Preschool–Grade 6

Samson

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

Main point: Samson's strength came from God, not from himself. Our choices matter, and even after a wrong choice we can turn back to God and pray.
Bible passage: Judges 13–16. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." *Psalm 46:1 (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. Draw a line down the middle of the rest of the board and write "Wise" on one side and "Foolish" on the other.

1. Opening game: Wise or Foolish? (5–10 minutes)

Read each choice. Kids stand up if it's wise and sit down if it's foolish. 1) Telling the truth when you broke something. 2) Doing what your friends want even when you know it's wrong. 3) Praying when you're scared. 4) Keeping a promise you made to God. 5) Giving up something good because someone keeps nagging you. Ask: *Why is it hard to keep making wise choices when someone keeps pushing you?* Say: "Today we will meet the strongest man in the Bible. His strength came from God, but some of his choices were very foolish."

2. Bible story: Strength from God (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Judges 13. 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 special promise. Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and the Philistines ruled them for forty years (Judges 13:1). Manoah and his wife had no children (13:2). The angel of the LORD appeared to her. **Look up Judges 13:5.** A **Nazarite** was someone set apart to God by a vow, a serious promise. One sign was that no razor came on his head (Numbers 6:5). God said the boy would **begin to deliver**, start to rescue, Israel. The child was named Samson, he grew, and the LORD blessed him (Judges 13:24), and the Spirit of the LORD began to move him (13:25).

The lion and the honey. Look up Judges 14:6. (**Rent** means tore; a **kid** is a young goat.) Samson had nothing in his hand. Later he found bees and honey in the lion's **carcase**, its dead body, and ate some (14:8–9). He made it into a riddle: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (14:14). The lion was the eater and the strong one; the honey was the sweet food.

The ropes and the water. The Philistines came against Judah, so 3,000 men of Judah went to Samson. They tied him with two new **cords** (ropes) and brought him to the Philistines (15:9–13). **Look up Judges 15:14.** (**Flax** is a plant used to make thread.) Then Samson was very thirsty and prayed (15:18). God **clave**, split open, a hollow place, and water came out (15:19). Samson judged Israel twenty years (15:20).

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The city gate. In Gaza, enemies waited all night at the city gate to kill him in the morning. At midnight Samson took the doors of the gate and the two posts, bar and all, and carried them up a hill near Hebron (16:2–3).

Delilah. Later there was a woman named Delilah (16:4). Each of the Philistine lords promised her eleven hundred pieces of silver to find out the secret of his strength (16:5). Three times Samson told her something false: seven green **withs** (fresh vines), new ropes, and weaving his hair into a loom. Each time she said, "The Philistines be upon thee, Samson," and each time he broke free (16:6–14). She **pressed** him daily, kept pushing him, until he was worn out (16:16). **Look up Judges 16:17.** While he slept, she had a man shave off the seven locks of his head (16:19). **Look up Judges 16:20.** (**Wist not** means didn't know.) Samson thought he would shake himself free as before, but the LORD had departed from him.

Prison. The Philistines blinded Samson, bound him with brass **fetters** (chains), and made him grind grain in the prison in Gaza (16:21). **Look up Judges 16:22.** (**Howbeit** means but.)

The last prayer. The Philistine lords gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon, their false god, and said their god had given them Samson (16:23–24). They called him out to **make sport**, to make fun of him, and set him between the pillars (16:25). He asked the lad holding his hand to let him feel the pillars (16:26). About 3,000 men and women were on the roof (16:27). **Look up Judges 16:28.** Samson took hold of the two middle pillars, one with each hand, and bowed himself, bent forward, with all his might (16:29–30). The house fell, and Samson died there too. His family buried him in his father's burying place (16:31).

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. Each big thing Samson did began with "the Spirit of the LORD came upon him" (14:6, 15:14). Where did his strength really come from?
2. Delilah asked again and again (16:16). Why is it hard to keep saying no when someone keeps pushing?
3. Samson "wist not that the LORD was departed from him" (16:20). Why is it dangerous to think we don't need God?
4. Samson was a blind prisoner, but he still prayed (16:28). What does that teach us about turning back to God after a wrong choice?
5. Hebrews 11:32 lists Samson with people of faith. What good and what bad do you see in his story?

Recall questions

1. What was never to come on Samson's head? *(A razor, Judges 13:5)*
2. What did Samson find in the lion? *(Bees and honey, 14:8)*
3. Who was the Philistines' false god? *(Dagon, 16:23)*

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

Explain the words: a **refuge** is a safe place to hide, **strength** is the power to do what we can't do alone, and **a very present help in trouble** means God is right here with us, ready to help, when trouble comes. 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.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Samson's strength came from God, and God gives us the strength we need most: He saves us from sin. 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 someone pushes you to do something wrong, stop and pray before you answer.

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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 13:1: How many years did the Philistines rule Israel? *(Forty years)*
2. Judges 13:24: What did the LORD do as Samson grew? *(The LORD blessed him)*
3. Judges 14:6: What did Samson have in his hand when he fought the lion? *(Nothing)*
4. Judges 15:13: How many new cords did the men of Judah use? *(Two)*
5. Judges 15:19: What came out of the hollow place? *(Water)*
6. Judges 16:3: What did Samson carry up the hill? *(The doors of the city gate, the two posts and the bar)*
7. Judges 16:19: How many locks of hair were shaved? *(Seven)*
8. Judges 16:31: How long did Samson judge Israel? *(Twenty years)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are our refuge and strength. Thank You that every good gift and every bit of strength comes from You. Help us make wise choices, say no when someone pushes us to do wrong, and turn back to You quickly when we fail. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks about the blinding (16:21): say it plainly and briefly: the Philistines put out Samson's eyes so he could not see. It was cruel, and the Bible tells it honestly. Then point to 16:22 and 16:28: his hair grew again, and he prayed.
If a child asks whether the people in the house died (16:30): yes. The house fell on the Philistine lords and the people in it, and Samson died with them. Keep it short and calm. God used Samson to begin to deliver Israel from the Philistines, as He promised (13:5).
Left out on purpose: Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman and the fighting that followed (14:1–4, 14:10–15:8), the jawbone battle (15:15–17) and why he went to Gaza (16:1). Read them yourself. If a child asks, answer briefly: Samson didn't always obey God, and there was real war between Israel and the Philistines.

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