Preschool–Grade 6

Deborah and Barak

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Courage is obeying God because He has already gone before us, not because the odds look good.
Bible passage: Judges 4:1–24. Students read Judges 4:1–16 out loud themselves.
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)* and "And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed." *Deuteronomy 31:8 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Judges 4–5 and Hebrews 11:32–34. Write both memory verses on the board.

1. Opening game: Would You Go? (5–10 minutes)

Read each situation. Students stand if they would go alone, stay seated if they would only go with a friend. 1) Sitting with the new kid at lunch. 2) Telling a teacher about bullying you saw. 3) Saying no when your friends start watching something you know is wrong. 4) Inviting a friend to church. Ask: *Why is it easier to do hard things when someone goes with you?* Say: "Today we meet a man who said, 'If you go with me, I will go.'"

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Read out loud: Judges 4:1–16. Students take turns, a few verses each. Old words in this passage:

- **sold them into the hand of** (4:2): let them be ruled by
- **host** (4:2): army; **mightily oppressed** (4:3): treated very cruelly
- **prophetess** (4:4): a woman who speaks God's words; **judged** (4:4): led and settled what was right
- **dwelt** (4:5): lived; **for judgment** (4:5): to have their cases decided
- **draw toward** (4:6): go up to; **notwithstanding** (4:9): but; **honour** (4:9): the praise for the win
- **severed himself** (4:11): moved away from; **discomfited** (4:15): threw into confusion and defeated
- **lighted down** (4:15): jumped down; **pursued** (4:16): chased

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Tell the rest in your own words (4:17–24): Sisera fled on foot to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, because Jabin was at peace with Heber's house (4:17). Jael told him to turn in and not fear, gave him milk to drink and covered him with a **mantle**, a cloak (4:18–19). While he was asleep, Jael killed him (4:21). When Barak came after Sisera, Jael showed him that Sisera was dead (4:22). So God subdued Jabin that day, and Israel prevailed until Jabin was destroyed (4:23–24). Deborah's word in 4:9 came true: "the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman." Then Deborah and Barak sang, "I will sing praise to the LORD God of Israel" (5:1–3), and the land had rest forty years (5:31).

Teacher note: Judges 4:21 tells exactly how Sisera died. Read it with your class only if you judge they are ready; the summary above is enough for the lesson.

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Jabin mightily oppressed Israel twenty years, and Israel cried unto the LORD (4:3). Why is crying out to God the right thing to do when we are in trouble?
2. Deborah began with, "Hath not the LORD God of Israel commanded…?" (4:6). Barak already had God's word. Why was it still hard to go?
3. Barak said he would only go if Deborah went (4:8). Yet Hebrews 11:32 lists Barak among the people of faith. What does that tell you about how God works with people who are afraid?
4. Deborah said, "is not the LORD gone out before thee?" (4:14). What is one hard thing you face where you need to know God has gone ahead of you?
5. Sisera came with 900 chariots of iron (4:13), but the LORD discomfited them (4:15). What do people today count on instead of God?
6. The story ends with a song of praise (5:1–3). Why is it important to give God the praise after He helps us?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Deuteronomy 31:8: **doth go before thee** means goes ahead of you; **fail thee** means let you down; **forsake thee** means leave you alone; **dismayed** means discouraged and afraid.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Judges 4:14 this week; keep working on Deuteronomy 31:8 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "God went before Barak. The greatest thing God ever did ahead of us was to come Himself to save us. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: '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) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-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 utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, 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.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. What is one thing I know God wants me to do, but I have been afraid to do?
2. How would it change things to believe the LORD has already gone out before me (Judges 4:14)?
3. Write a short prayer asking God for courage to obey Him this week.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: do the one hard, right thing you wrote about. Before you do it, pray Deuteronomy 31:8.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You go before us and never fail us. Give us courage to obey You when we are afraid, and help us give You the praise when You give us the victory. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

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