Preschool–Grade 6

Deborah and Barak

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: God goes before His people. When God tells us what to do, we can obey Him with courage, because He has already gone ahead of us.
Bible passage: Judges 4:1–24. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And Deborah said unto Barak, Up; for this is the day in which the LORD hath delivered Sisera into thine hand: is not the LORD gone out before thee? So Barak went down from mount Tabor, and ten thousand men after him." *Judges 4:14 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, sheets of paper for "obstacles," and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board. Scatter sheets of paper on the floor at one end of the room.

1. Opening game: The Guide (5–10 minutes)

Kids pair up. One partner closes their eyes. The other walks just ahead and talks them across the room without stepping on any paper: "Step left. Big step. Stop." Switch. Ask: *Was it scary to walk when you couldn't see? What made it easier?* Say: "Today we will meet a man who had to go up against 900 iron chariots. God told him, 'I have gone out before you.'"

2. Bible story: God Goes Before Barak (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Judges 4. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Trouble in Israel. After the judge Ehud died, the children of Israel did evil again (Judges 4:1). The LORD **sold them into the hand** of Jabin king of Canaan, which means He let Jabin rule over them. Sisera was the captain of Jabin's army (4:2). **Look up Judges 4:3. Mightily oppressed** means treated very cruelly. A **chariot** was a battle cart pulled by horses, and Sisera's were iron.

Deborah. Look up Judges 4:4–5. A **prophetess** is a woman who speaks God's words. Deborah **judged** Israel: she helped the people settle what was right. She **dwelt**, or lived and sat, under the palm tree of Deborah in mount Ephraim, and the people came up to her there.

God's command. Deborah called Barak the son of Abinoam (4:6). She told him the LORD God of Israel had **commanded** him to take ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun to mount Tabor. God would draw Sisera and his chariots to the river Kishon and deliver him into Barak's hand (4:6–7). **Look up Judges 4:8.** Barak would not go unless Deborah went with him. **Look up Judges 4:9. Notwithstanding** means but; **honour** means the praise for the win. Deborah went with Barak to Kedesh, and ten thousand men went up with him (4:9–10).

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The day of battle. Sisera gathered all 900 chariots at the river Kishon (4:12–13). **Look up Judges 4:14. Up** means get up and go. God had already gone out ahead of Barak! Barak went down from mount Tabor with ten thousand men behind him. **Look up Judges 4:15. Discomfited** means threw into confusion and defeated. Sisera **lighted down**, or jumped down, from his chariot and ran away on foot. Barak chased Sisera's army all the way to Harosheth, and not one of them was left (4:16).

Just as God said. Sisera ran to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite (4:17). Jael gave him milk to drink and covered him, and there Sisera died (4:18–22). When Barak came looking for him, Jael showed him that Sisera was dead (4:22). God had said He would sell Sisera into the hand of a woman (4:9), and it happened. **Look up Judges 4:23.** God **subdued**, or beat, Jabin. Then Deborah and Barak sang praise to the LORD (5:1–3), and the land had rest forty years (5:31).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Israel was treated cruelly for 20 years, and they cried unto the LORD (4:3). What should we do when we are in trouble?
2. Barak would only go if Deborah went too (4:8). Why do you think he felt that way? Who helps you be brave?
3. Deborah said, "is not the LORD gone out before thee?" (4:14). How does it help to know God goes before you?
4. Sisera had 900 iron chariots, but the LORD won (4:15). What looks too big for you right now? Is it too big for God?
5. After the battle, Deborah and Barak sang praise to the LORD (5:1–3). How can we thank God when He helps us?

Recall questions

1. Where did Deborah judge Israel? *(Under the palm tree of Deborah, between Ramah and Bethel in mount Ephraim, Judges 4:5)*
2. How many men went with Barak? *(Ten thousand, 4:10, 4:14)*
3. To what river did God draw Sisera's chariots? *(The river Kishon, 4:7, 4:13)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **up** means get up and go; **delivered Sisera into thine hand** means God has given you the win over Sisera; **gone out before thee** means gone ahead of you. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "God went before Barak and gave the victory. God loves you, and He goes before you too. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.
This week: when you need courage to do what is right, remember Judges 4:14 and say, "The LORD has gone out before me."

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Judges 4:2: Who was the captain of Jabin's army? *(Sisera)*
2. Judges 4:3: How many years did Jabin oppress Israel? *(Twenty years)*
3. Judges 4:4: Whose wife was Deborah? *(Lapidoth's)*
4. Judges 4:5: Between which two places was the palm tree of Deborah? *(Ramah and Bethel)*
5. Judges 4:6: Whose son was Barak? *(Abinoam's)*
6. Judges 4:6: Which two tribes did the ten thousand men come from? *(Naphtali and Zebulun)*
7. Judges 4:15: How did Sisera run away? *(On his feet)*
8. Judges 5:31: How long did the land have rest? *(Forty years)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You go before Your people. When we are afraid, help us remember that You have gone ahead of us, and help us obey You with courage. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

Left out on purpose: Judges 4:21 tells how Jael killed Sisera while he slept. The lesson says only that he died in her tent (4:22). If a child asks, answer simply and gently: Sisera was the captain who had cruelly oppressed Israel for twenty years (4:3), and God gave Israel the victory as He said (4:9).

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