

A VERY STRONG MAN

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

HEART UNDERSTANDING SUBMIT PATH RESPONSIBILITY RELATIONSHIP

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Judges 14:1-20; 15:1-17.

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help students learn that their relationship with God implies responsibilities.

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

When preadolescents face an unstable friendship, they often decide that it is not worth keeping. They are learning that establishing and cultivating a good friendship demands effort. If only one person gives, without receiving anything from the other, that relationship will not last.

This example will help them understand that the relationship between God and his people must be mutual. God expects obedience and faithfulness from his people in response to the genuine love he shows us. Both parties must work towards that goal to maintain the relationship. God made a covenant with Samson. And even though Samson did not always behave correctly, God fulfilled his part of the covenant and worked through an imperfect Samson to carry out his plan.

Young people will be encouraged to know that they do not need to be perfect to have a relationship with God. However, they must meet the requirements to maintain it.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Judges 14:1-20; 15:1-20. These two chapters on Samson's life are complex, a combination of comedy and tragedy. Samson showed humility and pride at the same time. He was stubborn, but he recognized that his strength came from God. We see an incredible strength in Samson, but he was lacking in discipline and let himself be carried away by his emotions. The most important thing in this story is that it shows God's faithfulness and willingness to use an imperfect servant to carry out his divine plan.

From the beginning, we see a stubborn Samson acting against his parents' wishes. He chose his wife, a right that belonged to his parents, from among the Philistines - a people outside of Israel. However, God used Samson's stubbornness to encourage the Israelites, who seemed to be satisfied with the Philistine oppression.

As the story progresses, we see that Samson violated the vow he made to not contaminate himself. When he ate honey from the carcass of a lion, married a philistine and started the riddle competition, he showed his lack of maturity.

This led him to use his emotions and the incredible strength that God had given him uncontrollably.

Despite his lack of discipline, Samson never forgot the source of his strength, and God never left him.

Preadolescents need to learn that God is faithful even if we fail him. They should also know that they have the responsibility to care for their relationship with God, live in obedience, and love for him.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Responsible

Hand out Student Activity Sheets #334 and write these questions on the board:

"Are you responsible?"

"What privileges would you like to receive from your parents or those older than you?"

Listen to the children's answers, and ask them to complete the acrostic suggested on their worksheet. Here we suggest some answers with which you can help those who have difficulty doing the activity:

Respond with kindness when they ask me something.

Encourage others.

Say hello to the elderly.

Pay attention to the instructions of my parents and teachers.

Organize my things.

Never be an accomplice to bad deeds.

Say things that are kind.

Intentionally do tasks without being told.

Be attentive to keeping the house tidy.

Let the instructions guide me when I do homework.

Entertain my little brothers when my parents are tired.

TEACH THE LESSON

Have students form a circle. Then, ask them: What happens when relationships between parents and children fall apart? (There will be problems if the parents fail or if the children do not fulfill their part. Every relationship, in order to be harmonious, requires effort.)

In biblical times, God wanted to have a harmonious relationship with his people. But the Israelites turned their backs on him and fell into the hands of the Philistines. Then God chose to use Samson to help them see that he was superior to the pagan idol gods that the other people worshiped. The Nazirite vow was part of that special relationship between God and Samson. If he followed God's instructions, God would give him the strength to face the Philistines. However, something sad happened with Samson. He did not fulfill his part of the deal with God.

Read the Bible passages (Judges 14:1-20; 15:1-17) and talk about what happened to this character.

CONNECT THE LESSON

The road of vengeance

Discuss the following questions and encourage each student to participate:

What was Samson's first mistake?

He chose a Philistine wife, ignoring his parents' advice (Judges 14:2).

Why do you think Samson's parents did not want him to marry the Philistine woman?

The Philistines were idolaters; they worshiped the idol Dagon. Samson's parents wanted him to choose an Israelite woman who worshiped the one true God (14:3).

How did Samson show his great strength?

He killed the lion with his own hands (14:5-6).

Where did Samson get the idea for the riddle?

He saw the bees and the honeycomb in the body of the dead lion (14:8-9).

What did Samson do to pay those who answered the riddle?

He killed 30 Philistines, took their clothes and gave them to the 30 men who had answered (14:10-19).

Why did Samson catch the foxes and tie burning torches to their tails?

He wanted revenge because his father-in-law had handed his wife over to Samson's best friend (14:20-15:5).

What did the Philistines do after Samson burned their harvest?

They killed the woman who was supposed to be Samson's wife and her father. His bad actions brought about serious consequences (15:6).

What did Samson do to the Philistines who wanted to catch him?

He killed a thousand men with the jawbone of a donkey (15:11-16).

What did God do for Samson after he destroyed the Philistines?

Samson was tired and thirsty, so God opened a fountain of water for him to refresh himself and regain strength (15:18-20).

What does this story show us about God's relationship with Samson?

Samson was stubborn and rebellious. He knew where his strength came from; he knew God's purpose for his life. And he was willing to use his strength against the Philistines. Despite his mistakes, God did not turn away from him and had patience.

Strengths and weaknesses

Ask the group: "Was it Samson's good qualities or weaknesses that got him in trouble?" (weaknesses) Discuss the results of Samson's decisions. Remind students that poor decisions lead to poor results. However, God fulfilled his promise in his relationship with Samson, giving him strength when he needed it.

Ask them to develop a list of Samson's characteristics as a person. Then, give them time to discuss how they imagine the story would have turned out if Samson had made good decisions.

Ask the group to discuss these two questions:

What does God expect from me regarding my relationship with him?

What can I expect from God in regard to my relationship with him?

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

[Download Suggestions for Bible Memorization PDF](#)

Write the memory verse on the board. After repeating it as a group several times, erase one word at a time, starting with the first, until the children have memorized the verse completely. Ask several of them to write two or three words of the verse on the board. You can divide the board into several spaces and give the opportunity for several to come and write parts of the text. Help those who are wrong, or ask whoever already knows the text to help those who do not know.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Have a prayer time. Ask God to give the group knowledge, wisdom and strength to make good decisions.

Encourage

Then, read Philippians 4:13 together, and encourage the group to make good decisions during the week.

Invite

Invite the children to the next session to study the last lesson of this unit. Remind them that visitors are welcome.