

LARGE GROUP LESSON

BOTTOM LINE:

God wants us to be humble and trust him.

OBJECTIVE:

Kids will know who Deborah, Gideon, and Samson are.

KEY PASSAGE:

Judges 4:4-9, 6:14-16, 16:28-30

INTRO:

I'd like to start this morning with a little super hero trivia. Are you ready? Here's your first question.

Which super hero was created first: Superman or Batman? (Superman)

Which group of heroes was formed first: the Fantastic Four or the Avengers? (Fantastic Four)

Who came first: Catwoman or Wonder Woman? (Catwoman)

I wanted to warm you up with some super hero trivia because today, we're going to learn about three super heroes of the Bible. These people weren't written up in comic books, of course, but their stories appear in a book called Judges. These three heroes, and several more, are referred to as judges because they led the nation of Israel in a time before they had a king. These judges were chosen by God in times of crisis to save Israel from their enemies. Long before Batman, Superman, and Wonder Woman, the children of Israel loved to hear the tales of Deborah, Gideon, and the mighty Samson.

READ JUDGES 4:4-9, 6:14-16, 16:28-30

MAIN POINT:

Our first hero is a woman named Deborah, a prophetess whom God chose to lead Israel against the wicked King Jabin. God spoke to Deborah and told her to choose a man named Barak to lead Israel into battle. Barak was a brave warrior, but he was afraid to go into battle by himself. Deborah was fearless because she trusted the Lord, and she led Barak and his men into battle.

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Our second hero is a man named Gideon. Gideon was no warrior, and he wanted no part of fighting God's enemies, but God saw something in Gideon. He called Gideon and told him to lead Israel into battle. Gideon was afraid, and he tested God a few times. Every time Gideon gave God a test, God answered him. Gideon overcame his fears and just like Deborah, he saved Israel from its enemies.

Finally, we come to Samson. Of all the Judges, Samson was the one most like a super hero. He had super strength that came from the long hair on his head, and so long as he had that long hair, he was unbeatable. But pride caused Samson to let his guard down. His hair was cut, and he was taken prisoner by the Philistines. Samson was humbled, but like Gideon and Deborah, he learned to place his trust in God, and he gave Israel one last victory against the Philistines.

The Judges were great heroes not just because they saved Israel, but because of how they saved Israel. They humbled themselves, overcame their fears, and trusted in God. It was God who made them heroes!

DRIVE IT HOME:

The Bible is filled with heroes like Deborah, Gideon, and Samson. Their trust in God is what makes these people so incredible. It wasn't their own ability that gave them intelligence or super strength or courage. Everything they had came from the Lord, and it worked because God helped them to use these abilities they had been given.

Deborah trusted God when he gave her a vision to save Israel. She had the faith that Barak did not, and her faith helped her to save her people. She went into battle with Barak, just as he requested. God defeated the forces of Jabin, and in the end it was a woman, not Barak, who took down the commander of the enemy army!

Gideon was afraid to trust God at first. If you read on in Judges, you'll see how he tested God several times to make sure he could trust the Lord. The Lord tested him even further by making him reduce his attack force to only 300 men armed with horns, jars, and torches. As crazy as it sounds, God gave Gideon a great victory because he learned to trust in the Lord.

Samson's tale is a tragic one in a way. God blessed him with strength, and he squandered it away thanks to his pride. Samson was sorry for his pride, and he asked God to give him one last chance to be a hero, and he sacrificed himself to defeat Israel's enemies.

This week, I encourage you to go home and ask your parents to read the whole story of Deborah, Gideon, and Samson with you. Discover for yourselves these incredible heroes and the trivia we didn't have time to cover. Discover the incredible faith these three had that allowed them to become true heroes. God can make heroes of us if we trust him the same way.

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CLOSE WITH A SIMPLE PRAYER:

Dear God,

Thank you for the example of faith the judges set for us.

In Jesus' name,

Amen