



OLD TESTAMENT: SAMSON

lesson 22

BIG IDEA

Samson was another of Israel's judges in their continuous cycle of sin. The Lord said he should never cut his hair as a sign that he was set apart for God. God also blesses him with strength. As an adult, Samson makes poor choices in who he marries. The women betray him and he finds himself in terrible trouble.

MEMORY VERSE

Psalm 8

KEY VERSES

Judges 13-16

• PREPARATION & MATERIALS •

BIBLE LESSON

- Bible
- *Experience Mission will provide a baseball cap and bear ears.*

GAME - TAIL ON FIRE TAG

- Crepe paper streamers in 12" lengths, 2-3 per child

CRAFT - STICK PUPPETS

- Craft sticks (tongue depressor size), one per child
- Tan or cream paper, approximately 2 x 3 inch pieces, one per child
- Pieces of red and brown paper
- Googly eyes, two per child
- Brown yarn
- Glue

WORKSHEETS

- Photocopies of Coloring Sheet (1 per child)



- scissors
- hole punches
- staplers

Psalm 8

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!



(extend hands to sides)

You have set your glory in the heavens.



(extend hands high)

Through the praise of children and infants you have



("stop" hand)

established a stronghold against your enemies,

To silence the foe and the avenger.



(index finger over lips)

(wiggle fingers both hands)

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers,



The moon and the stars which you have set in place,



(point to moon and stars)

What is mankind that you are mindful of them,



(shrug shoulders)

Human beings that you care for them?

You have made them a little lower than the angels



(flat hand at waist)

And crowned them with glory and honor.



(make crown with hands)

You have made them rulers over the works of your

hands;



(open hands)

You put everything under their feet:



(stomp feet)

All flocks and herds, and the animals of the wild,



(hands like claws)

The birds in the sky, and the fish in the sea, all that swim

the paths of the seas.



(hands together wiggle like fish)

Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth!



(arms up as if cheering)



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BIBLE LESSON • SKIT

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STAGING

TL wears baseball cap. Bear wears bear ears.

SCRIPT

Bear enter stage with weight. Raise and lower it slowly with many grunts and groans, as if it's very heavy. Be very dramatic to engage the kids.

TL (Enter stage and watch for a moment) Go Bear. You can do it! Pump that iron!

Bear Oh, hi TL. Thanks for the encouragement. This is part of my strength training regimen.

TL Good for you Bear. Working out your muscles is always a good idea. What are you training for?

Bear Nothing special. I just want to be strong and ready for anything.

TL Wow. I'm impressed. I'm sure all of your hard work will pay off.

Bear Yep. The thing is, it's really mind numbing. I mean, my muscles are getting stronger, but my brain is really, really bored.

TL Would you like me to tell you a story?

Bear I was hoping you would. (Continue to lift the weight)

TL Well, oddly enough, the story I want to tell you today is about a man who was very, very strong. His name was Samson. I've got to warn you. This story is not sweet and full of love and loyalty like our story about Ruth. Even though Samson is a leader in Israel, he does not make good choices, and his story ends in a disaster. And yet even in the disaster, God does something good for Israel.

At this time in Israel the people had sinned against the Lord again and as punishment, God let the Philistines in the neighboring country rule over them. One day, an angel appeared to a woman who had no children. She was shocked when the angel said, "You will soon become the mother of a baby boy. But I have a few rules. Be sure not to drink any wine or eat any forbidden food. Don't ever cut the boy's hair, for he will be dedicated to God as a Nazirite from the day he is born. The woman did as the angel commanded and soon she and her husband had a baby boy. They named him Samson. The child grew up and the Lord blessed him.

One day, when Samson was an adult he told his parents, "I saw a Philistine girl over at Timnah. I want you to get her for my wife." This upset his parents.



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BIBLE LESSON • SKIT (CONT. 2)

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“Why do you want to marry a Philistine? Can’t you find a nice girl from our own country?”

Samson was positive he had to marry this girl. During his journey to Timnah a young lion came roaring toward him. The Spirit of the Lord gave him great strength so that he was able to kill the lion with just his hands. Later, he noticed that bees had made honey in the lions body. Nobody knew that he had killed the lion or that he had later eaten honey from the bees.

During Samson’s wedding feast he told a riddle and promised to give the people a prize if they could answer the riddle in seven days. The riddle was this: “Out of the eater, something to eat. Out of the strong, something sweet.”

Bear That’s awfully clever of him. The eater was the lion. And the honey came out of the eater. The honey was the sweet thing that came out of the strong lion, right?

TL Exactly. But the wedding guests would not have known that or have any idea how to solve the riddle. They tried to figure out the riddle for three days and couldn’t. So they got mean and threatened his new wife, “Get your husband to explain the riddle. If you don’t we’ll burn your father’s house and you with it!” She was very upset and cried to Samson for the remainder of the week, “You don’t love me! You told my friends a riddle and didn’t tell me what it means!” Finally, on the last day, Samson told her the answer to the riddle, and she told the answer to her people. Just before sunset, the group of men came to Samson and said, “What could be sweeter than honey or stronger than a lion?” as if they had figured out the riddle. Samson knew his wife had told them and he was furious. In his anger he went to a nearby town and killed 30 men, took everything they had and gave it to the Philistine men who had answered his riddle. Then he went home back to his home land and his wife was given to another man.

Bear (Stops weight lifting) Really? They gave his wife to another man just because of a riddle? What an odd story.

TL Remember though, there is tension between the Israelites and the Philistines. The Philistines have been ruling over the Israelites and there were often battles. So even though these men were invited to the wedding party, they were never good friends with Samson or kindhearted toward the Israelites. In fact the story gets even sadder later when Samson returns to Philistine to visit his wife. His wife’s father said, “I thought you hated her, so I gave her to a friend. You can have her younger sister, she’s prettier anyway.”

Samson was so angry. He said, “This time I’ve got a right to get even with the Philistines!” So he went out and caught 300 foxes, tied their tails together in pair, and fastened torches in the knots. Then he lit the torches on fire and let the foxes run through the fields of the Philistines. All the wheat was burned up, and the olive orchards were ruined. When the Philistines found out that Samson had done this they decided to get back at him. They burned Samson’s wife



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and her father.

Samson fought back and killed many Philistines then hid in a cave. So the Philistines fought back and attacked one of the towns from Judah, Samson's homeland. The people of Judah were so frightened that they found Samson in the cave, tied him up and brought him to the Philistines to make peace. The Spirit of the Lord came on Samson with power and suddenly he was able to break the ropes as if they were thin thread. He found a jawbone on the ground and used it to defeat the Philistines, over 1000 men. Samson became respected by the people of Israel and he was their leader for 20 years.

Bear Wow, I'd like to be that strong, to bust through rope like it's thread and defeat all the bad guys with just a jawbone. Awesome!

TL Yah, but of course, it was God who gave him the power in the first place. It's always amazing when God uses a single person to display his great strength. Now, the story isn't over here. Samson gets into trouble once again and falls in love with a different Philistine woman named Delilah. The Philistines are still his enemies and they once again found a way to use this woman to trap Samson. They said, "Get Samson to tell why he is so strong. We'll give you 1, 100 pieces of silver if you do."

So Delilah said to Samson, "What makes you so strong? If someone wanted to make you helpless, how could he do it?"

Samson replied, "If I were tied up with seven new bowstrings, I'd be helpless." So she tied Samson with seven new bowstrings and shouted, "Samson! The Philistines are coming!" Samson jumped up and broke the bowstrings as if they were thin thread.

Delilah was angry. "You're making me look foolish. You liked to me. Come on. Tell me really how you can be tied up."

So Samson said, "If someone ties me up tightly with new ropes that have never been used, then I will become as weak as any other man." So Delilah got new ropes and tied him up, she also had some Philistine men hiding in the room. "Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!" she yelled. And once again, Samson broke the ropes as if they were thin thread.

Delilah would not give up. She wanted to find out his secret and she wanted the reward of silver. She said, "You keep making me look foolish by telling me lies! This time really tell me how you can be tied up."

Samson said, "Weave seven braids of my hair into the cloth on a loom. Then pin my hair to the loom. If you do, I'll become as weak as any man." So Delilah waited until he was asleep and she wove seven braids of hair into a loom and pinned it to his hair."



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BIBLE LESSON • SKIT (CONT. 4)

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Bear Seriously? She fell for that? She make braids in his hair and wove them into a loom? (Laugh hard) That's crazy! Does she really think it will work?

TL She's pretty motivated by the promise of silver so I suppose she was willing to try anything, no matter how crazy it seemed. And as we know, this was not the secret of his strength. So when she told him the Philistines were attacking, he easily pulled the pin and loom apart. Delilah never gave up. She kept pestering him until finally Samson told her the truth. "If my hair is ever cut, I will lose my strength."

This time Delilah got some Philistine men to help her. She had Samson fall asleep in her lap and the Philistine men came in and cut off Samson's hair. "Samson! The Philistines are attacking you!" she yelled. And this time Samson was not able to escape because the strength of the Lord had left him. The Philistines easily capture Samson, tied him with chains, made him blind, shaved his head and put him to work grinding grain at a mill.

Bear Gee. That's pretty bad. I don't understand why Samson told that tricky lady the truth about his hair.

TL You know what, Bear. I don't understand either. He should have known better than to get involved with the Philistines and he should have known better than to reveal the true secret of his strength. But it's important to remember that even though Samson lost his strength, God did not. God had a plan to allow Samson to defeat his enemy one last time.

Samson kept working in the mill as a blind prisoner, but over time his hair began to grow back and the Lord returned his strength. One day, the Philistine kings held a celebration for the idol they worshiped called Dagon. There were 3000 people in the temple for this party. They brought Samson in and they sang, "Dagon has given us victory over our enemy, who ruined our land and killed many of our people!" They entertained themselves by mocking Samson. Samson spoke to the servant who was holding his chains, "Put me where I can feel the pillars. I want to lean against them." Then he prayed to the Lord, "Lord and King, show me that you still have concern for me. God, please make me strong just one more time. Let me pay the Philistines back." Then Samson reached toward the two pillars that were in the middle of the temple and he pushed with all his might. The temple came down on all the Philistines that were in it and he died as he defeated his enemies.

Well Bear. That's the end of Samson's story. What do you think?

Bear I don't exactly know what to think. Samson wasn't all that wise, was he?

TL No, the stories about him in the bible are not like Moses or Joshua who listened to God and obeyed. Samson was blessed with physical strength, but he didn't demonstrate very much inner strength, like self control and wisdom and faith. It's good to know that God will still



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working even when we make poor choices. Man's weakness and sin can never upset God's perfect plan for the world.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who ruled over the Israelites during Samson's time?
- Why had God allowed the Philistines to rule over them?
- Did Samson make wise choices in whom to marry?
- How did the Philistines try to trap Samson?
- Why do you think Samson finally told Delilah the secret of his strength?
- Where did Samson's strength come from?
- What are some examples of what a person can do with strong muscles?
- What are some examples of what a person can do with God's strength?
- How did God ultimately allow Samson to defeat his enemies?



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• CRAFT •

OBJECTIVE: STICK PUPPETS

Kids will make a stick puppet of Sampson

MATERIALS BROUGHT BY TEAM - PAPER CRAFT

- Craft sticks (tongue depressor size), one per child
- Tan or cream paper, approximately 2 x 3 inch pieces, one per child
- Pieces of red and brown paper
- Googly eyes, two per child
- Brown yarn
- Glue

MATERIALS PROVIDED BY EM

- scissors
- hole punches
- staplers

DIRECTIONS

- Cut the tan/cream paper into an oval
- Cut out a mouth and nose, glue onto oval
- Cut several lengths of yarn to make long hair for Samson, glue in place.
- Glue googly eyes onto oval.
- Glue oval onto craft stick.
- Optional: make other characters from the story and act it out in small groups.





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• GAME •

OBJECTIVE: TAIL ON FIRE TAG

Kids try to keep their tail in place while others try to remove it.

MATERIALS BROUGHT BY TEAM

- Crepe paper streamers in 12” lengths, 2-3 per child

INSTRUCTIONS

- Everybody tucks a piece of crepe paper into their waist band like a tail.
- Kids run around trying to remove the tails of other players while at the same time trying to keep their own tail from being removed.
- When someone loses his tail he is out of the game.
- There are two winners: the last person to keep his tail and the person who collects the most tails.
- Note: It is not OK to hold onto your own tail or make it more difficult to remove.

THE JUDGES



For years the Hebrews had no kings but were ruled by Judges. One of the Judges was Samson, who was so strong that he killed a lion with his bare hands.