

Use Week of:

Unit 9 • Session 2

Deborah and Barak

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Judges 4–5

STORY POINT:

God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.

KEY PASSAGE:

1 John 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

The time of the judges continued after the death of Ehud. The Israelites fell into a continuous cycle of sin, bondage, deliverance, and peace. Every judge was imperfect, yet God worked through the judges. At the time when the Israelites were oppressed by the king of Canaan, Deborah was the judge of Israel. Deborah sent for Barak and encouraged him to take up an army and fight the army of Canaan and its leader, Sisera.

Deborah reminded Barak that God would hand Sisera and his troops over to him. (Judg. 4:6-7) Barak agreed to go, but only if Deborah went with him. Deborah went, but she informed Barak that he would get no glory for the battle.

When Barak went down from Mount Tabor with 10,000 men, “The LORD threw Sisera ... and all his army into a panic before Barak’s assault.” (Judg. 4:15). Everyone in the army died, but Sisera escaped on foot.

Sisera fled to the tent of Jael, who invited him inside and gave him a drink. While Sisera slept, Jael drove a tent peg through his temple and he died.

Judges 5 records a victory song Deborah and Barak sang on that day, praising God for defeating the Canaanites. The land had rest for 40 years.

The Israelites’ sin had resulted in 20 years of defeat. God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to accomplish the Israelites’ victory over Canaan. As you teach kids this week, highlight the actions of Deborah and Barak, who willingly served God and used their gifts for His glory.

Use the Christ Connection to emphasize that God uses people and events to save us not only from our enemies, but to bring about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

The BIBLE Story

Deborah and Barak

Judges 4–5

Ehud and Shamgar had been judges over Israel. After they died, the Israelites ignored God and forgot about Him. So God allowed the king of Canaan to overtake them. The commander of the king's army was named Sisera (SIS uh ruh). He was cruel to the

Israelites. **God's people remembered how good life was when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to God, "Save us!"**

At this time, Deborah was the judge over Israel. Deborah called for Barak to give him a message from God. God wanted Barak to gather an army and lead them to Mount Tabor. **God would help Barak defeat Sisera there.**

Barak said to Deborah, "I will go if you will come with me. If you won't come, I'm not going."

"I'll go," Deborah said, "but you will receive no honor for the battle." So **Deborah, Barak, and the army went to Mount Tabor. Sisera took his chariots and his army to fight against**

Israel.

"Go, Barak!" said Deborah. "God will help you defeat Sisera today." **Barak and his army moved down the mountain toward Sisera and his army.** Barak chased the chariots and the army, and everyone in the



army was killed. **None of them survived except Sisera. He had escaped!**

Sisera ran to the tent of Jael (JAY uhl) because he and Jael's husband were friends. Jael said, "Come on in. Don't be afraid." **Jael gave Sisera some milk to drink and covered him with a rug.** Sisera was so exhausted that he fell into a deep sleep.

Jael knew that Sisera was an evil man, an enemy of God. She **took a tent peg and a hammer, and used them to kill Sisera while he slept.**

Barak came, looking for Sisera. Jael greeted him and said, "The man you are looking for is inside." **Barak went into Jael's tent and saw Sisera lying dead.**

That day, God allowed the Israelites to defeat the Canaanites. The Israelites had won the battle! **Deborah and Barak sang a victory song.** They praised God for helping them beat the Canaanites. **The land was peaceful for 40 more years.**

Christ Connection: God does what is for His glory and our good. (Psalm 115:3; Romans 8:28) God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to defeat Canaan. In a similar way, God uses people and events to not only save us from our enemies, but to teach us about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Bible Storytelling Tips

- **Dramatic dialogue:** Shift the position of your body to portray various people. Stand in one place when Deborah speaks, in another for Barak, and in a third for Jael.
- **Use props:** As you tell the story, show people figures for Deborah, Barak, Sisera, and Jael. Display a tent peg and hammer.

INTRODUCE the Story



SESSION TITLE: Deborah and Barak

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 4–5

STORY POINT: God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.

KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to tell you about a time they had to work with a team or a partner to accomplish a goal or complete a task.

SAY • Working with others is a great way to get more done faster. Though others may frustrate us sometimes, God wants us to live in community with other Christians and work together to love and obey Him. Today we will learn about a man and two women who worked together to defeat an enemy of Israel.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the “It Takes Two” activity page. Invite the kids to circle the pictures that depict activities that need two or more people, and draw boxes around the activities that can be enjoyed alone.

SAY • Some activities are fun to do on your own, but many things are more fun when you have a friend or group of friends to play too. Today we will learn about people who worked together.

- “It Takes Two” activity page,
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Alone or together?

Designate one side of the room *alone* and the other as *with help*. Make statements and instruct the kids to stand on the side of the room that represents how they would do the task mentioned.

Suggested tasks:

- You must pick up your room.
- You have difficult homework.
- You want to read a book.
- You plan to learn to juggle.
- You are baking cookies.
- You have presents to wrap.

SAY • Sometimes we want help to do things, and sometimes we like to do things on our own. Today we will learn about a man who asked for help to defeat an enemy of God's people.

OPTION 2: Pick-up sticks

Form groups of two or three kids. Instruct one kid to hold the set of pick-up sticks about 12 inches above the floor and drop them so they form a pile. The kids will then take turns trying to remove one stick at a time without moving the other sticks. Each time a kid is successful, she keeps the stick she removed. The kid with the most sticks wins.

SAY • It was difficult to move one stick without affecting the other sticks around it. In a way, our decisions are like that. What we do affects those around us. Today we will hear how one man's choice affected others.

LOW PREP

- tape (optional)
- paper (optional)
- pen (optional)

- pick-up sticks, thin skewers, or chopsticks; multiple sets of about 15

Transition to teach the story

TEACH the Story



SESSION TITLE: Deborah and Barak

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 4–5

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KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

[Leader enters carrying a star map, a compass, and a laptop computer.]

• leader attire

• star map

• compass

• laptop computer

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

LEADER • Hey, friends. I hope you've had a *stellar* week!

[Pause with a big grin.] Get it? *[Pause, then sigh.]*

Stellar is a word that means great, but it also comes from Latin word for star—*stella*! Nobody ever laughs at my astronomy jokes. Oh well, I still think they are *out-of-this-world*! But maybe it's just me.

If you were here last week, you may remember that I am an astronomer, which means it's my job to study the stars and other things in outer space. I mentioned last time that one thing I love about the stars is the cycle of the stars. They seem to rotate through the night sky, and they also seem to rotate through the year. All the seeming movement of the stars actually comes from the way the earth moves, but it's still very interesting to watch the stars. Fun

fact: because the stars seem to move in cycles, and because the cycles are so regular and predictable, some people refer to their movement as a “dance,” or even a kind of music!

That’s pretty cool because the Bible says that the *heavens*—a word that can mean the sky and stars and outer space—declare God’s power. You know who else declared God’s power? The people from our Bible story! They sang about God’s power at the end of the story. Let’s get to it!

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Who remembers our big picture question and answer? [*Allow responses.*] Great memory. ***What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.*** When we understand how bad sin is—that it not only hurts us, but angers God—we should want to turn away from our sin. But that’s only the first half. We also need to turn toward Jesus. He is our greatest treasure. He can take away our sin and give us life with God. When we love Jesus, we will hate sin and want to obey Him.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

· Giant Timeline

LEADER • We learned last week that God’s people were pretty lost without good leaders. After Joshua died, **God’s people repeatedly turned from Him.** Thankfully, God is merciful. When they repented, God sent judges to rescue them from their enemies. This week we will learn about the judge Deborah.

- Bibles
- “Deborah and Barak” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Story Point Poster

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Judges 4–5. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Deborah and Barak.”

LEADER • Surprise, surprise! God’s people turned away from Him again! This time, the people of Canaan took over the Israelites’ land. The king of Canaan was cruel, and soon God’s people remembered how much better their lives were when they followed God. God raised up Deborah—a prophetess and judge—to guide the people. She told Barak to lead the people into battle. Barak said he would obey if Deborah went with him. It seems Barak may not have trusted God fully to provide the victory. As a result, the honor for the battle would not go to Barak, but to a woman named Jael.

But here’s a question for you: Who really got the glory for winning the day? [*Allow responses.*] God did! It was God who threw Siserà’s army into confusion and chaos. **God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people**, but it was God who gave them victory. It is amazing to think that God uses us. Even though He is powerful enough to do everything on His own, He invites us to be a part of His perfect plans for the world. How cool is that?

Christ connection

LEADER • God does what is for His glory and our good. (Psalm 115:3; Romans 8:28) God fought for the Israelites and used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to defeat Canaan. In a similar way, God uses people and events to not only save us from our enemies, but to teach us

Note: You may use this opportunity to use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

about our ultimate good: salvation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 9, Session 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to think about how we can help people who are in need. Guide them to discuss the ways God has gifted them to live on mission.

· “Unit 9, Session 2”
Questions from Kids
Video



Missions moment (3 minutes)

LEADER • Play the “Casting the Dye (Part 1)” missions video. The Dye family are missionaries with the North American Mission Board. When Matt Dye was asked to check out the city of Atlanta as a mission location, he had already made up his mind that was not the city for his family.

· “Casting the Dye
(Part 1)” missions
video

He believed people in Atlanta already had plenty of churches and access to the gospel. After the visit to the city though, he realized many people in the city actually needed to hear that God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue them. Instead of running away from the city, the Dye family ran toward the city of Atlanta, trusting the move would be for God’s glory.

Remember that God can use us to spread the gospel no matter where we live. Whether you live in the middle of the Bible Belt or far from the nearest church, you can live on mission by showing Jesus’ love and telling people about Him.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 John 1:9. Then sing “Faithful and Righteous.”

· Key Passage Poster
· “Faithful and
Righteous” song

LEADER • What a great key passage. The Bible teaches us that repentance leads us to life with God. *What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.* When we turn away from sin and toward Jesus, God forgives us and gives us a right relationship with Him.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “Onward, Christians Soldiers” song

LEADER • Let’s thank God for sending Jesus so we can have life through Him. He fights our battles with us so we can press on in victory.

Sing together “Onward, Christian Soldiers.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

LEADER • God, thank You for saving Your people. We know that all of us are sinners who turn away from You. Thank You for calling us back and sending Jesus to defeat sin and death. Help us to be filled with love for You. Make us quick to repent when we sin, and help us lovingly obey You more each day. Amen.

Dismiss to apply the story

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

APPLY the Story



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BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 4–5

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KEY PASSAGE: 1 John 1:9

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- “Key Passage Flip Cards” printable
- markers or pencils

Print the “Key Passage Flip Cards” printable double-sided and cut along the dotted lines. Help the kids fold their flip card in half so that only Level 1 is faceup. Challenge them to fill in the missing words before moving on to Level 2. After each level, kids should fold the previous level under so that they don’t have help with the harder levels.

SAY • *Confession* means telling God we know that we sinned and we agree with Him that our sin is wrong. The Bible teaches that when we confess, God forgives us and helps us grow in Him. As we trust God each day, He transforms our hearts to love Him more, which leads us to obey Him.

Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Story Point Poster

Distribute a Bible to each kid. Help them use the table of contents and large chapter numbers to find Judges 4–5. Talk about the History division of the Old Testament and briefly review the other books that are part of this division (*Joshua–Esther*). Remind the kids that we use Bible divisions to help us categorize and understand what the Bible teaches us about God and about the gospel.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. Why did God allow Canaan to overtake the Israelites? (*The people did what was evil in God's sight, so He allowed their enemies to conquer them; Judg. 4:1-2*)
2. Why didn't Barak get the honor for defeating Sisera and the army of Caanan? (*He said he would only go where God told him to go if Deborah went with him, Judg. 4:8-9*)
3. Who ended up getting the honor for killing Sisera? (*Jael, a woman who was not an Israelite; Judg. 4:22*)
4. Why did God keep rescuing His people if they kept turning away from Him? *Guide kids to see that God is faithful and merciful. He loves even those who sin against Him. He still planned to use the Israelites to send Jesus, so He showed His love to them.*
5. Whom does God use in His plans? *Guide kids to discuss the fact that God can—and does—use all kinds of people. In the story today, God used a man and two women. He used Israelites and non-Israelites. Remind kids that God is all-powerful and can use anyone in His plans. Help them see that when we have faith, God will do great things in us and through us.*
6. Why does God use people in His plans? *Guide kids to see that God doesn't need our help to do anything, but He lovingly includes us in His good work. We are blessed by the chance to participate in His plan to rescue sinners and glorify Him. By using people, He shows His power to do amazing things through ordinary people.*

SAY • God used Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people. They defeated Sisera's army, but only Jesus could defeat death and give us freedom from sin.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

- Allergy Alert
- streamers, balloons, party hats, small party favors, or other party supplies
- party foods or drinks (optional)
- “Dye Family Photograph” printable

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment found in Teach the Story.

LOW PREP

- baseball bat (optional)

Activity choice (10 minutes)



OPTION 1: Missions moment party

Gather various party supplies, like streamers, balloons, party hats, small party favors, or other items. You may bring in some party foods or drinks. Host a small party without telling the kids the occasion. After a few minutes, ask them why they think you are throwing a party. Show them the “Dye Family Photograph” and read the caption.

SAY • The Dye family creates events and opportunities to invite people into their lives so that they can share the gospel with many people. Like in today’s story, God uses events and all things to bring glory to Himself. We can plan ways to share Jesus with others.

Let the kids take home a party hat and a party favor. Remind them to pray for the Dye family or any other missionaries they know of.

OPTION 2: Dizzy walk

Clear the room of obstacles. Guide the kids to spin in a circle 10 times and then try to walk in a straight line. Discuss how difficult it is to walk straight while dizzy. Hold a competition to see who can walk the furthest without falling over after spinning 10 times. For added dizziness, you may use a bat and ask the kids to place one end on the ground and bend forward so their forehead touches the other end while they spin.

SAY • Spinning in circles makes us dizzy, and that means it is difficult to walk straight. It’s kind of like being very confused! You can hardly tell which way is up.

In our story today, God threw Sisera’s army into confusion. They were fleeing and disorganized in the face of Deborah and Barak’s attack. **God used**

Deborah, Barak, and Jael to rescue His people.

Although they did the fighting, God gave the victory.

Reflection and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute a sheet of paper to each child. Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:

- What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
- What does this story teach me about myself?
- Whom can I tell about this story?

Make sure to send the sheets home with kids alongside the activity page so that parents can see what their kids have been learning.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session. Pray for your group.

· pencils and crayons
· paper
· Bible Story Coloring
Page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's Big Picture Cards for Families to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.