

# People God Used

**Lesson 23a — Gideon**

**Lesson 23b — Ruth**

**Lesson 23c — Samson**

**Lesson 23d — Esther**

## OVERVIEW

The emphasis of our next series of four lessons is "People God Used." Each of the lessons is a complete story in itself, but the characters are tied together by a common theme — that they were used by God to accomplish a specific purpose.

You will notice that the four people selected for study were not necessarily "heroes" in that their lives exemplified every aspect of Christian perfection. We do not know a great deal about the personal characteristics of either Ruth or Esther, and yet we know that God used them. We see the imperfections in Samson's history, and yet God was able to use him also.

What was it that made these people the ones God chose to use? Each of them had something that qual-

ified them. As we study each lesson, we would like to zero in on the one quality which seems to stand out in the person's character. For Gideon, we will consider courage; for Ruth, a follower after God; for Samson, strength; and for Esther, unselfish regard for others.

As your students learn about these Bible characters, encourage them to think about the qualities God might be looking for in us today. They should see that He still uses people to fulfill many of His purposes. Even though the need may not be to lead an army into battle, or to pull down pillars of a great building, God has something for each one to do who is willing to be used of Him. Be sure to spend some time talking about the things a child of this age can do for the Lord, and how he can have the qualities in his life that God can use.

## GAMES FOR REVIEW

Write out short sentences, phrases, or words on separate squares of paper regarding each person God used and also the persons' names on separate pieces. Hand out to each student. Have a child say a name of one of the people if that child has the name piece. Then ask if anyone has a paper that says what that person did. There can be more than one answer. Or vice versa — have a child read one deed and have the child with the corresponding name reply.

Divide your group into teams. For each team, make a set of cards on which you have written the words (or short phrases) of the four memory verses for this unit. Spread the cards out on the floor in front of your group, or place them all on a table. At a signal, each team sends one member up to find a word or phrase of a verse. That player brings back the first word and places it on the floor. The next player goes forward and finds

the second word. The game continues until one team succeeds in arranging all four verses in the correct order.

Let the children have a story hunt. Divide them into two teams. Name one of the stories in this unit and have each student try to find the story in the Bible (you might want to tell them which book of the Bible it is in). The first one to locate it scores for his or her team. Do this with each story in this unit.

Set up a board with approximately 16 pegs on it (this will depend on the number of riddles you use). Attach a riddle to each peg. Use an even amount for each lesson in the unit. They might read something like, "Early one morning I was dry but the ground was wet — what am I?" "I was cut off while Samson slept — what am I?" "I was invited to eat with Queen Esther — who am I?" "I went to live with my mother-in-law — who am I?" Some

key words for each lesson might be, Gideon, pitchers, trumpets, Moab, Naomi, Bethlehem, Samson, strong, blind, Esther, banquet, Mordecai. Choose up sides in the department and let the students take turns tossing a large ring at the pegs. They must answer the riddle attached to the peg where their ring lands.

## CONTEST IDEAS

Put a shield (see Patterns) on the bulletin board. Put each child's name on one of the crown points. Every time a child says the memory verse, brings lesson book, brings a friend, etc., have the child put a foil star on his crown point.

Cut out 4-inch stars for your students (see Patterns). On the first Sunday, let each of them write their name on a star and attach the star to a bulletin board. Have several red, white, and blue strips of paper (1x3 inches) that are labeled: attendance, memory verse, etc. Each week let the children add the strips they have earned to the bottom of the star. Alternate the colors.

Before you start this newspaper contest, give each of your students a pocket folder — made from a 9x12 inch sheet of construction paper which has been folded in half and stapled or taped at the sides. Title the folder, "What's the News?" Cut a newspaper into 4x6 inch pieces. In the center of each one attach a piece of scratch pad paper that is approximately 2x4 inches. Label the pieces of paper: attendance, missionary, memory verse, etc. Each week give the students the awards they have earned. Have enough ready for all your students in case they all win the maximum. At the end of the unit the winner is the one with the most "News."

## BULLETIN BOARDS

Make a large shield on colored paper. Print PEOPLE GOD USED and draw a crown on the shield. Draw as many points on the crown as there are children in the class.

Title your board "A Tool God Can Use." Make the focus of your board a large open tool box (see Patterns). Arrange a number of tools around it, with each tool having the name of one of your students or one of the Bible

characters studied in this unit. (This board would be especially appropriate for a class of boys.)

Make the "People God Used" bulletin board using four different colors of paper (see Patterns). Use a fifth color of ribbon to divide the sections. Label each section with the virtue of each of the persons shown.

The "Can God Use You?" bulletin board personalizes the board for your class because the children's names and talents are used (see Patterns). Make the background blue and the hills in shades of green. The stars can be all yellow or you might enjoy using a variety of colors to brighten the board. Make sure the stars are large enough for the writing to be seen. The writing, of course, will be the children's names and their talents.

## UNIT SONGS

"Stand Fast Therefore in the Liberty"

"My God Is So Great, So Strong and So Mighty"

"They That Wait Upon the Lord"

## CHART IDEAS

Make the star chart for each child (see Patterns). Use various colors of paper for your class: red for Sally, blue for Johnny, etc. Label the sections as shown. Make the stars of contrasting colors and let the children add their stars each week to the appropriate square.

Use a wheel chart or even cards on which you have written the name of a person God used. Use a wheel chart that has words on it, "I want to be like . . ." and have the student turn the wheel to the character they want to be like. Use the chart to provoke discussion with each student on why they want to be like that person.

Make four "Blue Ribbons" for the people for this quarter. Cut a medallion from red construction paper, a smaller yellow circle, and ribbons from blue. In the center of each, print the name of one of the heroes. The red and blue could be made from satin ribbon and the center from gold foil.

## UNIT SUPPORT MATERIAL

Miracles of the Old Testament — Classroom Activity Book, 8 each of 6 pictures, Standard Publishing

**TEXT** Judges 6:11-16,36-40; 7:1-23

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to tell the story of Gideon and to relate some of the characteristics which made him one of the people God could use.

**MEMORY VERSE** Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. — Psalm 27:14

# Gideon

## MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

**WAIT ON** — Rest right cheek in right palm as right elbow is being supported by left palm.

**THE LORD** — Make an L with thumb and first finger of the right hand. Touch thumb to left shoulder, bring across in front of body touching right waist.

**BE OF GOOD COURAGE** — With index fingers at corners of mouth, help your lips to smile.

**AND HE** — Point up.

**SHALL STRENGTHEN** — Flex bicep muscle.

**THINE HEART** — Using index fingers, outline the shape of a heart over your heart.

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

This week's verse concerning waiting on the Lord features a small boy sitting in front of a fence in a "waiting" posture. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut out the pieces with the portions of the verse written on them. With the help of your students, put the puzzle together as the verse is learned by your group.

## BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

**Introduction:** Draw a simple face with wide staring eyes to illustrate a person who is afraid. Use this to open your class session. Tell your group that today's lesson is about a man who could have been afraid — but he had the assurance that God was with him, even though he faced some incredible challenges.

1. God sent an angel to Gideon to call him to deliver the Children of Israel from the hand of the Midianites, and promised that God would be with him.
2. Gideon proved the promise of God by the double miracle of the fleece.
3. God selected 300 men out of 32,000 to do the job.
4. The men were equipped with a trumpet, a lamp, and a pitcher, and sent forth to meet the vast Midianite army.

**Climax:** As the 300 obeyed the command, the Midianites and their allies fled, giving Gideon and his men the victory God had promised.

**Conclusion:** Gideon was able to lead his men to victory because he was willing to do as God instructed him.

**Response:** The students will be able to describe what took place when Gideon obeyed God, and understand that they, too, will be victorious in spite of the odds against them if they are obedient to God.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gideon is certainly among the heroes of the Old Testament. Although his birth was obscure and his family poor, God knew whom He was calling. Although Gideon's father had become an idolater, the God-fearing Gideon became known as *Jerubbaal*, which means "discomfiter of Baal" (Judges 6:32).

When Gideon received the call to lead the battle against the Midianites, who were oppressing Israel, God condescended to reveal His will through the double sign of the fleece. Because of his unswerving faith Gideon proved that a few brave men with God are a majority. Because of this, Gideon earned a place in the roll call of the faithful in Hebrews 11.

Gideon's life was characterized not only by courage, but also by humility (Judges 6:15), spirituality (Judges 6:24), obedience (Judges 6:27), and loyalty (Judges 8:23).

## IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Cut a thin sponge into a fleece shape. Have the sponge in a bowl with a little water in it. Wring out the fleece into another bowl to show that the fleece was wet. Use a dry sponge with a small box of damp dirt for the other sign.

Use finger puppets to act out the story of Gideon and his army. Also use the three small pictures: one of a crowd representing his army, one of a trumpet, and one of a light inside a jar (see Patterns).

Have a flashlight for each child, which they turn on all at once when you say "now." Have them pretend they are the army and you, the teacher, are Gideon. Use a sandbox with clothespin people and tents for Midian-

ites. You can use trumpets also. Have a flashlight for every other child and a paper or plastic trumpet for the rest. The children with the trumpets may make a trumpet noise at the same time as the children with the flashlights flip the switches.

## QUESTIONS

Why do you think God chose Gideon to fight the battle?

How would you feel if an angel from Heaven came to you with a job that God wanted you to do?

Was it important that Gideon followed God's instructions? Why?

How do you think Gideon felt when all the men who were afraid left him and returned home? Do you think Gideon was afraid too? Why or why not?

Explain why Gideon put out the fleece.

How can we know God's will?

Will God ever give someone something to do that is too hard for them? Explain.

Talk about Gideon and his blowing the trumpets and breaking the pitchers. What do you suppose the men in the camp thought was going on?

Compare Gideon's trumpet to our testimonies. We, too, can proclaim the power of God. Discuss some places where we might have to "fight" a battle for the Lord.

## PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Bring several items illustrating things small children could be afraid of; for example, a stuffed dog, a picture of a crowd of people, a flashlight (to represent darkness). Point out that they aren't afraid if Mommy or Daddy is close by them. Gideon wasn't afraid because he knew God was with him.

Give each child a copy of the picture showing the thoughtful child with a fold-over flap showing Jesus (see Patterns). Help your little ones fold over the picture of Jesus, and talk about how Jesus is always with us. Let the little ones add a smile to the face of the thoughtful child, to show that we are happy because we know Jesus will never leave us.

Ideas for trumpets: Purchase from a sewing factory, large cone-shaped thread spools. These will be fun for the children to use as trumpets. Or use ice cream cones. When the lesson is over, you have a ready-made snack! Another idea is to fold and tape half circles of paper into cone shapes.

For each child, fold a square of orange cellophane paper to represent flames. Tape the flames to a popsicle stick and set a paper cup over the top to represent a pitcher. Let them take the cups off the flames to show the lights as they were when the army broke their pitchers.

## REVIEW IDEAS

Dress up as a soldier, labeling each piece of "armor" with the character aspects shown by Gideon — humble, brave, careful, leader, loyal to God, earnest, etc. Discuss with the children what each piece adds up to — a person God can use.

Make comparison pictures of what Gideon might have seen or done, as a coward or as a brave man. One picture could show his reaction to the trumpet, candles, and vessels through the unknowing eye of a coward (what good are **these** for battle?). Then the other picture — what God showed him to do with them. We can listen to God's directions and obey (win) or we can give up everything (lose). Another picture — "We need **all** the 32,000 soldiers to win this battle!" versus Gideon's 300 true men. A picture of Gideon thinking of himself as a leader contrasts with his knowing that God was the true Captain.

## COORDINATING SONGS

"Lord's Army"

"God Answers Prayer in the Morning"

"This Little Light of Mine"

"There Was a Brave Soldier Named Gideon," by A. Smith, Rodeheaver Publishing

## SUPPORT MATERIAL

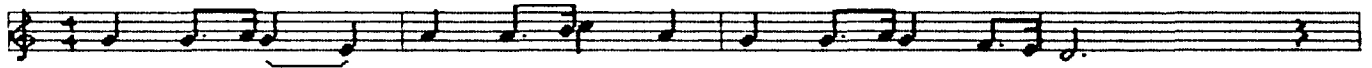
Stories About Joshua and Judges — Pict-o-graph, Standard Publishing

Gideon the Brave — Palm Tree Book, Concordia

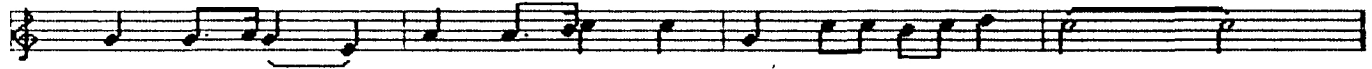
The Man Who Won Without Fighting — Arch Book, Concordia



## MEMORY VERSE SONG

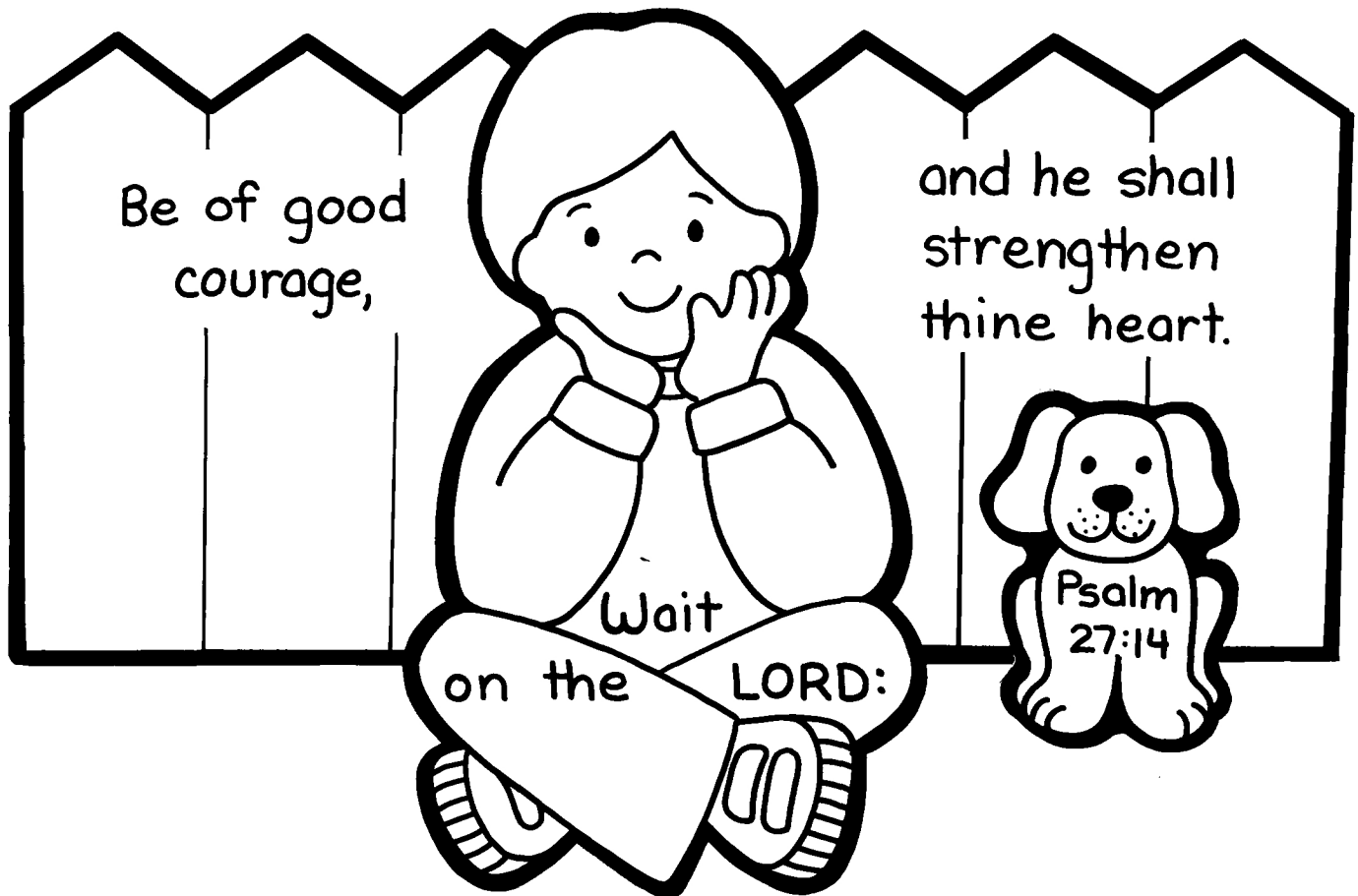


Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.



Wait on the Lord: be of good cour - age, and he shall strengthen thine heart.

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



**TEXT** Ruth 1:1-18

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to tell that Ruth chose to follow Naomi and relate why she was a person God could use.

**MEMORY VERSE** Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways. — Psalm 128:1

# Ruth

## MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

**BLESSED IS** — With thumbs of fists touching lips, move hands down and away from body opening fingers.

**EVERY ONE THAT** — Point to others.

**FEARETH** — Hold hands as in prayer, look up.

**THE LORD** — Make an L with thumb and first finger of the right hand. Touch thumb to left shoulder, bring across in front of body touching right waist.

**THAT WALKETH** — Extend hands, palms down, move one hand in front of the other in imitation of our feet when walking.

**IN HIS WAYS** — Palms facing each other about 8" apart, move hands straight away from body.

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Three children in a group will be the visual display for our memory verse this week. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut the display into pieces as indicated by the heavy black lines. Post the arrangement on your board one piece at a time, as your group learns the verse.

## BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Adapt the preschool activity using four hearts as your opener for this lesson. As your students look at the pictures of a home, beautiful scenery, some people, and Jesus that you have pasted on the hearts, explain that your Bible lesson for today is about a woman who had to make a choice. Put the first three hearts in a group together, and have the heart with Jesus remain separate. Explain that she had to choose between these.

1. A man of Israel moves his wife, Naomi, and his family from Bethlehem to Moab because of a famine.
2. He and his sons die, and Naomi decides to return to her homeland.
3. Naomi urges her two daughters-in-law to stay with their own people, though they both intend to go with her.

Climax: Though Orpah returns to her own people, Ruth decides to go with Naomi and serve Naomi's God.

Conclusion: Naomi's godly life influenced Ruth to want to serve the true and living God.

Response: The students should be able to explain why it is important to set a godly example as well as to recognize and follow a godly example.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the time of the Judges, Elimelech, a man from Bethlehem, and his wife, Naomi, and their two sons, emigrated to Moab because of a famine in Israel. While there, the two sons were married to Moabitish women, but subsequently Elimelech and his two sons died leaving Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah, widows. Having had these bitter experiences in this foreign land, Naomi resolved to return to Israel. Ruth was determined to accompany her despite her mother-in-law's recommendation that she stay, and answered her with those beautiful words, "Intreat me not to leave thee . . . for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God" (Ruth 1:16). Because of her faithfulness and determination, this woman of foreign birth was married to Boaz, a kinsman of Elimelech, and became the grandmother of David and honored ancestor of Jesus Christ.

## IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Draw finger puppets of Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah (see Patterns). Act out the story.

Talk about trips. Discuss how much you want to go on one and get to your destination. Tie in the story to the halfway point on the trip. Example: "Do you want to go home?" or "Do you want to finish traveling and reach the place where you were going?"

As your class discusses this lesson on Ruth, have your students tell one way they can be like her. Make a list of ways that each student is already like Ruth.

Make copies of the landscape background and cut out figures of Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah (see Patterns).

Have the children color the background and figures. Let them glue on the figures in the spaces indicated. Use a marking pen to make the path that each woman took. Tell the story of Ruth.

**QUESTIONS**

Do you suppose that God had a special plan for Ruth’s life? What was it?

Who made the wisest choice, Ruth or Orpah?

What do you think was so special about Naomi that Ruth wouldn’t leave her?

Does God still call people to live a certain way for Him? Talk about some testimonies of people who have left their families, homes, etc., to follow after God’s people.

How could Ruth know she was making the right choice?

How can we know when we are making the right choices?

**PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS**

Take a wooden or ceramic figure (to represent an idol) and a picture of Jesus. Ask your little ones if the figure you are showing them could answer their prayers. Explain to them that Ruth chose to follow after Jesus, the true God.

Cut out a set of four hearts. In one paste a picture of a home, in the second a picture of scenery, in the third a picture of several people, and in the fourth a picture of Jesus. Show your little ones the first three hearts first. Ruth could have had these things in her heart — her home, her country, and her friends — and could have decided to stay in the land of Moab because of them. But instead she had Jesus in her heart, so she chose to

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go where she could learn more about Him. Show the heart with Jesus.

Cut out the picture of Ruth (see Patterns) and place it on the back of a hand mirror. “Follow” God with the mirror by moving it in front of your students to portray the Christian walk. Then ask them, “Who else can follow God?” Turn the mirror over so they can see themselves.

Make a set of Ruth and Naomi finger puppets for each child (see Patterns). Using these they may show how Ruth followed Naomi to Bethlehem.

**REVIEW IDEAS**

Dress up as a Biblical woman, in a simple gown, belt, scarf, headband, sandals. Label each piece with the aspects of Ruth’s character — faith, obedience, sacrifice, family love, constancy.

Compare the similarities of Ruth, a Moabite, living in Bethlehem, a foreign land to her, to our living in a foreign country. In the Orient or Europe the language, dress, food, religion, eating habits (use of chopsticks) may be strange to us. But Ruth loved Naomi and Naomi’s God and wanted Him for her God.

**COORDINATING SONGS**

- “Lord, I Want to Be a Christian”
- “The Bible Tells Me So”
- “Trust and Obey”
- “Family of God”
- “I Have Decided to Follow Jesus”

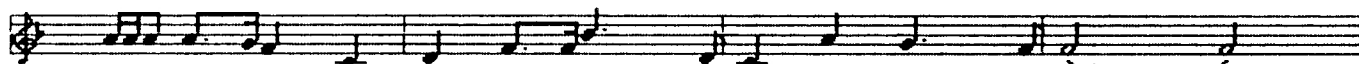
**SUPPORT MATERIAL**

Ruth and Naomi — Arch Book, Concordia  
Ruth — My Bible Story Card, Concordia (Picture on the front/story on the back)

## MEMORY VERSE SONG

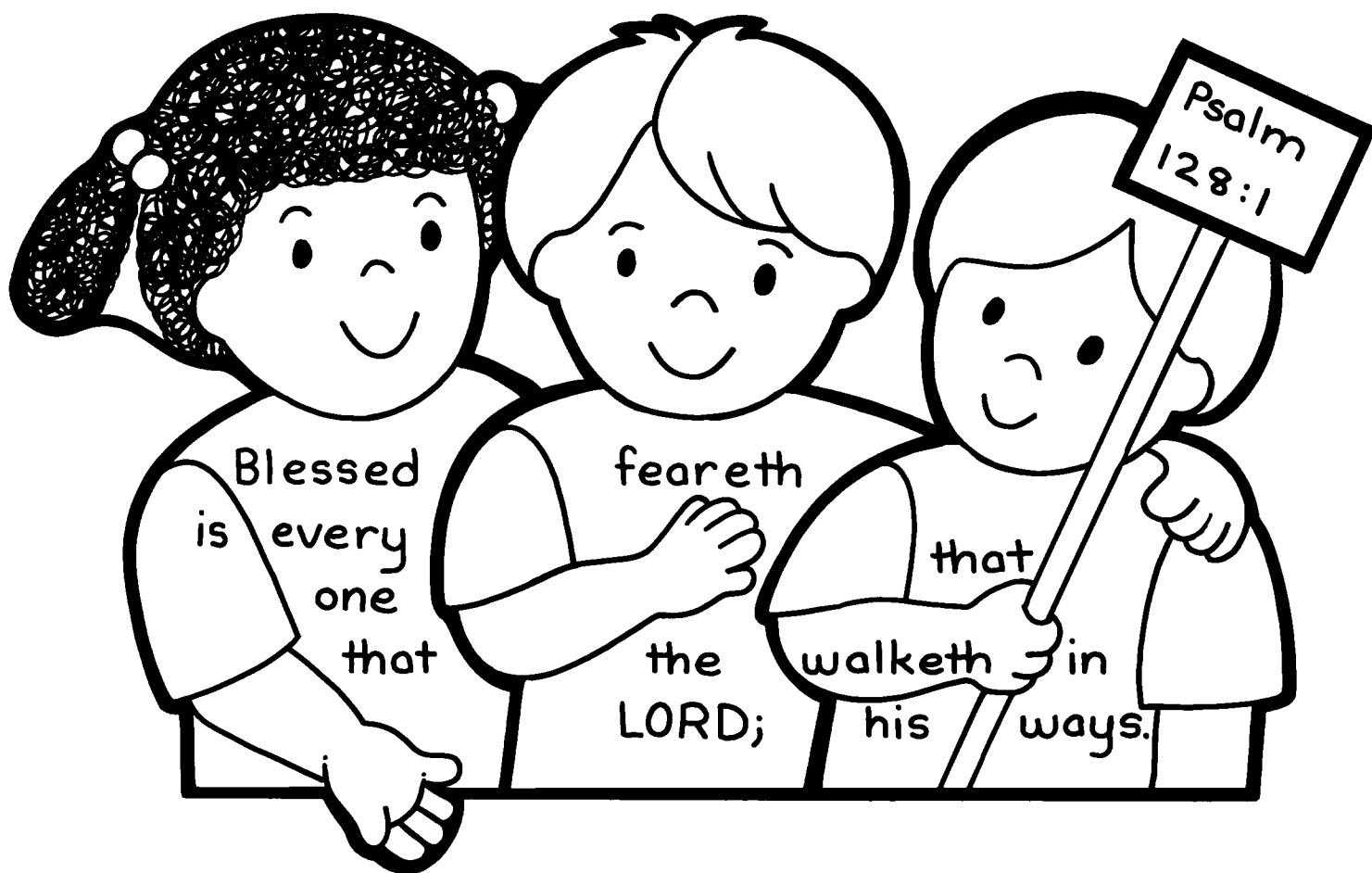


Blessed is ev-ry one that fear-eth the Lord; that walk-eth in his ways.



Blessed is ev-ry one that fear-eth the Lord; that walk-eth in his ways.

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



**TEXT** Judges 13:1-5,24; 16:18-30

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to tell the story of Samson and how God used him.

**MEMORY VERSE** The Lord will give strength unto his people. — Psalm 29:11

# Samson

## MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

**THE LORD** — Make an L with thumb and first finger of the right hand. Touch thumb to left shoulder, bring across in front of body touching right waist.

**WILL GIVE** — Thumbs touching finger tips, palms toward self touching chest, move hands away from body opening hands out flat.

**STRENGTH** — Flex bicep muscle.

**UNTO HIS PEOPLE** — Point to others.

Psalm 29:11

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

Another group of three children, this time with their arms raised to Heaven, will be the visualization of our verse for this week. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Put the pieces on your display board one at a time as your students learn the verse.

## BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

**Introduction:** Bring to class some articles used for weight lifting, as suggested under In-Class Activities. Talk about how people work out for long hours to develop their muscles and their strength. Tell your class that today's Bible lesson is about a man to whom God gave an exceptional amount of strength — a man by the name of Samson.

1. The birth of Samson is foretold with instructions that he would be a Nazarite from birth. Explain that part of being a Nazarite was that the hair would not be cut.
2. Samson revealed the secret of his strength to a woman who was an enemy of Israel. She had his hair cut, and the Lord took away his supernatural strength.
3. He was captured by the enemy, bound, put in prison, and blinded.
4. As his hair grew out, God returned his strength.

**Climax:** Samson was brought into a great hall filled with people. He prayed, and asked to be led to the pillars of the building. He pulled down the building through the power of God, destroying many of the enemy.

**Conclusion:** Samson failed God, but the Lord restored his strength, and used this strength to destroy many of the enemies of God.

**Response:** The students will be able to tell why it is im-

portant to use whatever strengths and abilities the Lord has given us for Him.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Samson was born as a result of a promise of God to a barren couple during that turbulent time of Israel's history between their entrance into the promised land and the rule of King Saul. According to the Word of God, he was to be a Nazarite from his birth until his death. A Nazarite was one set apart to God by a vow of abstinence from strong drink and refraining from cutting the hair.

In contrast to the other judges, Samson never rallied the forces of Israel but single-handedly engaged the enemy by his own supernatural strength. As long as he remained a Nazarite he was invincible; however, his physical strength was a striking contrast to his moral weakness.

Although the story of Samson's death is a sad one, it shows Samson's true heroic spirit and willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice to honor God. Samson, too, is mentioned as one of God's faithful in Hebrews 11.

## IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Show your arm muscles and your hair, as you describe how Samson was weak, then became strong. Relate how his hair grew back after it had been shaved and his strength returned when he prayed to God. A bald sad face and a long-haired happy face could be used (see Patterns).

Bring some items used for weight lifting. Talk about how people work out for long hours trying to develop their muscles and their strength. Samson hadn't been able to spend a lot of time (in prison) strengthening his muscles. But God gave him strength when he needed it to do something for the Lord.

Bring a He-Man or Superman doll and/or comic books describing the exploits of super heroes. Explain to your class that these characters are only pretend. Their strength is just make-believe. But Samson's strength

was given by God and was real, and his exploits were true happenings.

## QUESTIONS

Where did Samson get his strength?

How did he lose his strength?

Would you like to be strong like Samson was? What would you do if you were?

Are we happy when we get our way even though someone else gets hurt?

How do you think Samson felt when he had to grind in the prison house?

## PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Focus on the thought that God helped Samson work for Him, and He will help us too. He gave Samson great strength, and He gives us that which we can use too: our mouths, our eyes, our hands, our ears, our feet. Use pictures of children doing things to help others. You might wish to sing together the song, "Two Little Hands to Work for Jesus."

Trace around each child's hands. Across the top of each sheet of paper write "I Will Use My Hands for \_\_\_\_\_." Let them paste in a sticker of Jesus. Below, add stickers of a child going to Sunday school, praying, etc.

Stack blocks and let the children knock them down, comparing your block walls to the walls Samson destroyed. Lightweight blocks can be made from styrofoam squares or milk cartons cut off and covered with contact paper.

Make life-sized drawings of your students by having them lie on a large sheet of butcher paper. Draw an

outline of their bodies. Have them fill in the features, hair, and clothing to match their own. Before class time prepare signs, as follows, and attach to the chest of each drawing when the children are through. The signs should read something like this: My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I'm not strong like Samson but even I can work for Jesus.

## REVIEW IDEAS

Focus on developing spiritual muscle. Show weight-lifting equipment, magazine on body building, book on fitness, a jump rope, etc. Talk about what physical exercise does — it makes us strong. God sometimes uses physical strength (as He did in the case of Samson) but all of us can be spiritually strong. Ask students to name ways we can exercise spiritually. List their suggestions or display posters illustrating their ideas.

Illustrate how God adds to our strength little by little, as we read our Bible and pray. Show how one paper can be easily torn, or one toothpick broken in two. (Ask a volunteer to demonstrate these tasks.) But when many pieces of paper are stacked together, or many toothpicks are tied into one group, the unit becomes very strong.

## COORDINATING SONGS

"I'm in the Lord's Army"

"My God Is So Great"

"I Heard About"

"Shamgar Had an Oxgoad" — Singspiration

"Dare to Be Brave, Dare to Be True" — Moody Press

"All for Jesus"

"Take My Life and Let It Be"

## SUPPORT MATERIAL

Stories About Joshua and Judges — Pict-o-graph, Standard Publishing

Samson's Secret — Arch Book, Concordia

Samson — Suede-graph, Concordia

## NOTES

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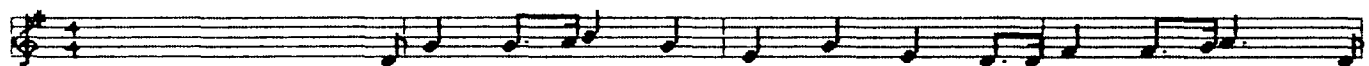
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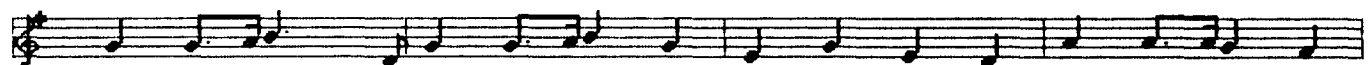
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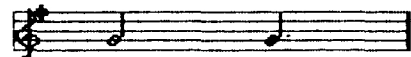
## MEMORY VERSE SONG



The Lord will give strength un- to his peo - ple. The Lord will give strength. The

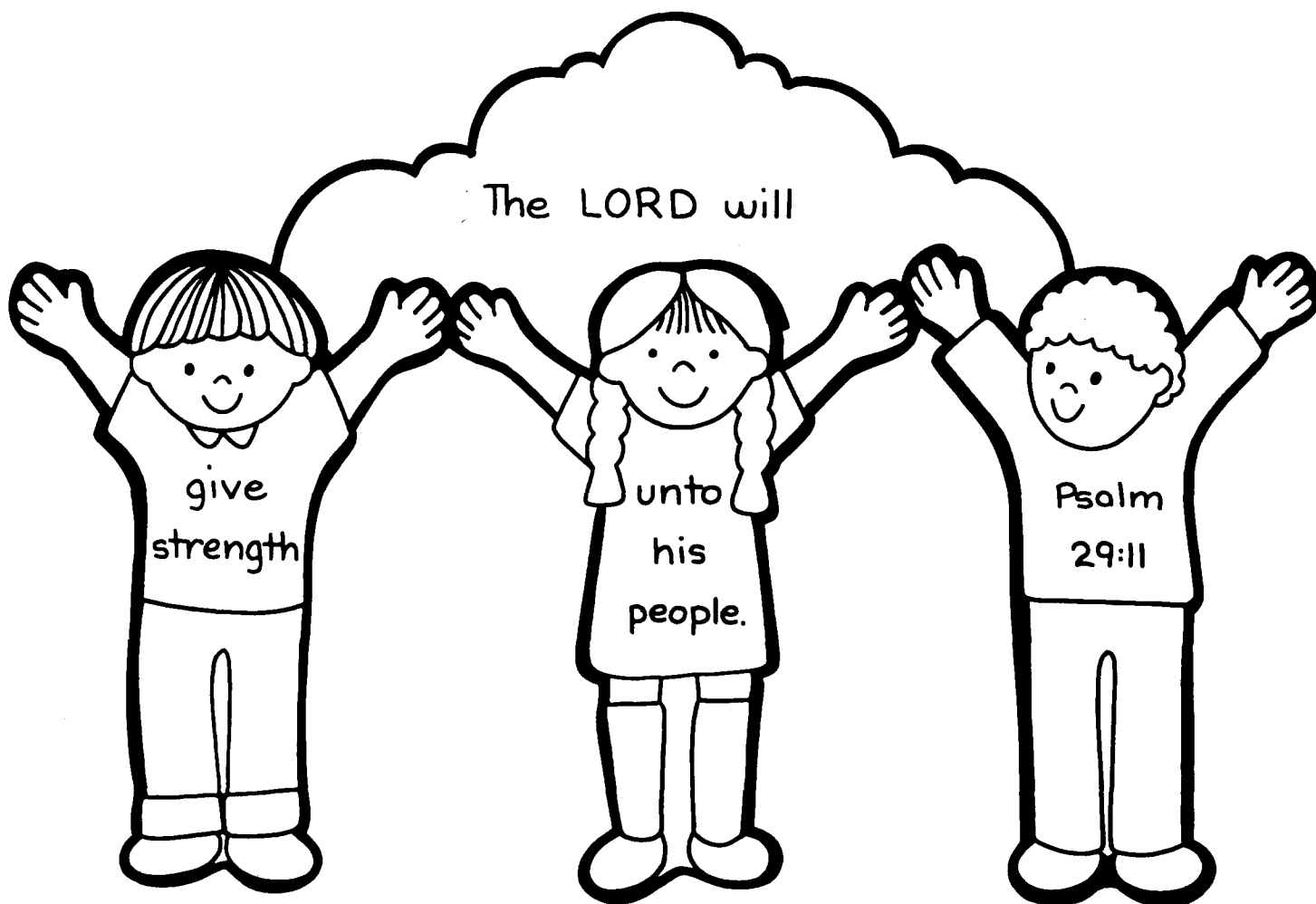


Lord will give strength. The Lord will give strength un- to his peo - ple. Psalm twenty - nine: e -



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## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED



**TEXT** Esther 2:8-11,15-20; 4:4-9,12-17; 7:1-6; 8:1-8

**OBJECTIVE** The students will be able to relate the story of Esther and give a reason why she qualified to be used of God.

**MEMORY VERSE** Ye that love the LORD, hate evil. — Psalm 97:10

# Esther

## MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

YE — Point to others.

THAT LOVE — Cross fists over heart.

THE LORD — Make an L with thumb and first finger of the right hand. Touch thumb to left shoulder, bring across in front of body touching right waist.

HATE EVIL — With hands in front of face and palms out, forcefully brush an imaginary object to the right. Look like you hate the object.

Psalm 97:10

## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

This week the visualization of our memory verse shows two children pointing to a portion of the verse. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Place the parts of the visualization on a display board as your students learn the verse.

## BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

**Introduction:** Ahead of class time, make a crown from silver or gold foil. (If you wish, make one for each of your students.) Put the crown on yourself, or on one of the students, and open your class session by asking if they have ever imagined what it would be like to suddenly be made a prince or princess. Tell them that your Bible story today is about a good woman that God allowed to become a queen, because He had a special purpose for her and He knew that she would allow herself to be used by God.

1. Esther is chosen from among many to become queen.

2. The wicked Haman makes plans to destroy the Jewish people, who are Esther's people.

3. Esther is courageous and goes before the king at the risk of her own life to intercede for her people.

**Climax:** The king grants Esther her request. Subsequently Haman is hung for his conspiracy and the Jews are given liberty to defend themselves and consequently are not destroyed.

**Conclusion:** God is able to use Esther to provide deliverance for her people because of her courage.

**Response:** The students should be able to describe how God was able to use Esther because of her courage and compassion for her fellow man. They will recognize that God is looking for people in our day, too, whom He can use.

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## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Esther's ancestors had been taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar and subsequently she had been born in captivity to Abihail the uncle of Mordecai. Because of her beauty, Esther was chosen to take the place of Vashti, the queen of Ahasuerus. However, it was not her beauty but her strength of character, courage, faith, and resolution that God used to save the Jewish people when they were threatened with destruction.

The man next to the king was offended because Mordecai would not bow to him. He determined to destroy all the Jews in the kingdom. He went to the king and persuaded him that there were people in his province that were undesirable and he offered to put up a large sum of money to have them destroyed. The king signed an unalterable decree to carry out Haman's program. Mordecai told Esther what had happened and asked her to intercede for her people. It could have cost her life to go unto the king uninvited, but she determined to do so. The king received her and though he could not change the edict to destroy the people, he gave them the permission to defend themselves and thus the nation of the Jews was spared.

To this day, the Jews annually celebrate the feast of Purim in remembrance of their miraculous deliverance through the courageous Queen Esther.

## IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Draw and cut out a crown for each child (see Patterns), so they can wear them in class while you are talking about kings and queens.

Esther was obedient to her cousin, Mordecai, who raised her. Compare her obedience to the children's obedience to their parents, guardians, grandparents, or baby sitters.

For each child cut a scepter from gold tagboard or posterboard, using a paint stick or large craft stick for an 11" or 12" handle (see Patterns). The circle could be



sprayed gold or covered with gold foil. Put small spots of glue on the circle so the children can put sequins on for jewels, while you tell the story. When the scepters are dry, the class can use them to pretend they are kings and queens.

King Ahasuerus was very rich and had a beautiful palace. Read Esther 1:6 and then have the children draw a picture of the garden court of the king's palace. Be sure they use the appropriate colors.

Let each child have a set of the paper dolls of the king and Esther (see Patterns). Have them use them at the appropriate times as you tell the story.

## QUESTIONS

Why did Esther obey Mordecai? He wasn't her father, but just her cousin.

Why does God not want us to worship men? What about Rock stars or TV heroes?

What does it mean to be humble?

In God's sight, do the wicked people ever win?

What was so special about Esther that God could use her to save His people from death? Can God use you?

Describe how Mordecai responded to the commandment regarding the destruction of the Jews? What did he want Esther to do?

What was Esther's response?

What did Esther want the Jews to do before she attempted to go in unto the king?

Did Esther tell the king right away what the wicked Haman planned to do? What did she do?

What was God's judgment against Haman?

## PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Make crowns for each of your girl students and bow ties for each of your boy students (see Patterns). Let the girls pretend to be Queen Esther and the boys to be her cousin, Mordecai.

Focus on the thought of helping others, rather than a complete retelling of the story which would likely be beyond the understanding of the little ones. Explain simply that Esther was a good queen who wanted to help her people. We may not be queens, but we can be helpers. Bring some objects to illustrate ways a child

can help: toy (share), BandAid (help hurt friend), cereal box (help Mom carry the groceries), money (give to someone in need), etc.

Dress a doll as a queen (bride or wedding attendant dress works well). Make a tiny crown from foil. Let this represent Esther. Tell your little ones that the best thing about Esther was that she had a kind heart. (Add a heart with a Jesus sticker.) Show several other dolls — give them names if you wish. They are not kings or queens, but they can have a heart with Jesus in it too. Pin on each child a heart with a picture of Jesus on it and tell them that it is to remind them to always try to be a kind helper as Esther was.

## REVIEW IDEAS

Write and tape a make-believe interview with Queen Esther. Try to emphasize her relationship with God, and also historical information connected with this story.

Dress as a queen or royalty, including crown, scepter, rich robe, and throne. Label each piece with traits that Esther showed — willingness to obey God, readiness to use talents, and a desire to see fairness and justice done.

For this last lesson of the quarter, gather all the traits of the people God used and write them on parts of a body made from paper (see Patterns). Pass out the pieces to different students and then put the figure together with tape, brads, felt strips, or pins. Remind the students they have these traits of character which they need to use for Jesus. Esther used what she had for the Lord — position, beauty, hostess abilities, culinary arts. We need only use what we have for the Lord. We can sew for Sunday school; make cookies for seamen or open house; clean the church, mow the lawns of the church or parsonage; baby-sit for mothers who sing or play for church. These duties show such godly traits as were portrayed by the people God used in our Bible lessons — faithfulness, willingness, helpfulness, etc.

## COORDINATING SONGS

"Where He Leads Me I Will Follow"

"Anywhere With Jesus"

"All for Jesus"

"Trust and Obey"

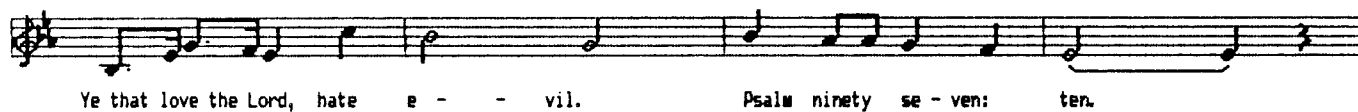
## SUPPORT MATERIAL

Up From Captivity — Book, Augsburg

The Queen Who Saved Her People — Arch Book, Concordia

Good Queen — My Bible Story Card, Concordia (Picture on the front/story on the back)

## MEMORY VERSE SONG



## MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

