

Unit 2 – lesson 5

THE JUDGES

SAMSON



Big idea: True strength comes from obedience

Key verse: Isaiah 40:31a – “But those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength.”

Bible passage: Judges 13-16

THOUGHTS FOR LEADERS

Strength is something we all need. Like the Israelites, we face many challenges throughout life. Sometimes it’s hard just to get through a day! While Samson was blessed with physical strength, the Bible is clear that when we obey God, He gives us inner strength to face each day. We can learn from Samson’s example of obedience to God – and the disastrous consequences of disobedience – to receive strength from the Lord for the challenges we face each day.

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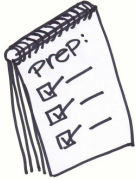


Supplies List:

| Attention Grabber | Small Group | Memory Verse | Crafts |
|---|-------------------------------|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2-4x5 gallon pails half filled with sand (more or less depending on the strength of your volunteers)- 1-2 broom handle, or similar straight stick, each with an icecream pail filled with sand hung on each end of the handle.- Tug of war rope/soft rope | <p><i>Prayer Journals</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Memory Verse 2.50 (pg. 9) (1 copy/person)- Markers/pencil- crayons | <ul style="list-style-type: none">- disposable cups/containers of varying sizes- silver/gold tin foil- scotch tape- pipe cleaners |



attention grabber



- 2-4x5 gallon pails half filled with sand (more or less depending on the strength of your volunteers)
- 1-2 broom handle, or similar straight stick, each with an icecream pail filled with sand hung on each end of the handle.
- Tug of war rope/soft rope

While there is some dramatic excitement that can happen if the competitors race against each other, it's also okay for each to go one at a time, and compare results at the end, depending on your groups resources.

Leader: Did you know there is a competition called the strongest man in the universe? The people who compete in it have to do crazy things like carry cars on their backs and pull airplanes down roads.

Who do you think the strongest person in this room is? Any guesses? We are going to have a strongest person competition to see who in this room is the strongest! Any volunteers?

For this one, choose mostly leaders who are prepared to "compete" – if any children want to volunteer, make sure it is someone who will have fun with this and not be a poor winner or loser. The game is not the point – it's just an illustration, and competitors need to have that perspective. Ensure you have an even number of contestants: either choose 2 volunteers, or have 4-6 contestants divided into two "teams." Then, rather than having an individual competition, the teams compete against each other, where each person wins a point for their team if they complete the strength task.

Leader: Alright! We'll start the competition with the T-hold.

(Bring out two ice-cream pails filled with sand.)

Leader: Contestants must hold each of these pails in one hand, straight out from their sides, making a perfect T with their body and arms. We are going to time this and see if any of our volunteers can last thirty seconds. If an arm starts to droop, the time stops. On your marks, get set, GO!

Time each contestant. For added drama, have the kids help with the last ten second countdown.

And the winner of the first round is..._____! (*or congratulations! It's a tie!*) Let's move on to the second round.

Bring out the broom handles & pails filled with sand.

Leader: Next, we have what's called the "Duck Walk." This may look silly, but it is a real event in the Strongest Man competition! Without using their hands, the contestants must walk twenty feet, or as far as they can, balancing this broom handle across their legs, with weights on either end.

This may warrant a demonstration. It really does look ridiculous, and is more about balance than strength, but is fun to watch! Hand out supplies and make sure the contestants understand the drill.

Leader: Get ready, get set, go!

Contestants race. Help the children cheer them on.

Leader: And the winner is _____! Congratulations!

Bring out the tug of war rope.

Leader: Lastly, we're going to have a tug-of-war between the two contestants (*or teams*) to see which team is the strongest! When I say "go," both teams must pull as hard as they can, and the team that can drag the other team to where I am standing, right here in the middle, wins! On your marks, get set, go!

Set up the stage area and let the teams compete.

Leader: Wow! We have a winner! Thank you contestants! Let's give them a round of applause!

Allow contestants to take a seat. You may choose to give each volunteer a small prize for being good sports!

Leader: Wow! We sure have some strong people in our group! You know, the Bible has a story about one of the strongest men who ever lived! His name was Samson. God gave him incredible strength to help defeat some people called Philistines who were enemies of God's people. God used Samson's strength to free His people. But there was a secret to Samson's strength, and that's the secret we're going to learn about today.



Teaching Time

The Bible has a story about one of the strongest men who ever lived. His name was Samson, and his story is found in the Bible, in Judges chapters 13-16. Even before he was born, God set him apart as someone special. God sent an angel to Samson's parents, telling them that when their baby was born, he would do great things for his country, but he had to obey God. One very important command God gave Samson was to never, ever cut his hair.

Samson and his parents obeyed God, and Samson grew to be incredibly strong! When enemies came to hurt his people, he was able to fight them and because of his strength, his enemies were afraid! Once, a lion attacked Samson, and he killed it with his bare hands. Another time, Samson caught 300 foxes by himself. When the Philistines tried to catch him and kill him, they sent one thousand men to fight him! Can you imagine? They thought Samson was so strong he needed one thousand soldiers just to catch him! And they were right – when they tried to take Samson prisoner, he found a donkey skeleton and killed all thousand of them – even though they had swords and shields and all he had was a jawbone! Samson obeyed God by never cutting his hair, and God rewarded Samson with giving him incredible strength. As a result, the Philistines grew very afraid of Samson and left God's people alone as long as Samson was alive.

All along, Samson kept winning battles and was very strong because he obeyed God.

But he had a weakness. There was a girl he really liked, who didn't like him as much as she pretended to. Her name was Delilah and she wanted to trick Samson into telling her what made him so strong, so that she could tell his enemies. One day she asked him what made Samson so strong. He thought he loved her, but he knew he should be careful so he said, "Tie me up with leather straps and I become as weak as a baby!" Was that true? No! But that night, Delilah tied him up with leather straps. When he woke up, he was still just as strong as ever and he broke the straps easily!

Delilah was upset. She told Samson, "You lied to me! Tell me the truth. What makes you so strong?" And Samson told her, "If you tie me up with brand-new ropes, I become as weak as a baby." Was that true? No! But that night, Delilah tied him up with brand new ropes. What happened when Samson woke up? He broke them easily!



Teaching Time continued...

Now Delilah was really mad. "Stop lying to me!" She told Samson. "If you really loved me, you would tell me what makes you strong!" Do you think Samson should trust Delilah? I don't think so! Samson didn't think so either, so he told her, "If you braid my hair just so, then I'll become as weak as a baby." So what do you think happened that night? Delilah braided Samson's hair! But was that the secret to Samson's strength? No! When Samson woke up, he was still as strong as ever!

"You keep making me look bad!" Delilah complained. And she cried, and cried, and cried and cried and finally Samson couldn't take it any longer! He told her the truth. "God gives me strength," he said, "But I have to obey him by never cutting my hair. When I cut my hair, I will be as weak as a baby." Was that a smart thing to tell Delilah?

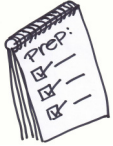
That night Delilah shaved Samson's head. Samson had disobeyed God, and his hair had been cut. All his strength was gone, and he really was as weak as a baby. The Philistines captured him easily and took him prisoner.

Even when we know the right thing to do is obey God, it's easy to forget. Sometimes we can just say we're sorry and get back on track, but sometimes big things happen that we can't avoid. For Samson, when he disobeyed God, he lost all his strength. He eventually died as a prisoner to the Philistines, but God helped Samson one last time, so that when Samson died, he was able to collapse a whole building and kill many of his enemies at the same time.

We might not need big muscles like Samson, and we're probably not slaves to Philistines, but all of us need strength. We might need inner strength to face a difficult situation, or strength to tell someone the truth. We might need strength to face a challenge, or strength to do the right thing. The Bible says God is our strength, if only we trust and obey. Just like Samson, we can obey God and have His mighty strength within us.



small groups



Prayer Journals

Leader: Let's have our own tests of strength! We'll compete against each other in thumb wars to see who is our very own "Samson" of our small group!

Thumb Wars

Have two players hold out their right (or left) hands in a "thumbs up" position. Grasp each other's fingers in a monkey grip. Players recite "one, two, three, four, I declare a thumb war!" and each player tries to pin the other person's thumb for a count of three.

Leader: It's fun to compete against each other for strength, but often the strongest people I know are not people with big muscles, but rather people who have been through a lot. Inner strength is a lot harder to see in people, but means so much more! Samson had a lot of physical strength, but when it came to resisting his girlfriend's tricks, he did not have much inner strength at all. Like Samson, our strength comes from God and when we obey God, He gives us strength to face each day's challenges.

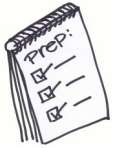
Discussion Questions:

- Can you think of a time when you needed inner strength?
- How would obeying God have helped you to be strong?

Take time to go through prayer journals. Close in prayer, thanking God for answered prayer and for giving us strength to obey.



memory verse



*Print outs of Memory Verse 2.50 (1 per person)
Crayons/pencil crayons/markers*

Monthly Verse: Jeremiah 7:23b – “Obey me. Then I will be your God. And you will be my people. Live the way I command you to live. Then things will go well with you.”

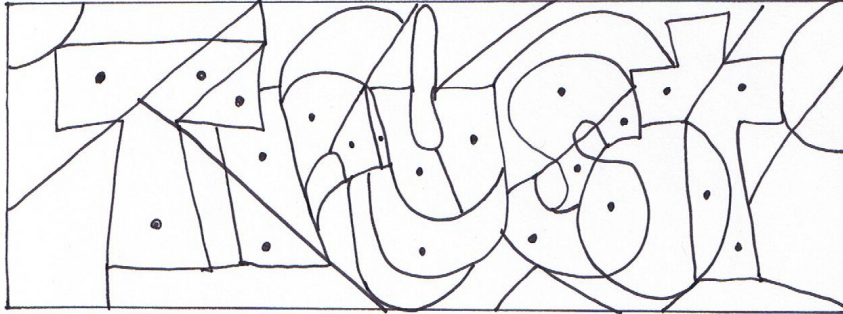
Weekly Verse: Isaiah 40:31a – “But those who trust in the Lord will receive new strength.”

Hand out copies of Memory Verse 2.50. Have the kids colour in the dotted sections to find the hidden words to the memory verse!

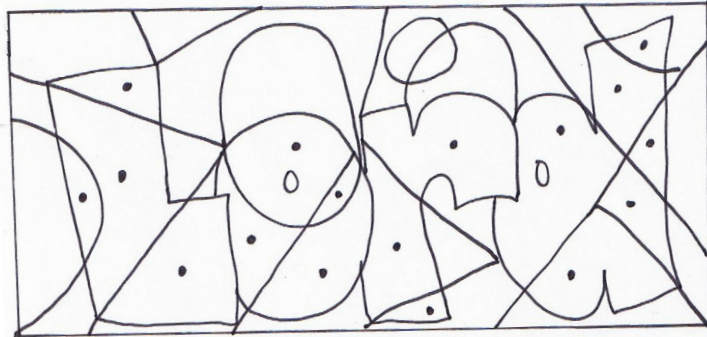
Memory Verse 2.50

Colour in the dotted sections to find the missing words to this verse

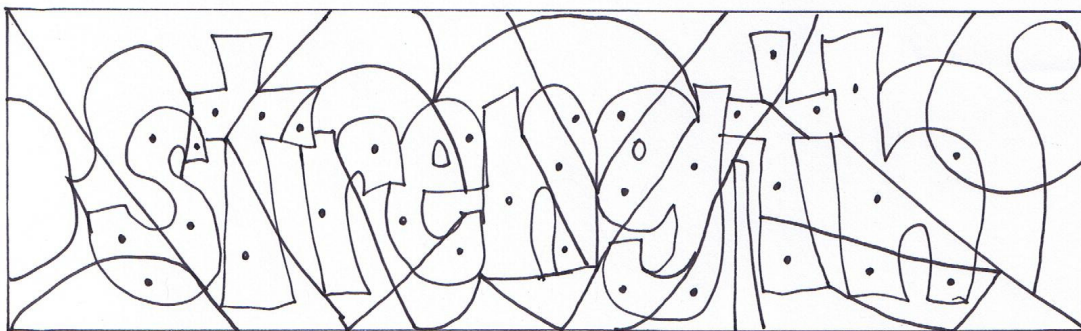
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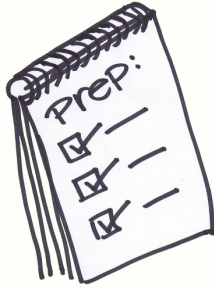
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Isaiah 40:31a



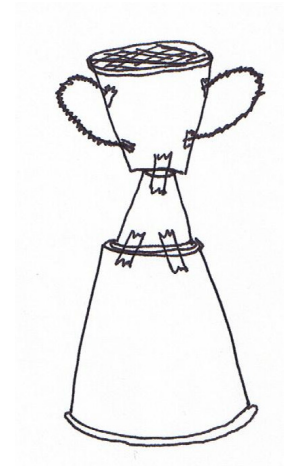
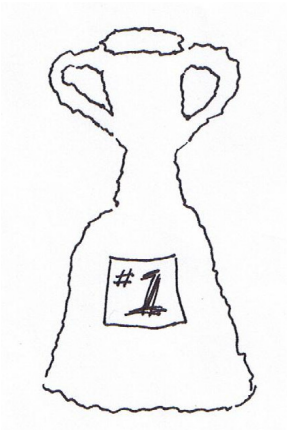
Craft Table



Various sizes of paper/plastic cups, empty & clean yogurt/sour cream containers
Tin foil (gold or silver coloured)
Scotch tape
Pipe cleaners

Mini Trophies.

1. Assemble a mini trophy by stacking 2-3 cups/containers on top of each other. Secure with tape. Add details with pipe cleaners.
2. Cover the containers with tin foil for a mini trophy! Use scotch tape to secure loose ends.





games

Manhunt

This version of tag is best played over a large area (1 city block, a large field or bush) but can be played in any space.

One person starts as "it" and runs to try and tag other players. Once a player is tagged, they become "it" as well. The game ends when everybody is "it" and the last player to be tagged can start as "it" for the next round of the game.