Preschool–Grade 6

Samson

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

Main point: God gave Samson great strength and a holy calling, but Samson treated it carelessly. Strength comes from God, and wise choices keep us close to Him. Even after failure, we can call on Him.
Bible passage: Judges 13–16. Students read Judges 13:2–5, 13:24–25, 16:15–22 and 16:28–30 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble." *Psalm 46:1 (KJV)* and "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint." *Isaiah 40:31 (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 13–16, Numbers 6:1–8 and Hebrews 11:32. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: Where Does It Come From? (5–10 minutes)

Call out a gift or ability: a fast runner, a great singer, a good memory, a strong body, a kind heart. For each one, students call out where it comes from: practice, family, food, God? Let them argue a little. Then ask: *If God gives us our gifts, what happens when we use them carelessly or forget who gave them?* Say: "Samson had the most famous gift in the Bible, and he had to learn where it came from."

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

Read out loud: Judges 13:2–5 and 13:24–25. Old words in this passage:

- **barren** (13:2): not able to have children; **conceive and bear**: become pregnant and have a baby
- **Nazarite** (13:5): someone set apart to God by a vow; no razor was to touch his head (Numbers 6:5); **deliver**: rescue
- **the Spirit of the LORD began to move him** (13:25): God's Spirit started to stir him to act

Tell the middle part in your own words: When a young lion roared at Samson, "the Spirit of the LORD came mightily upon him," and he tore it apart with nothing in his hand (14:5–6). Later he found bees and honey in its carcase (14:8). When the men of Judah tied him with two new cords and handed him over, the Spirit of the LORD came on him and the cords became like burnt flax (15:13–14). Afterward he was thirsty and called on the LORD, and God split open a hollow place and gave him water (15:18–19). In Gaza, enemies waited at the city gate to kill him, but at midnight he carried off the gate doors, posts and bar to a hilltop (16:2–3). Then the Philistine lords each offered Delilah eleven hundred pieces of silver to learn the secret of his strength (16:4–5). Three times Samson lied to her, and three times he broke free (16:6–14).

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

Read out loud: Judges 16:15–22. Old words in this passage:

- **thou hast mocked me** (16:15): you made a fool of me
- **pressed him daily** (16:16): pushed him every day; **his soul was vexed unto death**: he was worn out, sick and tired of it
- **told her all his heart** (16:17): told her everything; **shaven**: shaved
- **afflict** (16:19): hurt, bring down
- **wist not** (16:20): did not know
- **fetters of brass** (16:21): bronze chains; **grind in the prison house**: turn a heavy millstone to grind grain
- **howbeit** (16:22): but

Teacher note: 16:21 says the Philistines "put out his eyes." Let it be read as written, without adding detail. It was cruel, and the Bible is honest about it.

Tell the next part: The Philistine lords gathered for a great sacrifice to Dagon, their false god, saying their god had given them Samson (16:23–24). They called him out to make sport of him and set him between the pillars (16:25). Samson asked the lad who held his hand to let him feel the pillars the house stood on (16:26). About 3,000 men and women watched from the roof (16:27).

Read out loud: Judges 16:28–30. Old words: **avenged** (16:28): paid back; **borne up** (16:29): held up; **bowed himself** (16:30): bent forward with all his strength.
Teacher note: 16:30 says plainly that many died when the house fell, and Samson with them. Read it as written and don't add detail. His family buried him, and he had judged Israel twenty years (16:31).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Each great feat began with "the Spirit of the LORD came upon him" (14:6, 15:14). What does that say about where Samson's strength came from?
2. Samson's hair was the sign of a vow that set him apart to God (13:5). Why did telling Delilah his secret matter so much?
3. Delilah tried four times (16:6–17). What should Samson have learned by the second or third time? Where do we ignore warning signs?
4. "He wist not that the LORD was departed from him" (16:20). How can someone drift from God without noticing?
5. Samson's last prayer asked for revenge "for my two eyes" (16:28). God still heard him. What does that tell us about God's grace, and about Samson?
6. Hebrews 11:32 names Samson among people of faith. How can God use someone who failed so badly?

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words in Isaiah 40:31: **wait upon the LORD** means trust God and depend on Him; **renew their strength** means get new strength from God; **faint** means give out, collapse from being tired. Samson's strength came back only when he called on God (Judges 16:28). Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Psalm 46:1 this week; keep working on Isaiah 40:31 next week too.

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

Say: "God gave Samson strength, and He gives us what we need most: He saves us from sin. 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.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

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

1. What gifts has God given me? Am I using them for Him or for myself?
2. Is there a "Delilah" in my life, a voice that keeps pushing me away from what God wants? What can I do about it?
3. Write a short prayer asking God for strength to make wise choices and to come back to Him quickly when you fail.
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: when you feel pressure to do something wrong, stop and call on God before you answer, and choose one wise thing to do instead.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You are our refuge and strength. Every gift we have comes from You. Keep us from treating Your gifts carelessly, give us wisdom to make good choices, and when we fail, help us turn back and call on You. Thank You for loving us and making a way to save us through Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks about the parts this lesson skips: students may read ahead. Judges 14:10–15:17 tells of Samson's marriage to a Philistine woman, the riddle, and the fighting that followed, including the jawbone battle; 16:1 tells why he went to Gaza. Answer honestly and briefly: Samson often followed what he wanted instead of what God wanted, and there was real war between Israel and the Philistines. The Bible tells it plainly without asking us to copy it.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post