Preschool–Grade 6

Jehoshaphat and the Singers

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

Main point: The battle is the LORD's. When trouble is too big for us, we seek God first, trust His Word and praise Him before we see the answer.
Bible passage: 2 Chronicles 20:1–30. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And he said, Hearken ye, all Judah, and ye inhabitants of Jerusalem, and thou king Jehoshaphat, Thus saith the LORD unto you, Be not afraid nor dismayed by reason of this great multitude; for the battle is not yours, but God's." *2 Chronicles 20:15 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: What Comes First? (5–10 minutes)

Read each problem and three choices. Kids hold up one, two or three fingers for what they would do first. 1) You hear a loud storm at night: *1. hide under the blanket, 2. yell for help, 3. pray.* 2) A big test is tomorrow: *1. worry all night, 2. pray and then study, 3. give up.* 3) A friend is moving away: *1. get angry, 2. pray and talk to a grown-up, 3. stay in your room.* There is no score; let kids explain their answers. Ask: *Why is it hard to pray first, before we try everything else?* Say: "Today we will meet a king who had an army coming against him, and the very first thing he did was seek the LORD."

2. Bible story: The Battle Is Not Yours (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to 2 Chronicles 20. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

A great multitude. Jehoshaphat was king of Judah (20:15). The children of Moab, the children of Ammon and others came against him to battle (20:1). Some men came and told him, "There cometh a great multitude against thee" (20:2). **Multitude** means a huge crowd.

Seek the LORD first. Look up 2 Chronicles 20:3. Jehoshaphat feared, but he set himself to seek the LORD and proclaimed a **fast**, going without food for a time to pray. People came from all the cities of Judah to ask help of the LORD (20:4).

The king's prayer. Jehoshaphat stood in the house of the LORD and prayed. **Look up 2 Chronicles 20:6.** He reminded himself who God is: God in heaven, ruler over all the kingdoms, with power and might that no one can withstand (stand against). He remembered how God gave Israel the land (20:7). **Look up 2 Chronicles 20:12.** "Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee." All Judah stood before the LORD, with their little ones, their wives and their children (20:13).

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God answers. The Spirit of the LORD came upon Jahaziel, a Levite, in the middle of the crowd (20:14). **Look up 2 Chronicles 20:15.** "The battle is not yours, but God's." He said, "Ye shall not need to fight in this battle: set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD" (20:17). Jehoshaphat bowed his head with his face to the ground, all Judah worshipped the LORD, and the Levites stood up to praise Him "with a loud voice on high" (20:18–19).

Singers in front. Look up 2 Chronicles 20:20. Early in the morning they went out into the wilderness of Tekoa, and Jehoshaphat said, "Believe in the LORD your God, so shall ye be established" (made strong and steady). **Look up 2 Chronicles 20:21.** He appointed singers to go out **before**, in front of, the army, saying, "Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever."

God fights. Look up 2 Chronicles 20:22. When they began to sing and to praise, the LORD set **ambushments**, surprise attacks, against the enemies. The enemy armies turned against one another (20:23). When Judah reached the watch tower in the wilderness and looked, none of the enemy escaped (20:24). Judah never fought.

Blessing and joy. On the fourth day they met in a valley and blessed the LORD, so they called it the valley of **Berachah** (20:26). They went back to Jerusalem with joy, Jehoshaphat in front, with psalteries, harps and trumpets, to the house of the LORD (20:27–28). God gave Jehoshaphat's kingdom rest (20:30).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. Jehoshaphat was afraid (20:3). Is it wrong to be afraid? What did he do with his fear?
2. In his prayer, Jehoshaphat first remembered who God is (20:6–7). Why does that help when we are scared?
3. "Neither know we what to do: but our eyes are upon thee" (20:12). When have you not known what to do? Where can you look?
4. Why would a king send singers out in front of the army (20:21)? What did that show about their trust?
5. They praised God before they saw the answer. How can you praise God before your problem is fixed?

Recall questions

1. Who did the Spirit of the LORD come upon? *(Jahaziel, a Levite, 2 Chronicles 20:14)*
2. Where did the army go early in the morning? *(Into the wilderness of Tekoa, 20:20)*
3. What did they name the valley where they blessed the LORD? *(The valley of Berachah, 20:26)*

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

Explain the old words: **hearken** means listen, **inhabitants** means the people who live there, **dismayed** means scared and ready to give up, **by reason of** means because of, and a **multitude** is a huge crowd. 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: "Jehoshaphat had no might against the great multitude. Against sin, we have no might either; we need God to save us. God loves you. 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 face something hard, pray about it first, before you try anything else. Then thank God out loud that His mercy endures for ever.

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. 2 Chronicles 20:1: Which two peoples came against Jehoshaphat? *(The children of Moab and the children of Ammon)*
2. 2 Chronicles 20:3: What did Jehoshaphat proclaim throughout all Judah? *(A fast)*
3. 2 Chronicles 20:13: Who stood before the LORD with all Judah? *(Their little ones, their wives and their children)*
4. 2 Chronicles 20:17: What did God tell them to do in this battle? *(Set yourselves, stand ye still, and see the salvation of the LORD)*
5. 2 Chronicles 20:21: What did the singers say? *("Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever")*
6. 2 Chronicles 20:28: What did they bring to the house of the LORD? *(Psalteries, harps and trumpets)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are God in heaven, and nothing is too hard for You. When we are afraid and don't know what to do, help us keep our eyes on You, pray first and praise You before we see the answer. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks what happened to the enemy army: the LORD set ambushments, and the enemy armies destroyed one another (2 Chronicles 20:22–23). Say it simply: God fought for His people, and Judah did not have to fight at all.

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