

A GOOD START FOR SAMSON

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

HEART UNDERSTANDING SUBMIT PATH STRAIGHT HOLY LIFE

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Judges 13:1-25.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help students learn what it means to live a holy life.

MEMORY VERSE

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight” (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

As we know, the world we live in is corrupted by sin. Television, radio, the internet and other media promote immoral actions and lifestyles. Likewise, preadolescents feel pressure from their friends to do what is wrong.

Surely, they have characters that they admire - even famous athletes - who have been arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol, consuming or having drugs, or performing immoral acts. When observing such conduct, many young people come to consider it acceptable.

However, God asks us to have a different lifestyle: holiness. It is true that people who live in holiness do not constitute the majority, but preadolescents must understand what God demands: that his children do not conform to the ways of this world, but that they live in holiness.

God gave Samson a special mission to help his people. That is why he gave him a series of requirements that he had to fulfill.

Also, Christian preadolescents have the responsibility to live according to the commands of the Lord. And, just as God was with Samson, he promises that he will be with us, helping us to live in holiness.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Judges 13:1-25. The Philistines, a warrior people established in the coastal plain of Palestine, left their five main cities to attack the Israelites and Canaanites. They were more powerful than the other people thanks to their chariots, iron swords and spears.

One day, an angel appeared to Samson's mother to tell her that she would have a son. As a sign of God's promise, they should not cut off his hair. He could not drink wine or eat the fruit of the vine, nor touch corpses. God's plan for Samson was to free the Israelites from the Philistine attacks.

Read 1 Peter 1:15. God wants to use his children for his service; thus, he establishes rules of conduct that we must comply with. He asks for our obedience and holiness. That does not mean that we must be as holy as he is, because we are human beings; but we must have his character, which is holy, because we were made in his image. Just as a glass filled with ocean water has the same properties as the ocean, human beings must have the purity and holiness of God.

Our lifestyle and conversation should reflect such holiness. What is in the heart shows itself in every aspect of life. In the Old Testament, holiness included rites and ceremonies, but in the New Testament, holiness is an integral part of daily life. God calls us to be holy ones (saints) and live an integral life that reflects the change he has made in us.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

What do you think?

Allow time for your students to first individually read the statements in Student Activity Sheet #333. Then, read them all together by following these instructions:

If you agree with the corresponding statement, stand up while we read it.

If you do not agree, read it sitting down.

Take note of how many agree and how many disagree, but avoid making comments. At the end of the lesson, repeat the activity and see if they change their minds.

Declarations:

As a Christian, I am free to do what I want.

As a Christian, I must apologize if I sin.

God does not care how I live.

The Bible has such high demands that people find it difficult to fulfill them.

Through the Holy Spirit, God empowers us to live in holiness.

God wants us to live in holiness.

TEACH THE LESSON

Samson and John the Baptist

Use this session to compare the lives of two Nazarites: Samson, of the Old Testament, and John the Baptist, of the New Testament.

Old Testament: The neighboring peoples of the Israelites worshiped false gods. Many Israelite children when they grew up wanted to imitate them. They made images, put them in their courtyards and bowed before them to worship them.

As people turned away from God, he allowed them to have problems. In the coastal area lived the Philistines, who were cruel and strong. For 40 years, they dominated the tribes of Israel that lived nearby. The Philistines worshiped the idol god Dagon. This idol had a man's face and hands, and the body of a fish. The Philistines built a great temple for Dagon in their capital city.

However, not all Israelites worshiped false gods. Some loved and served God. Among them was Manoa and his wife, an elderly couple who had no children.

One day, an angel told Manoa's wife: "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. You will become pregnant and have a son whose head is never to be touched by a razor because the boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb. He will take the lead in delivering Israel from the hands of the Philistines. "

When she told Manoa about this, he prayed, "Pardon your servant, Lord. I beg you to let the man of God you sent to us come again to teach us how to bring up the boy who is to be born."

God heard Manoah and when his wife was out in the field, the angel returned, so she ran to call her husband. Manoah asked the angel, "When your words are fulfilled, what is to be the rule that governs the boy's life and work?"

The angel replied, "Your wife must do all that I have told her."

Then Manoah and his wife offered a sacrifice to God. When the flame ascended from the altar to heaven, Manoah and his wife saw the angel of the Lord rise in the flame.

After a while, Manoah's wife gave birth to a son and named him Samson. His parents raised him according to the Nazirite vows. They never cut his hair, and they did not allow him to eat unclean food or drink any kind of wine. These were some of the restrictions that the Nazirites had to fulfill. Samson grew strong and God blessed him. (Judges 13:2-24)

Important fact: "Samson must be a Nazirite." A Nazirite was a person who was set apart for the service of God, by means of a vow. In his case, Samson's parents made the vow for him. Sometimes this vow was temporary, but in the case of Samson, it was for life.

The New Testament tells us about another Nazirite, the son of Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth.

Zechariah had left his home in the mountains to fulfill his time of service as a priest in the temple. Since there were many priests, they took turns ministering.

Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth loved and served God, and awaited the coming of the Messiah, but for many years they had no children.

Twice a day Zechariah would take burning coals from the altar and take them to the sanctuary to offer incense to God. One day when entering the sanctuary, Zechariah saw an angel and was afraid.

The angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah; your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you are to call him John. He will be a joy and delight to you, and many will rejoice because of his birth, for he will be great in the sight of the Lord. He is never to take wine or other fermented drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit even before he is born. He will bring back many of the people of Israel to the Lord their God. And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the parents to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

It seemed incredible to Zechariah what the angel was saying, so he asked, "How will I know this? Because I am old and my wife is old."

The angel replied, "I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to tell you this good news. And now you will be silent and not able to speak until the day this happens, because you did not believe my words."

Those who were in the courtyard of the temple wondered why Zechariah took so long in the sanctuary. When, at last, he came out, he could not speak. He communicated by making signs. Then they realized that he had seen a vision. When he completed his ministry, he went home. Later, his wife, Elizabeth, conceived and gave birth to a boy.

According to Jewish custom, the father named his son eight days after birth. That day, relatives and friends arrived, hoping that the boy would take his father's name.

When Elizabeth announced that the baby would be called John, they all looked at Zechariah to see his reaction. But he wrote on a tablet, "His name is John." Immediately he regained his speech and praised God. Then, he prophesied that his son would go before the Lord to prepare the way. John would teach the people that they could be saved if they repented of their sins.

He grew big and strong. And when he was almost 30 years old, he left home and began to preach next to the Jordan River. People from all over came to hear him, and he baptized those who repented of their sins. One day, John had the privilege of baptizing Jesus. Because he baptized people, they called him John the Baptist. (Luke 1:13-24, 57)

CONNECT THE LESSON

Let's reflect

Before class, prepare a poster with the image of a person who represents a “saint” or who has a halo on his head. Ask the group: Why do we say that this person is holy?

Usually, preadolescents think that holiness is unattainable or that it is only for the elderly. It is important to emphasize that the holy life goes beyond a posture or conduct in church. We can pretend that we are saints while we are at church or in front of others, but the holy life is demonstrated in daily life, in relating with people.

Emphasize that selfishness, dishonesty, injustice, lies, disobedience, envy, hypocrisy, ill-intentioned comments, indifference to the need of the sufferer, abuse, bad jokes, words of double meaning, etc., are not characteristic of a person who lives in holiness.

Ask them: Is it possible for a boy or girl their age in the 21st century to live a holy life? How can you live according to what God wants for you?

Ask the students to complete the “Dear me” note on Student Activity Sheet #333-B. Read 1 Peter 1:15. Remind them that holy life implies: sharing what we have with others; being compassionate to the needs of others; being obedient to God and parents; being honest in the use of time and money; always speaking the truth; avoiding gossip; being respectful and fair in dealing with others. Encourage them to find friends who support them in reading the Bible daily, and participating in times of worship as a family or at church.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Continue using the same biblical memory verse. Write each word in the form of clouds or other forms. Divide into two groups and give each team a set of the words for the Bible verse. The team that completes the verse first will be the winner. Encourage the losing group to continue practicing to learn the verse.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Then, pray for each one and ask the Lord to help them live according to 1 Peter 1:15.

Encourage

Sing a song or chorus that encourages the children to always pray and submit to God everyday.

Invite

End by encouraging the group to attend the next session and to welcome friends.