



FAMILY DEVOTIONS

INSTRUCTIONS

For each week we will upload three devotions that build upon and link to our Kids Alive message on Sunday. Three devotions means:

- Those who already do devotions can continue these the other half of the week;
- Those for whom devotions are possible at most every second night of the week can also be included.

The devotions will follow this format:

INTRO

A short introductory activity or discussion

RECAP

A recap of the previous devotion

READ

A short passage will be printed. This makes it less time-consuming and also excludes the need to find a bible.

EXPLORE

Some simple comprehension questions that direct our understanding of the passage

APPLY

Something we can learn from the passage and apply to our own lives

PRAY

Suggested prayer points that come from the passage

MEMORY VERSE

This is only suggested if time permits as it may be a slightly longer activity. You may design something to remember the verse or do some fun games or activities to aid in remembering the verses.

WEEK 1: May 5-11

DAY 1

INTRO:

Brainstorm some activities done by a team. Then (kindly) discuss in your family which members you would pick for your team if you were to do each of those activities.

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 1:1-4

¹After the death of Joshua, the Israelites asked the LORD, "Who of us is to go up first to fight against the Canaanites?" ²The LORD answered, "Judah shall go up; I have given the land into their hands." ³The men of Judah then said to the Simeonites their fellow Israelites, "Come up with us into the territory allotted to us, to fight against the Canaanites. We in turn will go with you into yours." So the Simeonites went with them.

EXPLORE:

What activity did the Israelites ask about? (*Fighting against the Canaanites*)

Who did the Lord pick to do this? (*The tribe of Judah*)

How did the men of Judah respond? (*They asked another tribe, the Simeonites, to go with them*)

APPLY:

In the opening chapter of *Judges* the Lord wants his people to bring justice to the nations. As the story unfolds however God's people at best only partially do what he has asked! God told Judah to go up, and yet they asked another tribe to tag along. This shows a lack of trust in God's promise that he would give the land into their hands – what seems like wisdom is actual disobedience!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he wants to bring justice to our world as his people stand against evil. Pray that we might trust His word rather than rely on our own wisdom to do so.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

When they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer. Judges 3:9

Write the words of this week's verse onto separate bits of paper. Then have the members of your family pick the words randomly to see if they can put them in the right order.

WEEK 1: May 5-11

DAY 2

INTRO:

Have a conversation where people are not allowed to say 'yes' or 'no' or any of their derivatives ('yeah', 'uh uh' etc). See if you can trap people by setting up questions with yes/no answers to see how they reply!

RECAP:

What did God's people think was easier to do than driving out the Canaanites?

READ JUDGES 2:1-4

¹The angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bokim and said, "I brought you up out of Egypt and led you into the land I swore to give to your ancestors. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, ²and you shall not make a covenant with the people of this land, but you shall break down their altars.' Yet you have disobeyed me. Why have you done this? ³And I have also said, 'I will not drive them out before you; they will become traps for you, and their gods will become snares to you.'" ⁴When the angel of the LORD had spoken these things to all the Israelites, the people wept aloud.

EXPLORE:

What had God done for his people? (*Brought them up out of Egypt and given them a land in which to live*)

What did he ask his people to do? (*Break down the altars of those living in the land*)

What would God do because his people hadn't done this? (*Not drive out the nations before his people so that their gods would become traps for his people*)

APPLY:

We see in this passage the plot for the book of Judges. Because of their lack of faith and disobedience God handed his people over to their sin. God's justice is such that sometimes he gives us the very things our hearts desire!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he will not let sin go unpunished. Pray that he might change our hearts to desire the things of the Lord rather than those things which will ultimately harm us.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

When they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer. Judges 3:9

Repeat this week's verse as you rise from sitting, crouching, bending over and then standing up straight.

WEEK 1: May 5-11

DAY 3

INTRO:

Google 'pattern wallpaper' and discuss with your family what you think is the best pattern.

RECAP:

What did God raise up when his people kept returning to their sin?

READ JUDGES 3:7-11

⁷The Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD; they forgot the LORD their God and served the Baals and the Asherahs. ⁸The anger of the LORD burned against Israel so that he sold them into the hands of Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram Naharaim, to whom the Israelites were subject for eight years. ⁹But when they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer, Othniel son of Kenaz, Caleb's younger brother, who saved them. ¹⁰The Spirit of the LORD came on him, so that he became Israel's judge and went to war. The LORD gave Cushan-Rishathaim king of Aram into the hands of Othniel, who overpowered him. ¹¹So the land had peace for forty years, until Othniel son of Kenaz died.

EXPLORE:

What did the Lord do in his anger when his people did evil? (*He sold them into the hands of a king to whom they were subject*)

What did the Lord do when his people cried out to him for help? (*He raised up a deliverer named Othniel who saved them*)

What did Othniel bring the land of Israel until he died? (*Peace for forty years*)

APPLY:

This passage sets up a pattern that runs throughout *Judges*: God's people sin, God punishes them, they cry out to God, he sends a Saviour who brings them peace until his death. Here Othniel sets a standard for being a judge. Many of those who follow him break this by failing God's people in different ways.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that Jesus is our perfect judge who brought us never-ending peace with God through his death. Pray that we will follow Jesus' pattern and be peace-makers for the rest of the week.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

When they cried out to the LORD, he raised up for them a deliverer. Judges 3:9

Whisper, speak and then cry out this week's verse to show you've memorised it!

WEEK 2: May 12-18

DAY 1

INTRO:

Draw a picture of a judge. Try to show in the picture what you think judges do.

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 4:1-5

¹Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD, now that Ehud was dead. ²So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. Sisera, the commander of his army, was based in Harosheth Haggoyim. ³Because he had nine hundred chariots fitted with iron and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help. ⁴Now Deborah, a prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel at that time. ⁵She held court under the Palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim, and the Israelites went up to her to have their disputes decided.

EXPLORE:

Why did Israel cry out to the Lord for help this time? *(A superior army (they had chariots!) led by a commander called Sisera had cruelly oppressed them for twenty years.)*

Who was Deborah? *(A prophet, the wife of Lappidoth, Israel's judge)*

Why would the Israelites go to visit her? *(She settled their arguments)*

APPLY:

When Israel was becoming a nation Moses was advised to appoint judges for the people to assist them in deciding between right and wrong (Exodus 18:24-26). This became a practice that Israel continued for many years (Deuteronomy 16:18). Here we are told God used such a judge to save his people so that they might experience justice instead of cruel oppression.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he gives us wise people who are filled with his Spirit so that we might know how the Lord wants us to live. Pray that we might be filled with the Holy Spirit so we can judge between what is right and wrong, and so please God.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"When the people willingly offer themselves— praise the LORD!" Judges 5:2

Write the words of this week's verse onto separate pieces of paper. Dress up like a waiter and willingly offer the words to your family members so they can work together to assemble the verse.

WEEK 2: May 12-18

DAY 2

INTRO:

Share with your family: when it comes to speaking in front of others what are you willing to do and where do you draw the line?

RECAP:

What was Deborah meant to do as a judge?

READ JUDGES 4:6-9

⁶Deborah sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead them up to Mount Tabor. ⁷I will lead Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'" ⁸Barak said to her, "If you go with me, I will go; but if you don't go with me, I won't go." ⁹"Certainly I will go with you," said Deborah. "But because of the course you are taking, the honour will not be yours, for the LORD will deliver Sisera into the hands of a woman." So Deborah went with Barak.

EXPLORE:

What did Deborah ask Barak to do? (*Take ten thousand men to defeat Sisera and his army*)

What did Barak ask Deborah to do? (*Go with him or else he wasn't willing to go at all*)

What did Deborah say would happen as a result? (*She would go with him but he wouldn't be the one to defeat Sisera*)

APPLY:

In the rest of chapter 4 we see how this story plays out. But in chapter 5 we see God's interpretation of the events: God keeps commenting on how unwilling his people are to offer themselves to do what he has actually asked!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has clearly shown us how to live, both in the bible and in his Son Jesus. Pray for God's people today: may he create in us a willingness to actually do what he says, and to offer ourselves willingly to do it!

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"When the people willingly offer themselves— praise the LORD!" **Judges 5:2**

Get your family members to call out one word at a time of this week's verse. Don't coordinate it by saying who will say what; rather see who will willingly offer to do the next word!

WEEK 2: May 12-18

DAY 3

INTRO:

What job at home, school, or work are you always keen to volunteer for?

RECAP:

What was Barak willing to do?

READ JUDGES 5:1-5

¹On that day Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang this song: ²"When the princes in Israel take the lead, when the people willingly offer themselves— praise the LORD! ³Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I, yes I, will sing to the LORD; I will praise the LORD, the God of Israel, in song. ⁴When you, LORD, went out from Seir, when you marched from the land of Edom, the earth shook, the heavens poured, the clouds poured down water. ⁵The mountains quaked before the LORD, the One of Sinai, before the LORD, the God of Israel."

EXPLORE:

What did Deborah and Barak do on the day of their victory? (*Sing a song!*)

Who was the song mostly about in these opening verses? (*The Lord God*)

Why was the Lord praised? (*He went out first before his people and ultimately won the battle for them*)

APPLY:

In 4:14-15 we read that the Lord was the real winner in the battle! Here in v4 we learn how: the Lord sent so much rain from heaven that the army's chariots must have got stuck in mud! While the idea that God's people were slow to willingly offer themselves to serve Him comes up a lot in this song the opposite is also true: the song points out how keen the Lord is to volunteer to serve and fight for us!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that while we were still sinners he sent his Son to save us from our sin, rather than just abandoning us to it. Pray that we might be like our Lord and willing serve and fight for those in need.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"When the people willingly offer themselves— praise the LORD!" Judges 5:2

Spend some time with your family reflecting on this week's verse before praising the Lord for those who you know you willing offer themselves to serve the Lord.

WEEK 3: May 19-25

DAY 1

INTRO:

Give your family some unexpected instructions (for example: tell them it is time for devotions but they must be upside down for it).

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 6:7-12

⁷When the Israelites cried out to the LORD because of Midian, ⁸he sent them a prophet, who said, "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: I brought you up out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. ⁹I rescued you from the hand of the Egyptians. And I delivered you from the hand of all your oppressors; I drove them out before you and gave you their land. ¹⁰I said to you, 'I am the LORD your God; do not worship the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you live.' But you have not listened to me." ¹¹The angel of the LORD came and sat down under the oak in Ophrah that belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, where his son Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. ¹²When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior."

***EXPLORE:**

What did the Lord do this time in response to his people's cries? (*Sent them a prophet*)

What did the prophet explain? (*What God had done for his people and what he required of them in response*)

Then what did the Lord do? (*He sent his angel to raise up a judge called Gideon*)

APPLY:

So far in *Judges* when the people cry out to the Lord he raises up a judge to deliver them. However in this story the pattern is broken: God instead gives his people his word to explain why they are being punished. We then read that without even waiting for his people to respond God graciously raises up their deliverer.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has instructed us both how awful our sin is and how great our salvation is. Pray that we will listen to the Lord's word and flee from evil to Jesus, in whom we have forgiveness for sins.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." **Judges 6:12**

Write out this week's verse onto a piece of paper. Roll it up into a scroll and then stand up and read it out like a prophet might have to the Lord's people.

WEEK 3: May 19-25

DAY 2

INTRO:

What is the last test that you did? How did you go with it?

RECAP:

What did the Lord do when his people cried out to him?

READ JUDGES 6:36-40

³⁶Gideon said to God, "If you will save Israel by my hand as you have promised—³⁷look, I will place a wool fleece on the threshing floor. If there is dew only on the fleece and all the ground is dry, then I will know that you will save Israel by my hand, as you said." ³⁸And that is what happened. Gideon rose early the next day; he squeezed the fleece and wrung out the dew—a bowlful of water. ³⁹Then Gideon said to God, "Do not be angry with me. Let me make just one more request. Allow me one more test with the fleece, but this time make the fleece dry and let the ground be covered with dew." ⁴⁰That night God did so. Only the fleece was dry; all the ground was covered with dew.

EXPLORE:

Why did Gideon test the Lord? (*He wanted to know if God would save Israel through him as He had said*)

How did the Lord go with the test? (*The fleece Gideon had laid out was wet with dew while the ground around it wasn't*)

What was Gideon's next test? (*For the fleece to be dry while the ground was wet*)

APPLY:

Gideon is shown to be the opposite of the Lord's assessment: he is not a warrior but a farmer hiding underground; he is not mighty but someone who tests the Lord repeatedly even though he suspects he is angering the Lord (v39). However God addresses Gideon according to who he will be – by God's grace Gideon will be transformed into a mighty warrior if he trusts in the Lord.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he can transform us from weak sinners into people like Jesus. Pray that unlike Gideon we won't test the Lord but instead that we will step out in faith, trusting in the Lord's promises.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." **Judges 6:12**

Make a fleece using cotton wool. Write on it this week's verse so that you can see it and be reminded of who the Lord is calling you to be!

WEEK 3: May 19-25

DAY 3

INTRO:

How would you describe the perfect warrior?

RECAP:

How did Gideon test the Lord?

READ JUDGES 7:19-22

¹⁹Gideon and the hundred men with him reached the edge of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just after they had changed the guard. They blew their trumpets and broke the jars that were in their hands. ²⁰The three companies blew the trumpets and smashed the jars. Grasping the torches in their left hands and holding in their right hands the trumpets they were to blow, they shouted, "A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!" ²¹While each man held his position around the camp, all the Midianites ran, crying out as they fled. ²²When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD caused the men throughout the camp to turn on each other with their swords.

EXPLORE:

When did Gideon and his men act? *(At the beginning of the middle watch, just after the guards had changed)*

How many men did Gideon have to surround the enemy camp? *(Three companies of one hundred men each)*

How did the enemy respond? *(The Lord caused them to attack one another)*

APPLY:

Imagine the scene: it's about 10 o'clock at night and you're tired after being on guard for four hours. Your relief at being replaced by someone who is just waking up is ruined as your camp is surrounded by blazing light and noise! You can't tell who is who so as you see people approaching with swords you take them out!

This situation shows who the perfect warrior is: the Lord won the victory (v22) in such a way that his people would have no reason to boast (7:2,7).

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he fights for us despite our weaknesses and failures. Pray that we might not boast except in the Lord, for we are saved by grace (1 Cor 1:26-31)!

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"The LORD is with you, mighty warrior." **Judges 6:12**

Use this week's verse to praise the Lord that he is with us, that he makes the weak strong and that he transforms us by faith to be warriors for him.

WEEK 4: May 26-June 1

DAY 1

INTRO:

Tell your family about something you started but failed to finish well.

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 8:22-27

²²The Israelites said to Gideon, "Rule over us—you, your son and your grandson—because you have saved us from the hand of Midian." ²³But Gideon told them, "I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you." ²⁴And he said, "I do have one request, that each of you give me an earring from your share of the plunder." (It was the custom of the Ishmaelites to wear gold earrings.) ²⁵They answered, "We'll be glad to give them." So they spread out a garment, and each of them threw a ring from his plunder onto it. ²⁶The weight of the gold rings he asked for came to seventeen hundred shekels, not counting the ornaments, the pendants and the purple garments worn by the kings of Midian or the chains that were on their camels' necks. ²⁷Gideon made the gold into an ephod, which he placed in Ophrah, his town. All Israel worshipped it there, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.

EXPLORE:

What did God's people ask Gideon? (*To become a king and rule over them*)

What did Gideon answer? (*You already have a king: the Lord*)

What did he then proceed to do? (*Create something that the people worshipped*)

APPLY:

Gideon didn't end his life well at all; the final thing we learn about him before he died is that he set himself up to be a priest, something he had no right to do!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father for our Lord Jesus Christ, who was faithful right to the end. Pray that we might finish each day well, not by getting snappy or unkind in our tiredness after a long day, but by continuing to love the Lord and others right until bedtime.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you." **Judges 8:23**

Make a crown and write on it this week's verse.

WEEK 4: May 26-June 1

DAY 2

INTRO:

Discuss 'consequences' with your children by getting them to complete a number of conditional sentences such as "If I decide not to wear a jumper on a cold morning then..." or "If I don't eat my packed school lunch then..."

RECAP:

What did Gideon do before he died?

READ JUDGES 9:1-5

¹ Abimelek, son of Gideon, went to his mother's brothers in Shechem and said to them and to all his mother's clan, ² "Ask all the citizens of Shechem, 'Which is better for you: to have all seventy of Gideon's sons rule over you, or just one man?' Remember, I am your flesh and blood." ³ When they repeated all this to the citizens of Shechem, they were inclined to follow Abimelek, for they said, "He is related to us." ⁴ They gave him seventy shekels of silver from the temple of Baal, and Abimelek used it to hire reckless scoundrels, who became his followers. ⁵ He went to his father's home in Ophrah and on one stone murdered his seventy brothers.

EXPLORE:

What did Gideon name his son? (*Abimelek*)

How many children did Gideon have? (*Seventy*)

How did Abimelek hire people to murder his brothers? (*By using money from idol worship*)

APPLY:

While our previous devotion might have suggested Gideon did a good thing in refusing to replace the Lord as king this passage suggests that he didn't really mean it. The facts that he had seventy sons from a number of wives and that he named one of these Abimelek (which means 'my father is king') shows he acted like a king even if he didn't want to be called one. Furthermore, the consequences of introducing false worship to Israel is seen here as his son used money dedicated to the worship of another god to hire people for violence.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that Jesus took the consequences of our sin so that we need not experience God's anger, condemnation or death. Pray that our actions might be consistent with our words and with the reality that we've been saved from sin!

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you." **Judges 8:23**

Use the crown from the previous devotion and underline or highlight the second sentence to remind you that this is the most important part of this week's verse.

WEEK 4: May 26-June 1

DAY 3

INTRO:

Create a situation (e.g. you are baking a cake and someone asks to lick the wooden spoon) and invite your children to act out different responses to it: an honourable reply, an unfair reply, an angry reply, etc.

RECAP:

What consequences came from how Gideon raised his son Abimelek?

READ JUDGES 9:16-20

¹⁶“Have you acted honourably and in good faith by making Abimelek king? Have you been fair to Gideon and his family? Have you treated him as he deserves? ¹⁷Remember that Gideon fought for you and risked his life to rescue you from the hand of Midian. ¹⁸But today you have revolted against his family. You have murdered his seventy sons on a single stone and have made Abimelek, the son of his female slave, king over the citizens of Shechem because he is related to you. ¹⁹So have you acted honourably and in good faith? If you have, may Abimelek be your joy, and may you be his, too! ²⁰But if you have not, let fire come out from Abimelek and consume you, and let fire come out from you, the citizens of Shechem, and consume Abimelek!”

EXPLORE:

What did Jotham, the speaker in this story, want everyone to remember? (*How Gideon had fought for them and rescued them*)

What did he want them to consider? (*If they had acted honourably or unfairly to his family*)

What did he say would happen if they had not acted in good faith? (*Fire would consume them*)

APPLY:

The man who said these things was the only son of Gideon who survived. He wanted the people who had killed the rest of his brothers to recognise the evil they had done and be punished for it. This awful story ends with God punishing the people for the way they acted (9:56-57).

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he will not punish us as we deserve because Jesus died in our place for our sins. Pray that we will act honourably and in good faith to show our thankfulness for all that our Lord Jesus has done for us.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

“I will not rule over you, nor will my son. The LORD will rule over you.” **Judges 8:23**

Rip up the crown you made with this week’s verse on it to show that Gideon didn’t mean what he said and God’s people rejected his rule. As you do so say the verse one final time.

WEEK 5: June 2-8

DAY 1

INTRO:

Discuss with your family: how do you feel about slides? At Wet 'n' Wild there are ones where you go so fast you go around in a loop. Would you rather do this or a smaller, safer slide in your local park?



RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 10:1-5

¹After the time of Abimelek, a man of Issachar named Tola son of Puah, the son of Dodo, rose to save Israel. He lived in Shamir, in the hill country of Ephraim. ²He led Israel twenty-three years; then he died, and was buried in Shamir. ³He was followed by Jair of Gilead, who led Israel twenty-two years. ⁴He had thirty sons, who rode thirty donkeys. They controlled thirty towns in Gilead, which to this day are called Havvoth Jair. ⁵When Jair died, he was buried in Kamon.

EXPLORE:

Who led Israel for twenty-three years? (*Tola, from the tribe of Ephraim*)

Who led Israel for twenty-two years? (*Jair, from the city of Gilead*)

How did Jair lead? (*He had thirty sons and so was able to control thirty towns*)

APPLY:

While we don't know much about these judges the information given us tells more than it might seem. Tola's name means 'purple', which hints that he is rich. The fact that Jair has thirty sons tells us that he must have had a few wives at least. These facts, and the fact they both ruled for quite a while, show that both of these leaders set themselves up like kings. This is worrying considering how badly Abimelek's attempt at being a king went; it suggests that God's people are sliding further and further away from God being their king.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that Jesus didn't set himself up to be a king, but took on the very nature of a servant for our benefit. Pray that we might have the same attitude and seek to serve others rather than rule over them.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you!" **Judges 10:14**

Write the words of this week's verse onto small pieces of paper. Slide them to your family members across the table or floor (attach them to things that slide if needed) and get them to assemble the verse in the correct order so they can begin to learn it.

WEEK 5: June 2-8

DAY 2

INTRO:

What is the scariest thing that has happened to you recently?

RECAP:

What suggests that the last two judges might have wanted to be kings?

READ JUDGES 10:6-13

⁶Again the Israelites did evil in the eyes of the LORD. They served the Baals and the Ashtoreths, and the gods of Aram, the gods of Sidon, the gods of Moab, the gods of the Ammonites and the gods of the Philistines. And because the Israelites forsook the LORD and no longer served him, ⁷he became angry with them. He sold them into the hands of the Philistines and the Ammonites, ⁸who that year shattered and crushed them. For eighteen years they oppressed all the Israelites on the east side of the Jordan in Gilead, the land of the Amorites. ⁹The Ammonites also crossed the Jordan to fight against Judah, Benjamin and Ephraim; Israel was in great distress. ¹⁰Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals." ¹¹The LORD replied, "When the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, ¹²the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you and you cried to me for help, did I not save you from their hands? ¹³But you have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you."

EXPLORE:

What made the Lord angry? (*His people served the gods of the nations around them*)

How were the Israelites punished? (*The Philistines and Ammonites shattered and crushed them on both sides of the Jordan*)

How did the Lord respond when his people cried out? (*He said he will no longer save them*)

APPLY:

This is a terrifying story! What would make the Lord say he will no longer save his people? In the bible the number seven indicates completion (the Lord made the whole earth in seven days). Since verse 6 lists seven groups of gods it shows the Israelites had given themselves completely over to other gods and no longer served the Lord at all.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that rather than leaving us in our sin he demonstrated his love for us in that Christ died for us while we were still sinners. Pray that we might show our thankfulness by seeking to completely and wholeheartedly serve the Lord each day.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you!" **Judges 10:14**

Come up with actions to this week's verse to help you remember it.

WEEK 5: June 2-8

DAY 3

INTRO:

What have you done that you later regretted?

RECAP:

How did the Lord respond when his people cried out to him for help?

READ JUDGES 10:10-16

¹⁰Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD, "We have sinned against you, forsaking our God and serving the Baals." ¹¹The LORD replied, "When the Egyptians, the Amorites, the Ammonites, the Philistines, ¹²the Sidonians, the Amalekites and the Maonites oppressed you and you cried to me for help, did I not save you from their hands? ¹³But you have forsaken me and served other gods, so I will no longer save you. ¹⁴Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you when you are in trouble!" ¹⁵But the Israelites said to the LORD, "We have sinned. Do with us whatever you think best, but please rescue us now." ¹⁶Then they got rid of the foreign gods among them and served the LORD. And he could bear Israel's misery no longer.

EXPLORE:

What did the Lord invite his people to do? (*Cry out to their new gods to save them*)

What did his people reply? (*Punish us for our sins if you want but please rescue us*)

What did his people do? (*Got rid of their gods and served the Lord again*)

APPLY:

Repentance looks very different to regret. In the first few verses Israel regretted their sin because it had gotten them into trouble. However in the last few verses their willingness to change showed that real repentance had taken place: repentance means saying sorry AND changing behaviour.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he is willing to forgive anyone who confesses and is willing to change. Pray that we would not just say that we are sorry for our sin but that we would cry out to the Lord asking him to transform us and grant us true repentance.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"Go and cry out to the gods you have chosen. Let them save you!" **Judges 10:14**

Take turns to cry out each word of this week's verse to show you have learned it.

WEEK 6: June 9-15

DAY 1

INTRO:

If you could choose someone to be the head of your class or workplace when your teacher or boss was away, who would you choose?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 11:4-11

⁴Some time later, when the Ammonites were fighting against Israel,⁵ the elders of Gilead went to get Jephthah from the land of Tob.⁶ "Come," they said, "be our commander, so we can fight the Ammonites." ⁷Jephthah said to them, "Didn't you hate me and drive me from my father's house? Why do you come to me now, when you're in trouble?" ⁸The elders of Gilead said to him, "Nevertheless, we are turning to you now; come with us to fight the Ammonites, and you will be head over all of us who live in Gilead." ⁹Jephthah answered, "Suppose you take me back to fight the Ammonites and the LORD gives them to me—will I really be your head?" ¹⁰The elders of Gilead replied, "The LORD is our witness; we will certainly do as you say." ¹¹So Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him their head.

EXPLORE:

Who was attacking Israel now? (*The Ammonites*)

Who did the elders of Gilead choose to be their head? (*Jephthah*)

Why did Jephthah think it was strange that they would choose him to be their head? (*He lived in the land of Tob because these same elders had driven him from his home in Israel*)

APPLY:

Although we don't know much about Jephthah from these verses this story already sounds concerning: why have God's people chosen their own leader? In *Judges* the Lord repeatedly raises up people to save Israel; the fact that they are now picking their own deliverer can't be good!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has raised up Jesus, our perfect judge. Pray that we might not pick when we will follow him but that in all things we will choose to make Christ our head.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him their head. Judges 11:11

Shine a light in such a way as to make a silhouette of your head. Trace around it and write in it this week's verse to remind us that Christ is our head.

WEEK 6: June 9-15

DAY 2

INTRO:

Make some silly deals with your family: promise that if they... you will...

RECAP:

Who did Israel choose to be their head?

READ JUDGES 11:29-32

²⁹ Then the Spirit of the LORD came on Jephthah. He crossed Gilead and Manasseh, passed through Mizpah of Gilead, and from there he advanced against the Ammonites. ³⁰ And Jephthah made a vow to the LORD: "If you give the Ammonites into my hands, ³¹ whatever comes out of the door of my house to meet me when I return in triumph from the Ammonites will be the LORD's, and I will sacrifice it as a burnt offering." ³² Then Jephthah went over to fight the Ammonites, and the LORD gave them into his hands.

EXPLORE:

What did Jephthah do when the Holy Spirit came upon him? (*Went to fight the Ammonites*)

What deal did he try to make with the Lord? (*If I win I will sacrifice a burnt offering to you*)

Who won the fight? (*The Lord gave the Ammonites into Jephthah's hands*)

APPLY:

Jephthah made a very silly deal with the Lord. A burnt offering was meant to show complete surrender to God, so Jephthah was essentially promising that if God gave him victory over his enemies then Jephthah would choose to worship him. Our God deserves to be worshipped whatever happens!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he loves us unconditionally, no matter what we do. Pray that we might completely surrender all we have to God, and not try to make silly deals with him that if he does something THEN we will love him back.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him their head. Judges 11:11

Make a paper chain of people, but don't leave them joined. Write the words of this week's verse on the heads of the people and then get your family to assemble the verse in its correct order.

WEEK 6: June 9-15

DAY 3

INTRO:

Ask one of your family members to leave the room. Then pick a leader who must repeat the same action again and again, changing it only slightly, while everyone else in the family follows. As the first person re-joins you, see if they can identify who is leading your family.

RECAP:

Why was the deal that Jephthah tried to make with the Lord a silly one?

READ JUDGES 12:7-15

⁷Jephthah led Israel six years. Then Jephthah the Gileadite died and was buried in a town in Gilead. ⁸After him, Ibzan of Bethlehem led Israel. ⁹He had thirty sons and thirty daughters. He gave his daughters away in marriage to those outside his clan, and for his sons he brought in thirty young women as wives from outside his clan. Ibzan led Israel seven years. ¹⁰Then Ibzan died and was buried in Bethlehem. ¹¹After him, Elon the Zebulunite led Israel ten years. ¹²Then Elon died and was buried in Aijalon in the land of Zebulun. ¹³After him, Abdon son of Hillel, from Pirathon, led Israel. ¹⁴He had forty sons and thirty grandsons, who rode on seventy donkeys. He led Israel eight years. ¹⁵Then Abdon son of Hillel died and was buried at Pirathon in the land of Ephraim.

EXPLORE:

What happened to Ibzan after he had led Israel for seven years? (*He died and was buried in Bethlehem*)

What happened to Elon after he had led for ten years? (*He died and was buried in Aijalon*)

What happened to Abdon after he had led for eight years? (*He died and was buried in Pirathon*)

APPLY:

The book of *Judges* is sometimes pretty repetitive! But reading the same thing again and again shows us a pattern. God's people just kept sinning and refused to follow the Lord. The Lord patiently and graciously continued to raise up leaders for his people. And finally the deliverance of these leaders was cut short again and again because of death.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that Jesus has conquered death and so can deliver us forever (Hebrews 7:14-16, 25). Pray that we will not abuse our Lord's patience but that we will battle against sin each day in the power of the Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Jephthah went with the elders of Gilead, and the people made him their head. Judges 11:11

See how many times you can repeat this week's verse in one minute!

WEEK 7: June 16-22

DAY 1

INTRO:

In what ways are you different to others around you at school or work?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 13:2-5

²A certain man of Zorah, named Manoah, from the clan of the Danites, had a wife who was childless, unable to give birth. ³The angel of the LORD appeared to her and said, "You are barren and childless, but you are going to become pregnant and give birth to a son. ⁴Now see to it that you drink no wine or other fermented drink and that you do not eat anything unclean. ⁵You 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."

EXPLORE:

How was this woman different at the start of the story? (*She was unable to have children*)

What did the angel of the Lord say was going to happen? (*She would have a son*)

How would this child be different? (*He would be dedicated to God from the womb*)

APPLY:

Nazirites were people who specifically dedicated themselves to the Lord for a time (Numbers 6). This child would be different because he would be particularly dedicated to the Lord for his whole life! God was about to do something unheard of amongst his people: raise up a deliverer who was wholly dedicated to the Lord.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that Jesus was similarly dedicated to the Lord from birth so that he might be holy and set apart from others (Matt 2:23). Pray that we might be different from those around us so that they might see that we are holy and dedicated to the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"The boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb." **Judges 13:5**

Draw a baby shape and write on it this week's verse.



laserwoodys

WEEK 7: June 16-22

DAY 2

INTRO:

Tell three short stories to your children, one of which is made-up. Can your kids identify the untrue story with certainty?

RECAP:

What was different about the child who was to be born?

READ JUDGES 13:8-9, 19-20

⁸Then Manoah prayed to the LORD: "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."

^{*9}God heard Manoah, and the angel of God came again.

¹⁹Then Manoah took a young goat, together with the grain offering, and sacrificed it on a rock to the LORD. And the LORD did an amazing thing while Manoah and his wife watched: ²⁰As the flame blazed up from the altar toward heaven, the angel of the LORD ascended in the flame.

EXPLORE:

What did Manoah pray? (*Please resend your messenger to teach us how to raise our son*)

What did Manoah offer the angel? (*Offerings to the Lord*)

What happened as a result? (*The angel of the Lord ascended to heaven in the fire*)

APPLY:

Manoah wanted certainty about what the angel had said to his wife. His questions weren't really answered, but the angel still performed an amazing sign to show him that he was from the Lord. This left Manoah with an odd mix of faith (not having his questions answered further) and assurance (certainty that this was the Lord's will). We might sometimes feel the same: we have been given a certain message we can trust (Luke 1:4) while we are also called to be sure about that which we can't see (Hebrews 11:1).

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that Jesus ascended to heaven in a similar way so that we might be certain that he will return (Acts 1:11). Pray that we might be sure of our faith, trusting the Lord in those things that we do not fully understand.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"The boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb." **Judges 13:5**

Draw a picture of the angel of the Lord ascending in the flame, adding a speech bubble of him saying this week's verse to show that we can be certain of his message.

WEEK 7: June 16-22

DAY 3

INTRO:

What are you most excited about that's approaching over the next few weeks?

RECAP:

How did the Lord show Manoah he could be certain his message would come true?

READ JUDGES 13:24-25

²⁴The woman gave birth to a boy and named him Samson. He grew and the LORD blessed him, ²⁵and the Spirit of the LORD began to stir him.

EXPLORE:

What was the promised son named? (*Samson*)

How did the Lord relate to the child as he grew? (*The Lord blessed him*)

What did the Spirit of the Lord do to the child? (*He began to stir him*)

APPLY:

There is a real sense of excitement and expectation about this child! The angel of the Lord has announced his arrival and when the baby is born these short verses indicate there is something really special about him. Over the next few weeks we will see what this is!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that the birth of our Lord Jesus was similarly special, showing that he too was no ordinary child. Pray over your children, asking the Lord to bless them and stir them by his Holy Spirit.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"The boy is to be a Nazirite, dedicated to God from the womb." **Judges 13:5**

Separate the words of this week's verse by getting one family member to say each word only. See if together you can get through the whole verse!

WEEK 8: June 23-29

DAY 1

INTRO:

In the book *Beautiful Oops* Barney Saltzberg turns messes or accidents into art. Use this idea as a family by turning squiggles or spills into something beautiful.



RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 14:1-4

¹Samson went down to Timnah and saw there a young Philistine woman. ²When he returned, he said to his father and mother, "I have seen a Philistine woman in Timnah; now get her for me as my wife." ³His father and mother replied, "Isn't there an acceptable woman among your relatives or among all our people? Must you go to the Philistines to get a wife?" But Samson said to his father, "Get her for me. She's the right one for me." ⁴His parents did not know that this was from the LORD, for the LORD was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines (at that time they were ruling over Israel).

EXPLORE:

What did Samson ask his parents? (*To get a certain Philistine woman to be his wife*)

How did his parents respond? (*By asking why he couldn't marry one of his own people*)

What was behind Samson's strange request? (*The Lord was setting up a situation*)

APPLY:

To his parents' (and our) surprise Samson wanted to marry one of the enemies of his people who had been punishing them for forty years (13:1). However we are told that "this was from the Lord". This does not mean that God was behind Samson's sinful desire to do something against His law. Rather the Lord was creating a Beautiful Oops; he is the master of turning our mess into his good purposes.

PRAY:

Thank God that he can bring good out of the most tragic or evil situations, as we see so clearly in the execution of his Son. Pray that the Lord will do the same for a situation you see in the news this week.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

The LORD was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines. Judges 14:4

Write the words of this week's verse onto separate pieces of paper. Hide these around your house and then send the family to seek them out so they can start to learn the verse.

WEEK 8: June 23-29

DAY 2

INTRO:

What have you heard or seen recently that has shocked you?

RECAP:

What was behind Samson asking his parents to get him a Philistine wife?

READ JUDGES 14:5-9

⁵Samson went down to Timnah together with his father and mother. As they approached the vineyards of Timnah, suddenly a young lion came roaring toward him. ⁶The Spirit of the LORD came powerfully upon him so that he tore the lion apart with his bare hands as he might have torn a young goat. But he told neither his father nor his mother what he had done. ⁷Then he went down and talked with the woman, and he liked her. ⁸Some time later, when he went back to marry her, he turned aside to look at the lion's carcass, and in it he saw a swarm of bees and some honey. ⁹He scooped out the honey with his hands and ate as he went along. When he rejoined his parents, he gave them some, and they too ate it.

EXPLORE:

What happened when the Spirit of the Lord came upon Samson? (*He tore apart a lion*)

What did he find when he looked at the lion some time later? (*Some bees had set up a hive in the lion's dead body*)

What did he do about this? (*He ate the honey from the hive with his parents*)

APPLY:

Samson's story continues to be very unexpected. His decision to marry one of the enemy came from the Lord, and here the Holy Spirit enables him to kill a lion attacking him! However the revelation that he ate honey from the lion's dead body should shock us: part of Samson's dedication to the Lord was that he never eat anything unclean (13:4). Despite being chosen & empowered by the Lord, Samson appears not to care about living his way!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that our Lord Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit to live a life without sin. Pray that we might be so filled with the Spirit that we will become more like Jesus each day, desiring to live for the Lord and not for our own sinful desires.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

The LORD was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines. Judges 14:4

Come up with actions to help you remember this week's verse.

WEEK 8: June 23-29

DAY 3

INTRO:

Perform some actions and get your family members to mirror you by doing what you did.

RECAP:

Why is the fact that Samson ate some honey shocking?

READ JUDGES 15:9-12

⁹The Philistines went up and camped in Judah, spreading out near Lehi.¹⁰The people of Judah asked, "Why have you come to fight us?" "We have come to take Samson prisoner," they answered, "to do to him as he did to us." ¹¹Then three thousand men from Judah went down to the cave in the rock of Etam and said to Samson, "Don't you realize that the Philistines are rulers over us? What have you done to us?" He answered, "I merely did to them what they did to me." ¹²They said to him, "We've come to tie you up and hand you over to the Philistines."

EXPLORE:

Why did the Philistines want to capture Samson? (*To do to him what he did to them*)

What reason did Samson give as to why he acted? (*He felt he had done to the Philistines what they had done to him*)

How did Samson's own people respond? (*They handed him over to the Philistines*)

APPLY:

Doing to others what they did to you can be a very unhelpful thing. In the story of Samson things just get worse and worse in a cycle of revenge. We praise the Lord that he broke this cycle for us and treated us as we don't deserve: with grace! He did this when Jesus was handed over to the enemy by his own people to be punished in our place.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he didn't treat us as our sins deserved but that he forgave us and treated us with love and grace. Pray that we might do to others not as they have done to us but as we would like to be treated.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

The LORD was seeking an occasion to confront the Philistines. Judges 14:4

Confront someone in your family with this week's verse by finding a time in the remainder of the week to jump out to surprise them by saying it.

WEEK 9: June 30-July 6

DAY 1

INTRO:

What is the most expensive thing you've ever bought?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 16:4-5

⁴Some time later, Samson fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah. ⁵The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, "See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver."

EXPLORE:

With whom did Samson fall in love? (*A woman called Delilah*)

What did the Philistines ask her to discover? (*The secret to Samson's great strength*)

How did they buy this information? (*By offering her over a thousand pieces of silver each*)

APPLY:

This is an extraordinary amount of money; in the very next chapter of *Judges* a priest is offered a job paying ten pieces of silver a year (17:10)! Delilah is happy to sell her boyfriend in much the same way that Judas was happy to sell his friend Jesus.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he loves us so much he was willing to purchase us for himself not with perishable things like silver or gold but with the precious blood of Jesus (1 Peter 1:18-19). Pray that as a result we might no longer live for ourselves but for the Lord who bought us.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me". **Judges 16:28**

Write out the words of this week's verse and get your family members to purchase the words from you by promising to do different tasks. Then have them work together to assemble the verse.

WEEK 9: June 30-July 6

DAY 2

INTRO:

What is the secret of Samson's strength?

RECAP:

What was Delilah promised if she found out the secret?

READ JUDGES 16:15-17

¹⁵Delilah said to Samson, "How can you say, 'I love you with all my heart,' when you won't confide in me? This is the third time you have made a fool of me and haven't told me the secret of your great strength." ¹⁶With such nagging she prodded him day after day until he was sick to the heart. ¹⁷So he told her his heart: "No razor has ever been used on my head," he said, "because I have been a Nazirite dedicated to God from my mother's womb. If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become as weak as any other man."

EXPLORE:

How many times did Samson pretend to share his secret with Delilah? (*Three*)

How did she finally get him to share the secret? (*She nagged him until he'd had enough*)

What did Samson say was his secret? (*His long hair; his head had never been shaved*)

APPLY:

We all know that the secret of Samson's strength was the Lord; he performed mighty acts when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him in power. However the sign that Samson was dedicated to the Lord was his hair. So when Samson gave away his heart to Delilah (v17) and 'shared the secret of his strength' he was really saying that he no longer wanted to be set apart for God.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that our Lord Jesus loved the Lord our God with all of his heart and strength in a way that we all fail to do. Pray that the Lord will change us so that the desire of our heart will be to be set apart for the Lord each day rather than to become like any other man (as Samson really desired).

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me". **Judges 16:28**

This week's verse comes from the end of Samson's life when he desired that the Lord remember him despite the fact that he turned away from him. Design a poster or banner for the words so that you can remember the verse.

WEEK 9: June 30-July 6

DAY 3

INTRO:

Who or what would you get to perform for you if you were to celebrate at a party?

RECAP:

From where did Samson's strength ultimately come?

READ JUDGES 16:25-30

²⁵While the Philistines were in high spirits, they shouted, "Bring out Samson to entertain us." So they called Samson out of the prison, and he performed for them. When they stood him among the pillars, ²⁶Samson said to the servant who held his hand, "Put me where I can feel the pillars that support the temple, so that I may lean against them." ²⁷Now the temple was crowded with men and women; all the rulers of the Philistines were there, and on the roof were about three thousand men and women watching Samson perform. ²⁸Then Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me. Please, God, strengthen me just once more, and let me with one blow get revenge on the Philistines for my two eyes." ²⁹Then Samson reached toward the two central pillars on which the temple stood. Bracing himself against them, his right hand on the one and his left hand on the other, ³⁰Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" Then he pushed with all his might, and down came the temple on the rulers and all the people in it. Thus he killed many more when he died than while he lived.

EXPLORE:

How did the Philistines want to celebrate? (*By getting the defeated Samson to perform*)

What did Samson do after performing? (*Lean on the central pillars of the temple to rest*)

What happened as a result? (*The Lord strengthened him to bring down the temple*)

APPLY:

After being betrayed Samson was captured and beaten. Now his enemies wanted to mock and humiliate him. However the Lord used his death to save his people by destroying the rulers and authorities of their enemies. These exact events happened to Jesus, not for the sake of revenge but for our salvation!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that although Jesus was captured, beaten, humiliated and mocked he too triumphed over his enemies. Pray that when we are treated shamefully we might follow Jesus' example and not retaliate but trust our Judge (1 Peter 2:19-23).

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

Samson prayed to the LORD, "Sovereign LORD, remember me". **Judges 16:28**

Use this week's verse to pray the Lord will remember you when you suffer unjustly.

WEEK 10: July 7-13

DAY 1

INTRO:

Imagine you were your own parent. What do you think are the most important things to encourage your child about?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 17:1-6

¹Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim ²said to his mother, "The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse—I have that silver with me; I took it." Then his mother said, "The LORD bless you, my son!" ³When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, "I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make an image overlaid with silver. I will give it back to you." ⁴So after he returned the silver to his mother, she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who used them to make the idol. And it was put in Micah's house. ⁵Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some household gods and installed one of his sons as his priest. ⁶In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as they saw fit.

EXPLORE:

Why did Micah give his mother eleven hundred shekels of silver? (*He had stolen it and she had cursed the thief, so he wanted her to remove the curse from him*)

Why did his mother give back two hundred shekels to Micah? (*To make an idol*)

What did Micah then get his son to do? (*He made his son to be a priest in his shrine*)

APPLY:

This story is one of two that end the book of *Judges* by answering the question 'how did things get like this for Israel?' One of the first answers given is that parents failed to encourage their children to obey the Lord. Micah's mum blessed him for stealing from her and rewarded him by encouraging him to worship an idol; Micah made his son a priest in his homemade temple.

PRAY:

Thank the Lord that as our Heavenly Father he has taught us what is good and what he requires of us (Micah 6:8). Pray that we might do what the Lord requires so that, when we have children ourselves, we can encourage them to do the same.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

They continued to use the idol Micah had made. **Judges 18:31**

Make up some actions to encourage your family to learn this week's verse.

WEEK 10: July 7-13

DAY 2

INTRO:

Who would you say are your spiritual 'fathers', that is people who have raised you to know and love the Lord?

RECAP:

What did Micah's mum encourage him to do?

READ JUDGES 17:7-13

⁷A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah, ⁸left that town in search of some other place to stay. On his way he came to Micah's house in the hill country of Ephraim. ⁹Micah asked him, "Where are you from?" "I'm a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah," he said, "and I'm looking for a place to stay." ¹⁰Then Micah said to him, "Live with me and be my father and priest, and I'll give you ten shekels of silver a year, your clothes and your food." ¹¹So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man became like one of his sons to him. ¹²Then Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in his house. ¹³And Micah said, "Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest."

EXPLORE:

Who arrived at Micah's house? *(A young Levite priest from Bethlehem looking for a home)*

What did Micah offer him? *(The chance to stay at his place and be his priest)*

What did Micah conclude when he said 'yes'? *(The Lord would be good to him)*

APPLY:

As the story goes on the next answer to what went wrong for Israel is that their leaders let them down. Levites didn't have specific land assigned to them but were meant to live amongst the other tribes of Israel to be their priests. This Levite should never have been wandering around, and he should have taught Micah that the Lord would never bless him if he set up and worshipped his own idols!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father for those who have taught you his ways. Pray that the Lord might likewise use you to help people to know and love the Lord.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

They continued to use the idol Micah had made. Judges 18:31

Draw or make an idol and write on it this week's verse. Then keep it for the following devotion.

WEEK 10: July 7-13

DAY 3

INTRO:

What do you think is the biggest problem God's people around the world face at this time?

RECAP:

Who did Micah invite to live with him?

READ JUDGES 18:27-31

²⁷The Danites took what Micah had made, and his priest, and went on to Laish, against a people at peace and secure. They attacked them with the sword and burned down their city. ²⁸There was no one to rescue them because they lived a long way from Sidon and had no relationship with anyone else. The city was in a valley near Beth Rehob. The Danites rebuilt the city and settled there. ²⁹They named it Dan after their ancestor Dan, who was born to Israel—though the city used to be called Laish. ³⁰There the Danites set up for themselves the idol, and Jonathan son of Gershom, the son of Moses, and his sons were priests for the tribe of Dan until the time of the captivity of the land. ³¹They continued to use the idol Micah had made, all the time the house of God was in Shiloh.

EXPLORE:

Who did the tribe of Dan destroy? (*The peaceful people of Laish*)

What did the tribe of Dan set up in their new city? (*Micah's idol with his Levite priest*)

How long did this tribe worship the idol? (*All the time they should have been worshipping the Lord at his house in Shiloh*)

APPLY:

The third and final reason this story gives as to how Israel got into such trouble in *Judges* is that it is ultimately because the people forgot the Lord and worshipped idols instead. Verse 30 indicates that Dan continued to follow the Levites' dodgy directions right up until God kicked them out of the land in the exile, a period of about five hundred years!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he sent us a rescuer (v28) so that we might turn from idols to serve the living God (1 Thess 1:9). Pray that the church around the world might worship the Lord God and seek to serve him alone.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

They continued to use the idol Micah had made. **Judges 18:31**

Destroy the idol that you drew or made previously to show that you have learnt this week's Verse.

WEEK 11: July 14-20

DAY 1

INTRO:

Think of a time when your whole school came together as one. What special event led to this happening?

RECAP:

What did your children learn about at church on Sunday?

READ JUDGES 20:8-14

⁸All the men of Israel rose up together as one, saying, "None of us will go home. No, not one of us will return to his house. ⁹But now this is what we'll do to the city of Gibeah: we'll go up against it in the order decided by casting lots. ¹⁰We'll take ten men out of every hundred from all the tribes of Israel, and a hundred from a thousand, and a thousand from ten thousand, to get provisions for the army. Then, when the army arrives at Gibeah in Benjamin, it can give them what they deserve for this outrageous act done in Israel." ¹¹So all the Israelites got together and united as one against the city. ¹²The tribes of Israel sent messengers throughout the tribe of Benjamin, saying, "What about this awful crime that was committed among you? ¹³Now turn those wicked men of Gibeah over to us so that we may put them to death and purge the evil from Israel." But the Benjamites would not listen to their fellow Israelites. ¹⁴From their towns they came together at Gibeah to fight.

EXPLORE:

Why did the men of Israel unite as one? (*To march against the city of Gibeah*)

What had this city done? (*An outrageous act (v10), an awful crime (v12), something wicked and evil (v13)*)

How did the tribe of Benjamin respond? (*They refused to listen and united as one to fight*)

APPLY:

In this final story in *Judges* Israel unites as one to destroy some terrible sin in their midst. However others also unite as one to defend the sin in order to stop it being dealt with! The casting of lots in verse 9 shows that the Lord is on the side of those who take sin seriously.

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that in Jesus he went to war on sin for us so that its power over us might be defeated. Pray that we might put to death sin in our own lives (Rom 8:13).

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"What about this awful crime that was committed among you?" **Judges 20:12**

Draw a war scene or a soldier in armour getting ready to fight. Add to the picture this week's verse to remind you that we need to do battle against sin.

WEEK 11: July 14-20

DAY 2

INTRO:

What news have you heard recently that made you feel awful?

RECAP:

Why did Israel gather together as one?

READ JUDGES 20:46-48

⁴⁶On that day twenty-five thousand Benjamite swordsmen fell, all of them valiant fighters. ⁴⁷But six hundred of them turned and fled into the wilderness to the rock of Rimmon, where they stayed four months.⁴⁸The men of Israel went back to Benjamin and put all the towns to the sword, including the animals and everything else they found. All the towns they came across they set on fire.

EXPLORE:

How many men from the tribe of Benjamin died in battle? (*Twenty-five thousand*)

How many men were left? (*Six hundred*)

What happened to the families and homes of the Benjamites? (*They were destroyed*)

APPLY:

The Israelites did not just do battle against sin but they took it so far as to almost wipe out an entire tribe! This awful story leads us to praise the Lord, for although in his holiness he cannot abide sin, he still loves us and shows sinners such amazing mercy and patience (1 Timothy 1:15-16).

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that in Christ he poured out his mercy and grace upon us. Pray that we will show similar mercy to those who sin against us, not punishing them but forgiving them as Christ forgave those who crucified him.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"What about this awful crime that was committed among you?" **Judges 20:12**

Use this week's verse to lead you to pray for the awful news that you thought of above.

WEEK 11: July 14-20

DAY 3

INTRO:

How do you feel when someone in your family (like your mum or dad) is away?

RECAP:

What did the rest of Israel do to the people of the tribe of Benjamin?

READ JUDGES 21:15-21

¹⁵The people grieved for Benjamin, because the LORD had made a gap in the tribes of Israel. ¹⁶And the elders of the assembly said, "With the women of Benjamin destroyed, how shall we provide wives for the men who are left? ¹⁷The Benjamite survivors must have heirs," they said, "so that a tribe of Israel will not be wiped out. ¹⁸We can't give them our daughters as wives, since we Israelites have taken this oath: 'Cursed be anyone who gives a wife to a Benjamite.'¹⁹But look, there is the annual festival of the LORD in Shiloh, which lies north of Bethel, east of the road that goes from Bethel to Shechem, and south of Lebonah." ²⁰So they instructed the Benjamites, saying, "Go and hide in the vineyards²¹ and watch. When the young women of Shiloh come out to join in the dancing, rush from the vineyards and each of you seize one of them to be your wife."

EXPLORE:

What problem did Israel realise they had caused? (*By destroying the towns of Benjamin they had left no women for the few survivors to marry and so nearly wiped out a tribe*)

Why couldn't they just give the survivors women from their own tribes to fix the problem? (*They had foolishly vowed not to do this (v18)*)

What solution did they come up with? (*Kidnap some young women at a holy festival*)

APPLY:

The end of the book of *Judges* shows that the nation of Israel has not really changed for the better. They have foolishly created a gap in their family and, instead of repenting of something silly they have promised, they decide to fix their problem by further dodgy actions!

PRAY:

Thank our Heavenly Father that he has fixed our greatest problems through Christ our Lord. Pray that we might repent when we need to and ask the Lord for help, rather than trying to fix our messes by ourselves.

MEMORY VERSE: (OPTIONAL ACTIVITY TIME PERMITTING)

"What about this awful crime that was committed among you?" **Judges 20:12**

Use this week's verse as a basis for praise that our awful crime of rebelling against our Creator has been forgiven by his Son.

WEEK 12: July 21-27

DAY 1-3

PRAY:

Spend your time this week praying!

- Confess to the Lord our sins; our nation of Australia still does what is right in our own eyes as did the people of Israel.
- Praise the Lord for Jesus, our righteous deliverer who never committed sin and who saves us completely for all time.
- Pray that the Lord might use the good news of Jesus to transform our community as we get ready for Mission 2020.

