started out by breaking one rule and you end up breaking more and more rules. And as time goes by, you feel less and less guilty about it. If you continue on that path you will find out that it is easy for you to lie. Which makes it to break other rules. That isn't a very good pattern to continue, is it?

Rules are set up for our good. They are set up not to harm us or keep us from having fun, but to give us the opportunity to have the best life possible. Samson ended up being a judge for only twenty years. The other judges that we have learned about--Deborah and Gideon--were both judges for forty years. Twice as long as Samson! Things would have gone much better for him if he would have kept his heart soft towards the Lord and His ways all of his life, wouldn't they have?

Sin always costs us. There is good news, though. It is this: making one bad choice does not have to lead to another! Remember my example about playing baseball in the house? What would have been the right thing to do? The right thing to do would have been to tell your mom right away what you had done. Apologize, ask forgiveness and receive any discipline (without complaint!). Then, decide not to do it again. Find something else to do inside that is fun. Anytime you sin, the good news is that you don't have to keep on sinning! Jesus died so that we would be free from sin and death. It is important for us all to make sure that if we do make a mistake, if we sin, that we make it right as quickly as we can. God is merciful and good and His forgiveness is big enough to forgive everything! Isn't that good news?

Close in prayer. Praise the Lord for His goodness and mercy. Thank Him for sending His Son so that we can walk in forgiveness rather than sin. Give the students time to ask forgiveness if there is any unconfessed sin in their lives. Then ask the Lord for grace to be released for the children to choose quick repentance when needed. Thank the Lord for His plans over each child.

Optional Activities:

1. Do some "strong man" type competitions. Be creative. You could play tug-of-war; arm-wrestling; thumb-wrestling; leg-wrestling; etc. If you want to you could even create some awards and prizes to give out at the end.
2. Watch the VeggieTale Movie: Minnesota Cuke. (About Samson's hairbrush.)
2. Bring in a couple wigs of crazy hair for the children. Take a picture of each child with the wig on. If the technology is available, do a "slide show" on a computer of all the children in their wigs. Pick some fun music to play during this time.

King's Kids: Unit Nine: Judges
Lesson Four: New Testament Connection

New Testament Connection Focus: The Prodigal Son and our Father's great love.

New Testament Connection Introduction Idea: Have the room decorated for a special party before the children come in. Try to make it very special. Once all the children have arrived, have them all sit down and explain that today you are going to learn about a very special party that happened one day. After, you will have a party of your own.

New Testament Connection Lesson: *This lesson is from Luke 15:11-32. Find or prepare a version to share with the children. Then discuss it with them as follows.*

Do you know who Jesus told this story to? He told it to Jewish people. People who knew the Lord. It wasn't directed at people who didn't know God and needed to come to know Him. The reason it is important to know this is because that means the son in this story isn't someone who never knew the Lord, but someone who did know Him and walked away from Him. Someone who decided to do things their way instead of His way. What a sad day that must have been for the father of this story. His son was leaving and he didn't know if he would see him again. Once the son left, did the father stop loving him? Did the father forget about him? You know what I think? I think the father thought about that son every day. I think he prayed for him and longed to see him again and know he was okay. Do you think the father cared about anything but the son coming home again?

The father didn't care about what mistakes the son made. No mistake would have been big enough to stop his father from loving him! Unfortunately, the father's love couldn't stop the son from making bad choices. It didn't change the fact that the son had a miserable life for a period of time before he came home. The father's love couldn't protect the son from himself. But, there was one thing it could do. The father's love could stay and wait, hoping against hope for the son's return. And upon that return, the father's love would bring forgiveness and restoration to the son. His love made a way for the son's mistakes--his sin--to be just a bad choice in his past instead of changing his whole life forever.

Do you know that our heavenly Father is just like the father in this story? He has such great love for us. His love might not always stop us from making bad choices and sinning. But, it is waiting for us as soon as we decide to make the right choice. The father's love is waiting for us. As soon as we make the right choice and turn from our sin, do you know what happens? It is celebrated by heaven. Our sin is forgiven in the goodness of Father's love. It is even forgotten so that it doesn't change our whole lives. Isn't Father good? It is amazing how much love He has for us all! *Close in a prayer of praise for Father's great love.*

Optional Activities:

1. Find some party games appropriate for your class size and age. Possible ideas: Pin the tail on the donkey, balloon race (race while holding a balloon between your legs), musical chairs, do face painting, etc.