

# THE BIGGEST STORY CURRICULUM



**VOLUME 2**  
**HISTORY**

 **CROSSWAY**  
WHEATON, ILLINOIS

*The Biggest Story Curriculum, Volume 2*

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# How to Use This Curriculum

*The Biggest Story Curriculum* includes 104 lessons designed to help children understand God’s plan to redeem the world through his Son, Jesus, by leading them through the overarching story of the Bible over the course of roughly two years. Created from the ground up by a team of pastors, children’s ministry workers, and content creators, the curriculum features guided lessons that can be used in Sunday school, children’s church, or homeschooling contexts.

A major strength of *The Biggest Story Curriculum* is its modular design, allowing teachers to pick and choose which components to use based on the age of the students, specific educational goals, or available time.

The chart below shows suggested components for 30-, 45-, and 60-minute class times. For a complete set of sample lesson plans for Sunday school, children’s church, and homeschooling contexts, see Sample Lesson Plans on page x.

Available Time for Lesson				
Lesson Components		30 minutes	45 minutes	60 minutes
Teach	The Big Picture (5 minutes)		✓	✓
	Tell the Story (5–10 minutes)	✓	✓	✓
	Teach the Story (10 minutes)		✓	✓
	Gospel Connection (5 minutes)	✓	✓	✓
Engage	Discuss the Story (10 minutes)			✓
	Activities (10–15 minutes)	✓	✓	✓
	Crafts (10–15 minutes)			✓



## Lesson Components

The lesson components are grouped into three major lesson phases: Read, Teach, and Engage. The Read phase includes a brief set of prelesson prompts including the most important step—reading and meditating on the Bible passage itself. The Teach phase includes all the tools needed to help kids understand the story and how it fits into the grand narrative of the Bible. The Engage phase includes multiple components to help kids thoughtfully, creatively, and physically engage with the story in memorable ways. Below is a description of each component within these three phases.

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### **1** **Read**

#### **BEFORE THE LESSON**

This section highlights the Bible passage that teachers should read and meditate on before teaching the lesson. For a few lessons that cover longer passages, this section offers a focus passage to review within that larger context. It also includes a simple checklist designed to guide teachers as they review the lesson and prepare to teach.

---

### **2** **Teach**

#### **THE BIG PICTURE**

*5 minutes*

This section helps the teacher understand and summarize how the lesson connects with previous lessons and the overarching story of the Bible. Teachers are encouraged to review this section ahead of time, summarizing it in their own words at the beginning of the class.

#### **TELL THE STORY**

*5–10 minutes*

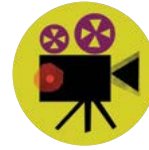
After reviewing how the lesson fits into the preceding lessons and the overarching story of the Bible, teachers progress to telling the current week's story. This can be done in one of three ways: (1) reading the relevant Bible passage out loud to the class, (2) reading the relevant story from *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook*, or (3) watching the relevant animated video for that particular story (found at [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com)). In each lesson, these options will be presented to you in the following way:



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*10 minutes*

This section provides some suggested teaching points to emphasize as teachers seek to reiterate the key themes from the story. While this section is written as a script, it can also be used as a launching pad for teachers to unpack the story for their class in ways that will serve their specific students. Don't miss the Big Truth. In the margin next to this section, teachers will find the Big Truth—a short sentence summarizing the main point of the lesson. Consider emphasizing the Big Truth throughout the lesson by saying it together as a class, incorporating it into an activity, or writing it on a craft.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*5 minutes*

Similar to the Teach the Story section, this section can be used as a script or as a guide to help teachers show their kids how the lesson connects to the Bible's big story of redemption through Christ. Teachers are encouraged to close the teaching portion of the lesson by emphasizing how the story points to Jesus—the Snake Crusher—and his plan to save people from their sin.

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*10 minutes*

Designed for use in smaller groups, the discussion questions listed in this section are a great way to help kids go deeper in their understanding of the story and why it matters. The questions listed here are intended to foster interactive group conversation between teachers and students.

3

**Engage**

Don't miss the Memory Verse. In the margin next to this section, teachers will find a Memory Verse for the lesson. These verses reinforce the main point of the lesson and are short enough for kids to memorize in a week. Consider handing out a Biggest Story Verse Card to each child as a fun tool to take home as they seek to memorize the verse. Learn more about the Verse Cards at [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com).

## ACTIVITIES

*10–15 minutes*

Each lesson includes a number of suggested activities that are designed to pair well with the story. These activities are broken up into two age ranges (K–2nd and 3rd–5th) and include simple instructions along with a list of necessary supplies. Teachers can also download and print a coloring page and an activity page for each lesson for each student to work on in class or take home.

## CRAFTS

*10–15 minutes*

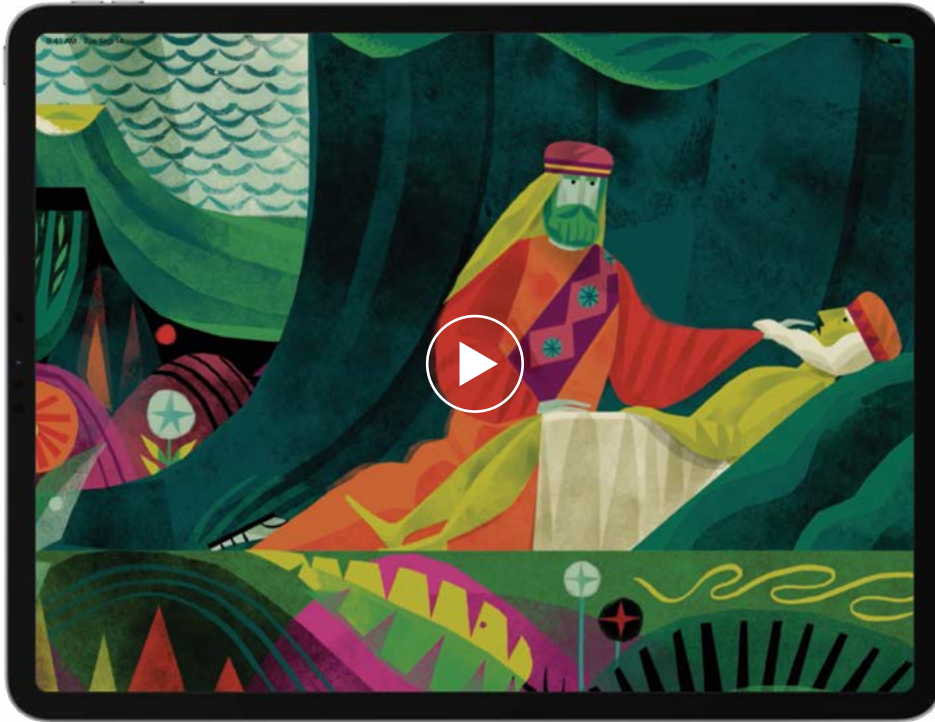
Each lesson includes a number of suggested crafts that connect to the story in some way. These crafts are broken up into two age ranges (K–2nd and 3rd–5th) and include recommended preparation before the class begins, a list of necessary supplies, and simple instructions for doing the craft in class.

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## A Note on Artwork

Users will notice that some stories within *The Biggest Story Curriculum* include pictures of Jesus. The illustration style shows that these are not meant to be depictions of Jesus as he really was on earth. Instead, the artwork used here recognizes that Jesus is indeed the main character of the Biggest Story.





TheBiggestStory.com

## TheBiggestStory.com

Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) to stream or download free materials designed to complement *The Biggest Story Curriculum*.

Featuring beautiful animation and custom sound design, *The Biggest Story Bible Storybook Videos* help bring the Bible to life for children in a home or classroom setting. The videos are available to stream for free.

Downloadable and printable worksheets give kids fresh ways to engage with and review each of the 104 Bible lessons from *The Biggest Story Curriculum*. Each activity page encourages children to recap key points from the story, helping them apply what they have learned throughout the week, and the coloring pages give them a creative way to meditate on the story.

## Sample Lesson Plans

*The Biggest Story Curriculum* consists of lesson components that can be customized for various church, home, and classroom contexts. The following sample lesson plans are intended to serve as inspiration as you develop the plan that is right for your context. A blank worksheet is provided at the end of this section for you to build your own lesson plan.

### ● Sunday School: Small Group/Large Group Plan

This 60-minute lesson plan was developed for a Sunday school format that includes small groups led by volunteer leaders and a single large group teaching time led by a primary teacher.

Time/Day	Duration	Lesson Component	Notes
8:30 a.m.	5 min	Welcome, Activity Sheets	Led by small group volunteers
	5 min	Transition to large group	
8:40 a.m.	5 min	The Big Picture	Led by large group teacher
	5 min	Tell the Story	Video or Storybook
	10 min	Teach the Story	
	5 min	Gospel Connection	
	5 min	Transition to small groups	
9:10 a.m.	10 min	Discuss the Story	Led by small group volunteers
	10 min	Craft or Activity	

### ● Sunday School: Simple Plan

This 45-minute lesson plan was developed for a one-room Sunday school context. It is simple and fast-moving to help younger kids stay engaged.

Time/Day	Duration	Lesson Component	Notes
9:30 a.m.	5 min	Welcome, Coloring Sheets	Room Leader, Volunteer 1
	10 min	Activity	Volunteer 2
9:45 a.m.	10 min	Tell the Story	Room Leader, Video or Storybook
	5 min	Gospel Connection	Room Leader
10:00 a.m.	5 min	Snack	Volunteer 3
10:05 a.m.	10 min	Craft	Volunteer 1

## ● Homeschool or Classroom: Daily Plan

This lesson plan was developed for a daily homeschool or classroom learning environment. Two stories are covered each week and Fridays are used for review and Scripture memory.

Time/Day	Duration	Lesson Component	Notes
Mon	5 min	The Big Picture (Story 1)	
	10 min	Tell the Story (Story 1)	Storybook or Video
	10 min	Craft or Activity (Story 1)	
Tue	10 min	Teach the Story (Story 1)	
	5 min	Gospel Connection (Story 1)	
	10 min	Discuss the Story (Story 1)	
Wed	5 min	The Big Picture (Story 2)	
	10 min	Tell the Story (Story 2)	Storybook or Video
	10 min	Craft or Activity (Story 2)	
Thu	10 min	Teach the Story (Story 2)	
	5 min	Gospel Connection (Story 2)	
	10 min	Discuss the Story (Story 2)	
Fri	5 min	Review	
	10 min	Scripture Memory	Choose one of the two verses
	10 min	Bonus Craft or Activity	

## Build Your Own Plan Worksheet

Use this worksheet to build your own lesson from the components listed below.

## Lesson Components

## The Big Picture (5 min)

**Tell the Story: Bible (5–10 min)**

**Tell the Story: Storybook (5 min)**

Tell the Story: Video (5 min)

### Teach the Story (10 min)

Gospel Connection (5 min)

Discuss the Story (10 min)

Memory Verse (5 min)

### Activity Sheet (5 min)

### Coloring Sheet (5 min)

Activity (10 min)

Craft (10 min)

*Non-Curriculum Components:*

*Snack (5–10 min)*

Worship/Singing (5–10 min)

Room Transitions (5 min)

Attendance (5 min)

Free Time (10 min)

## Build Your Own Plan Worksheet

Use this worksheet to build your own lesson from the components listed below.

## Lesson Components

## The Big Picture (5 min)

Tell the Story: Bible (5–10 min)

Tell the Story: Storybook (5 min)

Tell the Story: Video (5 min)

### Teach the Story (10 min)

Gospel Connection (5 min)

Discuss the Story (10 min)

Memory Verse (5 min)

### Activity Sheet (5 min)

### Coloring Sheet (5 min)

Activity (10 min)

Craft (10 min)

*Non-Curriculum Components:*

*Snack (5–10 min)*

*Worship/Singing (5–10 min)*

Room Transitions (5 min)

Attendance (5 min)

Free Time (10 min)







## PART 2

# HISTORY

## JOSHUA–ESTHER

The historical books cover almost a thousand years of history, from the conquest of the Promised Land to the return from exile in Babylon and the building of the second temple. The history of God's people is marked with moments of great faith and triumph and moments of spectacular disobedience and failure. Through it all, God's promises remain true as the Lord prepares his people for the coming of the Snake Crusher.



## STORY 21

# The Walls Came Tumbling Down

## JOSHUA 6

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Joshua 6.
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*



---

### THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*



Does anyone remember the names of the two spies who trusted God's promises and gave the good report? Their names were Joshua and Caleb. After Moses died, God chose Joshua to lead his people into the promised land. The Lord said to Joshua, "Just as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you. Be strong and courageous" (Josh. 1:5–6), for Joshua had to take over and destroy every city in the land. Joshua obeyed God. And the people followed his lead. They said, "All that you have commanded us we will do, and wherever you send us we will go" (1:16).

Joshua sent new spies into Jericho, a city in the promised land. When the king of Jericho found out, he sent his men to capture them. But a woman named Rahab hid them. She did this because she had faith in God, even though she wasn't from Israel. She had heard of God's power, and she knew he would keep his promises, including giving Israel the promised land (which is where her city was!). The spies told her that if she tied a scarlet (red) cord in the window then they would be kind to her and her family when the Israelites came. When the spies returned safely, they gave this good report, "The LORD has given the land into our hands. Let's go!" (see 2:24).

### TELL THE STORY

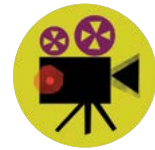
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

### TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
**God fights**  
**for those who**  
**trust in him.**

The first step to entering the promised land was for Israel to cross the Jordan River—no easy task for a nation of over a million people. How would they do that? God would make a way. Remember when he parted the Red Sea? He also parted the Jordan River! Here's what happened. The priests went first, carrying the ark of the covenant. This ark was not a big boat, but a small golden chest that was used in the tabernacle. Inside were two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments, and two other reminders of God's faithfulness: Aaron's rod (used when they left Egypt) and a pot of manna (the daily bread from heaven that God provided in the wilderness). When the priests stepped into the Jordan River, the flow of water stopped and, all of a sudden, there was a clear path to walk. All of Israel crossed over on dry ground. What a miracle!

That wasn't the only miracle! Because the second step to entering the promised land was to take over and destroy Jericho. This might have been harder than



crossing the river with over a million people. You see, Jericho had these thick, tall city walls to protect them. How would Israel get past the mighty big walls? Dig under them? No, too hard. Jump over them? No, that's impossible. Knock on the front door and asked to be let in? Don't be silly. Who would let them in? God had a better plan, one of those crazy plans that works only because it's God's plan. "Tell the soldiers in Israel's army to march around the city," God told them. "Have seven priests hold seven trumpets as they walk in front of the ark of the covenant." God continued, "Then, on the seventh day march around the city seven times, blow the trumpets, and have the people shout." The people actually obeyed this crazy plan! They believed that God would fight their battle. Do you know what happened next? The big walls came tumbling down. Crash! Victory! Israel walked over the rubble. The city was conquered. Everyone was destroyed. Except Rahab (remember the scarlet cord?) and her family. God saved them because of Rahab's faith.

### GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

God's people have always faced enemies. Sometimes it's people who oppose God and his ways. Other times it's things like sin, death, and Satan. Through Jesus all our enemies will be defeated. Sin forgiven. Death killed. Satan crushed. And, yes, people brought down in judgment. Hallelujah! We have the victory in Jesus! And someday soon we will enter a far better promised land, the new heaven and new earth. There may be grapes the size of watermelons to eat. A clear and clean river to swim in. Hills with green grass to roll down. Big and beautiful trees to climb. Secret places to discover. And there will be people from every nation to eat with and play with and explore with and sing with. And there will be never-ending joy! Never-ending peace! Never-ending love! And the best part? Never-ending face-to-face fellowship with God!

Unlike the first promised land, this amazing place isn't just for the people of Israel. It is for anyone who believes God's promises and trusts in Jesus for salvation. It's for you and for me. Remember Rahab? Rahab wasn't an Israelite. She was an enemy of God's people. But when she heard about God and his mighty acts, she believed he'd keep his promises. She asked to be saved from the coming destruction. And God saved Rahab. And even more, God gave her special honor. We will see her name again because she is in the family tree of the promised Savior, Jesus.



3

## Engage

### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** Even though Joshua, the Israelites, and Rahab believed God's promises, what fears might they each have had? How did they bravely act on what they believed?

**TAKEAWAY:** Believe God's promises and obey his plans.

2. **QUESTION:** Have you ever been afraid to follow God or do what he commands? How can believing God's promises help us be strong and courageous in those situations?

**TAKEAWAY:** Because of God's promises, we can be strong and courageous.

3. **QUESTION:** How would most armies defeat their enemies and destroy the thick walls of a city? What did the Israelites do? Why did that work?

**TAKEAWAY:** God is powerful and defeats his enemies.

4. **QUESTION:** What enemies has Jesus defeated for all who trust in him? Could we defeat them without him? How does that make you feel?

**TAKEAWAY:** We have victory in Jesus!

#### Memory Verse

Be strong and  
courageous. Do  
not be frightened,  
and do not be  
dismayed, for the  
LORD your God is  
with you wherever  
you go.

JOSHUA 1:9

### ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

#### Option 1: The Quiet Game

*Supply List: none*

Have the children march behind you in complete silence. Tell them they need to do just what you are doing, but without making a sound. Do silly things with your arms, or march/waddle like a duck. If a child talks or makes any noises, she is out. Continue until one child is left or you are ready to appoint a different leader. Remind them that it would have been hard to obey God and keep marching in total silence around Jericho for all those days.





## Option 2: Walls Tumble Down Game

*Supply List: plastic cups, paper, masking tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Mark a line down the center of the room using masking tape.*

Divide the children into two teams. Give each team an equal number of plastic cups and have them place them around their territory, right-side up. Then give each child two pieces of paper. When a teacher says “Go!” the children crumple their paper into balls to try to knock down the opposing team’s “wall” (their plastic cups). They must stay in their territory. If they cross the line into the other team’s territory they must sit out and they can no longer throw paper balls. The children should continue picking up paper balls and throwing them to try and knock down the other team’s wall. When one team has succeeded in knocking down all the other team’s wall, they win!

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Knock Down the Wall Battle

*Supply List: wood/cardboard blocks or cans (approx. forty), masking tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Mark off the center of the room with masking tape; mark two lines on the opposite sides of the room at an equal distance from the center line.*

Divide the children into two teams. Give each team an equal number of blocks/cans and have them place them along the tape on their side. This is their “wall.” Have the children stand along the center line. When the teacher says, “Go,” children run and try to take a block from the other team’s wall and add it to their own wall—then they need to run back and get another block. They may only take one “brick” at a time. After three minutes, say “Stop!” Count up the bricks on each side and see which wall is bigger. If there is time, play again. Remind them that no one took bricks from Jericho’s wall; God alone knocked it down.

## Option 2: Walls Tumble Down Game

*Supply List: plastic cups, paper, masking tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Mark a line down the center of the room using masking tape.*

Divide the children into two teams. Give each team an equal number of plastic cups and have them place them around their territory, right-side up. Then give each child two pieces of paper. When the teacher says “Go!” the children

crumple their paper into balls to try to knock down the opposing team's "wall" (their plastic cups). They must stay in their territory. If they cross the line into the other team's territory they must sit out and they can no longer throw paper balls. The children should continue picking up paper balls and throwing them to try and knock down the other team's wall. When one team has succeeded in knocking down the other team's wall, they win!

---

## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Paper Horns

*Supply List: cardstock, clear tape, crayons/markers, scissors*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Draw a horn template on cardstock and write the words "God keeps his promises!" down the center of the template. Make copies on cardstock for each child. Make a sample craft.*

Distribute horn template and scissors to each child. Set tape and coloring supplies on each table. Children should decorate the horns and then cut them out. Explain how to assemble them by forming a cylinder that tapers to a small hole at one end, then taping at the seam to hold it in place. Remind the children that when Joshua obeyed God and marched around the city of Jericho and blew the horn, the walls came down.

### Option 2: Pennant Flag

*Supply List: markers/crayons/colored pencils, cardstock, straws, tape, scissors*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Draw a pennant flag template on a piece of cardstock. Write "God gives the victory!" along the bottom edge. Make a copy for each child.*

Distribute pennant template, straw, and scissors to each child. Set coloring supplies and tape on each table. Have them decorate their flag as they desire and then cut them out. Have them attach a straw to the side with tape. Remind them that God gave Joshua the victory over enemies in the promised land.



### Option 1: Build the Walls of Jericho Craft

*Supply List: cardstock, glue sticks, colored paper, permanent marker, straightedge, scissors, red yarn (optional)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On a piece of cardstock, draw a template of a city wall (with different heights along the top) using a straightedge and a permanent marker. Along the top of the page write “God gives the victory!” Make copies for each child. Cut out small squares and rectangles of colored paper of varying sizes. (One sheet of colored paper per child will ensure that there are enough squares for the craft). Cut 3-inch lengths of yarn for each child (optional).*

Give each child the wall template, glue stick, and an assortment of colored squares (enough to fill in the wall). Have them all “build” the wall by gluing the squares on the wall template until it is completely filled in. Optional: Have kids attach red yarn to a part of the city as a reminder of Rahab’s salvation.

### Option 2: Make a Red Cord Bookmark

*Supply List: red yarn, tape, beads (large enough holes to fit on yarn)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut red yarn into fifteen-inch pieces, three per child. Make a sample craft.*

Distribute three pieces of red yarn to each child. Set tape and beads on each table. Have children knot the three pieces together at the top and tape the knot to the table so you can begin beading and braiding. Start by sliding beads onto each of the strings. Then braid the yarn until there’s 4 inches left. String beads onto each string and then knot the three pieces together to close. Tell children that the bookmark can remind them of Rahab’s faith and God’s salvation.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



## STORY 22

# The Fight of Gideon and the Flight of Midian

JUDGES 6–7

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Judges 6–7.
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

1  
Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*

2  
Teach

Think back on all that we have learned about God's people. Let's consider three questions. First, do God's people get in trouble when they rely on their own strength instead of God's? Yes. Every time they rely on their own strength, bad things happen. Second, do God's people have victory over their enemies when they trust in God's strength? Yes, they certainly do! Remember the walls of Jericho? Third, how often did Israel trust in God's strength? Not often enough. Israel's history is like a teeter-totter: up and down, down and up. Israel rebels and God disciplines. They cry out for help and God rescues. They grow comfortable and start sinning again. And then the whole thing repeats itself. This

pattern is especially true in the book of Judges, which records stories about the time of the judges—God’s leaders who ruled after Moses and Joshua and before Saul, David, and Solomon. These judges didn’t wear black robes, bang gavels, and say, “Order in the court!” They were warrior-rulers. And when they relied on their own strength, they lost their battles. But when they relied on God’s strength, they were victorious.

## TELL THE STORY

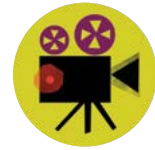
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
God strengthens  
those who know  
their weakness.

God loves to humble big shots and save the little guy or girl. He loves to show himself to be strong when we are weak. This is true in the story of Gideon. The Midianites were big shots and really bad people. They stole Israel’s food and animals. Israel was brought low. And they did what humble people do: they “cried out for help to the LORD” (Judg. 6:6). Judge Gideon was God’s answer to their prayer.

But when God first found him, Gideon was a scaredy-cat. He was hiding from Israel’s enemies. The Lord said to him, “I am with you. Go and save Israel from the cruel Midianites” (see 6:12–13). But he was still scared. “Lord,” he said, “How can I save Israel? I come from the weakest family, and I am the weakest person in my family? You’ve got the wrong guy” (see 6:15). But the Lord replied again, “Don’t worry, I will be with you.”

Gideon agreed to lead, but he was still scared. One night, God asked him to tear down an altar to a false idol and build in its place an altar for him. Gideon did that, but only with the cover of night. He didn’t want anyone to catch him. Another night, he asked God for a sign that he would be with him. He placed his coat made of sheep’s wool (a fleece) on the ground. “God,” he said, “If there





Story

22

Judges

6-7

is dew on the fleece alone, and it is dry on all the ground, then I shall know that you will save Israel by my hand” (6:37). Sure enough, the next morning the fleece was wet and the ground dry. But Gideon was still afraid to fight the Midianites. “Um, Lord, how about the same sign in reverse?” God was gracious again. The next morning the fleece was dry and the ground wet. God was kind to weak Gideon, because God was going to work through him to show everyone that God is strong.

Gideon gathered a huge army. But God wanted a little army to do big things so that God would show that he—not Gideon or his army—was the real warrior. So, God gave Gideon a plan to take his huge army and make it small. They went from twenty-two thousand men to three hundred. That’s a lot smaller! But when this tiny army blew their trumpets and smashed their jars, the mighty Midianites got scared and ran away. Gideon’s army chased them down and conquered them. A total victory for God and his people!

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” Four times in the book of Judges a similar refrain is repeated. Those sentences mean the Israelites did not view God as their King and had decided to call their own shots. They did whatever they wanted to do. That may sound like the best way to live, but it’s actually the worst way to live. Doing whatever you want leads to broken hearts, broken families, and broken promises—our promises, that is, not God’s. All God’s promises are true as true can be.

One of the best promises that God gave us was the promise of a coming king. This king would save God’s people. This king would lead God’s people. This King is Jesus, the Snake Crusher. Without King Jesus, we’d all be our own kings, doing whatever it is we think is right. But King Jesus changes our hearts so that we actually want to do what God wants. There’s even a fancy name for it: regeneration. King Jesus makes us new!

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** Why were the Israelites afraid of the Midianites? Who did the Israelites turn to for help? How did God answer their call for help?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** God is with us; the weak become strong when they call on God.

2. **QUESTION:** What was Judge Gideon doing when God asked him to lead his army? What did God do to Gideon's big army before the battle? Why do you think God chose a weak judge and a small army to win his battle?

**TAKEAWAY:** God loves to show his strength by using weak people to win his battles.

**Memory Verse**  
But when the  
people of Israel  
cried out to  
the LORD, the  
LORD raised  
up a deliverer  
for the people  
of Israel, who  
saved them.

**JUDGES 3:9**

3. **QUESTION:** What were some fears that Gideon had? When God asked Gideon to battle the Midianites, how did Gideon gain the courage he needed to obey?

**TAKEAWAY:** Be brave and ask God to give you courage to do what he asks.

4. **QUESTION:** How many times is the refrain "there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" repeated in the book of Judges? What's the problem with everyone doing what's right in their own eyes? Instead of making ourselves the king, who is the king we should follow?

**TAKEAWAY:** Follow King Jesus instead of doing whatever you want.

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## ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Army Exercises

*Supply List: none*

Have the children stand with space between them. The leader tells the children that they are now in the army and should follow the orders of the commander. If they fail to follow instructions, they will be out of the army. Give orders to do push-ups, jumping jacks, run in place, march in place, hit the deck, and the like. Any child that does not quickly do the instructed exercise is out. Continue until only one child remains standing.



Story

22

Judges

6–7

## Option 2: Everybody Freeze

*Supply List: paper towel roll, red construction paper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a paper torch from a paper towel roll with red construction paper coming out of the top to look like flames.*

Instruct the children that they should march around the room, but keep an eye on the leader because when the leader holds up the paper torch, they should immediately freeze. If a child moves when the torch is up in the air, he is out. Play continues until only one child remains.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Pass the Torch Relay

*Supply List: paper towel rolls, red construction paper*

*Before Class: Make paper torches out of paper towel rolls and red construction paper. You will need one torch for every four to six children in your group.*

Divide the children into equal teams of four to six people. When the leader says “Go!” the first child from each team will run with the torch to the opposite side of the room and back, and then he or she will pass the torch to the next player on their team. After each player has run with the torch, play again challenging them to crawl (while keeping the torch up) to the opposite side of the room. The race continues until every player has raced. The first team to complete the race wins!

## Option 2: Everybody Freeze

*Supply List: paper towel roll, red construction paper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a paper torch from a paper towel roll with red construction paper coming out of the top to look like flames.*

Instruct the children that they should march around the room, but keep an eye on the leader because when the leader holds up the paper torch, they should immediately freeze. If a child moves when the torch is up in the air, he is out. Play continues until only one child remains.

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Paper Torch

*Supply List: empty paper towel rolls (or cardstock and tape), markers, stickers, strips of red and orange tissue paper, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Provide empty paper towel rolls, or roll pieces of cardstock into a cylinder and tape shut. Cut red and orange tissue paper into strips approximately 2" x 5". Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper towel roll. Provide an assortment of markers and stickers for children to use to decorate the paper towel rolls. After the rolls are decorated, have the children glue strips of tissue paper to the top inside of the roll to resemble flames. Tell the children that when Gideon and his men blew their trumpets and smashed their jars, inside the jars were torches that helped confuse the Midianites who got scared and ran away.

### Option 2: Paper Plate Visor

*Supply List: paper plates, elastic thread, scissors, hole punch, “God Is in Control” papers, glue sticks, markers/crayons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut paper plates into a crescent shape, punch a hole near the two points of the crescent, and tie a piece of elastic thread through both holes to create a wearable visor. Print out the words “God Is in Control” in large print on copy paper and cut to fit onto visors. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate visor and “God Is in Control” word strip. Have them all glue the strip to the visor and decorate the visor as desired with markers or crayons. Visors help people to see in the sunlight. We don’t always see things the same as God does; it is in those times that we trust God, knowing that he is in control and sees all things clearly.



### Option 1: Paper Mosaic

*Supply List: crayons/markers, colored construction paper, glue sticks, copies of paper with words “I Trust You, God!”*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Write the words “I Trust You, God!” in bubble letters on paper (cardstock preferred) and make copies. Cut small pieces of a variety of colored construction paper. Make a sample craft.*

Give children a copy of the “I Trust You, God!” paper. Have them color the bubble letters with markers or crayons. Have them glue the pieces of construction paper around the outside of the words to fill the paper.

### Option 2: Word Web

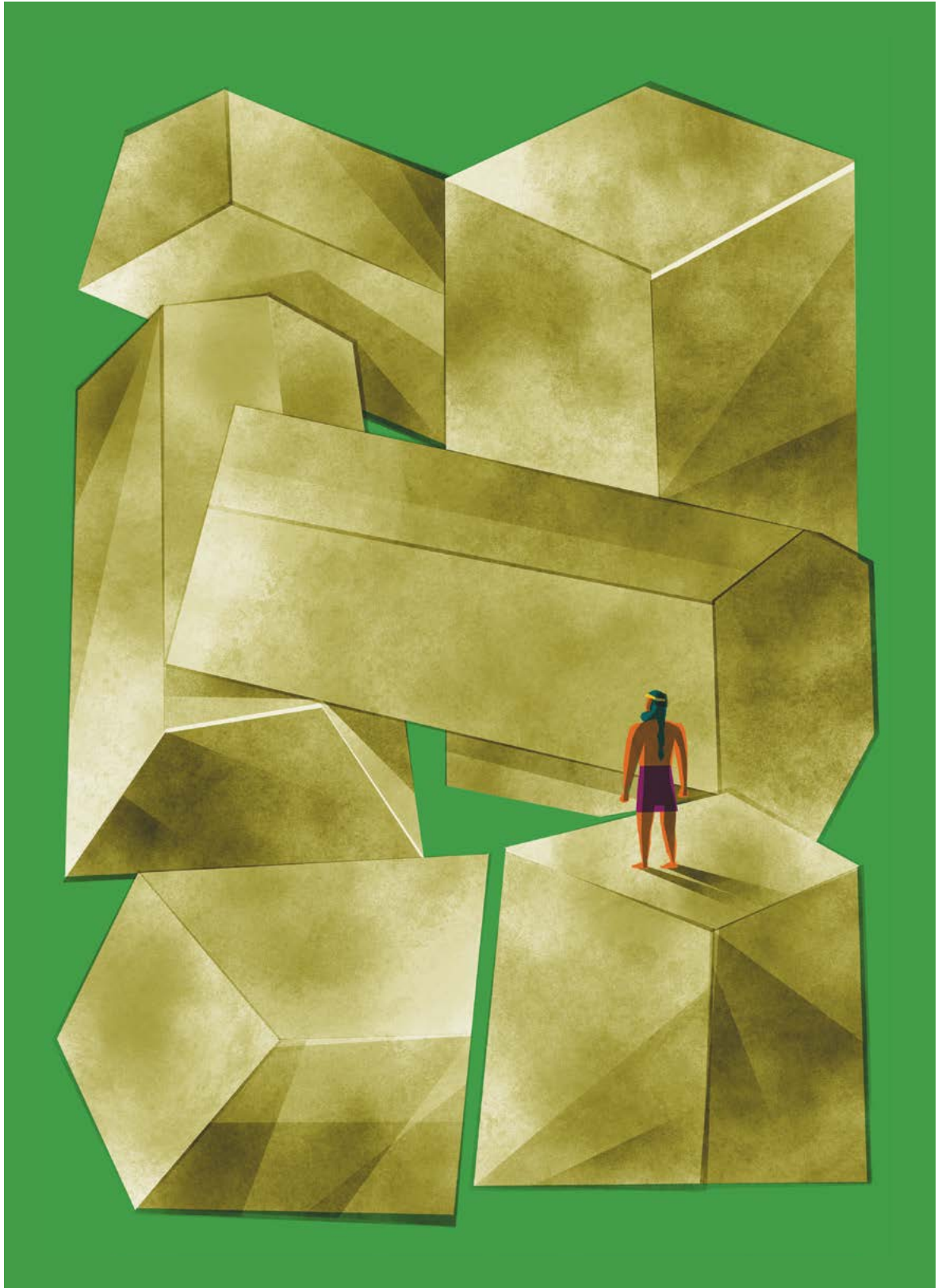
*Supply List: “Gideon” paper, colored pencils*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Write the name Gideon in large letters on the center of a paper. Make a sample craft.*

Have the children brainstorm with you some words that describe Gideon and write them on a whiteboard. Write the words in a way that represents the word (e.g., *fleece* written in a fluffy way, *scared* in small letters with wavy lines, *leader* written in solid, bold letters, etc.).



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.





## STORY 23

# Samson's Strength

JUDGES 13–16

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read the focus passage (Judg. 15:9–16:31) or the whole passage (Judges 13–16).
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Israel was a great nation now. God's promises were being fulfilled. They had twelve tribes with thousands and thousands of men, women, boys, and girls. And they had cows and lambs and goats and camels too. Joshua had led them into the promised land—the land flowing with milk and honey. Yum. But there was still a big problem: there were lots of bad people living in the land. God brought judgment on these people by raising up judges. Remember how the Midianites were defeated by Gideon? He and the other judges led God's people in battles to defeat their enemies in the promised land. This helped them remember God's promises and receive them. The most famous of these judges was Samson. He was so famous because he was so strong! He was also famous because he made so many mistakes. We know God will keep his promises. But will Samson obey? Will he find his true strength in the Lord? Let's find out.

## TELL THE STORY

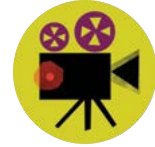
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
focus passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

### Big Truth

True strength is  
more about faith  
than muscles.

Samson's parents, before they were parents, struggled to have a baby. Then one day, the Lord told Samson's mother, "You shall conceive and bear a son" (Judg. 13:3). This baby would be set apart for God from the first day of his life to the last. He would save Israel from the big, bad Philistines. As a sign that he was set apart by God, he drank no wine and he wasn't allowed to have a haircut. Whenever the Spirit of the Lord came upon him, he possessed incredible strength. But if he drank wine or his hair was shaved, God's strength would leave him. His strength was legendary. He tore a furious lion apart with his bare hands and struck down a thousand wicked men with the jawbone of a donkey. And his strength gave Israel relief from her enemies. What a hero!

But before you run out and buy his action figure, you need to know that this strong hero had flaws. He fell in love with Delilah, a woman who was not from Israel and who did not love God. (Samson often did what seemed right in his own eyes instead of what was right in God's.) Some leaders from the big, bad Philistines thought Delilah could help them figure out the secret to Samson's strength. To convince her to do it, they each gave her 1,100 pieces of silver. Samson knew she was up to something tricky. So he lied the first three times she tried to trick him into sharing his secret. The fourth time, however, he finally told her the truth: "My hair is the secret of my strength." That night, while he was sound asleep, his hair was shaved off by one of his enemies. Samson's Spirit-powered superpowers were gone! The Philistines captured him and poked out his eyes. What evil people! But as time passed, Samson grew stronger and stronger.



Story

23

Judges

13–16

One night, the Philistines threw a big party in a big house. To mock the once mighty Samson, they had him stand between two pillars to entertain them. To mock Samson's God, they cheered about how their false god was the strongest. Weak Samson heard this and asked God to make him strong one final time: "O Lord God, please . . . strengthen me" (16:28). God answered his prayer. Judge Samson decided to judge the Philistines by sacrificing himself. He shouted, "Let me die with the Philistines!" (16:30), and then he pushed apart the pillars. The roof collapsed and everyone died. In his death Samson was victorious over God's enemies.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Do you have a favorite *superhero*? Maybe Superman, Wonder Woman, Black Panther, or Batgirl? Do you have a favorite *hero*? Maybe your mom, older brother, teacher, or athlete? The Bible has lots of heroes. Moses and Joshua, for example, are heroes. Samson too. But the Bible has only one superhero—Jesus! He is not a superhero just because he can do things that most people cannot do: read minds, walk on water, give sight to the blind, raise the dead. He is a superhero because he is *super good*. Perfectly good. The best heroes in the Bible—and the heroes that you know—set an example for us in faith, hope, and love, but they all have weaknesses. Some, like Samson, have lots of them. Only Jesus—the Son of God, the Savior, the Snake Crusher—was without sin. And only Jesus made the ultimate sacrifice. Like Samson, he was mocked. Like Samson's enemies thought they had defeated Samson, God's enemies thought they had defeated God. But unlike Samson, Jesus wasn't captured because he was foolish. And unlike Samson, Jesus didn't stay dead! He rose again. He conquered his enemies and ours—sin, death, and the devil. He is the only superhero we need.

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What amazing things was Samson able to do with God's strength? Why did Samson lose his strength? When did he get it back and how? Where should we find our strength?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** It is foolish to rely on our own strength—our true strength is in the Lord.

**Memory Verse**

O Lord God,  
please . . .  
strengthen me.

JUDGES 16:28

2. **QUESTION:** What evil things did the Philistines do to Samson? How did God judge them for all the evil things they did?

**TAKEAWAY:** God gives strength to defeat his enemies.

3. **QUESTION:** Who are some of your heroes who love Jesus? What are they like? Are any of them perfect? Who is the one perfect superhero who saves us from our sins?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is the only superhero who can save us from our sins.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Strong Samson Relay Race

*Supply List: large sweatshirt (one per team) and balloons (two per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Inflate balloons to a size that can fit in the sleeve of the sweatshirt. Place sweatshirts and balloons on the far side of the room.*

Divide children into teams and have them line up on one side of the room. When the leader says “Go!” the first child from each team will run to the opposite side of the room, put on a sweatshirt, and place one balloon under the sleeve of each of his arms like big bicep muscles. Then he must run back to his team without the balloons falling out of the shirt. If the balloons fall out, he must stop and replace them before continuing. When he gets to his team, he should take off the sweatshirt and balloons and pass them to the next person. (Note: the sweatshirt will alternate the side of the room where it is put on and taken off.) The next team member should put the shirt and balloons on and run to the opposite side of the room, where she takes it off and runs back to the start. Each member will run one length of the room with the sweatshirt on and one without. The first team to get all their members to complete the race wins.



## Option 2: Cool It Game!

*Supply List: one hot item, one cold item*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Have children sit in a circle. Give one child the cold item and another child the hot item. Start the music. As the music plays, children pass the items around the circle to the person on their right. When the music stops, the person holding the hot item is out, but the person holding the cold item can continue to play. Play continues until one player remains. Remind children that Samson was a strong and heroic man in many ways, but he was not perfect. Sometimes he was out of control and his choices had serious consequences. We honor God when we demonstrate self-control even when we feel hot and angry.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Two Truths and a Lie

*Supply List: none*

Have children sit in a circle. Give them a minute to think of two true things and one lie about themselves. Go around the circle allowing each child to share his or her three statements (e.g., “I have a pet turtle. I sing in the shower. I went to Iceland for my birthday.”). Other children raise their hands and guess which statement the child shared is a lie. Remind the children that three times Samson lied to Delilah about what the source of his strength was, but the fourth time she begged and he finally gave up his secret.

## Option 2: Samson Picture Guessing Game

*Supply List: paper, pencils*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Write words that relate to the story of Samson on pieces of paper (e.g., muscles, foxes, donkey jawbone, strong, Delilah, lion, long hair, blind, pillars, prayer, etc.).*

Divide children into two teams, with each team sitting at a table together. To begin, the first person from each team goes to the teacher and looks at the word on the paper at the same time. Then the players run back to their team’s table and draw a picture of the word. The first team to guess the word correctly gets a

point. Continue to play with a different child from each team viewing the word and drawing the picture each time. The team with the most points after all the words have been completed wins.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Samson's Planter

*Supply List: paper/plastic cups (one per child), grass seed, potting soil, permanent markers (optional: wiggly eyes, glue)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Put soil in containers for each table (enough to fill the cups for each child). Place grass seed in smaller containers for each table. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a cup. Set soil and grass containers on each table, along with markers. Have children draw a face on their cup (optional: glue wiggly eyes to the cup instead of drawing eyes). Have them fill their cup with dirt and add grass seed. Instruct the children to water the seeds regularly at home. When the grass starts to grow it will remind them of Samson's growing hair.

### Option 2: Lion Face Puppet

*Supply List: small white paper plates (one per child), paper bags (one per child), glue, crayons, yarn (yellow, orange, or gold)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut pieces of gold or yellow yarn (about 3 inches in length). Make a sample craft.*

Have children draw a lion face on the center of the paper plate. Glue yarn pieces all around the outside edge of the plate to make a lion's mane. Glue the paper plate to a paper bag to make a puppet. Remind children that God gave Samson incredible strength; one time he even tore a lion apart!





### Option 1: Rope Bracelets

*Supply List: twine, scissors*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut pieces of twine in 10-inch segments and knot together in groups of three (one set per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a set of twine. Have children braid the three pieces of twine together to make a bracelet. Tie the bracelet onto the child's wrist when completed. Remind the children that Samson lied to Delilah and told her if he was bound with ropes, he would lose his strength.

### Option 2: Paper Chain

*Supply List: construction paper, glue sticks, scissors, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut construction paper into strips (six per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child six strips of paper, a marker, and a glue stick. Have children write one word from the Memory Verse ("O Lord God, please . . . strengthen me"; Judg. 16:28) on each strip. Then have them glue the strips together to make a paper chain. Remind children that Samson was captured and chained between two pillars, but when he prayed for strength one last time, God granted his request. Samson pushed apart the two pillars and showed that even in death he could judge God's enemies.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



## STORY 24

# The Girl Who Wouldn't Go Away

RUTH 1–4

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read the focus passage (Ruth 1:1–2:20; 4:13–22) or the whole passage (Ruth 1–4).
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

**1**  
**Read**

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

**2**  
**Teach**

"In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes." Remember that refrain from the book of Judges? It was repeated four times! In those evil days, bad things happened. Bad things like a famine. Bad things like an Israelite family leaving the promised land for a foreign country. Bad things like a husband and two children dying. Things were so bad that one woman even changed her name to Bitter.

But God is working even in the bitter times. God used Bitter's family to bring his blessing to a foreign woman—kind of like how he brought a blessing to

Rahab, the Canaanite woman who protected the Israelite spies. And this was exactly like how he'd promised Abraham that he was going to bless all the people of the earth through him. Want to hear the story of Bitter and the foreign woman? Let's have a listen.

## TELL THE STORY

*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
focus passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Bible  
Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

### Big Truth

We can trust  
God's plan for our  
lives even when  
things don't go  
our way.

Things were very dark for Israel. It was the dark days of the judges, and there was a terrible famine in Israel. No rain! No food! So Elimelech, and his wife Naomi and their two sons, left Bethlehem and settled in Moab outside the promised land. Their two sons married Moabites, women outside God's family. It usually wasn't a good thing to marry a Moabite (see Num. 25:1–2; Deut. 23:3–4). But that's what these boys did. It was the time of the judges, after all. The wives were named Orpah and Ruth. But not long after they married, something terrible happened. All the men died. Naomi's husband, Orpah's husband, and Ruth's husband. How sad.

Shortly after, Naomi heard there was food again in Israel, so she told Orpah and Ruth that she was returning to Bethlehem. Orpah stayed in Moab; but Ruth clung to Naomi and said, "Where you go I will go" and "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (Ruth 1:16). When they arrived in Bethlehem, Naomi's friends said, "Is this Naomi?" They couldn't believe she was back! But she said, "Don't call me Naomi [which means "pleasant"], but Mara [which means "bitter"], for the Lord has brought disaster upon me" (see vv. 20–21).

Naomi's life was bitter, but God had a plan to turn it into something sweet. God's plan involved a generous Israelite named Boaz. Boaz had a field where



Story

24

Ruth

1–4

Ruth went daily to gather barley to eat. Boaz heard good things about Ruth—how she cared for Naomi and vowed to follow the Lord. One day he said to Ruth: “The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!” (2:12). And God did reward her in a surprising way. One night, Ruth came to Boaz, laid at his feet, and said to him, “Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer” (3:9). It was Ruth’s way of saying that she wanted to marry him, her way of saying to Boaz, “You can be the answer to your own prayers.”

Boaz was happy to be such a blessing. He bought her family’s land and made her his wife. He redeemed her! God rewarded Ruth by giving her kind Boaz as a husband. God also gave them a son. As Naomi cradled her grandson, the women said to once-bitter Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer” (4:14). God had brought foreign Ruth into his family through faith. God had turned Naomi’s bitterness into sweetness. And that was just the tip of the iceberg! Even in the dark time of the judges, God was using these people of faith to bring about an even bigger blessing.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Do you want to know something cool? Boaz’s mother was Rahab. The same Rahab that was saved from the walls of Jericho and brought into God’s family. So when Ruth married Boaz, she and her mother-in-law Rahab were both women who had once been outside God’s family. And both women had been brought into God’s family because they had put their trust in him. They must have loved to share their stories with each other! And now Ruth and Boaz’s son would lead to the greatest blessing of all—Jesus. Their son’s name was Obed. Obed had a son (Jesse) who had a son (David). Do you know who David was? He was the king Israel was waiting for—a king after God’s own heart. Not the perfect king. Only Jesus is the perfect King. But a king that helped God’s people do what is right in God’s eyes. And from King David comes King Jesus, our Redeemer! The one who saves us from our sins and brings us new life. The Gospel of Matthew starts with a list of names, Jesus’s family tree. And do you know whose names are on that list? Rahab and Ruth! God’s plans are so much better than we can ever imagine.



## 3

## Engage

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** What promise did God make to Abraham about all the nations of the world? Who are the people in this story who were not originally part of God's family? Why did God welcome them into his family?

**TAKEAWAY:** God welcomes people from all the nations to be part of his people.

2. **QUESTION:** How do we know Ruth made the Lord her God? In what ways should we be like Ruth?

**TAKEAWAY:** Like Ruth, we should make the Lord our God.

3. **QUESTION:** How did Naomi feel when she first returned to Bethlehem? Why? How did Naomi feel by the end of the story? Why? What do we learn about God from her story?

**TAKEAWAY:** We should trust God's plan for our lives even when things are hard.

4. **QUESTION:** How did Boaz redeem, or save, Ruth and Naomi from their bitter life? How is Jesus a better redeemer?

**TAKEAWAY:** King Jesus is a redeemer better than Boaz.

## ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

## Option 1: Share the Food Relay Race

*Supply List: bag or basket with food (apples, bread, carrots, bagels, etc.), plates*

*Before Class: Gather supplies (one food item per child). Place a bag of food on a table on one side of the room. Place plates on the other side of the table and number them (one per team).*

Divide children into teams with a maximum of six children on each team, and give each team a number to match the plate. Have them stand on the opposite

**Memory Verse**  
Blessed be the  
LORD, who has  
not left you this  
day without a  
redeemer!

RUTH 4:14





side of the room as the bag of food. When you call “Go!” the first person on each team should hop on one foot to the table, choose a food item from the bag/basket, then hop a little further to set that item on her plate. Then she runs back to the starting line and tags the next person to hop to the table, choose another piece of food, hop it to the plate, and run back to the starting line. The winning team successfully places six pieces of food on their plate and returns to the starting line first. Remind children that Boaz shared food with Ruth.

### Option 2: Find Your People

*Supply List: colored buttons/chips (two matching colors for each child), paper bag*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Hide half of the buttons or colored chips around the classroom (one from each match). Place the other matching buttons/chips in a paper bag.*

Have children reach in a bag and choose a button/chip without looking. Call out “Find Your People,” and each child should search the room for a button/chip matching his or her color. Upon finding it, he or she calls out “My people are your people” and sit down to wait until the rest find their match. The game ends when everyone has found their people.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Friends Balloon Race

*Supply List: balloons (one per pair of children); timer/stopwatch*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Inflate the balloons to roughly the same size. Set up a simple obstacle course for pairs of children to weave themselves through during the game.*

Divide children into pairs. Each pair gets one balloon. They must both be touching the balloon without using their hands as they move through the obstacle course. If the balloon falls to the ground, or they touch it with their hands, they need to start over. Use a stopwatch to time each pair. The fastest team to make it through the course is the winner. Remind the children that Ruth clung to Naomi.

### Option 2: Redeemer Game

*Supply List: five to six pieces of construction paper (different colors)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Lay five to six different colored pieces of construction paper randomly around the floor.*

Choose one child to be the Color Caller. Tell the children that when the Color Caller says “Go!” they should choose a colored paper to stand by (each child chooses for themselves). The Color Caller must stand with her back to the colored squares and then call out “Go!” and count to ten. Then she calls out a color and anyone who chose that color is out and must sit outside the playing area. Have the Color Caller say, “Go!” again and play continues. Periodically, pause the game and shout, “Anyone wearing [pick a color] has been redeemed and is back in the game!” Remind the children that Boaz was Ruth and Naomi’s redeemer. Continue to play until time runs out or there’s one child left, and he or she becomes the new Color Caller.

---

## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: God Spreads His Wings

*Supply List: copy paper, red construction paper (one per child), white paper plates (one per child), scissors, staplers, crayons, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print “God spreads his wings over his children” on copy paper (one per child). Cut the messages out so they will fit on the hearts. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate, scissors, red construction paper, the message, and a glue stick. Place crayons and a stapler at each table. Have children fold the red paper in half to trace half a wide heart. Have them cut out a heart and glue the message in the center. Have them cut the white plate in half, then staple each half to the side of the heart to form wings (may require assistance). With extra time they can decorate the craft using crayons.

### Option 2: Basket of Grain

*Supply List: white paper plates, scissors, brown crayons or markers, blue construction paper, glue, penne pasta*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut paper plates in half (one half per child). Place penne pasta in containers (one per table, with about eight pieces per child). Make a sample craft.*



Story

24

Ruth

1-4

Give each child a half-plate, blue construction paper, and glue. Place containers of pasta and brown crayons or markers at each table. Have children color the underside of the half-paper plate brown to look like a basket. Then have children glue the rounded edges of the plate to the blue paper so that it forms a basket (the brown side will be facing up to create a small opening at the top). Children will then glue penne pasta to the blue paper so that it appears to be coming out of the basket. Remind them that Ruth labored to gather grain in Boaz's field.

3rd-5th

### Option 1: Strand of Hearts

*Supply List: cardstock, yarn, markers, scissors, hole punchers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut yarn in 3-4-foot lengths (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child yarn and scissors. Set cardstock, hole punchers, and markers on each table. Have the children draw and cut out seven to nine hearts from the cardstock. Have them punch holes in the hearts and string them along the yarn. They will need to tie a knot to hold each heart on the yarn. Encourage them to write "God spreads his wings over his children" on the heart(s) and the reference for the Memory Verse (Ruth 4:14). Remind them of all the love shown in Ruth's story.

### Option 2: God Spreads His Wings

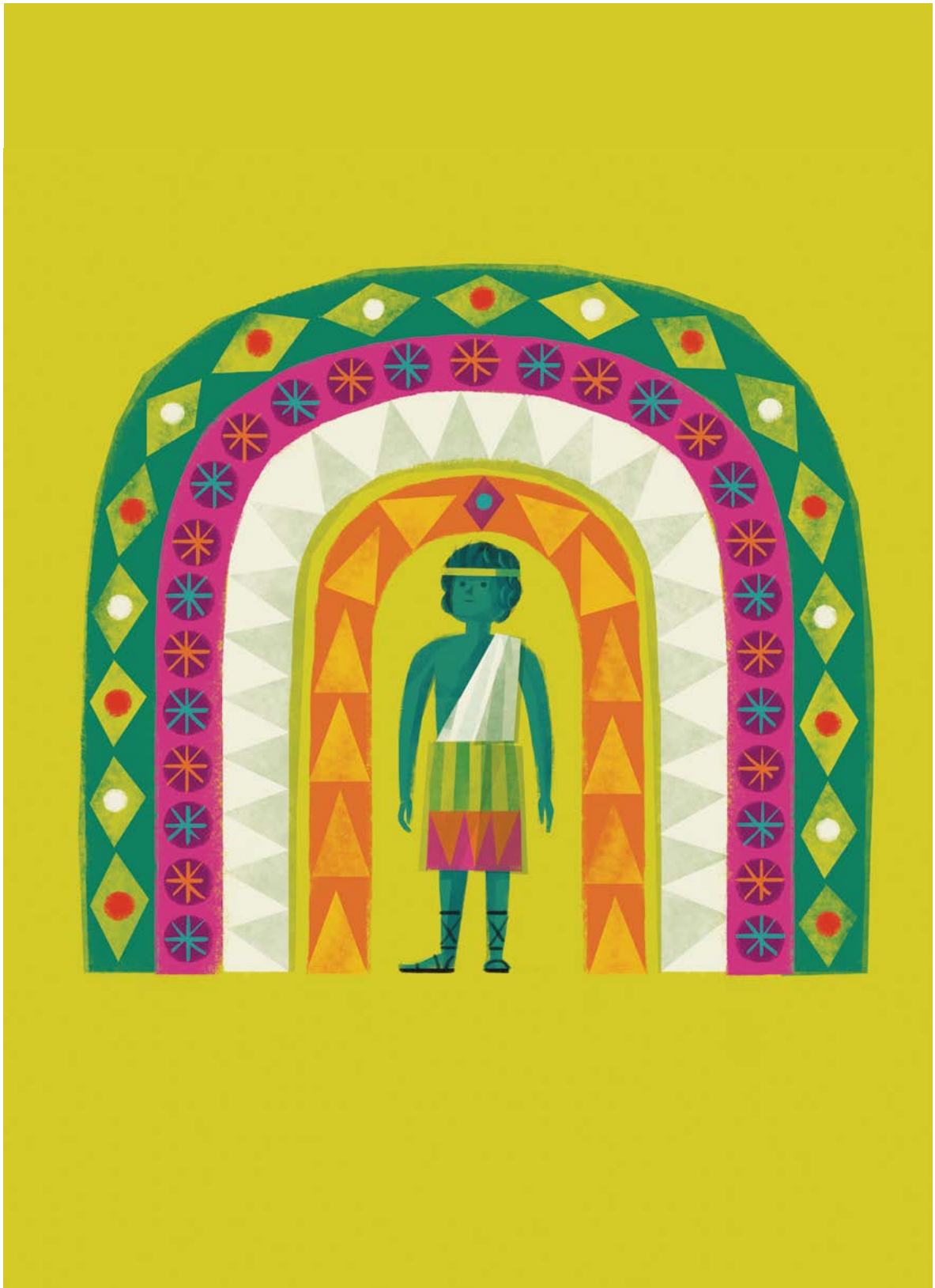
*Supply List: red construction paper (one per child), white paper plates (one per child), scissors, staplers, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate, scissors, red construction paper, and a glue stick. Place crayons and a stapler at each table. Have children fold the red paper in half to trace half a wide heart. Have them cut out a heart and write "God spreads his wings over his children" in the center. Have them cut the white plate in half, then staple each half to the side of the heart to form wings. With extra time they can decorate the craft using markers.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



## STORY 25

# The Lord's Word and Samuel

1 SAMUEL 1; 3

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read 1 Samuel 1; 3.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



For nearly two hundred years Israel was ruled by judges. Remember Gideon and Samson? They were judges. And when they relied on God's strength, they defeated Israel's enemies. Yes, when they listened to God, they led Israel well. But those men, just like most of the other judges, were like a spiritual teeter-totter. Up and down, up and down. Mostly down! No wonder then that God's people were like a Ferris wheel—they circled round and round. One day they would follow the Lord. The following day they would slide back into sin. Then God's enemies would attack them. Next, they would cry out to the Lord. Finally, God would deliver them. Then round and round again. (Are you getting sick just thinking about it?)

Today we will talk about Samuel. He was the last judge. He was also a priest. And he was also a prophet. Oh, and he also anointed Israel's first king. He did it all! He was an important leader. And, for the most part, he was a good and godly leader. He was a special man called by God to hear and declare God's word to God's people.

## TELL THE STORY

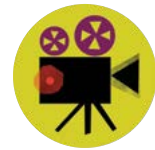
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
God's people  
should obey  
and share God's  
word, the Bible.

Once, there was an Israelite named Elkanah who had two wives—Peninnah and Hannah. Was an Israelite supposed to have two wives? No! In the garden of Eden God created man and woman. Adam and Eve married. That was God's design for God's people. Anyway, Elkanah didn't obey God's word. And anytime someone doesn't obey God's word, it doesn't go well for him. Having two wives caused tons of trouble. Peninnah was very mean to Hannah. And Peninnah had lots of babies, but Hannah had none. Peninnah would actually tease Hannah because she had no babies. This made Hannah so sad that she cried and cried.

One day, she cried out to the Lord! She traveled to the temple and made this special promise: "Lord, if you give me a son, I will give him to you all the days of his life" (see 1 Sam. 1:11). Eli, the priest in the temple, didn't hear her prayer, but he offered her a blessing: "Go in peace, and the God of Israel grant your petition" (1:17). She went in peace. And our kind God answered her prayer: "In due time Hannah conceived and bore a son, and she called his name Samuel, for she said, 'I have asked for him from the LORD'" (1:20). The name Samuel means "heard of God."





Story

25

1 Samuel

1; 3

Just as his mother had promised, Samuel grew up in the temple and served God. One night, the boy named “heard *of* God” heard *from* God! This was unusual. Sure, there are times in Israel’s history when God spoke to people. But in the days of the judges, “the word of the LORD was rare” (3:1). Almost no one heard from God. But Samuel did. Here’s what happened. The Lord said, “Samuel! Samuel!” Samuel thought it was Eli. So he ran to him and said, “Yes, you called.” Eli said, “Go back to bed. It wasn’t me.” God called three more times, and each time Samuel thought it was Eli. Finally, Eli realized that it is was the Lord!

So he gave Samuel these instructions: the next time he heard the voice, he was to say, “Speak, LORD, for your servant hears” (3:9). Samuel did exactly what Eli said, and from that point on, God used Samuel to talk to his people. God spoke to Samuel, and Samuel spoke God’s word to the people.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

The book of Hebrews begins this way, “Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Heb. 1:1–2). Over a thousand years before Jesus, God revealed himself to Samuel and other judges, priests, and prophets like him through visions and dreams—or with actual words like our story today. But now, God reveals himself to us through Jesus. We know what God is like, what he has done for us, and how we are to respond to him by looking at Jesus—the way he lived, taught, healed, suffered, died, and rose again. And the surest way we know about Jesus is by the word of God in the Bible. We read the Bible. We learn about Jesus. And we share the good news about Jesus with our friends and family. It is so important to listen to whatever the word of God tells us to be and to do—and then to share it with others.

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What made Hannah cry and cry? Whom did she cry out to for help? What can we learn from her? Does God always give us what we ask for?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** God doesn't say yes to every prayer we pray, but, like Hannah, we should bring our requests to him.

**Memory Verse**

Long ago, at  
many times and  
in many ways,  
God spoke to our  
fathers by the  
prophets, but in  
these last days he  
has spoken to us  
by his Son.

HEBREWS 1:1-2

2. **QUESTION:** How did Samuel respond when he first heard God's voice? What did God call Samuel to do? How should we respond to what God tells us to do in his word?

**TAKEAWAY:** Like Samuel, we should listen to and obey the word of God.

3. **QUESTION:** How did Samuel hear from God? What is the main way that God talks to us today?

**TAKEAWAY:** God speaks to us through his word, the Bible.

4. **QUESTION:** Who did Samuel tell the things the messages that God spoke to him? What are some things that we have learned about God? How can we be like Samuel when we learn new things about God?

**TAKEAWAY:** We should tell others what we learn about God and his Son from the Bible.

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**ACTIVITIES**

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10-15 minutes}*

K-2nd

**Option 1: Telephone Game**

*Supply List: none*

Have children sit in a circle. The first person (or teacher) whispers a message into the ear of the person next to him. That person then whispers the message she thought she heard on to the next person. The game continues until it reaches the last person in the circle. The last person then says the message he or she heard aloud to the group. Compare the original message to the final one shared. Is the message the same in the end as it was when it started? Were you good listeners and communicators?



Story

25

1 Samuel

1; 3

## Option 2: Who Is Calling?

*Supply List: none*

Have children sit in a circle. One person is Samuel and sits in the middle of the circle with his eyes closed. A leader silently points to someone around the circle who quietly says, “Samuel!” The person who is Samuel then wakes up and says, “Here I am!” and points to the person he thinks called out “Samuel.” If he guesses correctly, the person who called out “Samuel” becomes the new Samuel, and the old Samuel takes his or her spot around the circle. If Samuel guesses incorrectly, he gets one more guess. Regardless of whether Samuel guesses correctly, the person who called out “Samuel” reveals himself and becomes the new Samuel.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Eli, Samuel!

*Supply List: none*

Gather children together in an open area. Choose one person to be Samuel. Tell the children they can only walk in this game or they will be out if they run. Samuel will close his or her eyes while the rest of the group scatters. When Samuel calls out “Eli,” the rest of the group replies “Samuel.” Samuel tries to touch someone (while keeping his or her eyes closed). If he or she tags someone, that person becomes Samuel.

## Option 2: Who Is Calling?

*Supply List: none*

Have children sit in a circle. One person is Samuel and sits in the middle of the circle with his eyes closed. A leader silently points to someone around the circle who quietly says, “Samuel!” The person who is Samuel then wakes up and says, “Here I am!” and points to the person he thinks called out “Samuel.” If he guesses correctly, the person who called out “Samuel” becomes the new Samuel, and the old Samuel takes his or her spot around the circle. If Samuel guesses incorrectly, he gets one more guess. Regardless of whether Samuel guesses correctly, the person who called out “Samuel” reveals himself and becomes the new Samuel.

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Praying Hands

*Supply List: construction paper, scissors, crayons, glue stick, stapler/staples, copy paper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and cut out papers that say “Bring your prayers to God” in a font that would fit in the palm of a child’s hand. Make a sample craft.*

Help children trace their hands onto a piece of construction paper. Children should cut the hands out, place them on top of each other, and create a hinge by stapling one side of the hands so they can open and shut. Have them open the hands and glue the message to the palm of one hand. Children can color the hands if time allows.

### Option 2: Cup Telephone

*Supply List: paper cups, string, scissors, paper clips, markers, stickers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut pieces of string about 18 inches long. Use a pen to poke the ends of a piece of string through the bottom of two cups, and attach paper clips with a large knot to the ends of the string to hold them in place (one cup telephone set per child). Make a sample craft.*

Distribute a cup telephone to each child. Allow them to decorate with markers and stickers as desired. Demonstrate how to pull the string tight and talk/listen to someone on the other end.

**Option 1: Pillow**

*Supply List: full-sized, heavy-duty paper towels, washable markers, glue or stapler/staples, soft material of your choice*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child two full-sized, heavy-duty paper towels and have them decorate both pieces with washable markers as desired. Use staples or white glue to seal three of the sides together. Fill with tissues, paper towels, or cotton balls—any soft material. When filled, seal the last side. Remind children that Samuel was asleep when God first spoke to him.

**Option 2: Cup Telephone**

*Supply List: paper cups, string, scissors, paper clips, markers, stickers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut pieces of string about 18 inches long. Use a pen to poke the ends of a piece of string through the bottom of two cups, and attach paper clips with a large knot to the ends of the string to hold them in place (one cup telephone set per child). Make a sample craft.*

Distribute a cup telephone to each child. Allow them to decorate with markers and stickers as desired. Demonstrate how to pull the string tight and talk/listen to someone on the other end.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.





## STORY 26

# The Rise and Fall of King Saul

## 1 SAMUEL 8–15

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read the focus passage (1 Sam. 8:1–9:2; 15:1–35) or the whole passage (1 Samuel 8–15).
- Pray for God’s help. Ask for the Spirit’s help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children’s eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week’s story. {5 minutes}



Way back in Genesis, God promised that he would send a king to destroy evil and bless the nations. The king would come from the *line* of Judah (and he would be the *lion* of Judah!). Jesus was this lion king from Judah’s line. But before we get to King Jesus, we start with King Saul. Saul wasn’t a great king, because he wasn’t always a good man. And he wasn’t who God had in mind when he thought of the right king for Israel. This is why, when Israel demanded a king, the Lord said, “They have rejected me from being king over them” (1 Sam. 8:7). They wanted a king that was just like all the other nations: a powerful man who was

like a god, someone who would rule them in his own strength. They wanted a great king *instead* of our great God! Well, God gave them what they wanted. Let's see what happens, and let's see how God brings about his good plan even through Israel's bad decision.

## TELL THE STORY

*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
focus passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

### Big Truth

Our good God  
is the only king  
we need.

"Give us a king!" the people told Samuel. "You're too old. Your two sons are too wicked. Appoint a king to rule over us just like all the other nations!" (see 1 Sam. 8:5). Samuel felt rejected. He also thought a king was a bad idea. So he brought the matter to God in prayer. (Always a good thing to do!) "They have not rejected you," God said, "but me from being their king. Go and warn them that having a king like the nations is a bad idea" (see 8:7–9).

Samuel warned them that having a king would cost them, but the people wouldn't listen. They "refused to obey" Samuel, and they said to him: "No! But there shall be a king over us, that we also may be like all the nations, and that our king may judge us and go before us and fight our battles" (8:19–20). God gave them what they wanted. He picked a king whom the people would have picked. Saul was a "handsome young man" and "he was taller" than anyone in all of Israel (9:2). He was also a strong warrior. Samuel poured oil over Saul's head, and said, "The LORD anoints you king. You will rule over my people and save them from the hand of their surrounding enemies" (see 10:1). For a time, that is exactly what happened. Saul led Israel's army and they defeated their enemies. Israel was so happy. "Long live the king!" (10:24), they shouted.



Story

26

1 Samuel

8–15

God promised them that if they followed his good commandments, then everything would go well with them. But if they disobeyed, “the hand of the LORD” would “be against” them and their king (12:15). Well, it didn’t take long for *tall* Saul to break a *big* rule. After a victory, he offered sacrifices to God. He was only a king, not a priest! He wasn’t supposed to do this, but he gave in to what the people wanted. Samuel said to him, “What have you done? You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the LORD your God” (13:11, 13). Sadly, this was not the only time Saul obeyed the voice of the crowd instead of obeying the voice of God. And because he “rejected the word of the LORD” over and over, the Lord finally “rejected” him “from being king over Israel” (15:26).

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Israel rejected God as their King and wanted a human king for the wrong reasons, which led to all sorts of trouble. Their bad choice would be bad for them, but their bad choice would not stop God’s perfect plan. He would still establish his forever kingdom through his Son, Jesus—the perfect King! This is how God works throughout history. His purpose is such that rebellious acts bring about his good. This is the story of the cross, isn’t it? Jesus is born as the King of the Jews, but his own people, the Jews, reject him. They mock him and crucify him. But that rejection brings about God’s good plan. Jesus dies and the Snake Crusher is crushed. Jesus dies and rebellious sinners are forgiven. Jesus dies and new life comes to spiritually dead people. Jesus dies and he is crowned King: “God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord” (Phil. 2:9–11). Only God could plan something as good as Jesus’s reign through something as bad as Jesus’s death.

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** Why did the Israelites want a king other than God? Why was this a bad decision?

**TAKEAWAY:** Our good God is the only king we need.

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**

I will raise up  
your offspring  
after you, . . . and  
I will establish  
the throne of his  
kingdom forever.

2 SAMUEL 7:12-13

2. **QUESTION:** How did Saul disobey God's good rules? Whom was Saul trying to please with his choices? What are some ways we might feel tempted to please others instead of God?

**TAKEAWAY:** We should obey God's good rules because pleasing God is always more important than pleasing people.

3. **QUESTION:** When the Israelites and Saul both rejected God and his rules, did that stop God's good plan? When the Jews rejected Jesus as King and crucified him, did that stop God's good plan?

**TAKEAWAY:** Even when people reject God's rule, it cannot stop God's good plan.

---

## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Going on a King Hunt

*Supply List: a picture of King Saul*

*Before Class: Print out a picture of King Saul. Hide the picture somewhere in the room.*

Like the Israelites who wanted a king and wouldn't stop until they got one, the children will go on a king hunt. Tell the children when you say "Go!" that the first person to find the king wins. The child who finds King Saul can then hide him in a different place in the room for the others to find. Continue to give other children the opportunity to hide King Saul.

### Option 2: Choose a King Game

*Supply List: paper or play crown*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Have children sit in a circle. One person is Samuel and holds a paper crown. Samuel walks around the circle and puts the crown on someone's head to choose a king. The crowned child then gets up and tries to tag Samuel before he or she

gets around the circle to the spot where he or she had been sitting. If tagged, the old Samuel sits in the middle of the circle. If not tagged, that child can be part of the circle. The crowned child becomes the new Samuel and gets to walk around the circle and choose a new person to be king. If your group is large, break off into two groups to give more people an opportunity to play. Place a limit on the number of times one person can be chosen.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Going on a King Hunt

*Supply List: a picture of King Saul*

*Before Class: Print out a picture of King Saul. Hide the picture somewhere in the room.*

Like the Israelites who wanted a king and wouldn't stop until they got one, the children will go on a king hunt. Tell the children when you say "Go!" that the first person to find the king wins. The child who finds King Saul can then hide him in a different place in the room for the others to find. Continue to give other children the opportunity to hide King Saul.

### Option 2: King and Queen Chase

*Supply List: small items (such as a block), stickers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies (one small item per child).*

Gather children together in an open area and divide children into two teams—the Kings and the Queens. Have the Queens put a sticker on their cheek to help children keep track of who is a king and who is a queen. Give the children a small item to balance on their heads so that they are walking carefully instead of running through the room. The teacher will call out directions to the class. If the teacher calls out, "Kings chase queens" the kings try to tag the queens. At any time the leader can switch things up and call, "Queens chase kings." If someone is tagged or if the item falls off his or her head, the child has to sit down exactly in that spot and serve as an obstacle for the remaining players. Play continues until one person is left and that person is the winner.



Story

26

1 Samuel

8–15

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Paper Crown

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, tape, markers, jewels, sequins, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Draw a zigzag line down the center of the cardstock (length-wise, one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Place scissors, tape, markers, jewels, sequins, and glue on tables. Give the children each one piece of cardstock. Have them cut along the zigzag line. Have children decorate the pieces of the crown with markers, jewels, and sequins as desired. Have children tape the two pieces together to form a crown. Remind children that God is our King.

### Option 2: Picture Frame Magnet

*Supply List: copy paper, scissors, glue, craft sticks, magnets, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Type “God is my King” on paper so that it will fit on a craft stick. Print and cut, as needed (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child four craft sticks and a “God is my King” strip. Place glue, magnets, and markers on tables. Have children glue craft sticks into a rectangular shape to form a picture frame. Glue the “God is my King” strip to one of the craft sticks. If desired, decorate frames with markers. Put a magnet on the back of one of the craft sticks. Tell children they can place the frame over a picture on their refrigerator or other magnetic surface.





### Option 1: Sword Craft

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, aluminum foil, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. On cardstock, print out a sword pattern a little bigger than a hand (one per child). Tear off sheets of aluminum foil (one large sheet per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of cardstock and a sheet of foil. Place scissors and markers on tables. Have children cut out the sword pattern. Children should wrap the blade of the sword with aluminum foil to make it look shiny. Use markers to color the handle. Remind children that Saul led the Israelite army to victory over some enemies, but that Jesus defeated all enemies on the cross.

### Option 2: Picture Frame Magnet

*Supply List: glue, craft sticks, magnets, markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child four craft sticks. Place glue, magnets, and markers on tables. Have children glue craft sticks into a rectangular shape to form a picture frame. Have children write “God is my King” on one of the craft sticks. If desired, decorate frames with markers. Put a magnet on the back of one of the craft sticks. Tell children they can place the frame over a picture on their refrigerator or other magnetic surface.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



## STORY 27

# David Stands Tall

## 1 SAMUEL 16–17

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read 1 Samuel 16–17.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*

2

Teach

The Lord “rejected” Saul “from being king over Israel” because Saul “rejected the word of the LORD” (1 Sam. 15:26). That’s the end of last lesson’s story. But it isn’t the end of God’s Big Story. God raised up a new king, one after his own heart.

As Samuel was grieving over Saul, God came and said, “Go to the town of Bethlehem and find a man named Jesse. I will pick one of his sons to be the next king.” When he arrived, Samuel saw Eliab, Jesse’s oldest son. He took out his oil to anoint him: “Surely [this is] the LORD’s anointed” (16:6). Eliab, like Saul, was tall and strong. But God said to Samuel, “For the LORD sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart” (16:7). Jesse paraded his next oldest son and the next and the next and the next

and the next and the next. Seven sons! “Do you have any more sons?” Samuel asked. “Well,” Jesse said, “there is David. But he is the youngest and he is just a shepherd boy” (see 16:11). But God knew this was a boy that trusted him. Samuel said, “Bring him to me.” When David arrived, he anointed him the new king, and “the Spirit of the LORD rushed upon David” (16:13). Let’s see what the Spirit of the Lord can do through those who trust him.

## TELL THE STORY

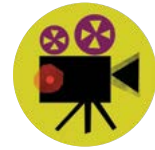
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
Through his  
anointed king,  
God defeats our  
biggest enemies.

One day “the Philistines gathered their armies for battle” against Israel, and they sent forward “a champion named Goliath” (1 Sam. 17:1, 4). Goliath was not a sports champion or a chess champion. He was the big winner in beating people up! And he was a big man. “He is seven feet tall,” said one of Israel’s soldiers. “No, he’s got to be nine feet tall!” said another. “And look at his armor,” someone whispered to King Saul. On the giant’s head was a bronze helmet and his body was covered with heavy metal. He was invincible! Unbeatable!

“Choose a man for yourselves,” Goliath barked out, “to fight me. If I kill him, we win. But if he kills me, Israel wins” (see 17:8–9). Every single man in Israel’s army was “greatly afraid” (17:11). No one would go forward to fight. Every day for forty days, Goliath made this challenge. One day, when young David was there to bring his big brothers some food, he heard Goliath. “Enough is enough. This big bully should not make fun of our great God. I’ll fight him!” (see 17:26). David told Saul about the times God saved him from getting killed by lions and bears, and he said, “The LORD . . . will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine” (17:37). This shepherd could not stand Goliath’s defying God, and he trusted

God to deliver him and the Israelites. What courage! What faith! Saul said, “Go, and the LORD be with you!” (17:37).

The Lord was with David! Indeed, the Spirit of the Lord was David’s strength. David took his slingshot and five smooth stones and marched forward. “Ha!” Goliath laughed. “Am I a dog, that you come to me with sticks?” (17:43). David answered, “The battle is the LORD’s, and he will give you into our hand” (17:47). He placed a stone in his sling, swung it around, and let it fly. Whoosh! The stone flew like a bullet and sunk right into the big winner’s big head. Down he fell—dead! Goliath had defied God. The Lord used faithful and courageous David to defeat this enemy.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

The story of David’s defeat of Goliath is not about how we can face the giant problems in our lives. Rather it is a story that shows us what God values and how he works in the world. King Saul was tall, handsome, strong, and popular. But God doesn’t look on the outside; he looks on the inside. What’s in our hearts is what matters most. Saul’s heart did not follow after God’s heart. So he was not the king God wanted, which meant he wasn’t the king God used to defeat Israel’s big enemy. But David’s heart beat after God’s heart. Even though he was just a humble shepherd boy, he completely trusted that God could defeat Israel’s biggest enemy through him. He didn’t need special armor, a strong shield, a bronze helmet, and a long sharp sword. He just needed God’s wisdom and strength. And that’s what God gave him.

David’s humility points forward to Jesus’s humility. David’s trust in God was great—it led him through a scary battle. But Jesus’s trust in God was greater—it led him through death itself! And so Jesus accomplished the greatest victory because he had the greatest humility.

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** Why did Samuel think the oldest son would be the next king? Can we tell if people love and trust God by their appearance? Who is the only one that knows completely if we love God or not? And how does he know?

**TAKEAWAY:** God doesn’t look on the outside; he looks inside at our hearts.



Story

27

1 Samuel

16–17

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**  
Know that the  
LORD saves not  
with sword  
and spear. For  
the battle is  
the LORD'S.

1 SAMUEL 17:47

**2. QUESTION:** Why were all the Israelites afraid of Goliath? Why wasn't David afraid? How can we be like David?

**TAKEAWAY:** God is with us, so we don't need to be afraid of our enemies.

**3. QUESTION:** What happened when David was anointed that gave him strength for the battle? How was David able to defeat the mighty Goliath? If we are Christians, we have the Spirit just like David. How can this help us when we feel weak or afraid?

**TAKEAWAY:** The Spirit of the Lord is our strength.

**4. QUESTION:** How was Jesus an unlikely king like David? What did David do to defeat Goliath? What did Jesus do to defeat sin, death, and Satan?

**TAKEAWAY:** Through God's chosen King (Jesus) and his weakness (the cross), God defeated our biggest enemies (sin, death, and Satan).

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Philistines and Israelites

*Supply List: none*

Have children line up on one side of the room. Choose one person to be Goliath. Goliath says, "I defy the armies of Israel! Give me a man and let us fight each other." Children try to cross to the other side without being tagged by Goliath. If they are tagged, they join the Philistine army and help Goliath tag others until only one person is remaining.

### Option 2: Sheep in the Pen Relay Race

*Supply List: bag of cotton balls, plastic spoons (one per team), large plastic cup (one per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Scatter cotton balls on the floor on one side of the room.*





Story

27

1 Samuel

16–17

Divide children into teams and give each team a cup and have them put it on the floor at the starting line. Give the first child on each team a spoon. When you call out “Go,” the first person on each team should race down, pick up a “sheep” (cotton ball) with the spoon, and bring it back to the “sheep pen” (cup). If the cotton ball falls off the spoon while carrying it, the child must stop and replace it before continuing. Once they put it in the cup, they give the spoon to the next player. Play continues for a predetermined amount of time. The winning team gets the most cotton balls into their team’s cup in the allotted time.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Shepherd the Sheep Game

*Supply List: masking tape*

*Before Class: Mark off an area on the floor with the tape so all the children can stand in it.*

Have the children stand in the taped area (the sheepfold). Choose one person to be David the Shepherd and the others to be sheep. David stands in the center of the play area and counts to five with his eyes closed. While David counts, the sheep scatter outside of the sheepfold. After counting, David opens his eyes and tries to tag the sheep until he has tagged them all. When a sheep is tagged, she is sent to the sheepfold. As time allows, the last person to be tagged can be the new David.

### Option 2: Put On the King’s Armor Relay

*Supply List: a set of armor (helmets, knee pads, shirts, plastic swords, boots, etc.) per team*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Place armor sets on one side of the room (one pile per team).*

Divide the class into teams and have them line up on the opposite side of the room as their pile of armor. To begin, say “Who will fight Goliath?” The first child on each team will race to the armor and put on all the items. Then she should run back to the starting line, take off the items, and tag the next person in line to go. The next person puts on the items right away, runs to the opposite side, takes off the items, runs back, and tags the next person. Play continues until all players have a turn. The winning team is the one that gets all their team members to complete the race first.

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Heart Necklace

*Supply List:* cardstock, hole punch, scissors, marker/crayons, pony beads in a variety of colors, thin yarn/string, small bowls

*Before Class:* Gather supplies. Cut out small paper hearts on cardstock that say, “God looks at the heart.” Hole punch two holes in the top of the heart so the heart will lay flat when string is threaded through it. Cut thin yarn into 24-inch pieces. Place beads in small bowls (one per table). Make a sample craft.

Give each child one piece of string and a heart. Place beads and markers/crayons on each table. Have children decorate the paper hearts and then string a piece of thin yarn through the holes in the heart. Then have them add pony beads in patterns and colors of their choosing to the sides of the heart. Tie each child’s string to form a necklace.

### Option 2: Lace Together Hearts

*Supply List:* cardstock, yarn, crayons/markers, hole punch, scissors, paper clips

*Before Class:* Gather supplies. Print and cut out large cardstock hearts (two per child). Hold pairs of hearts together and punch holes along the sides and bottom of the hearts (paper clip each pair together). Cut yarn pieces about 24 inches in length (one per child). Make a sample craft.

Distribute a pair of hearts and a piece of yarn to each child. Have children decorate the hearts as desired with markers/crayons, then use the yarn to lace the hearts together, leaving the top open to make a pocket. Knot and trim the yarn as necessary. Encourage the kids to find five small rocks outside to keep in the heart to remind them of what God can do when they put their faith in him.



### Option 1: String Art Heart

*Supply List: cardstock, different colored yarn, hole punch, scissors, tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and cut out large cardstock hearts (one per child). Use a hole punch to make holes around the outside of the hearts. Form balls of yarn for each child (approx. 6 feet, or enough to complete the craft). Make a sample craft.*

Give the children each a cardstock heart and ball of yarn. Have them unroll the yarn and tape one end to the back of the heart. Then show them how to string yarn through one hole and then thread the end into a hole on the opposite side of the heart. Continue to string the yarn through the holes, crossing yarn over the center each time until yarn has been thread through each hole. Extra yarn should be trimmed at the end to complete and taped to secure on the back.

### Option 2: Slingshot Challenge

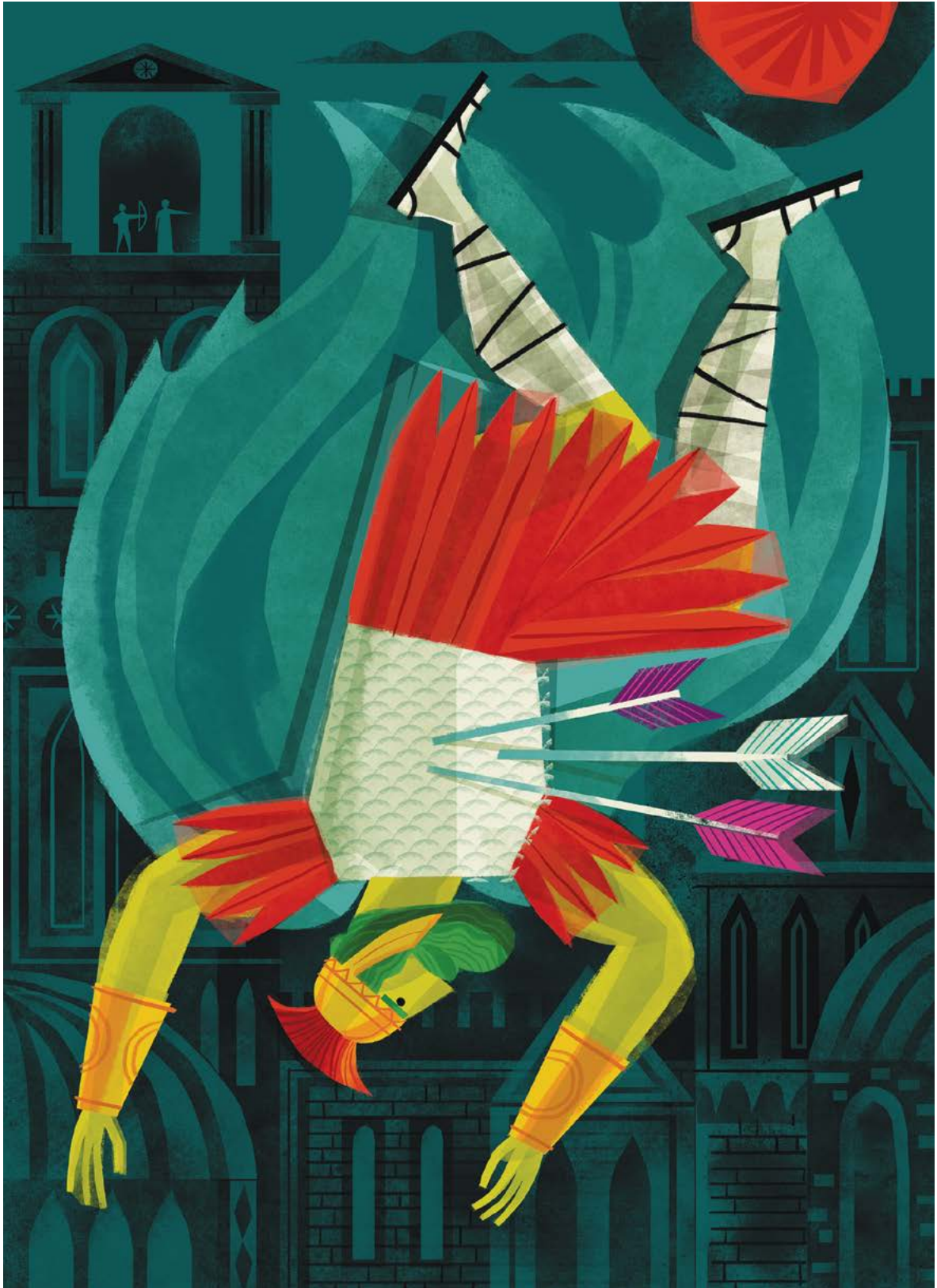
*Supply List: craft sticks, rubber bands, plastic spoons, large marshmallows, plastic bags*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Experiment with making a slingshot using the supplies.*

Place craft sticks, rubber bands, plastic spoons, and a bowl of marshmallows on each table. Challenge the children to build a slingshot that shoots a large marshmallow and hits a target such as a bullseye. At the end of class, give them a bag with a marshmallow to take home with their slingshots.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



## STORY 28

# David Sins . . . and Repents

## 2 SAMUEL 11–12

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- *Read 2 Samuel 11–12.*
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*

2

Teach

Remember how Samuel anointed David to be the next king? In the meantime, Saul was still king. God was pleased with David but not with Saul. So Saul became extremely jealous of David. Time after time, he tried to kill him. David had to live on the run. He even hid in caves in the desert. But God was with David. He delivered him over and over.

After Saul died, David came out of hiding and was crowned king. David was a good king, a man after God's own heart. He was merciful toward Saul's family. He ruled God's people with wisdom and kindness. He won many battles. He became rich and famous. Everyone loved him! Would you want that? Of course! David enjoyed that too. But more than the money, fame, success, and power, he enjoyed God's presence and promises. One night God spoke to David through

the prophet Nathan. He promised David a kingdom that would never come to an end: “Your throne shall be established forever” (2 Sam. 7:16). David was amazed. Everything was going so well! But things were about to change.

## TELL THE STORY

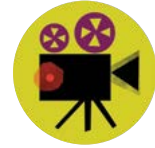
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
God forgives  
even big-time sins  
when we repent.

Can someone who loves God sin? Sadly, yes. Does even this king after God’s own heart have a heart that always beats with God’s? Thump. Thump. Bump. Blump. No. David did many good things, and he loved and praised God most of his life. But he also did some pretty bad things—terrible sins that showed he didn’t always trust and obey God.

One day David was on the roof of his big palace. He looked down and saw a beautiful woman named Bathsheba. He decided then and there, “I must have this beautiful woman for myself.” Ah, but there was only one problem: David was already married. Oh yeah, and another problem: Bathsheba was married too! David didn’t care. He set his heart on her, a heart that was no longer beating with God’s heart. So, here’s what he did. It was really, really bad. He took her anyway. And she became pregnant. To cover his tracks, David commanded Uriah, Bathsheba’s husband, to fight at the front of a battle. Uriah was a brave soldier. He accepted the order. He fought. He died. (Just liked David had planned.) David immediately married beautiful Bathsheba. David was an adulterer, murderer, and a thief.

What David did was not what a man after God’s own heart would do. God was upset, that’s for sure! So he sent the prophet Nathan to David with a hard message. Nathan shared a story about a rich man with everything who stole a little





Story

28

2 Samuel

11–12

lamb from a poor man who had nothing. When the story was over, David was furious, “What a terrible thing to do! That man deserves to die!” Then, Nathan surprised him. “You are the man!” he said. David’s heart hurt. He saw now that he was the wicked man. He deserved to die. So here’s what he did next: he bowed low and asked God to forgive him. And God did. God always forgives those who come to him. Later, he wrote a song about what happened, in which he said: “Oh God, I have sinned against you. Have mercy on me and cleanse me from my sin. Create in me a clean heart and restore to me the joy of your salvation” (see Psalm 51). David now knew that he was a terrible sinner who worshiped a wonderful Savior.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

In the Old Testament, God made two very important promises to two important people. He promised Abraham that through him and his children he would bless all the nations. And God promised David that through him and through one of his children he would create a kingdom that would never end. What kind of a king would it take to rule that forever kingdom? The perfect King! That perfect King is Jesus. David was good some of the time; Jesus is perfect all the time. David committed some big-time sins; Jesus never committed any sins, not even one. David needed a Savior; Jesus is his Savior. Jesus died on the cross for sinners (see Rom. 5:8)—like David and like us. And he is the Savior of all people from all nations who bow before him as King of kings and Lord of lords and ask for his forgiveness (“Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner”). Only those who know Jesus as their Lord and Savior can have their sins forgiven and find true and lasting joy. Praise God for our perfect King!

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** How did David sin? Is there anyone besides Jesus who has not sinned?

**TAKEAWAY:** Like David, we are sinners.

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**  
The LORD also  
has put away  
your sin.

2 SAMUEL 12:13

2. **QUESTION:** How did Nathan show David his sin? How did David respond? How did God respond to David's prayer? What can we learn from David's example?

**TAKEAWAY:** God forgives even big-time sins.

3. **QUESTION:** Has your heart ever hurt after you sinned? What do we do when we know we have sinned? How does it feel to know that Jesus forgives your sins when you come to him?

**TAKEAWAY:** We must go to Jesus to have our sins forgiven and find true and lasting joy.

4. **QUESTION:** How long did God promise David his throne would last? Was David going to live forever? Then how would this promise come true?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is the promised King of the forever kingdom.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Blob Tag

*Supply List: none*

Have the kids spread out in the room, and pick one kid to be “Blob.” Start a game of tag. Blob is “It.” When the Blob tags someone, the tagged child links arms with the Blob. The game goes until everyone is part of the Blob. Explain to children how sin is like the Blob. David's sin grew and spread until he repented.

### Option 2: Swat Away Sin Game

*Supply List: masking tape, dark paper or newspaper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Place a piece of masking tape down the center of the play area to divide it into two sections.*

Divide children into two teams—one team on each side of the tape. Distribute an equal number of pieces of dark colored paper or newspaper to each side and



instruct the children to crumple the pieces into balls. Explain that the paper represents sin and they're trying to get rid of it. When you call "Go," each team tries to keep the paper off their side by tossing the pieces to the other side for a predetermined amount of time (recommendation: 3-5 minutes). At the end, the team with the most pieces of paper on their side loses. Play again as time allows. When game time is over, the leader yells "Repent!" and all paper gets thrown into a trash can.

**3rd–5th****Option 1: Carrying Sin Relay**

*Supply List: two bags, books*

*Before Class: Fill bags with heavy books (one bag per team).*

Divide children into two teams. Give each team a heavy bag of books. Say "Go!" The first child on each team should carry or drag the bag of books to the other side of the room, empty the bag, and bring it back to the next person in line. The next person carries the empty bag to the opposite side and puts the books in and carries it back to the next in line. Play continues until all children have had a turn to race. Remind children that carrying around sin weighs us down, but when we repent and are forgiven, we are free from the weight of sin.

**Option 2: Wrapped in Sin Game**

*Supply List: two rolls of toilet paper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Divide children into two teams. Have each team line up in a single file line. Distribute a roll of toilet paper to each team. Call out "Go!" The first child holds on to the end of the toilet paper and passes the roll over their shoulder (without ripping it). The next person continues to unroll it as he passes it under his legs. This pattern continues (shoulder/legs/shoulder/legs) until the end of the line. The last person wraps the toilet paper around her waist and starts it back the opposite way. The winning team is the first team to use up their roll of toilet paper. If the toilet paper rips, the team is responsible for making sure it stays off the ground for the remainder of the game. Just as David became entangled by his sin, it can get out of control in our lives. The way to be freed from sin is to repent.

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Create in Me a Clean Heart

*Supply List: white cardstock, black construction paper, scissors, tape, paint, paintbrushes, cups*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print the Big Truth or Memory Verse in the center of the cardstock. Make copies (one per child). Cut out hearts from black construction paper that would cover the center words (one per child). Make a sample craft. Fill cups with water.*

Give each child a piece of cardstock and a heart. Place paints, brushes, and cups of water on each table. Have the children place the heart over the words and hold (or tape) it in place as they paint over the entire paper (right up to the edges of the black heart). Then have them carefully remove the black paper heart to reveal the white (unpainted) heart and Big Truth or Memory Verse.

### Option 2: Forgiven Heart

*Supply List: red paper, white paper, glue sticks, scissors, crayons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a large heart on red paper and a smaller heart on white paper (one of each per child). Print a cross that has the word Forgiven on it (the cross must fit inside the white heart); make copies on white paper (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child one red heart, one white heart, and one cross paper. Have the children color the cross. Then have the children cut out the two hearts and the cross. Have them glue the cross to the white heart and then the white heart to the red heart.



### Option 1: Forgiveness Mobile

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, yarn, tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print the Big Truth horizontally on cardstock (three per sheet) and cut them out (one Big Truth strip per child). On a sheet of paper draw five simple shapes and write one word in each shape (joy, forgiveness, mercy, love, prayer). Make copies on colored cardstock (one per child). Cut five varying lengths of yarn, and one 15-inch length for hanging (one set per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child the Big Truth strip, the sheet with shapes, and the set of yarn. Set tape on each table. Have the children tape the ends of the Big Truth strip together to make a circle. Have children cut out the five shapes and use tape and a piece of yarn to connect each one to the Big Truth circle. Add the long piece of yarn to the top of the mobile for hanging.

### Option 2: Sin/Forgiven Plates

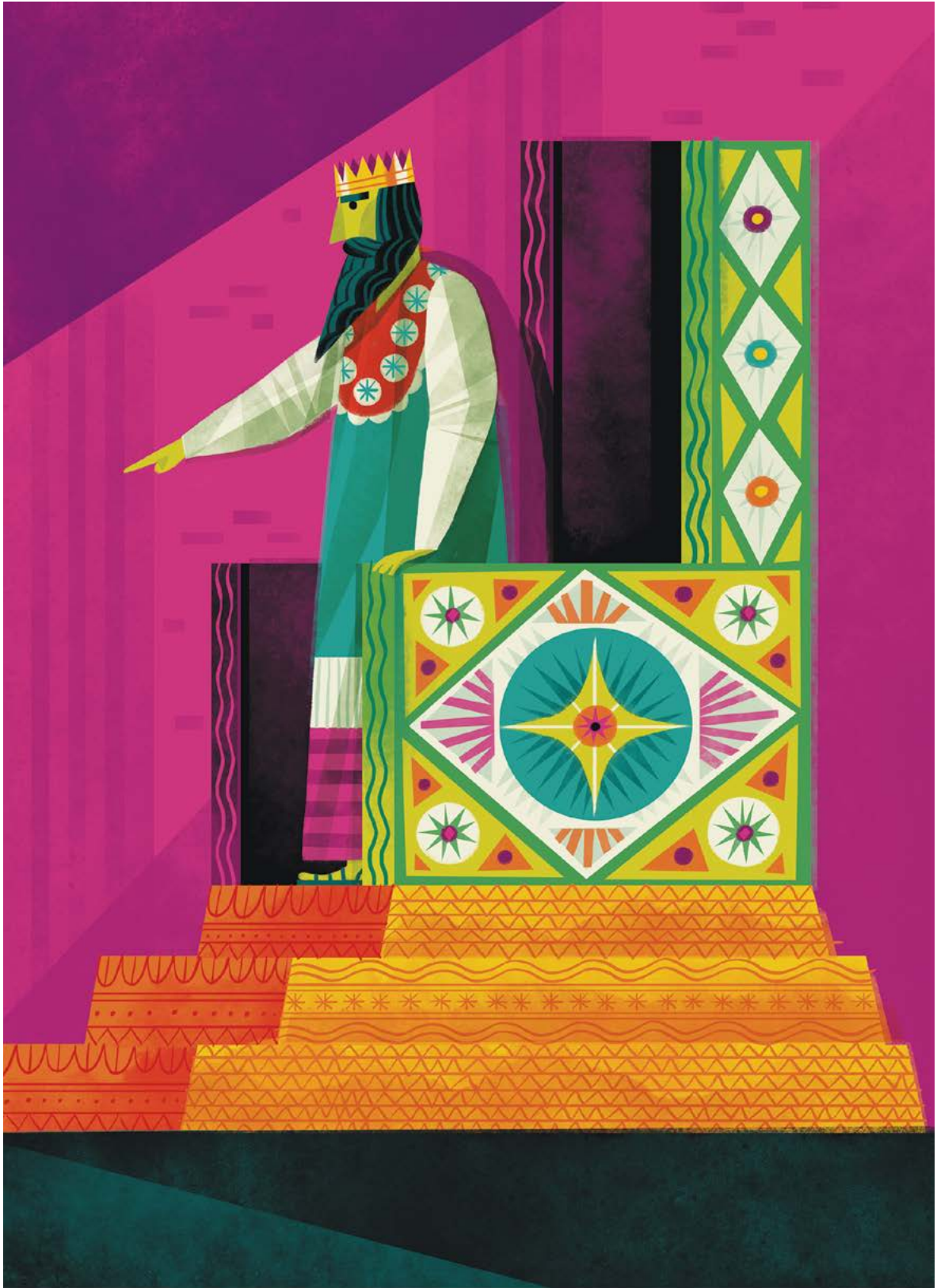
*Supply List: paper plates, craft sticks, crayons/markers, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child two white paper plates and a craft stick. Set coloring materials and glue sticks on each table. Have them write *Sin* in the center of one plate and *Forgiven* in the center of the other. Then have children draw faces on each plate to match the feelings that go with the word on that plate. Glue the two plates together so the faces are facing outward and attach a craft stick at the bottom between the two plates as a handle. Remind children how sin makes us feel bad and separates us from God, but when we repent, we experience forgiveness from God that brings joy and peace.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.





## STORY 29

# The Wise and Foolish King

1 KINGS 3; 11

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read 1 Kings 3; 11.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.



### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}



Remember when the prophet Nathan confronted David about his sin and David finally understood how bad he had been? At the time David confessed, "I have sinned against the LORD," and Nathan replied, "The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die" (2 Sam. 12:13). David's sin was forgiven. His life spared! But that doesn't mean there weren't consequences for his sin. The baby that David and Bathsheba made died at birth. Isn't that so sad? But God made a promise to David. Remember that? He promised him: "Your throne shall be established forever" (7:16). To have a kingdom that lasts forever means you need a son at the very least. God always keeps his promises. Bathsheba had another baby, a boy named Solomon. Right before David died, he said to Solomon, "My son, you will sit on my throne and rule my kingdom. Walk in God's ways. Walk before God in faithfulness with all your heart" (see 1 Kings 1:17, 30; 2:3, 4). The

prophet Nathan anointed the new king, and the people shouted, “Long live King Solomon!” (1:34). Would Solomon be a good king? A bad king? A wise king? A foolish king? Or maybe a good, bad, wise, and foolish king? Let’s find out.

## TELL THE STORY

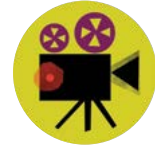
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
God can give us  
wisdom to live  
for him.

The story of Solomon as king starts with the words “Solomon loved the LORD” (1 Kings 3:3). Not a bad way to start! He loved God by walking in God’s way and by wanting to build a big temple where God’s people could worship.

God was pleased with Solomon. So one night “the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream,” and he said, “Ask for whatever you want and I will give it to you” (see 3:5–6). What do you think Solomon asked for? Money? Fame? To live until age 250? No—none of those things! A trip to Disneyland? A waterslide in his room? A double cheeseburger, hold the mayo? Now don’t be silly. He asked for wisdom. Yes, as a new and young king, he knew he needed “an understanding mind” to lead God’s people (3:9). Well guess what? God gave him wisdom, that’s for sure. “God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding beyond measure, and breadth of mind like the sand on the seashore” (4:29). That’s a big brain! But God also gave him riches and honor. “No other king,” the Lord said, “shall compare with you, all your days” (3:13). Solomon would use his wisdom, riches, and honor to grow the kingdom, keep peace in the land, and build God’s temple in Jerusalem. Everyone was so happy that Solomon was king!

End of story.

Sorry, not end of story. This wise king made some big-time foolish moves. His biggest big-time foolish move was to marry more than one wife. He married two,



Story

29

1 Kings

3; 11

then three, then four, then (as time went on, day after day and year after year) seven hundred! No joke. And no joking matter. You see, the problem wasn't just that Solomon had 699 wives too many but also that his wives didn't worship the true and living God. They worshiped false and dead gods. And, because he loved his wives, he started to love their gods too. Solomon was still a success in the world's eyes, but not anymore in God's eyes. "The LORD was angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned away from the LORD" (11:9). God would soon take away the riches, honor, and peace of Solomon's kingdom. His kingdom would be torn apart.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

When Solomon was anointed king, the people shouted, "Long live King Solomon!" Then King David said to his son, "Come and sit on my throne" (see 1 Kings 1:35). After that, people began to pray, asking God to bless Solomon as king: "Make the name of Solomon more famous than [David's], and make his throne greater than [David's] throne" (1:47).

Those thoughts and prayers were answered. Solomon was the wisest, richest, and most honored king in all of Israel's history. But, because of his foolishness (marrying many wives) and idolatry (worshiping their false and dead gods), he was not the king to establish David's forever kingdom. So who would it be? Would God still keep his promise? Of course he would! He always does. Jesus was the forever King! In Matthew 12:42, Jesus speaks of himself as being "greater than Solomon." How so? Jesus is greater than Solomon in his wisdom, power, obedience, and glory. Solomon ruled Israel for only forty years, and his kingdom was split apart in the end. Jesus will rule all God's creation forever and establish his kingdom in peace.

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## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** When God gave Solomon the chance to ask for anything in the world, what did he ask for? How did God answer his request? What can we learn from Solomon's example?

**TAKEAWAY:** We should regularly ask God, as Solomon did, for wisdom.

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**  
If any of you lacks  
wisdom, let him  
ask God, who  
gives generously  
to all without  
reproach, and it  
will be given him.

JAMES 1:5

2. **QUESTION:** What were some of the wise things Solomon did? What were some of the foolish things? How did marrying seven hundred women change Solomon's heart toward God? Who is the only person who is worthy of our worship?

**TAKEAWAY:** Only God should be worshiped.

3. **QUESTION:** What happens when we stop following God with our whole hearts? What are some things that could take our focus off of God and lead us into sin? How can we make sure we keep loving God first?

**TAKEAWAY:** We must guard our hearts so we can remain steadfast all our days.

4. **QUESTION:** What King did Jesus say that he was greater than? In what ways do you think King Jesus is greater than King Solomon?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus is a far greater King than Solomon, and he always rules with perfect wisdom.

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## ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Choose Wisely Relay

*Supply List: assortment of kitchen utensils (large forks, spatulas, different shaped/sized spoons, ladles, etc.), medium-sized balls (one per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Set up the game play area by placing a chair for each team on the opposite side of the room from the starting line.*

Divide the children into three teams. Tell children they will be competing against the other teams in a relay race and will have to carry a ball on the utensil that they choose. Show them the ball and give each team one minute to choose the utensil that they want to use. Say "Go!" The first child on each team should place the ball on her chosen utensil and walk to the opposite side of the room,



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walk around a chair, and carry it back to the next person in line. If the ball falls off the utensil, she needs to stop and put it back on before continuing to walk. Play continues until all children have had a turn to race. The first team to finish wins. Remind children there is wisdom in thinking through choices and not making quick decisions.

### Option 2: Divided Hearts Puzzle Hunt

*Supply List: various colors of cardstock, scissors*

*Before Class: Draw three different sizes of hearts on cardstock. Copy and cut out the hearts on different colors of cardstock so that each child would have one unique heart. Cut each heart into four pieces like a puzzle. Hide three of the four pieces of each heart around the room.*

Give the children each a remaining puzzle piece and direct them to find the three other pieces that complete their heart puzzle. The first child to complete the puzzle wins. Allow everyone time to find his or her pieces. Remind children that Solomon's disobedience showed he had a divided heart. God wants our hearts to be wholly committed to him.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Wise or Foolish Relay

*Supply List: whiteboard, two colors of sticky notes*

*Before Class: Write scenarios that describe both wise and foolish choices on sticky notes (write each scenario twice, one on each color). Divide the whiteboard into two sections: wise and foolish. Place sticky notes on the opposite side of the room as the whiteboard.*

Divide the children into two teams. One child from each team at a time runs down, chooses a sticky note, reads it, decides if the scenario is describing a foolish or wise choice, runs to the whiteboard, and sticks it on the corresponding side. Then he returns to the start and tag the next person on his team. Play continues until all players have had an opportunity to go and all sticky notes have been placed. The first team to complete the race and have the correct responses is the winner. Take time to read the choices and discuss why the choices would be wise or foolish.

## Option 2: Divided Heart Puzzle Hunt

*Supply List: various colors of cardstock, scissors*

*Before Class: Make copies of hearts on cardstock with Bible verses about wisdom printed on them. Verses can be printed on different colored paper to allow multiple children to find the same verse in their specific color. Cut out each heart and then cut each heart into four puzzle pieces (one heart per child). Hide three of the four pieces of each heart around the room.*

Give each child a remaining puzzle piece and direct them to find the three other pieces that complete his heart puzzle. The first child to find all his pieces, put them together, and read his verse aloud is the winner. Allow everyone time to find his or her pieces. Remind children that Solomon's disobedience showed he had a divided heart. God wants our hearts to be wholly committed to him.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Stoplight Craft

*Supply List: red, yellow, green, and black paper; scissors; glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Write “STOP and ask God for wisdom” inside a circle and make copies on red paper. Write “SLOW down and consider God’s Word” inside a circle and make copies on yellow paper. Write “GO and follow God’s Word” inside a circle and make copies on green paper. Make all circles the same size. Cut black paper in half lengthwise. Make a sample craft.*

Distribute a half sheet of black paper and one of each color circle to each child (circles should not be precut). Place scissors and glue sticks on tables. Have the children cut around the circles and glue them to the black paper.

### Option 2: Wise Owl Puppet Craft

*Supply List: brown and yellow construction paper, scissors, jumbo craft sticks, wiggly eyes, glue, feathers*



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*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut ovals out of brown construction paper, and small triangles out of yellow construction paper to form beaks. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child an oval, a yellow triangle, feathers, glue, and two wiggly eyes. Have children glue the feathers to the brown oval, then attach the wiggly eyes and yellow beak. Glue the owl to a craft stick. Tell the children that some people consider owls to be wise animals. We want to be known for being wise people who follow God.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Wisdom Crowns

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, tape, markers, jewels, sequins, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print a paper with the sentence “Wisdom is more valuable than gold and jewels.” written four times in large print. Cut out the sentence strips. On the cardstock, draw a zigzag line down the center (lengthwise, one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child one piece of cardstock. Place scissors, tape, markers, jewels, sequins, and glue on tables. Have children cut along the zigzag line. Have children tape the two pieces together to form a flat crown (do not form the circle yet). Have them glue the sentence strip to their crown and decorate with markers, jewels, and sequins. Once decorated, form the crown into a circle and tape to secure. Remind children that God is our King.

### Option 2: Wise Owl Puppet Craft

*Supply List: brown and yellow construction paper, scissors, jumbo craft sticks, wiggly eyes, glue, feathers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut ovals out of brown construction paper, and small triangles out of yellow construction paper to form beaks. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child an oval, a yellow triangle, feathers, glue, and two wiggly eyes. Have children glue the feathers to the brown oval, then attach the wiggly eyes and yellow beak. Glue the owl to a craft stick. Tell the children that some people consider owls to be wise animals. We want to be known for being wise people who follow God.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.





## STORY 30

# The Kingdom Cracks

## 1 KINGS 12

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read 1 Kings 12.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

King Saul was tall. King David was victorious. King Solomon was wise. Each king reigned for about forty years, and each king did some good things and some bad things. Some really bad things! Saul directly disobeyed God's order. David committed adultery and had Bathsheba's husband killed. Solomon married many pagan wives and started worshipping their gods. Bad. Very bad. As bad as bad gets. And every sin of theirs, like every sin of ours, had consequences. Saul died. David lost a baby. And Solomon lost his peaceful, rich, and unified kingdom.

Today we learn about Solomon's son Rehoboam, the next king and the one who cracked the kingdom.

## TELL THE STORY

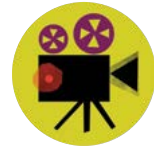
Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}

**Big Truth**  
Two bad kings  
cracked God's  
kingdom.

King Solomon did amazing things. He built a big house for himself and a great house for God—the temple! But in doing so, he sometimes treated his builders harshly and collected too much tax from the people. After Solomon died, his young son Rehoboam became king. Like Solomon, Rehoboam faced a test of wisdom. People said to him, “Your father was harsh. He taxed us a lot, made us do hard labor, and treated us almost like slaves. If you will be nicer, we will serve you faithfully.” “Hmm,” Rehoboam thought. He thought and thought and thought. He asked for three days to think about their request. What a wise move! We shouldn’t rush to make big decisions. He asked the old wise men of his kingdom what they thought. Smart move! We should ask our parents and teachers what they think. These old wise men told the young king to listen to his people: “Serve your people and they will serve you; speak good words to them and they will listen to what you ask them to do” (see 1 Kings 12:7). Rehoboam didn’t like what he heard. So he asked his young friends for their advice. They told him, “Don’t listen to those old men. You’re in charge! Show the people that you are stronger and meaner and greater than Solomon. Say to them, ‘My little finger is thicker than my father’s fat thighs’” (see 12:10). But this was not how God wanted his kings to treat the people (see Deut. 17:14–20). Quite the opposite. Nonetheless, Rehoboam liked his young friends’ answer even though it wasn’t the wise answer.

On the third day, when the people returned for an answer, Rehoboam told them, “My father disciplined you with whips, but I will discipline you with scorpions” (1 Kings 12:14). Ouch! The people did not like that answer, and they stirred up trouble. None of this took God by surprise. In fact, Jeroboam, a rival



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king, had been told this would happen through the prophet Ahijah. Ahijah showed Jeroboam how the kingdom would crack by tearing his new robe into twelve pieces. Then God said to Jeroboam, “Take for yourself ten pieces. This symbolizes what I’m about to do—tear the kingdom from the hand of Rehoboam and give you ten of the tribes to rule. I am doing this because they have worshiped false gods and not walked in my ways” (see 1 Kings 11:30–35). So God’s people were split in two. Ten tribes rebelled against Rehoboam and followed Jeroboam instead. He ended up being even worse than Rehoboam. He made not just one but two golden calves! The ten tribes that followed Jeroboam were called Israel, and the two tribes that followed Rehoboam were called Judah.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

God told Jeroboam that he would divide God’s people in two. He also promised him that if he led wisely and walked in God’s ways, then God would bless his kingdom. But did Jeroboam do this? No. He worshiped false gods. How about Rehoboam? No. He listened to the bad advice of his young friends. And now God’s people were divided.

Would Israel and Judah ever come back together again? Would God’s people ever find a good and wise king to lead them? They would. Jesus is the wise and good King for all God’s people. Unlike Rehoboam, he would not take evil advice. When Satan told him that he would give him power over all the world if he just worshiped him, Jesus refused to give in to that temptation. When Peter told him to forget the cross and just rule as king without dying, Jesus refused. “Not my will,” he prayed to his heavenly Father, “but your will be done.” He listened to God’s voice. He walked where the Holy Spirit led him, even to death on a cross. But through his death, he showed God’s mercy to God’s people and brought God’s divided people back into one body, his church. A good king is hard to find. In Jesus, we have the best King ever!

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What did Rehoboam need advice on? What two groups of people did he go to for advice, and whom did he listen to? What would have been the wise thing to do? Why?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** When making big decisions, it is wise to listen to older people and take your time.

**Memory Verse**  
Pride goes before  
destruction, and  
a haughty spirit  
before a fall.  
**PROVERBS 16:18**

2. **QUESTION:** What was the consequence of Rehoboam's bad decision? What about Jeroboam—did he make good and wise decisions? What happened to God's kingdom as a result of their disobedience? What can we learn from this?

**TAKEAWAY:** When the leaders of God's people don't obey God's rules, things go badly for everyone.

3. **QUESTION:** Was God surprised by their bad decisions and the consequences? How do we know he wasn't? What does this show us about God?

**TAKEAWAY:** God is still in control when bad leaders make bad decisions.

4. **QUESTION:** Can you think of any king in the Old Testament that was perfect? How about in modern times? Why is Jesus the best King ever?

**TAKEAWAY:** A good king is hard to find, but in Jesus, we have the best King ever!

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Bowling Game

*Supply List: Ten 2-liter bottles, cans, or paper towel rolls (any set of ten free standing items to be bowling pins); soft ball*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Set up the bowling pins about 10–15 feet from the starting line in a four-three-two-one pattern. Explain that the goal is to roll the ball and knock down all the pins in as few attempts as possible. Each child gets up to five attempts to knock



all the pins down. The child, or children, with the least number of attempts wins. Remind children that knocking down one pin can have a domino effect, knocking down more. The same is true of people's actions. Rehoboam's bad decision led to bad consequences and a divided kingdom.

### Option 2: Whom Should You Listen To?

*Supply List: small object/button*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Seat the children at two tables. Ask for one volunteer to step out of the room while you hide a small object (like a button). When the object is hidden, invite the child back into the room. Give one person at each table the job of giving hints (like telling them they are “warm” if they are close to the hidden object and “cold” if they are far from it) to the seeker. One helper should give right hints on where the object is hidden while the child at the other table should give wrong hints at the same time. The seeker needs to decide whom to listen to and see if they can find the object. Play numerous times, allowing many children the opportunity to be the seeker or to give hints. Remind children we all need to think about those who we listen to when we make choices and sometimes it is difficult to know who to follow.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Divided Class

*Supply List: masking tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Place masking tape down the center of the play area to divide it into two sections.*

A leader asks the children to make a decision: “Choose a side: cookie dough or gummy bears?” (The teacher indicates which section represents cookie dough and which represents gummy bears.) Children should go to the side of the one that they prefer. Some other ideas of choices they can make are: Cake or ice cream? Tacos or pizza? Pink or blue? Book or video game? Pepperoni or cheese? Soccer or baseball?



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## Option 2: Bowling Game

*Supply List: Ten 2-liter bottles, cans, or paper towel rolls (any set of ten free standing items to be bowling pins); soft ball*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Set up the bowling pins about 10-15 feet from the starting line in a four-three-two-one pattern. Explain that the goal is to roll the ball and knock down all the pins in as few attempts as possible. Each child gets up to five attempts to knock all the pins down. The child, or children, with the least number of attempts wins. Remind children that knocking down one pin can have a domino effect, knocking down more. The same is true of people's actions. Rehoboam's bad decision led to bad consequences and a divided kingdom.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10-15 minutes}*

K-2nd

### Option 1: Symmetrical Picture

*Supply List: paper, pencils, crayons/markers*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of a simple picture of a butterfly or king that is only half drawn (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper and a pencil. Have the children look at the picture that is printed on the paper and try to draw the other side of the picture. Then have the children color the picture with crayons or markers. Remind children that the kingdom was divided in two, just like their picture.

### Option 2: Torn Paper Castle

*Supply List: paper, colored construction paper, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make copies of an outline of a castle. Make a sample craft.*





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Place castle outlines, construction paper, and glue on each table. Have the children tear pieces of colored construction paper into small pieces. Then have the children glue the pieces of torn paper to fill a castle outline. Remind children that the kingdom was torn apart because of Rehoboam's bad decision.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Torn Paper Castle

*Supply List: paper, pencils, colored construction paper, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Place white paper, pencils, construction paper, and glue on each table. Then have the children draw a simple castle on a piece of white paper. Instruct the children to glue the pieces of torn paper to fill their castle outline. Remind children that the kingdom was torn apart because of Rehoboam's bad decision.

### Option 2: Kingdom Pennant

*Supply List: ruler, white cardstock, scissors, colored pencils or crayons, other items for decorating (glue if needed).*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Use a ruler to draw a large isosceles triangle on a piece of cardstock and make one copy per child. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child the prepared cardstock. Place scissors, coloring materials, and other items on each table. Have the children design a pennant to represent their love for God and cut it out.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



## STORY 31

# Elijah Proves a Point

## 1 KINGS 18

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read 1 Kings 18.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Who is the most famous leader of your country? Who is the leader now? Most people, especially adults, have strong opinions about whoever happens to be leading the country at the time. Some leaders have been great, some not so great, and a few are even known for the evil things they did. The history of Israel's leaders is a bit mixed too. Moses was a great leader. Joshua and David too. Then there was Samson, who was not so great, and King Saul who was awfully bad. Other kings were even worse. They did "evil in the sight of the LORD" (1 Kings 15:26). Of all the rotten rulers in Israel's long history, King Ahab and his wife, Jezebel, may have been the evilest, nastiest, vilest, wickedest, foulest, and cruelest. They were the worstest! (Okay, *worstest* isn't a word, but you get the idea.) This bad king and his bad wife did some bad things. Like what? Like worshipping

false gods—one named Asherah and the other named Baal. Like killing God’s true prophets. And what they did got God’s attention. Our Lord hates idolatry and murder. What will God do about these evil, nasty, vile, wicked rulers who reject him and kill his prophets? Will the worstest win? In the story we’re learning today, that’s just what we’ll find out.

## TELL THE STORY

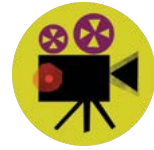
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
There is only  
one true God,  
the Lord.

How long do you think you could survive without rain? A month? Two months? For three years it did not rain in Israel because of Ahab’s worship of false gods. Three years! Imagine how hungry and thirsty they were. Also imagine how terrible it would be to have awful Ahab as king. What would God do about this situation? He raised up the prophet Elijah to bring a message to Israel.

“Go . . . to Ahab,” God told Elijah, “and I will send rain upon the earth” (1 Kings 18:1). Elijah met with Ahab. This was risky because Ahab’s wife, Jezebel, hated the prophets and had many of them killed. It was also risky because Ahab hated Elijah for predicting the drought. “Is it you, you troubler of Israel?” (18:17), Ahab asked. (It’s sadly true: people who don’t like God usually don’t like what he has to say through his messengers.) Elijah replied, “I have not troubled Israel, but you have . . . because you have abandoned the commandments of the LORD and followed the Baals” (18:18). Next, Elijah offered a challenge to invite all the people to Mount Carmel. He said to bring 450 prophets of Baal (the false god) and 400 prophets of Asherah (a false goddess).

What was Elijah up to? God had a plan for a big showdown to prove who was the real God, to show Israel who they should worship. Baal? Asherah? The God



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of Israel? The plan didn't seem fair—850 prophets against one little old Elijah! Ah, but if God is for us, who can defeat us? No one! "Let's prove who the real God is by seeing who sends fire down from heaven to burn up these sacrifices," Elijah said. The false prophets prepared a sacrifice, and from morning until night they screamed to the sky, "O Baal, send fire." Nothing happened. Elijah teased them, "Maybe your god fell asleep or is using the bathroom!" Elijah then prepared his offering, and he poured four massive jars of water on it three times. He knew God would answer his prayer. And God did. As soon as Elijah called upon the Lord, "fire . . . fell and consumed the burnt offering and the wood and the stones and the dust, and licked up the water" (18:38). When the people saw it, they declared, "The LORD, he is God" (18:39).

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

After the Lord consumed Elijah's sacrifice on Mount Carmel, proving that he alone was the real God, he commanded Elijah, "Seize the prophets of Baal; let not one of them escape" (1 Kings 18:40). The Lord then judged the false prophets. They died because of their sins. Later he would condemn King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. God is holy and he judges evil, but God is also love and he extends mercy and grace to those who trust in him and bow before him. After the great showdown, God sent a great rain as a sign of his great care.

In Jesus, God shows both his holiness and his love. On the cross God's holy Son (Jesus) paid the penalty for all our unholy sins. And in doing so, he showed us his great love. The same God who showed his great care to Israel when he sent the rain, showed his care to us when he sent Jesus.

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## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** What made Ahab and Jezebel evil in the eyes of God? What did the big showdown between Elijah and the 850 prophets prove? What does it mean for us to only worship the one true God?

**TAKEAWAY:** There is only one true God, the Lord, and we should worship him alone.

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**  
The LORD, he is  
God; the LORD,  
he is God.

1 KINGS 18:39

2. **QUESTION:** Why can't God just ignore it when people do evil? How did God respond to the evil things that Ahab, Jezebel, and the false prophets did? How does God respond to our sin? Why did Jesus have to die on the cross?

**TAKEAWAY:** God is holy and he judges evil.

3. **QUESTION:** How did God show his holiness and love in Elijah's day? How did he show his holiness and love through Jesus?

**TAKEAWAY:** In Jesus, God shows both his holiness and his love.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: One True God Game

*Supply List: paper plates, paper, music*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Copy, cut out, and glue pictures of flames to some paper plates (one per child). Add ten blank plates to the others. Place all the plates face down in a circle in an open area of the room.*

Instruct children to walk around the circle when the music is playing, but when the music stops they should quickly choose a plate to stand on. When all the children are standing on a plate, say “The Lord, he is God!” The children turn over the plate they are standing on. If the plate has a flame on it, they are like followers of the one true God, who brought fire down from heaven. If they are standing on a plate without a flame, they are like the worshipers of Baal. They should pick up their blank plate and hand it to a leader (the child is not out, but the blank plate is no longer used). Shuffle the plates, start music, and play again. Play continues until all the blank plates are found and only worshipers of the one true God remain.

### Option 2: Rain Is Falling!

*Supply List: light blue/white balloons, permanent marker*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons (one per child).*





Give the children each a balloon with their name written on it. The balloons represent rain. Explain that the goal is to keep their balloon in the air, while trying to knock other students' balloons to the ground. If a balloon does touch the ground, the person whose name is on the balloon is out. Continue playing until only one child/balloon remains. That child is the winner.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Build an Altar Relay Race

*Supply List: containers, rocks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Place twelve rocks in each container (one container per team). Place containers with rocks in a line on one side of the room.*

Divide the children into teams and have them line up behind one of the containers. The relay starts when you say “Go!” The first child on each team takes a rock from the container, places the rock under her chin, and walks as quickly as possible to the other side of the room without touching the rock with her hands. If the rock falls, the child must stop and replace the rock under her chin before continuing. When she gets to the other side of the room, she places the rock on the ground and runs back to the next person in line. The second person does the same thing, adding his rock to the first to form a pile (altar). The winning team is the first team to place all of their rocks on the pile and return to their container.

### Option 2: Rain Is Falling!

*Supply List: light blue/white balloons, permanent marker*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons (one per child).*

Give the children each a balloon with their name written on it. The balloons represent rain. Explain that the goal is to keep their balloon in the air, while trying to knock other students' balloons to the ground. If a balloon does touch the ground, the person whose name is on the balloon is out. Continue playing until only one child/balloon remains. That child is the winner.



## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Altar Story Picture

*Supply List: white paper, brown paper, scissors, toothpicks, blue yarn, red/orange tissue paper, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut blue yarn into 4-inch pieces (about four per child). Cut tissue paper into small pieces. Make a sample craft.*

Distribute toothpicks, blue yarn, and tissue paper to each table. Give each child a piece of brown paper, a piece of white paper, scissors, and glue. Have each child cut out twelve rock shapes from the brown paper, and glue the rocks onto the white paper stacked on top of each other to look like an altar. Have them glue three to five toothpicks on top of the stack of rocks to represent the wood. Then have them add three to four pieces of blue yarn to represent the water that was poured onto the altar. Finally, the children should glue tissue paper around the toothpicks to represent the fire that God sent from heaven to show that he is the one true God.

### Option 2: Praise Instrument

*Supply List: heavy duty paper plates, markers, sequins, stickers, stapler, dry beans*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child two paper plates and glue. Distribute markers, sequins, and stickers to each table. On the underside of one plate, have the children write “We worship the one true God.” Assist as needed. Children can then decorate the undersides of both of their plates. The teacher will then staple each child’s two plates together so the decorated sides are facing outwards. Leave a small opening, drop some dried beans through, and then add the final staples to seal them inside. Encourage the children to shake their instrument in praise to God, who is worthy of praise!

**Option 1: Folded Candle**

*Supply List: construction paper (any color), scissors, glue, yellow paper*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut 1" x 12" strips of paper (two per child). Cut yellow paper into smaller pieces (one piece per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child two strips of paper, scissors, glue, and one piece of yellow paper. Have the children take the two strips of paper and glue the two corners together at a right angle to form an L shape. Have them fold the bottom strip over the top strip at the glued corner and press flat. Have them keep repeating this alternating process until they have made a tall accordion style candle. When they finish folding, they should glue the top pieces together. Have children cut out a flame shape from the yellow paper. Fold a small section of the bottom of the flame and glue the folded portion to the top of the candle so the flame stands upright. This candle can be a reminder of the fire God sent to prove that he is the one true God.

**Option 2: Praise Instrument**

*Supply List: heavy duty paper plates, markers, sequins, stickers, stapler, dry beans*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child two paper plates and glue. Distribute markers, sequins, and stickers to each table. On the underside of one plate, have the children write "We worship the one true God." Assist as needed. Children can then decorate the undersides of both of their plates. The teacher will then staple each child's two plates together so the decorated sides are facing outwards. Leave a small opening, drop some dried beans through, and then add the final staples to seal them inside. Encourage the children to shake their instrument in praise to God, who is worthy of praise!



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



## STORY 32

# Grime and Punishment

## 2 KINGS 5

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read 2 Kings 5.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Remember Elijah, the amazing prophet of God? Remember when he called down fire from heaven and the fire licked up all the water and burned up his big sacrifice? He was a powerful prophet of God—in word and deed. Do you know something amazing about this amazing prophet? He never died! Seriously. One day Elijah was with Elisha, another prophet, and as they were talking, “behold, chariots of fire and horses of fire separated the two of them,” and then “Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven” (2 Kings 2:11). God took him straight up to heaven. (Not a bad way to go!)

Right before that, Elisha asked Elijah something very important: “Please let there be a double portion of your spirit on me” (2:9). He wanted to continue to serve God during Israel's dark days. He wanted to speak God's messages and

show God's power. That double portion was given to him. As a messenger, he instructed kings, rebuked enemies, and promised food for hungry people. And as a miracle worker he multiplied cooking supplies, unpoisoned a deadly stew, made an axe head float, and brought the dead back to life. And Elisha's story shows that God's message and power were not for Israel alone—Israel's God also blesses the nations! Let's open the Bible to find out more.

## TELL THE STORY

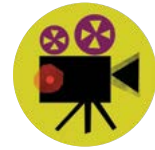
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
God's grace  
is free and  
available to all.

The people of Syria were at war with Israel. The commander of the army, Naaman, was a strong man but also sick. Really sick! He had leprosy—a terrible, incurable skin disease. In his household was a little girl from God's people. She was the servant of Naaman's wife and had been kidnapped and forced to serve them. But instead of hating her enemies, she loved them. When she learned of her master's leprosy, she told Naaman's wife that there was a prophet in Israel who would cure him: Elisha! Naaman wasted no time. He traveled to see the prophet. When he arrived in Israel, Elisha told him: "Go and wash in the Jordan seven times, and your flesh shall be restored, and you shall be clean" (2 Kings 5:10). Naaman was furious! "What? Why would I do that dirty thing in your dirty river? We have better rivers back home." He got into his chariot and started to ride away. One of his servants, however, asked him to just try what the prophet asked and see if it works. Naaman humbled himself. His great need led him to obey God. He returned, walked down into the river, and dipped his whole body under the waters seven times, just as God had said. And do you know what happened? It worked! The prophet's word





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5

worked. “His flesh,” the Bible says, “was restored like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean” (5:14). Next Naaman stood before Elisha and said these important words, “I know that there is no God in all the earth but in Israel” (5:15). A little girl had told him about this God. In his great need, he’d looked to this God. And now he knew this God was real. He then offered the prophet some money for this miracle. He didn’t know that Israel’s God operates by grace. Elisha refused the money. He knew about God’s grace. God’s work was a gift, not something to buy. The end.

Well, not exactly. Later Gehazi, Elisha’s servant, wanted that money. So he tricked Naaman. While the servant girl had told the truth about God to Naaman, Gehazi lied about God and said Elisha now wanted the money. Gehazi cared more about his own profit than letting this foreigner know about God’s free grace. To cover his tracks, he lied to Elisha too. Not a good move. Two really bad moves. God then made his move. He judged Gehazi’s greed and dishonesty by giving him leprosy. Quite the reversal, huh?

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Even though Naaman was not part of God’s people, the Israelites, he obeyed the voice of God. As a result, he was healed from leprosy and came to know the greatness of God. The blessing that comes from obeying God’s word is not just for Israelites—it’s for all people and all nations. The servant girl knew this; Gehazi didn’t. But Jesus knew it too! He showed us that when a leper came to him for healing. This leper believed that Jesus had the authority (like Elisha) to speak God’s words and heal diseases. And he was right.

One day, the leper approached Jesus, knelt before him, and begged, “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean” (Matt. 8:2). The Bible says Jesus had deep compassion for this sick man (Mark 1:41). Jesus’s heart was touched. Then, Jesus’s hand touched this untouchable man and answered, “I will; be clean” (1:41). Do you know what happened? As Naaman was when he came out of the Jordan River, this man was suddenly and completely cleansed. Scales fell off his skin. Bruises and wounds were instantaneously healed. The tips of toes and fingers grew back. Something as awesome as Genesis 1 occurred—perhaps better: A new creation. A sort of resurrection from the dead. What a great picture of the gift of God’s grace, grace that is for Israel, foreigners, lepers, our enemies—everyone!

3

## Engage

### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** Was Naaman an Israelite? How did he come to know that the God of Israel is the one true God?

**TAKEAWAY:** There is no God in all the earth but the Lord, the God of Israel.

#### Memory Verse

Behold,  
I know that  
there is no God  
in all the earth  
but in Israel.

2 KINGS 5:15

2. **QUESTION:** In Naaman's day was there any cure for leprosy? How did the Lord cure his leprosy? How did Jesus heal the leper who came to him? Why did God cure their leprosy?

**TAKEAWAY:** The Lord is powerful and merciful: he cures the incurable and touches the untouchable.

3. **QUESTION:** What were some of the things Elisha did that showed he was a great prophet? How was Jesus similar to Elisha? How is Jesus greater than Elisha?

**TAKEAWAY:** Like Elisha (the prophet of God), Jesus (the Son of God) was powerful in words and works.

4. **QUESTION:** Why didn't Elisha take the money that Naaman offered? What did his servant Gehazi do to get money from Naaman? Why did God punish Gehazi with leprosy?

**TAKEAWAY:** Since God's grace is a gift, not something money can buy, don't be greedy like Gehazi.

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### ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

#### Option 1: Listen and Obey Game

*Supply List: none*

Have children sit in a circle. Whisper a command to one child. (Examples: Flick the lights on and off. Put a chair on a table. Give someone a high five). The child





then whispers the message to the person seated next to him until the command is passed all the way around the circle. The last child to hear the command should stand up and does the task she heard. Reveal the original command if it's different than what the child does. Whisper a new command to a different child to start sending around the circle. Play continues until each child has had a turn to follow the instructions. Remind children that even Naaman, who was a great leader, had to follow instructions to be healed.

### Option 2: Army Statues

*Supply List: none*

Explain that Naaman was a commander in the Syrian army. Have one child be the army commander and close his eyes and count to ten. While the commander counts, the other children march as soldiers around the room. When the commander reaches ten, have the commander open his eyes and say, "Attention!" The soldiers/children must immediately stand perfectly still on one leg while giving a salute. If the commander sees a child move, he calls his or her name. That child is out and must sit to the side. The commander then shuts his eyes and begins counting again. Play continues until only one person remains and is crowned the winner.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: 7s Activities

*Supply List: paper, pen, tape*

*Before Class: Write seven actions on seven different papers, and tape the papers throughout the room. (Possible actions: seven jumping jacks, seven sit ups, spin in a circle seven times, run in place for seven seconds, sing the ABCs seven times, etc.)*

Divide the children into pairs. Have children stay with their partner and rotate through the room and complete each of the activities together. Say "Go!" The first pair of children who complete all the tasks are the winners. (Variation: Time pairs of students one at a time and see who completes the activities in the fastest time.) Remind children that seven is also the number of times that Naaman had to wash in the river.

## Option 2: Wash in the Jordan Relay

*Supply List: balloons, masking tape*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons (one per child). Make a “Jordan River” by placing two parallel pieces of masking tape on the floor with about 4 feet between the two lines.*

Divide children into teams and have them line up across the room from the Jordan River. Tape a balloon to each child’s back. When you say “Go,” the first person from each team runs down to the Jordan River and “washes themselves” by jumping up and down in the river until the balloon comes off. Once the balloon falls off, the child runs and tags the next person in line. The first team to get their entire team to the Jordan River and back is the winner.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Sponge Painting

*Supply List: cardstock, washable paint, sponges*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut various small shapes out of sponges (hearts, stars, circles, diamonds, flowers, etc.) Print “God can make us clean” on cardstock. Place various colors of paint on paper plates. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a copy of the “God can make us clean” paper. Place sponges and paint on the table. Have the children decorate the papers by dipping the sponges into the paint and pressing it onto their paper.

### Option 2: “Get Well” Cards

*Supply List: paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Create a list of people in the church who are sick.*

Set paper, crayons, markers, and colored pencils on the tables. Have each child pick someone from the list to make a “get well” card for. Remind them of the

servant girl who cared about Naaman when he was sick. Make sure that all people on the list are receiving at least one card. Have children fold a piece of paper in half and write and decorate the “get well” card. Collect the cards from children and deliver.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Bar of Soap Wrapper

*Supply List: bars of soap (one per child), paper, tape, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, water, cups, paper towels*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Put water in cups (one per table). Print “Only God can make us clean” in bubble letters on a 9" x 2" paper (or a size that can be wrapped around the bar of soap). Make a sample craft.*

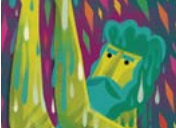
Give each child a paper and set of watercolor paints. Set paintbrushes, cups of water, paper towels, and tape on the table. Have the children paint the wrapper. Once dry, have the children wrap the decorated paper around their bar of soap and tape the ends together in the back. Remind the children that only God can clean us on the inside from sin.

### Option 2: “Get Well” Cards

*Supply List: paper, crayons, markers, colored pencils*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Create a list of people in the church who are sick.*

Set paper, crayons, markers, and colored pencils on the tables. Have each child pick someone from the list to make a “get well” card for. Remind them of the servant girl who cared about Naaman when he was sick. Make sure that all people on the list are receiving at least one card. Have children fold a piece of paper in half and write and decorate the “get well” card. Collect the cards from children and deliver.



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Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



## STORY 33

# The Boy Who Sought the Lord

## 2 CHRONICLES 34

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read 2 Chronicles 34.
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*



### THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*



David was a good king, most of the time. Solomon too, some of the time. At least when they reigned as kings, Israel had some peace and unity. After Solomon died, the kingdom divided in two. God's people who lived in the south were called Judah and God's people in the north stuck with Israel. Both kingdoms struggled. Israel was captured by a nation called Assyria and taken to their land as exiles. Then, 150 years later, Judah was captured by a nation called Babylon and taken to their land as exiles. And when they weren't exiles in faraway lands under cruel kings, they had their own share of rotten rulers at home. Judah, however, had a few good kings. One of the best kings was one of Judah's last.

His name was Josiah. His story begins with this sentence: “Josiah was eight years old when he began to reign” (2 Chron. 34:1). Eighteen? No, eight! Can you imagine ruling a kingdom that young? What pressure! He was young, but God was with him. Josiah “reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem” (34:1), the capital city, and “all his days [God’s people] did not turn away from following the LORD, the God of their fathers” (34:33).

## TELL THE STORY

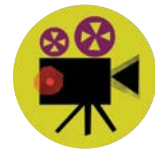
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
God’s people  
must worship  
the right God in  
the right way.

The first line about Josiah’s reign is about how he started his big job as a little boy. He was eight years old, remember? The next line is “And he did what was right in the eyes of the LORD” (2 Chron. 34:2). Doing what God thinks is right is the right way to live.

The more Josiah sought after God, the more he understood that God alone is to be worshiped. Many people in Judah were worshiping other gods. Josiah was upset, because only the one true God is to be worshiped. So Josiah tore down idols and smashed the altars dedicated to false gods. Now usually it would be wrong to smash people’s stuff, but in this case, it was a very good thing. Worshiping the right God in the right way is always right.

Another way Josiah sought to worship the right God in the right way was by repairing the temple. As the workmen worked day after day faithfully fixing all that needed fixing, something amazing happened. Hilkiah the priest found an old book. A cookbook? No. A comic book? Of course not. A book about how to build robots? Come on, now! It was “the Book of the Law” (34:14), the inspired word that the Lord had given Moses. Hilkiah found Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus,



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Numbers, and Deuteronomy! This book of five books had a lot of laws in it, but not laws like “No shoes, no shirt, no service.” These were God-given laws that taught God’s people who God was, what he had done, and what would please him.

When God’s word was read to Josiah the king, he tore his clothes. Why? It wasn’t because he wanted a new wardrobe. Rather, it was a sign of his deep sadness that God’s people had “not kept the word of the LORD” (34:21). And he knew that their worship of false gods would bring God’s judgment upon them. So Josiah wasted no time. He came before God and made a promise—a covenant. The people did the same. All God’s people repented and promised to obey God’s word. Repentance starts with feeling sorry for our sins. True repentance also means turning *from* sin to God. God’s people now followed God’s holy word, kept his holy days, and served him in holy ways.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Josiah was a good king. A really good king. But even good King Josiah had to repent. Why? Because he, like all people, was a sinner. Jesus is a good King too. A great King. The greatest King! He never had to repent. Why? He is without sin. Peter writes of Jesus that he “committed no sin” (1 Pet. 2:22), and John says that “in him there is no sin” (1 John 3:5). This does not mean that Jesus was never tempted to sin. He was! In fact, he was tempted just like we are tempted and yet he never sinned (see Heb. 4:15). But Jesus’s goodness would have done us no good unless he died for us to save us from our sin. And he did just that! For our sake God “made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Cor. 5:21). Jesus destroyed our sin on the cross. And when he returns, he will destroy sin in the world. All of it! King Josiah smashed some idols; King Jesus will wipe out all idolatry and every evil. What good news!

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** Why was Josiah such a good king? Why did Josiah destroy the idols in Judah? How should we be like Josiah?

**TAKEAWAY:** Worship the right God in the right way.

3

Engage



**Memory Verse**

If my people who  
are called by my  
name humble  
themselves, and  
pray and seek  
my face and turn  
from their wicked  
ways, then I will  
hear from heaven  
and will forgive  
their sin and heal  
their land.

2 CHRONICLES 7:14

2. **QUESTION:** What was the wonderful treasure that Hilkiah found when fixing the temple? What gift do we have from the Lord that we can read? How can we treasure it?

**TAKEAWAY:** The Bible is God's gift to us and we should treasure it.

3. **QUESTION:** How did Josiah and the people of Judah respond when they heard "the Book of the Law" read? Would it have been true repentance if Josiah had only torn his clothes and been sad? What else is needed for true repentance?

**TAKEAWAY:** Repentance starts with feeling sorry for our sins and means turning *from sin to God*.

4. **QUESTION:** Both Jesus and Josiah were great kings, but Jesus is the perfect King. What was Jesus able to do on the cross because he was sinless? Why is this good news for you and me?

**TAKEAWAY:** Sinless Jesus saves us from our sin by becoming sin for us.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Find the Scroll

*Supply List: paper, string*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make a scroll by rolling a piece of paper and tying a piece of string around the middle.*

Tell the children that when Hilkiah the priest found God's word, it was like finding a great treasure. Show children the scroll, which represents God's word. Instruct children to close their eyes while you hide the scroll. Have them open their eyes and try to find the scroll. The first child to find the scroll can be the next person to hide the scroll while the children again close their eyes. Continue to play as time allows.



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## Option 2: God Not Idols Game

*Supply List: masking tape, music*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Mark a line down the middle of the room with masking tape.*

Have children stand on the line. Explain that one side represents worshiping God and the other side represents worshiping idols. When the music starts, the children must hop back and forth over the line. When the music stops, they must freeze. If they are on the idol side, they are out. Play continues until only one child remains. Explain that Josiah chose to follow God and destroy the idols as God commanded.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Scroll Tic-Tac-Toe

*Supply List: index cards, picture of scroll, scissors, tape, whiteboard/poster board*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Make twenty index cards, where ten cards have pictures of scrolls taped to them and ten are blank. Spread out all index cards face down on one end of the room. Make a large tic-tac-toe board on a whiteboard or large piece of paper on the opposite side of the room.*

Divide the children into two teams. Identify one team as the Xs and one as the Os. When you say “Go!” the first child on each team should crab walk down to the end of the room where the cards are, take one card without looking at it, and crab walk back to her team. When both players have made it back to their teams, they turn over their cards at the same time. If the card they chose has a scroll on it, they can put an X or O on a tic-tac-toe board in the space of their choosing. If there is no scroll on the card, they do not get to put their team’s mark on the board. The player who gets to mark the board first is the one who arrived back to her team first. The next player from each team then crab walks down and takes her turn. The first team that gets three of their markers in a row wins.

## Option 2: Get the Scroll Relay Race

*Supply List: paper, string, plastic toy hoops*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Write “Worship the right God in the right way” with each word on its own separate piece of paper. Roll each paper into a scroll and tie with a string (one set of these per team).*

Divide the children into two teams. Give each team a plastic toy hoop. The first two children on each team step into the hoop and must work together to race down to the other side of the room, pick up a scroll, and carry it back to the start. The next two children will do the same until the team has collected all their scrolls. When a team has all their scrolls, they must open them, put the words in order, and read them aloud. The first team to read the scrolls correctly wins.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Scroll

*Supply List: brown paper bags, paper, colored pencils, craft sticks, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut brown paper bags into 4" x 8" pieces (one per child). Print copies of "Oh how I love your law! Psalm 119:97" (one per child) so that the verse will fit on the 4" x 8" pieces. Cut the verses out. Make a sample craft.*

Give the children each a piece of the brown paper bag and have them crinkle it into a ball and then flatten it out to make it look old and worn. Have them glue the verse to the brown paper and decorate with colored pencils. Glue one craft stick to each end, and roll both ends until they meet in the middle.

### Option 2: Treasure Chest Envelope

*Supply List: paper, envelopes, markers, sequins, plastic gems, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print a coloring page of a Bible (one per child). Write the words "Treasure Chest" on the back of the envelopes (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child an envelope and coloring page. Set markers, sequins, plastic gems, and glue on the tables. Have children decorate the envelope to look like a treasure chest. Then have them color the Bible picture and insert it into the "Treasure Chest." Remind children that God's word is a great treasure.

**Option 1: Scroll**

*Supply List: brown paper bags, paper, colored pencils, craft sticks, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut brown paper bags into 4" x 8" pieces (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give the children each a piece of the brown paper bag and have them crinkle it into a ball and then flatten it out to make it look old and worn. Have them write “Oh how I love your law! Psalm 119:97” on the brown paper and have them decorate it with colored pencils. Glue one craft stick to each end, and roll both ends until they meet in the middle.

**Option 2: God’s Word Door Hanger**

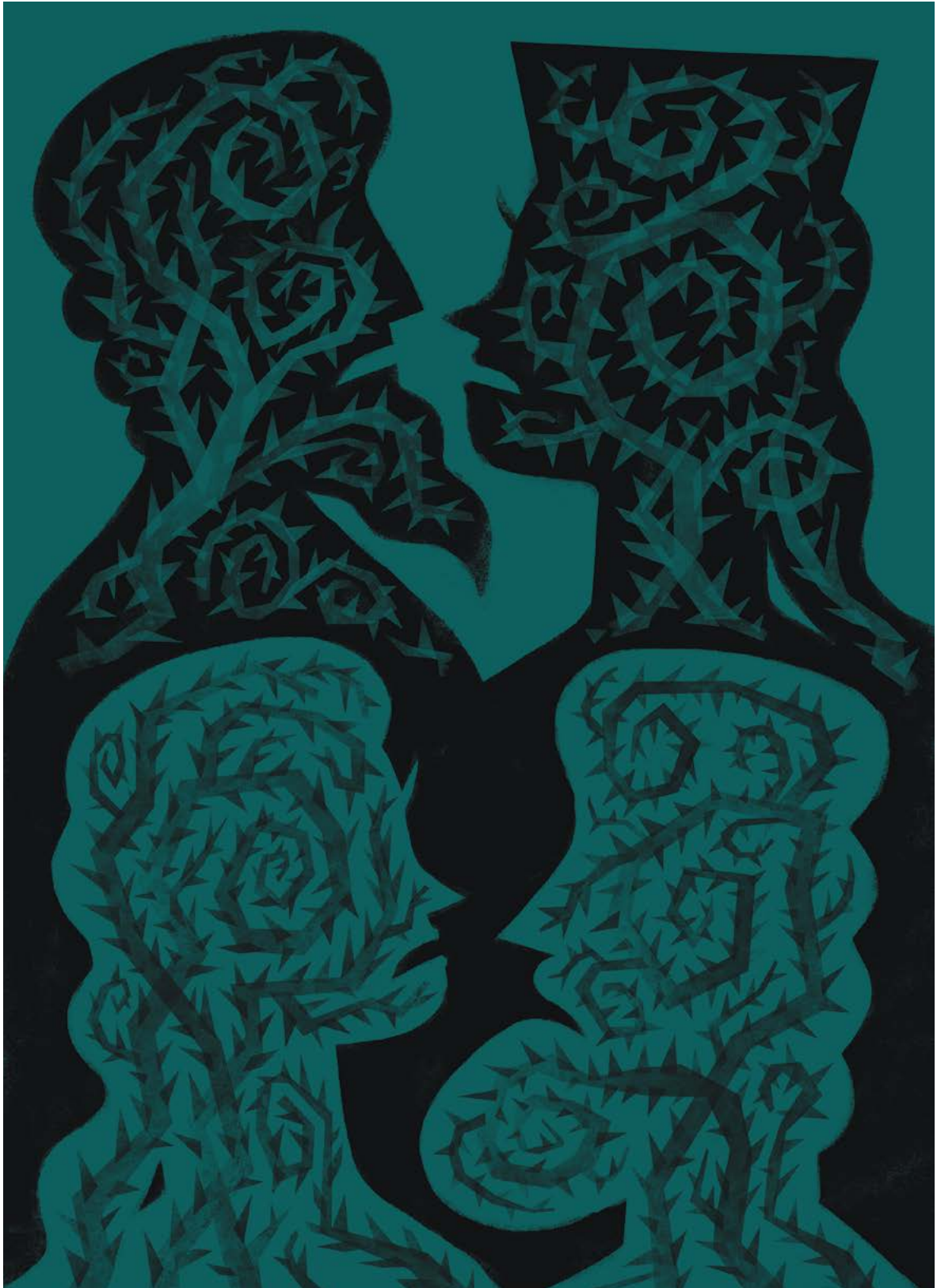
*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, hole punch, yarn, markers, stickers, sequins, glue*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut cardstock in half lengthwise to create door hangers (one door hanger per child). Punch two holes at the top of each door hanger for the yarn. Cut 12-inch pieces of yarn (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a cardstock half and a piece of yarn. Place markers, stickers, sequins, and glue on each table. Have children write “Oh how I love your law! Psalm 119:97” on their door hanger, then have them decorate it with the provided materials. When they are finished decorating, have them string the yarn through the holes and tie a knot so that it can be hung from a doorknob.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



## STORY 34

# Promises Broken and Promises Kept

## 2 CHRONICLES 36

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read 2 Chronicles 36.
- *Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.*
- *Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.*



### THE BIG PICTURE

*Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}*



Long before the days of Josiah, God met Moses on a mountain. They cut a covenant—that is, God made promises and God's people made promises. And if God's people kept their promises to keep God's laws, then God would bless them. If they didn't, they would experience curses, not blessings. When Josiah was king, God's people "did not turn away from following the LORD" (2 Chron. 34:33). They kept their side of the deal. They destroyed idols and worshiped God alone. They started to rebuild the temple and celebrate the Passover again. But after Josiah died, God's people went back to their usual pattern. There was hardly a promise they didn't break. They were supposed to be a kingdom of

priests, but instead they were a collection of grumblers and rebels. God was so patient with them. He gave them lots of chances to repent—to turn *from* sin back *to* God. He gave them a thousand years to repent—from the time of Moses on the mountain to the day of Josiah’s death. But eventually, a thousand-year pattern of breaking your promise is too much. God had promised that if they broke their end of the covenant, they would be cursed. A promise is a promise. So God promised that he would kick Judah out of the promised land—just like he banished Adam and Eve from Eden.

## TELL THE STORY

*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
God cursed  
his people for  
breaking their  
promise.

Remember the good King Josiah? He was eventually killed. During a battle, some Egyptians shot him with an arrow. “Take me away,” Josiah said to his servants, “for I am badly wounded” (2 Chron. 35:23). And he was. Soon after, Josiah died and “all Judah and Jerusalem mourned” (35:24). Then, Jehoahaz, the son of Josiah, was made king. But he didn’t last long in power. The Egyptians threw him out after only three months. Then, Jehoahaz’s older brother Jehoiakim was made king. Would he save the day? Would he be a good king like Josiah? Nope. “He did what was evil in the sight of the LORD” (36:5).

Well, bad things happen when bad kings act badly. Right? Right! Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and his army came to Jerusalem. They captured Jehoiakim, bound him in chains, and brought him to Babylon. The Babylonians also stole some of the holy vessels from the house of the Lord, the temple. But then things got better for God’s people. Right? Wrong! Another bad king took over Jerusalem, then another. God didn’t give up on his people though. He sent prophets





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to speak some sense to his kings, priests, and people. But no one listened. They even mocked God's messengers and "polluted the house of the LORD" (36:14). They polluted the temple not with smoke from a dirty factory but with idols!

God had a big problem with their bad behavior. In his wrath "the LORD rose against his people" (36:16). God raised up Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, to bring the promised curse to Jerusalem for breaking the covenant. The Babylonians returned to Jerusalem. They stole treasures, burned the temple, broke down the city walls, killed people, and took whoever was left back to Babylon to serve as slaves. Now the Israelites were back in slavery, strangers in a strange land. They were far from home and far from everything they knew. How terrible! Why would God send his enemies to conquer his people? It was because God's people were acting like enemies to God. In love he was disciplining them. And in love, someday, he would draw them back.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

Is all hope lost? Of course not. God is God and God is good. God is still their God. He had not forgotten his people and his promises. In due time he would provide good leaders, bring his people back, restore the city walls, and rebuild the holy temple.

God has done more for us than all that. In Jesus he gave us a King after his own heart to establish the forever kingdom. When Jesus preached, his first sermon was this: "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). Jesus established God's everlasting kingdom in a surprising way. He showed how a good king should live by loving God first and best and by loving his neighbor as himself. He suffered and died as God's King. Then he rose again from the grave and now reigns in power in heaven. One day he will return and take his people home with him. Together we will live forever in his perfect kingdom. What a good God! Like Judah of old, we deserve curses instead of blessings. Instead, for all who are in Christ, we receive blessing after blessing after blessing.

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

- 1. QUESTION:** What were God's people doing that showed they were not keeping their promise to God? Since God promised he would curse them if they

3

Engage

didn't keep their promise, why didn't God curse them right away? What did God do to try to change their hearts?

**TAKEAWAY:** God's patience is for our good, because he wants his people to repent.

### Memory Verse

They kept  
mocking the  
messengers of  
God, despising  
his words and  
scoffing at his  
prophets, until  
the wrath of the  
LORD rose against  
his people.

2 CHRONICLES 36:16

2. **QUESTION:** When God was patient, did his people change their hearts and put him first? What did God eventually do when the people refused to turn away from idols?

**TAKEAWAY:** God cursed his people for breaking their promise.

3. **QUESTION:** Are you able to obey God's word perfectly? What do people deserve when they sin? How did Jesus take the curse for us?

**TAKEAWAY:** We deserve curses not blessings, but God sent Jesus to bear the curse for us.

4. **QUESTION:** How is Jesus better than all the kings before him? How is his kingdom different than any kingdom that came before?

**TAKEAWAY:** In Jesus we have a King after God's heart who established God's forever kingdom.

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## ACTIVITIES

*Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Wait and Go!

*Supply List: none*

Line children up on one side of the room. Choose one child to be "It," and have him or her stand at the opposite end of the room. "It" calls either "Wait" or "Go." If the person calls "Go!" the players move forward. When the person calls "Wait!" all the players must immediately freeze. If "It" sees any children move, they are sent back to the starting line. The winner is the one who touches the wall on the opposite side of the room first. It is important that the child who is



“It” take long pauses after saying “Wait” before calling out the next command. This can remind children that even if it seems like God is taking a long time to keep his promises, we should wait patiently for him because eventually, in his perfect timing, he will do what he said he would.

### Option 2: Balloon Relay

*Supply List: balloons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons (one per team and a few extra).*

Divide the children into teams. Each team should be in a single file line. The first child on each team places a balloon between her knees and races to a designated spot and back. If the balloon drops, the child must go back to her start and try again. Then she passes the balloon to the next player on her team. The first team to get all their players to finish the race is the winner. Remind children that even though following God’s word is sometimes difficult, it’s important not to give up.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Basketball Freeze Tag

*Supply List: paper*

Give each child a piece of paper and have them crinkle it into a ball shape. Tell them they must keep the ball with them during the game. Choose one child to be “It.” When the game starts, the person who is “It” should run and try to tag the others. If a child is tagged, he must freeze and make a circle hoop in front of him with his arms. To rejoin the game and become unfrozen, another child must throw her paper ball through the hoop made by his arms. Play continues as time allows. Remind children that God gave the Israelites (and us) many chances to “get back in the game” and follow and obey him.

### Option 2: Balloon Relay

*Supply List: balloons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons (one per team and a few extra).*

Divide the children into teams. Each team should be in a single file line. The first child on each team places a balloon between her knees and races to a

designated spot and back. If the balloon drops, the child must go back to her start and try again. Then she passes the balloon to the next player on her team. The first team to get all their players to finish the race is the winner. Remind children that even though following God's word is sometimes difficult, it's important not to give up.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Cross Bookmark

*Supply List: cardstock, watercolor paints, paintbrushes, hole punchers, scissors, ribbon, small cup*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut 6-inch pieces of ribbon (one per child). Print a cross with the words “Jesus is God’s Greatest Promise” on cardstock. Put water in cups. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a cross, a ribbon, and a paintbrush. Set paints, hole punchers, scissors, and water on each table. Have them cut out the cross with scissors and use a hole punch to put a hole at the top of the cross. Paint the cross with watercolor paints. String a ribbon through the hole and tie in a knot.

### Option 2: Tissue Paper Sun Catchers

*Supply List: wax paper, white glue, water, bowls, paintbrushes, tissue paper, scissors, paper plates*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut wax paper into the shape of a cross (about 10 inches tall by 6 inches wide, one per child). Dilute two parts white glue with one part water, and divide into bowls (one per table). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of cross-shaped wax paper and a paintbrush. Set bowls of the diluted paste and an assortment of small colored pieces of tissue paper on each table. Have children paint a thin layer of paste to cover the cross and

lay tissue paper on top, overlapping pieces slightly, until the entire cross is covered. Paint another layer of paste on top of the tissue pieces. Set on paper plates to dry. Encourage children to tape the crosses to their windows at home.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Trust God Decorated Art

*Supply List: paper, rulers, pencils, markers, glitter, glue sticks*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print “Trust God” in large bubble letters in the center of a piece of paper. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a “Trust God” paper, a ruler, and a pencil. Have them use the edge of a ruler to draw straight lines with a pencil so there are six to eight sections going around the words (not through them). Children should color each of the sections a different color with markers. Fill in the bubble letters with the glue stick, sprinkle glitter on the glue, and shake paper gently until glitter completely covers the glue.

### Option 2: Tissue Paper Sun Catchers

*Supply List: wax paper, white glue, water, bowls, paintbrushes, tissue paper, scissors, paper plates*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut wax paper into the shape of a cross (about 10 inches tall by 6 inches wide, one per child). Dilute two parts white glue with one part water, and divide into bowls (one per table). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of cross-shaped wax paper and a paintbrush. Set bowls of the diluted paste and an assortment of small colored pieces of tissue paper on each table. Have children paint a thin layer of paste to cover the cross and lay tissue paper on top, overlapping pieces slightly, until the entire cross is covered. Paint another layer of paste on top of the tissue pieces. Set on paper plates to dry. Encourage children to tape the crosses to their windows at home.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



Story

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2 Chronicles

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## STORY 35

# Walls and Worship

## NEHEMIAH 6–8

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read Nehemiah 6–8.
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

Judah was in exile in Babylon. Remember what happened? Nebuchadnezzar and his big army came to the holy city, Jerusalem. They did some really bad things. Stole treasures. Burned the temple. Broke down walls. Killed people. And took whoever was left back to Babylon. Seventy years passed. Can you count to seventy? It takes a while to do. Imagine living that long in exile—day after day, year after year! Imagine being a slave in a strange land, far from home.

As powerful as the Babylonian Empire was, God is more powerful. He raises up nations and brings them to nothing. God raised up the Persian Empire to conquer the Babylonians. That's power! Then, in love, he remembered his promises to his people. "The LORD stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia" (2 Chron. 36:22) and made him decree that God's people should return to God's holy city,



Jerusalem. What power God has! “The LORD . . . has given me all the kingdoms of the earth,” King Cyrus wrote, “and he has charged me to build him a house at Jerusalem, which is in Judah” (36:23). What? Build God a house? What does that mean? It means that God wanted the Persian king to send his people home and build a temple where God could dwell with them. And that’s just what King Cyrus did. And after they built the temple, they began another building project.

## TELL THE STORY

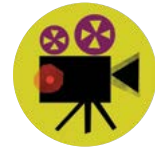
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
Bible passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story*  
Bible Storybook



Play *The*  
*Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
We worship  
God when we  
gather together  
to hear and obey  
God’s word.

Who protects you from danger—like thieves that might break in at night? The police and your parents do. Alarms help too. And, of course, the walls, windows, and doors of your home keep the wrong people out, right? After some of the Jews returned from exile and the temple was rebuilt, they realized the walls, which were falling apart, could not protect them. They wanted Jerusalem safe from their enemies. They wanted a safe place to rebuild their houses and worship God.

God raised up Nehemiah to lead this important building project. He gathered the Jewish leaders and came up with a plan, and all the people got to work right away. But their enemies got to work too. They opposed them, threatened to hurt them, and even made fun of them. But the wall kept going up, for the people had a mind to work. Nehemiah was a smart leader. He prayed for God’s help. That’s smart. He set a guard to watch over the city day and night. That’s smart too. Sadly, there aren’t too many leaders in the Old Testament that we should want to be like. But Nehemiah was one. He was organized, hardworking, and courageous. He ruled with wisdom and justice. He helped the poor and was generous with his wealth. Be like Ne!



Story

35

Nehemiah

6–8

After about two difficult months, God’s people, with God’s help, finished the wall. To celebrate, they gathered at the town square to worship. They worshiped God like we should worship God: God’s people gathered together to hear from God’s word. Ezra, the scribe, stood behind a big platform, opened the “Book of the Law” (Neh. 8:3), and read from it. When he was done, the people lifted their hands, said “Amen, Amen” (8:6), and bowed before the Lord. The people were so hungry to hear and understand the Bible that they spent all morning listening to it read and explained. The people cried when the word was read, because they hadn’t heard it read in years and years. And when they heard it read, they realized how sinful they were. But their joy was greater, because they were back in relationship with God, worshiping in the holy city. Nehemiah declared the day a holy day. What a great day in Israel’s history!

### GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

The days when Israel returned to Jerusalem, rebuilt the temple and walls, and worshiped God were high points in Israel’s history. But they weren’t even close to the highest. What could be better than a brand-spanking-new temple? I’ll tell you: God’s dwelling with us. What could be better than all God’s people hearing God’s word and wanting to obey? I’ll tell you. Having God’s law written on our hearts (see Jer. 31:31–34).

When Jesus came, he did these better things. By paying for our sins on the cross, he made a way for God’s Spirit to dwell inside us. On top of that he made a way for our very hearts to change. All who believe in Jesus are born again, with new hearts that have God’s law written on them. If the people in Nehemiah’s day had reason to gather around God’s word and worship, then we have all the more reason!

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### DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups.* {10 minutes}

**1. QUESTION:** How did God show his power in this story? How did God use the rulers of other nations to help his people?

**TAKEAWAY:** God is powerful—he rules over all rulers and nations.

3

Engage

**Memory Verse**

I will put my law  
within them, and  
I will write it on  
their hearts. And  
I will be their God,  
and they shall be  
my people.

**JEREMIAH 31:33**

**2. QUESTION:** How was Nehemiah a good leader? How can you be like him?

**TAKEAWAY:** Be like Nehemiah!

**3. QUESTION:** What did the Israelites do when they finished building the wall? What can we learn about worshiping God from the Israelites?

**TAKEAWAY:** We worship God when we gather together to hear and obey God's word.

**4. QUESTION:** What hopeful prophecy did Jeremiah make? How did God fulfill that amazing promise?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus fulfilled the new covenant.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from [TheBiggestStory.com](http://TheBiggestStory.com), or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

**K–2nd**

### Option 1: Protect the Wall Game

*Supply List: masking tape, soft balls, ten to twenty boxes/cardboard boxes, stopwatch*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Mark a building area by making a rectangle on the floor with masking tape.*

Divide children into teams of three to four. Each team needs to have one to two builders and two guards. Give the builders a pile of blocks (empty shoe boxes, cardboard bricks, medium-sized shipping boxes, etc.). Explain that the goal is to be the team with the most blocks stacked after 1 minute, with teams going one at a time. The builders will work together to build a wall using the blocks, while the guards protect the builders and the wall. Everyone else is an “enemy” and tries to knock down the wall with soft balls without entering the building area. The builders start building when the teacher says “Go” and begins the 1-minute timer. After 1 minute, everyone must stop. The teacher will count the number of blocks that are stacked and record it. Then the next team goes. Once all the teams have gone, celebrate the winning team!



Story

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Nehemiah

6–8

## Option 2: Teamwork Game

*Supply List: balloons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Blow up balloons (one per two children).*

Divide children into pairs. Give each pair a balloon. The leader calls out a body part, and the children in each pair must carry the balloon around the room while both are touching that specific body part to the balloon. (Some ideas of body parts to call include elbow, hand, knee, shoulder, and head.) If a group's balloon falls to the ground, the children in that pair should sit down out of the play area. If you touch the balloon with anything other than the designated body part, you are also out. Play continues until only one pair remains. Remind the children that the Israelites worked as a team to build the wall.

3rd–5th

## Option 1: Protect the Wall Game

*Supply List: masking tape, soft balls, ten to twenty boxes/cardboard boxes, stopwatch*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Mark a building area by making a rectangle on the floor with masking tape.*

Divide children into teams of three to four. Each team needs to have one to two builders and two guards. Give the builders a pile of blocks (empty shoe boxes, cardboard bricks, medium-sized shipping boxes, etc.). Explain that the goal is to be the team with the most blocks stacked after 1 minute, with teams going one at a time. The builders will work together to build a wall using the blocks, while the guards protect the builders and the wall. Everyone else is an “enemy” and tries to knock down the wall with soft balls without entering the building area. The builders start building when the teacher says “Go” and begins the 1-minute timer. After 1 minute, everyone must stop. The teacher will count the number of blocks that are stacked and record it. Then the next team goes. Once all the teams have gone, celebrate the winning team!

## Option 2: Block Wall Relay

*Supply List: cookie sheet pans, wooden blocks (six per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Place a chair for each team on the opposite side of the room, with teams lined up across from them.*

Divide the children into two teams. Give each team a cookie sheet and six wooden blocks. Say “Go!” The first person on each team builds a wall on the cookie sheet (two stacks of three blocks, touching each other), carefully carries—using only one hand—the pan down and around the chair, and returns to their team. If the wall topples while carrying it, the child must stop, rebuild the wall, and continue. The next person in line fixes the wall (if necessary) and then continues in the same manner. The first team to get all their members to complete the race is the winner.

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## CRAFTS

*Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}*

K–2nd

### Option 1: Build a Wall Picture

*Supply List: paper, washable stamp pads, baby wipes*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print paper with the Big Truth or Memory Verse printed on top. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of paper. Set stamp pads on the table. Have children press their thumb on the stamp pad and then onto their paper to make a thumbprint on their paper. Children continue to make thumbprints to shape a wall. When their wall is complete, give children baby wipes to clean their hands. Remind children that we are all part of building God’s kingdom by using our unique gifts.

### Option 2: Handprint Picture

*Supply List: paper plates, yarn, construction paper, scissors, glue, crayons*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Punch two holes at the top of the paper plates and attach a piece of yarn through the holes for hanging. Write the Big Truth or Memory Verse along the bottom edge. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of construction paper and a paper plate. Set glue, scissors, and crayons on the table. Have them trace their hand on the paper. Children

should cut out their traced hand and glue it to the paper plate. Remind children that God strengthened the hands of those who had a mind to work and that he can strengthen our hands to do his work too.

3rd–5th

### Option 1: Build a Wall Picture

*Supply List: paper, washable stamp pads, baby wipes*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print paper with the Big Truth or Memory Verse printed on top. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a piece of paper. Set stamp pads on the table. Have children press their thumb on the stamp pad and then onto their paper to make a thumbprint on their paper. Children continue to make thumbprints to shape a wall. When their wall is complete, give children baby wipes to clean their hands. Remind children that we are all part of building God's kingdom by using our unique gifts.

### Option 2: Picture Frame

*Supply List: cardstock, paper, yarn, scissors, hole punch, puzzle pieces, glue, stapler (optional)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Cut out 4" x 6" picture frames from cardstock with two holes punched at the top for hanging (or cut strips and form frames by stapling them). Cut yarn into ten-inch lengths for stringing. Print a paper with Ephesians 2:10 on it (cut them out, one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a picture frame, piece of yarn, and the Bible verse. Set glue and an assortment of random, colorful puzzle pieces on the tables. Have them glue the Bible verse to the top of the frame and attach the string for hanging. Have children glue the puzzle pieces around the frame. Explain that the puzzle pieces represent how each of us have a part in doing God's work. We are his masterpiece.



Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.

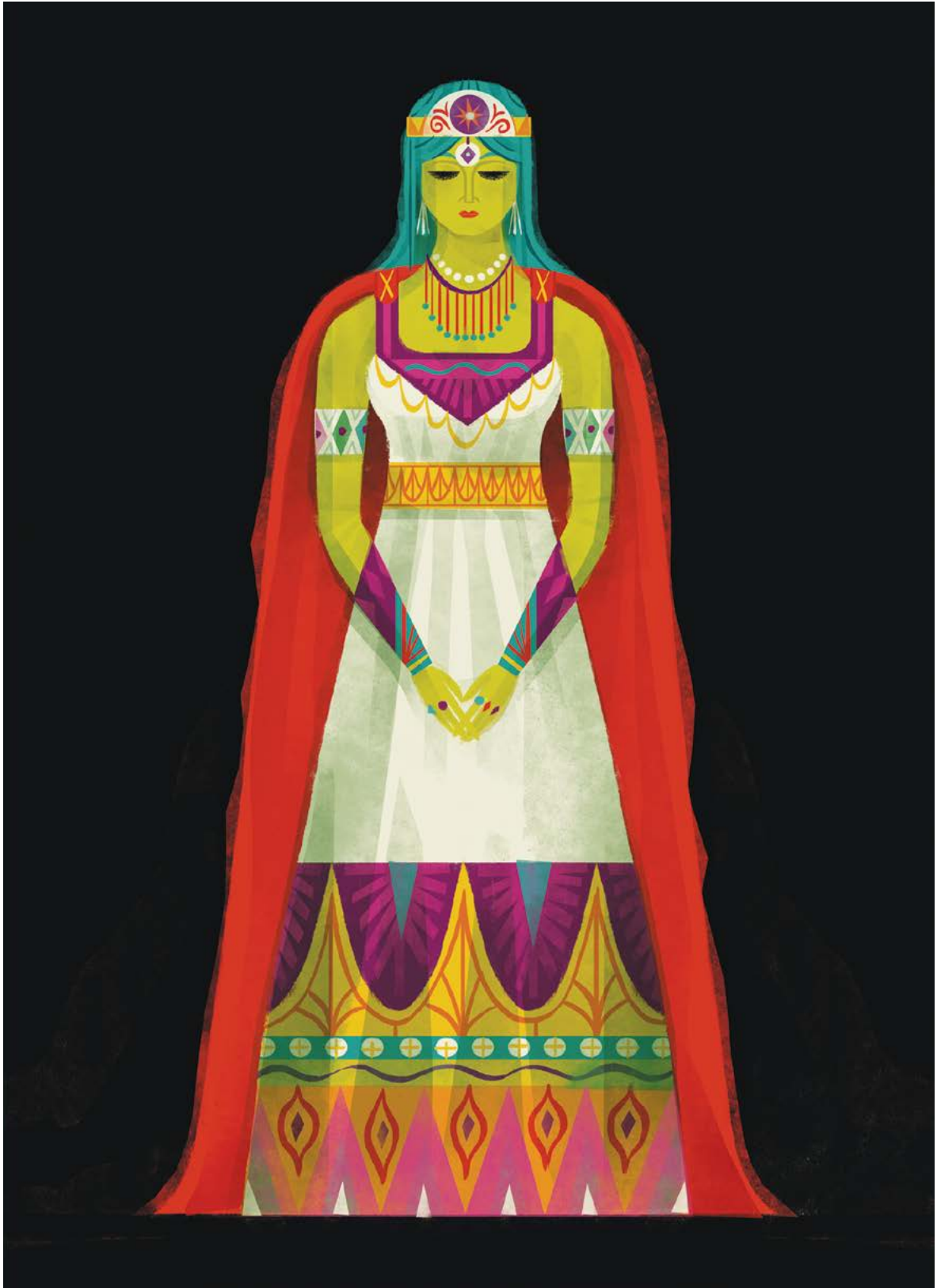


Story

35

Nehemiah

6–8





## STORY 36

# More Than a Pretty Face

## ESTHER 1-4

### BEFORE THE LESSON

- Read the focus passage (Est. 2:1-18; 3:7-4:17) or the whole passage (Esther 1-4).
- Pray for God's help. Ask for the Spirit's help in understanding the passage and for the Lord to open the children's eyes to see who he is, what he has done, and how they should respond to him.
- Study the lesson plan below. Use these sections as suggestions. Think of ways to teach it in your own voice.

1

Read

### THE BIG PICTURE

Help children see how this story connects with the other lessons. Build anticipation by introducing the setting and the significance of what is about to happen in this week's story. {5 minutes}

2

Teach

God is so powerful! He rules over all rulers and nations. Out of all the nations, God chose Israel to be his special people. He gave them his promises and laws. He raised up good leaders like Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Samuel, David, Elijah, Jeremiah, and Nehemiah to guide, teach, and discipline his people. When God's people listened to God's good leaders, blessings followed. When they didn't, curses came. Do you remember how one consequence was the kingdom being divided? The northern kingdom (Israel) was taken into exile by the Assyrian Empire, and the southern kingdom (Judah) was taken into exile by the Babylonian Empire. Then God raised up the Persian Empire to conquer Babylon. Under King Cyrus of Persia, some of Judah's exiles were permitted to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city's walls and God's temple. The story of Esther also took place when the Persian Empire was in power and some of God's people (like Esther)

were still living far from home. But God had a reason that some of his people (like Esther) were still living far from home. Any guesses? In today's story, we'll learn why God kept Esther in Persia. Let's listen and find out.

## TELL THE STORY

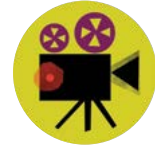
*Share the story in one of these three ways. {5–10 minutes}*



Read the  
focus passage  
together



Read from  
*The Biggest Story  
Bible Storybook*



Play *The  
Biggest Story*  
video

## TEACH THE STORY

*Retell the story with an emphasis on what it says about God and about us. {10 minutes}*

**Big Truth**  
God always has  
a plan to save his  
people.

Do you love a great story? The story of Esther is a great story! It starts with King Ahasuerus, the powerful king of Persia. He “reigned from India to Ethiopia” (Est. 1:1). One day (actually for 180 days!) he threw a big party. He invited lots of people and showed them his riches. He also wanted to show off his beautiful wife, Vashti. So, on the seventh day of a seven-day feast, the king commanded that the queen parade herself before all the people. Vashti refused. The king was so angry that a royal decree was made: “Vashti is never again to come before King Ahasuerus” (1:19). Instead, he declared he would find a new queen. From all the beautiful young women in his kingdom, the king choose Esther. She “was lovely to look at” (2:7). Esther was also a Jew. She lived with her uncle Mordecai, because both her parents had died.

One day Mordecai refused to bow down before Haman, an important man in the kingdom. (Mordecai, as a good Jew, knew that only God should be worshiped.) When Mordecai refused, Haman was “filled with fury” (3:5), which is another way of saying he was really, really mad! He was so mad that he not only wanted to kill Mordecai but actually wanted to kill “all the Jews” (3:6). What a crazy, evil overreaction! And he almost succeeded. He tricked the king into signing a decree that was sent throughout the kingdom with instructions to kill all Jews, “young and old, women and children, in one day” (3:13).



Story

36

Esther

1–4

When Esther's uncle Mordecai learned of the plot, he begged her to help. "You can't stay silent any longer," he said. "Perhaps the only reason you are queen was for this very day—to save your people!" (see 4:14). Esther was not allowed to see the king unless he summoned her. If she went to him without being invited, he could have her killed! But she knew she needed to act fast. She walked into the king's chambers, thinking to herself, "If I perish, I perish" (4:16). What a brave woman! She saved the day. The king called off his decree and found out about Haman's evil plans and lies. He had Haman killed instead of the Jews. That's called justice, and the Jews celebrated God's justice and mercy with a great feast of their own.

## GOSPEL CONNECTION

*Show how the story points to Jesus and his rescue mission as the Snake Crusher.*  
{5 minutes}

God's people have always had enemies: the snake in the garden; the Egyptians who enslaved them; the Philistines, like Goliath, who fought them; the Assyrians and Babylonians who captured them; the Persians, like Haman, who wanted them completely destroyed. But those enemies are no match for God. Don't fight against God; you'll lose. But if you take refuge in God, you can be safe—all because of Jesus.

God's enemies hated Jesus too. He was rejected by the world. Even his own people shouted, "Crucify him, crucify him!" (John 19:6). And the Roman soldiers did just that. But those enemies were no match for God. Just the opposite. Jesus's death was part of God's plan to save his people once and for all. After three days he rose from the dead and defeated our greatest enemies: sin, death, and the snake! That's why we can be safe if we take refuge in God. But Jesus's victory when he rose paved the way for a final victory, which will come on the final day. And when is that day? When Jesus comes to judge all who reject him and save those who take refuge in him. So run to Jesus and find your refuge in him!

## DISCUSS THE STORY

*Discuss the story in smaller groups. {10 minutes}*

1. **QUESTION:** Who is the enemy of God's people in this story? What does he plan to do to them? Who else have been enemies of God's people in the Old Testament?

3

Engage

**TAKEAWAY:** God's people have always had enemies.

**Memory Verse**

Who knows  
whether you have  
not come to the  
kingdom for such  
a time as this?

**ESTHER 4:14**

2. **QUESTION:** When Esther heard about Haman's evil plan, what did she do? Why was this so brave? What can we learn from Esther?

**TAKEAWAY:** Like Esther, be brave.

3. **QUESTION:** Why do you think God made Esther to be queen in Persia? How did God use Esther to save the Jews from their enemy Haman?

**TAKEAWAY:** God always has a plan to save his people.

4. **QUESTION:** Jesus's enemies had him crucified, but how did God use their evil plan to save his people? What three big enemies did Jesus defeat on the cross?

**TAKEAWAY:** Jesus destroyed Satan, sin, and death.

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## ACTIVITIES

Download coloring pages and activity pages from *TheBiggestStory.com*, or choose from the following activity suggestions. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: King, May We?

*Supply List: chair*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Have children line up along a wall. Choose one child to be King, and have them sit in a “throne” (chair) at the opposite side of the room. The children take turns saying “King, may we \_\_\_\_?” (e.g., take three giant steps, take five baby steps, take four frog hops forward). The King may grant the request by saying, “You may,” and the children move in that manner. The King may also alter the allowed movement by replying, for example, “No you may not, but you may take six steps backwards.” A third option is that the King may allow only some children to move forward by responding with criteria like, “If you are wearing blue, you may.” If the child calling out the request forgets to say “King, may I?,” the teacher sends him back to the starting line. The first child to reach the throne and tag the King is the winner, and he or she becomes the next King.



Story

36

Esther

1–4

## Option 2: Royal Dance Party

*Supply List: music*

*Before Class: Gather supplies.*

Have children dance when the music is playing. When the music stops, the children should freeze and hold that position until the music starts again. If the teacher sees a child move when the music is not playing, she is out and needs to sit in a designated area. Play continues until only one person remains and is the winner. (This can also be a nonelimination game to keep children active. If a child moves when music is off, they must do ten jumping jacks before reentering the game.)

3rd–5th

## Option 1: King Says

*Supply List: none*

Have a leader be King and stand in front of the children. The King commands children to do different actions. Children must only obey the commands given that begin with the words, “King says.” If the King says, “King says touch your nose,” then children must touch their nose. If the command is given, however, without saying “King says,” any child that does that action is out. Continue play until only one child is left and allow that person to be the King in the next game.

## Option 2: Dress Like a King Relay

*Supply List: crowns, robes, scepters (one set per team)*

*Before Class: Gather supplies and place them on the opposite side of the room in two separate piles.*

Divide children into two teams and have each team make a single file line. When the teacher says “Go!” the first person from each team runs to the other side of the room (to her pile), puts on the crown and robe, and carries the scepter back to her team. Next, she takes off the items and gives them to the next person on her team. That person puts the items on, runs to the opposite side of the room, removes the items, and runs back to tag the next player. Play continues until all children have raced and returned to the starting line. The first team to get all their members through the relay is the winner.

## CRAFTS

Choose from the following craft suggestions depending on time, age ranges, and group size. {10–15 minutes}

K–2nd

### Option 1: Esther's Crown

*Supply List: 8–10-inch paper plates (not plastic), scissors, markers, sequins, glue, jewels, pom-poms*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Fold each plate in half (one per child). Draw three lines that all start from the center of the fold to form four pie-shaped pieces. Be sure the lines stop one inch from the edge of the plate. Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a folded paper plate and scissors. Place glue, markers, sequins, jewels, and pom-poms on each table. Instruct children to cut along the drawn lines on the plate, making sure they stop at least an inch from the edge of the plate. Have them open the plate and make two cuts from the center along the folded edge to make a straight line stopping at least an inch from the edge of the plate. Have the children decorate the plate using the provided supplies, then fold the points up to form the crown.

### Option 2: "For Such a Time as This" Clock

*Supply List: paper, paper plates, scissors, crayons, markers, glue, brass fasteners*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print and cut out the phrase "For such a time as this" and two clock arrows (one set per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a plate, the phrase, brass fastener, and two arrows. Set scissors, glue, crayons, and markers on the tables. Have children write the numbers 1 through 12 around the outside of the plate, like a clock. Have children decorate the clock with crayons or markers and glue "For such a time as this" to the clock. Help children attach the arrows to the center of the plate with a brass fastener. Remind children that Esther was raised up at a certain time to save her people.

**Option 1: King/Queen Character Mask**

*Supply List: cardstock, scissors, tape, craft sticks, markers, colored pencils*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print a face-sized outline picture of a king and queen onto cardstock (one per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a king or queen face, craft stick, and scissors. Set tape, markers, and colored pencils on the table. Have the children cut out the mask face and eye holes. Have the children color the masks and tape the craft stick to the bottom of the mask. Remind children that God rules over all kings and queens.

**Option 2: “For Such a Time as This” Clock**

*Supply List: paper, paper plates, scissors, crayons, markers, brass fasteners*

*Before Class: Gather supplies. Print two clock arrows (one set per child). Make a sample craft.*

Give each child a paper plate, brass fastener, and arrows. Set scissors, crayons, and markers on the tables. Have children write the numbers 1 through 12 around the outside of the plate, like a clock. Have the children cut out the two arrows. Have children decorate the clock with crayons or markers and write “For such a time as this” on the clock. Attach the arrows to the center of the plate with a brass fastener. Remind children that Esther was raised up at a certain time to save her people.

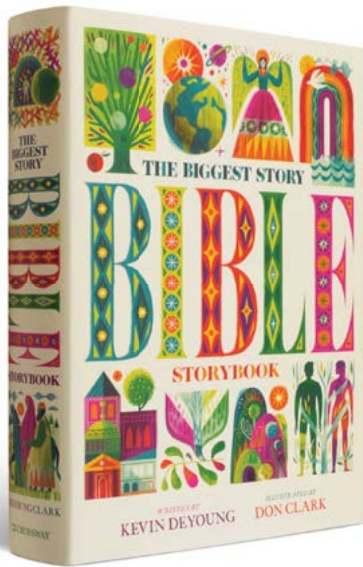


Visit [TheBiggestStory.com](https://TheBiggestStory.com) for downloadable coloring pages, activity pages, and craft templates for this lesson.



# MORE RESOURCES FOR YOUR CLASSROOM

The Biggest Story leads kids through the overarching story of the Bible, from Genesis to Revelation. These resources can be used together to help children engage with Scripture and grow to know and love God better.



## **The Biggest Story Bible Storybook**

This beautifully illustrated book by Kevin DeYoung combines 104 easy-to-read stories from Scripture with artwork by Don Clark, helping children ages 6–12 learn the unified story of the Bible.

*Purchase one of these for each classroom in your ministry.*



## **The Biggest Story Curriculum Books**

Available for individual purchase, these carefully constructed lessons on key biblical stories help children in kindergarten through fifth grade grasp God's plan to redeem the world through his Son, Jesus.

*Purchase volumes as needed for each teacher or volunteer so they can study the curriculum at home.*



## The Biggest Story Posters

This set of 104 sturdy, 11" x 17" posters feature lesson details on one side and corresponding illustrations on the other. Use them to teach and review lessons, and to decorate your children's ministry area.

*Purchase one set of these for each classroom in your ministry.*



## The Biggest Story Verse Cards

Each colorful, pocket-size card in this set of 104 features a Bible verse and an illustration to help children remember key verses from Genesis through Revelation.

*Purchase a set for each student and hand out a card after each corresponding lesson.*

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**Notes:** \_\_\_\_\_

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