



Preschool:
Unit Nine:
Judges

Basic Truth(s): The Lord is and always has been merciful and compassionate.

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."

Pre-K: Unit Nine: Judges Lesson One

Lesson One Focus: The Israelites didn't do all that the Lord asked when they began to live in the promised land.

Lesson One Introduction Activity: Bring in the ingredients for a cake or something similar. Don't follow them all the way, though. Maybe don't put them all in, or put in the wrong amount of a couple of them. Ask the children if they think it will turn out. Give them a taste of something you baked before the class that did not have all the ingredients and does not taste good. (Leaving out the sugar may be a good idea.) Tell them that even though the dough looked the same, and even the cake looked the same, it wasn't the same at all. That's because it is important to follow the recipes. The person that wrote it knows that things won't turn out if you don't do what they have said. Tell them that is how it works with the Lord, also. If we don't follow what He says, things don't turn out as they should. (Have a treat that does taste good to share with the children after the lesson is over.)

Lesson One Teaching: *This lesson is based off of Judges 1:27-2:5. Read through these verses so you are familiar with the context of this lesson. Then share it with the children as follows.*

Do you remember who was chosen to lead the Israelites after Moses died? Joshua was. And Joshua was a great leader. He was brave and faithful to the Lord. The Israelites won many battles with Joshua as their leader and they began to live in the Promised Land. The Lord did many miracles and wonderful things for them during that time. Unfortunately, there was a problem. The Israelites didn't quite do everything that the Lord had asked them to.

You see, there were other people that lived in the land that the Lord was giving to Israel. He told them that they needed to drive all the people who lived there out, so that none of them remained in the land. That seems kind of mean, doesn't it? But God wasn't being mean. He was actually protecting the Israelites. The people who lived in the land didn't serve God. They served false gods and did a lot of things that were not good. The Lord knew that if they remained living in the land, so would the evil things that they did. He didn't want the Israelites to live in a land like that! He wanted them to have a place where everyone knew and loved Him and lived according to His ways.

The Israelites didn't listen, though. They let some of the people stay in the land. They made some of them act as their slaves. Maybe they thought it was okay to live there if they were slaves. After a while, the problems began. Some of the groups of people that Israel didn't drive out of the land began to make the Israelites servants for them! The Israelites also began to serve some of the false gods that the other people served. They stopped doing things God's way. The Lord was not happy about this. The Israelites had a lot of sadness and bad things happen to them because they didn't do what God had asked. However, God was still faithful to them. Time after time he would rescue them from the problems that they had gotten themselves into.

That is how good God is. He is faithful to us, even when we aren't always faithful to Him. He loves us and His love never changes. His goodness never changes. We can always trust in Him. Isn't He a good God? Do you know that He loves you just as much as He loved the Israelites? That means that He will always be faithful to you, just like He was to them.

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.

Lesson One Optional Activities:

1. Do the "God is faithful to me!" coloring page
2. Play "Follow the Leader", "Simon Says" or another game in which listening to directions is important.
3. Find a preschool worksheet for the children to do that is about following directions.
4. Do any activities from Unit Eight: Joshua, that weren't previously used.

Pre-K: Unit Nine: Judges
Lesson One: New Testament Connection

New Testament Connection Focus: The Lord's prayer

Introduction Activity: Bring in someone from your church family that has a talent or skill that they excel at and have them do a performance or show an example of that skill or talent. After they are done, lead the class in complimenting and thanking your special guest for coming in. Tell the children that if they wanted to learn how to do whatever that particular skill or talent is, the special guest would be a good person to learn from. Tell them that they wouldn't want to try to learn from someone who had never done it very well, wasn't very good or was just learning themselves. Tell them that one way to learn how to do something well is to learn from someone that has the skill they want. There was something that Jesus did very well. And He knew it was something that the Lord wanted everyone to know how to do, so He taught people how to do it like Him. Ask them what they think that might have been. Then tell them to listen carefully to the following story to hear what the answer is.

New Testament Connection Lesson: *Begin by reading "How to pray" in the Jesus Storybook Bible starting on page 222. Then discuss it with the children as follows.*

Can you think of anyone better than Jesus to teach people to pray? Jesus spent a lot of time praying. And when He prayed, He didn't just say meaningless words. He really spoke with God. His prayers had power. When He prayed, things happened. He also heard the Lord speak to Him when He prayed. Don't you want that to be what it is like when you pray? There is good news. That is what it is supposed to be like when you pray!

The way Jesus taught people to pray is called "The Lord's Prayer". I'm going to say it for you again, and I want you to repeat it after me. This is going to sound a little bit different than it did in the story we just read, but it is the same prayer, just with different words. Are you ready?

Read the Lord's prayer, pausing after each line to give the children time to repeat it.

"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one."

Jesus was teaching people what to pray. How often do you think you should pray? Every day, right? More than that, actually. The Lord wants us to pray all the time! He loves us and wants to spend time with us. He also knows that when we pray, things happen. So, when we pray the Lord's prayer, what do you think happens? *Show the children how the prayer is answered: we have what we need every day, we have strength not to sin, etc.* Prayer is a way to grow closer to God and to know His ways and grow in obedience to Him. We don't have to just use these words when we pray, the Lord wants us to talk to Him about everything. We should start, though, by praying like He showed us.

Close in prayer. Thank the Lord for His goodness in listening to our prayers. Thank Him for talking to us, too. Ask Him to give the children ears to hear His voice. Then thank Him for giving our prayers power, that He answers us when we pray.

Optional Activities:

1. Find a coloring page of the Lord's prayer.
2. Print out the Lord's prayer. Give each child a heart shaped piece of construction paper and help them glue the print-out onto it. If you want, punch holes around the heart and give them ribbon to thread through the holes. Tie them in a bow where the two ends of ribbon meet. Remind the children that the Lord's prayer is something they should keep in their hearts.
3. Watch the VeggieTales Movie "Larry Boy and the Bad Apple". (Remind the children that part of the Lord's prayer is about protection from temptation.
4. Do a time of "soaking". Practice listening to the Lord, and remind the children that listening is actually a very important part of praying.

Pre-K: Unit Nine: Judges Lesson Two

Lesson Two Focus: Deborah & Barak

Lesson Two Introduction Activity: If you can, wear a robe that looks like what a judge would wear. Bring in a gavel, if you can, also. Ask the children if they know what a judge is. Explain to them a little bit about judges. Tell them that judges help when people have disagreements. They make a “ruling” that both people must obey to settle to problem. They also are involved when people break the law. They decide what punishment the people will have to face. Then tell the children that there was a period of time when Israel was ruled by judges. Then go into the lesson.

Lesson Two Teaching: This lesson is based off of the account in Judges 4. Read the passage and become familiar enough with it to share it with the children as you discuss it with them as follows.

After Joshua died, the Lord assigned people called “Judges” to be leaders for the Israelites. They helped instruct the people and helped them to solve their problems. We are going to spend some time over this unit learning about those judges. The first judge we are going to learn about is a woman named Deborah.

While Joshua had been alive, Israel had served the Lord. Unfortunately, after he died, they began to do things their own way instead of God’s way. Because of this, they stopped having victory over their enemies. They even became slaves to a King named King Jabin. The leader of Jabin’s army was named Sisera. Do you think the Israelites were happy being treated that way by King Jabin and Sisera? Not at all. The Israelites began crying out to the Lord to rescue them, and even though the Israelites hadn’t been faithful to Him, do you know what the Lord did? He listened to their cries and answered their prayers! Isn’t He a good God? He is so faithful! So, one day the Lord told Deborah that he had a special mission for a man named Barak. Deborah had Barak brought to her and she told him, “You are supposed to take an army of 10,000 to Mt. Tabor. There the Lord will give you victory over Sisera and his army.”

Barak did as Deborah told him, except that he asked her to go with him. In fact, he even said that he wouldn’t go unless she went. So, she went with him. Because he wouldn’t go without her, though, the whole victory wasn’t given to him. Instead of Barak having victory over Sisera himself, Deborah said a woman would get that honor. And that is exactly what happened. Barak and his 10,000 men won a great victory over Sisera’s army. However, Sisera himself ran away. As he was running away, he came to the tent of a woman named Jael. She was the one who had the final victory over Sisera, instead of Barak. How do you think Barak felt when that happened? Do you think that he wished he would have trusted the Lord enough to go on his own without Deborah?

Even though Barak could have trusted the Lord more, it was still a great day for Israel. Barak didn’t do things completely according to God’s plans, but God was faithful to bring

about victory anyway. The Lord used both men and women to save His people from their enemies. Deborah was a good and wise judge. After this, the Bible tells us that the Israelites lived in peace for forty years.

God was so faithful to Israel! And do you know what? He is faithful to us, too. He listens to our prayers and He answers them--just like He did on that long ago day in Israel.

Close in prayer: Thank the Lord for being faithful and answering our prayers.

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.)

Pre-K : Unit Nine: Judges
Lesson Two: New Testament Connection

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.

**My
book
about
FAITH**

Faith helps people get
healed.

Faith helps people know
Jesus.

Faith helps you do great
things for God.

Faith helps you do
miracles.

Faith helps you tell
people about Jesus.

Pre-K: Unit Nine: Judges Lesson Three

Lesson Three Focus: Gideon

Lesson Three Introduction Activity: Play all or part of the VeggieTales Movie “Gideon: Tuba Warrior”.

Lesson Three Teaching: This lesson is based off of Judges 6-7. Make sure to read through it before the class so you are familiar with it as you discuss it with them as follows.

Israel seemed to have a hard time doing things God’s ways. And when they did things their own way they always seemed to end up in trouble. One of those times they ended up having to serve a group of people called the Midianites. Once again, when the Israelites were in trouble, who do you think they cried out to? They cried out to the Lord and, again, He faithfully answered their prayers. This time He answered through a man named Gideon.

Gideon did not see himself as someone that could be used to rescue his people. But, God knew differently. God sent the angel of the Lord to tell Gideon of His plans for Him. When Gideon learned that God was going to use Gideon to save Israel from Midian he wondered how that could be. You see, Gideon’s family was not a very important family in Israel. On top of that, Gideon was the youngest in his family. But God knew that none of that mattered. He had chosen Gideon and that was what was important.

So, God sent Gideon out to fight against the Midianites. Gideon didn’t go alone, he brought with him 32,000 men. But God thought that was too many men, even though the Midianites had many more people than that. So, instead, God sent Gideon out to fight with only 300 men. Three hundred against many thousand! How were they ever going to win? It must have seemed impossible!

But, do you know what? Gideon and his small army *did* win! Israel was rescued from their enemy and the Bible tells us that there was peace in the land for forty years after that. Isn’t that amazing? God used the youngest son of a small family with a small army to bring a great victory for Israel.

If God could use Gideon to do such a great thing do you think He can use you to do great things too? Of course! He has many great plans for you. It doesn’t matter if you are small or big; the youngest or the oldest. God has chosen you for greatness, just like He chose Gideon.

Close in prayer. Thank the Lord for His goodness in choosing even those that seem to be unlikely heroes to do great things. Lead the children in a simple prayer asking the Lord to use them to do great things for His Kingdom.

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"

Pre-K: Unit Nine: Judges
Lesson Three: New Testament Connection

Lesson Three New Testament Connection Focus: Jesus is baptized

New Testament Connection Introduction Activity: Bring in a picture of the day that you were baptized. Tell the children about it. Ask them if any of them have been baptized or been to a baptism before. Give them an opportunity to share their experiences. Then tell them that today you are going to learn about a very special baptism.

New Testament Connection Lesson: Begin by reading the story “Heaven breaks through” in *The Jesus Storybook Bible* starting on page 200. Then discuss it with the children as follows.

Jesus was always God’s Son. So, why was it important for Him to be baptized? He had never sinned, so He wasn’t repenting from sin like others who had been baptized by John. Instead, Jesus was preparing for what was going to happen next. When He got baptized, He was being obedient to the Lord. Does anyone remember what came down from the sky when Jesus was baptized? A white dove.

Do you know that a white dove is often a sign of Holy Spirit? When Jesus was baptized, Holy Spirit came upon Him and prepared Him for what was going to happen next. It wasn’t until after Jesus was baptized that He began to teach the crowds of people and do miracles. Nothing about who Jesus was changed, He was always the Son of God, but even He needed to be baptized.

Do you know what? You need to be baptized someday, too. When you are baptized, you are setting your life apart for the Lord. You are inviting the Holy Spirit to prepare you to do great things for God, just like Jesus did.

Close in prayer: Praise the Lord for His goodness. Thank Him for the example of Christ, being obedient to be baptized. Ask him to give each child the opportunity to be baptized. Thank Him for having plans for their lives, that they are set apart for Him.

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.
3. See Unit Six: The Exodus, New Testament Connection Lesson One for ideas of John the Baptist crafts that may fit with this lesson.

Pre-K: Unit Nine: Judges Lesson Four

Lesson Four Focus: Samson

Lesson Four Introduction Activity: Come to class wearing a crazy wig of some sort. Ask the children how they like your hair. Ask them if they wish that they had hair like you do. Tell them that today you are going to learn a story about a boy who had hair that was very special, kind of like your “new hair”.

Lesson Four Teaching: This lesson is based off of Judges 13-16. Read through it so you are familiar with the account of Samson’s life. Then share it with the children as follows.

Before Israel had a king, they were ruled by Judges. We have learned about a couple of them already: Deborah and Gideon. Today we are going to learn about another Judge of Israel. His name was Samson. Have any of you heard of him before?

Samson was very special. In fact, he was chosen by God before he was even born! One day an angel appeared to Samson’s mom. He told her that even though she hadn’t had any children, she was going to have a son. The angel then gave her special instructions for her son: he wasn’t supposed to cut his hair. He told her that her son was going to be set apart for God for his entire life and there would be some special rules he would have to follow.

Just like the angel told her, she did have a son. His name was Samson and his parents did all that they were told, raising him as they had been instructed. And Samson proved that he was a very special boy. He was very strong. One day he even killed a lion with his bare hands! The Lord was with Samson and had plans for him to rescue the Israelites from their enemies the Philistines.

Unfortunately, Samson didn’t always do things God’s way. What happens when we don’t do things God’s way? Things don’t work out very well, do they? That was certainly the case for Samson. Even though he was very strong and had already begun to win victories over the Philistines, he didn’t always follow God’s rules for his life. And eventually he told a woman named Delilah the secret of his strength: his long, uncut hair. After Samson told her this, what do you think happened? She cut his hair! Then she called the Philistines in and they attacked Samson. They captured him, because he wasn’t strong anymore.

What a sad way for this story to end! Samson was supposed to rescue the Israelites from the Philistines, not be captured by them. Isn’t it sad that he was captured? The good news is that Samson’s story didn’t end there. After he had been captured, his hair began to grow back. As it grew, do you know what happened? He became strong again! The Philistines didn’t realize that he had become strong again. They brought him out to a big party because they wanted to show off that he was captured and make fun of him. Then they chained him to a column (or big post) in the building where they were celebrating. Samson was strong enough to push it

over and it caused the whole building to collapse. At this party, Samson had his greatest victory over the Philistines in his entire life.

Even though Samson hadn't done things well, God still helped him to do what he was supposed to do. Do you know what that tells me? That tells me that we don't have to be perfect for God to use us! Have any of you ever made a mistake before? Or, maybe even done something you knew you weren't supposed to do? So did Samson, but God forgave him. Do you think God will forgive you too? It's always best to do things God's way. Samson had a lot of pain in his life because he didn't. But, its nice to know that God is very patient and forgiving, isn't it?

Close in prayer. Thank the Lord for His forgiveness and mercy. This may be a good time to lead the children in a simple prayer of repentance. Ask the Lord to teach us all how to listen to Him and do things His way. Praise Him for being so good and patient with us all.

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.)
3. 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.
4. Have a picture of Samson for each child to color. Bring yarn to cut and glue on to him for his hair.

Pre-K: Unit Nine: Judges
Lesson Four: New Testament Connection

New Testament Connection Focus: The Prodigal Son.

New Testament Connection Introduction Activity: 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. Tell them they need to listen carefully during the lesson, and then you will celebrate just like they did in the story.

New Testament Connection Lesson: Begin by reading “Running away” starting on page 272 in *The Jesus Storybook Bible*. Then discuss the story with the children as follows.

I told you at the beginning of class that we were going to learn about a special party that happened. What party was that? Do you know what is even better than the fabulous party that this father had when his son returned home? The way that God celebrates over each one of you. You see, God loves you just as that father loved his son--even more! And, He longs to have all of us know Him and His love. Once we come to know Him, He celebrates and you know what? He never stops celebrating! He is always filled with joy that we are His children. Isn't that amazing? What a good Father God is!

Close in prayer: Praise the Lord for His goodness and great love. Thank Him for the joy that He has over each child. After you have finished the prayer, tell the children you are going to spend the rest of the class time enjoying a special party celebrating Father God's great love for each one of us.

Optional Activities / Party Games:

1. Pin the Tail on the Donkey.
2. Musical Chairs
3. “Balloon Stomp” = have balloons blown up with a small treat inside. Let the children stomp on the balloons and collect the treats. (Make sure to have extras on hand in case any of the children don't get one. Or else have one or two balloons per child and instruct the children to only pop their balloon(s).)
4. Bring in someone to make balloon animals / crowns.
5. Play any other party games that are appropriate for your class size / time / age.
6. Watch “The Wonderful Wizard of Ha's” (The VeggieTales Movie)