

21. Jericho



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Joshua 6
(summarise earlier chapters of Joshua)

Joshua leads the Israelites into the Promised Land and they conquer the city of Jericho



AIMS

To encourage the children that God is bigger than the challenges or difficulties they face, and that they can pray to him and ask for help

The Israelites were only able to conquer Jericho by trusting in God. It seemed like an impossible task, but by following his instructions they were able to succeed.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- How do you think Joshua and the Israelites felt when God gave them the instructions about marching round the city?
- What does this story teach us about God?
- How can it encourage us when we face difficult situations?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Jenga

You will need: a set of Jenga for every five or six children

Let the children play a game of Jenga (either in one group or in a few small groups depending on your numbers). They have to take it in turns to remove a brick from the middle of the tower and place it on top, aiming not to make the tower fall.

▶ Knock Down The Wall Game

You will need: paper cups, newspaper

Stack the cups with four on the bottom, followed by layers of three, two and one. Get the children to stand at a distance and try to knock the cups down by throwing balls of rolled up newspaper at them. See who can be the quickest to knock the whole wall down. Depending on your numbers, the children could all play together with one set of cups, or you could divide them into groups.

▶ Multiple-Choice Recap Quiz

You will need: signs labelled A, B, C and D, blu tack or similar

Recap the story of Moses by

(continued overleaf)

doing a multiple-choice quiz. Stick the signs labelled A, B, C and D up at the four corners of the room. For each question the children have to run to the letter which they think represents the correct answer. (The correct answers are marked in bold.)

Where were the Israelites slaves? A- Canaan, **B- Egypt**, C- England, D- China

How did God speak to Moses when he called him to rescue the Israelites? A- in a dream, B- a voice from the clouds, C- sent him a letter, **D- a burning bush**

How many plagues did God send on the Egyptians because of Pharaoh's stubbornness? A- 6, B-9, **C-10**, D-12

What did the Israelites have to do to be saved during the final plague? **A- kill a lamb and paint its blood around the door frame**, B- hide in a cave, C- fight the Egyptians, D- sing to God

Which area of water did God part to make a path for the Israelites to escape from the Egyptians? A- the Blue Ocean, **B- the Red Sea**, C- the Green River, D- the Lilac Lake

Which of these is NOT one of the commandments God gave Moses and the Israelites? **A- pray to God three times a day**, B- don't worship idols, C- don't steal, D- don't want what other people have

When the Israelites disobeyed God, what did they make to worship? A- a bronze horse, B- a silver snake, **C- a gold calf**, D- a copper elephant

How long did the Israelites have to wander in the desert for because they didn't trust God? A- 40 days, B- 3 years, C- 7 years, **D- 40 years**

What were the names of the two spies who trusted God? A- Joshua and Aaron, **B- Joshua and Caleb**, C- Aaron and Caleb, D- Aaron and Joseph



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

► Recap

If you decided not to use the recap quiz intro activity, briefly recap the story of Moses.

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt, then God spoke to Moses from the burning bush and asked Moses to lead the Israelite people out of Egypt. Moses had to go to Pharaoh and ask if the people could go free. Pharaoh kept refusing so God sent plagues on the Egyptians. Finally, after the last plague, the Israelites were able to go. Moses led them through the Red Sea towards the land God was leading them to - the land which he had promised to Abraham long before. Along the way God provided food and drink for the Israelites and he gave them his rules for how they should live as his people. When the people finally reached the edge of the Promised Land some spies went in to check out the land but most of them were put off by the people in the land who were big and scary. They thought they would be defeated. Only two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, trusted God enough to believe that he would help them, so God decided they would all have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years before they would be allowed into the land.

► Joshua's Story

You will need: rams' horns (you can use party horns or you could roll sheets of cardboard diagonally into a horn-like shape and let the children make the noise themselves)

The 40 years passed in the wilderness. Eventually the time was up and the Israelites were finally allowed to go into the Promised Land. Moses was a very old man by this point.

At the edge of the land he climbed a mountain and from up there he could see across the whole land. God had told him that he would get to see the land but he wouldn't be the one to lead the Israelites into the land, and Moses died up there on the mountain. Joshua, one of the spies who trusted God, was appointed as the new leader of the Israelites and he was able to lead the people into the land.

But there was a bit of a problem. The people in the land had heard that the Israelites were coming and they had heard that God was giving the Israelites this land. To get into the land the Israelites needed to get into Jericho which was the main city, but the gates of the city were tightly shut, no one was being allowed in or out of the city, and Joshua didn't know what to do.

God spoke to him and gave him some instructions. They seemed very strange and Joshua couldn't see how it would work but he decided to trust God and get the people together ready to follow God's instructions.

We're going to act out what happened.

Get a few children to be the walls of the city by standing in a tight circle with their arms raised. Organise the others to march around them. One could be Joshua, some can pretend to be priests with rams' horns, and any remaining children can be the rest of the Israelite people.

God told the Israelites to get together and march around the city. That was all they had to do, march round one time and come back to their camp. The priests with the rams' horns could blow on them but no one else was to make a sound. The Israelites did this.

Get the children to act it out.

The next day Joshua told them to do the same thing again so

once again they marched around the city. They did the same thing on the third day and the fourth day and the fifth day and the sixth day. On the seventh day, Joshua said they were going to march around the city seven times. Then he said, "I'll give the signal and the priests with the rams' horns have to give one long blast on their horns. Then everybody has to shout."

The Bible doesn't say what words they used but we're going to use the words "Jericho for the Lord."

Get children marching round, blowing horns. You can just let them march round once and get them to imagine they have done it seven times. Then get the priests with the horns to make the sound of a long blast and get the children to shout, "Jericho for the Lord!" As they do, encourage the children representing the walls to fall to the ground.

As soon as the Israelites shouted, the walls fell to the ground and the Israelites were able to go in and claim the city.

God had kept his promise and helped the Israelites get into the land they had been travelling towards for so long!



REFLECT & RESPOND

► Reflection

It seems a strange way for God to ask the Israelites to conquer the city. Why do you think that is what God asked them to do?

Maybe it was to teach them that they could trust him, and to follow his instructions even if they couldn't see how it was going to work out.

Maybe so that the Israelites would know that they didn't

conquer Jericho because they had a really strong army but because God was with them, helping them.

If we're going to follow God today, sometimes it means we have to trust him when he asks us to do something hard and we have no idea how it will work out. But it also means God is with us and he will help us with all the situations we face, even with things that seem impossible.

► Prayer Activity

You will need: paper cups, pens

Get the children to think about a situation that is difficult in their life at the moment, and to think about how it makes them feel. They might feel sad, scared, angry etc. Give them a paper cup and ask them to write or draw that feeling on the cup. Then get them to bring the cups to the front and build them into a wall.

Sometimes the situations we face can seem impossible, just like the task of getting into Jericho seemed for Joshua and the Israelites, but Christians believe that God is bigger than those situations.

Sometimes he transforms situations, like he did for Joshua. Sometimes the situation doesn't change but he helps us to deal with it.

Get the children to kick the cups over and stamp on them as a reminder that God is bigger than the challenges we face.

Lead them in prayer, asking for his help in the situations they are facing and with the emotions they are experiencing.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

► Song – Only A Prayer Away or Our God Is A Great Big God

You will need: equipment to play music

These songs tie in well with the theme of today's session. Especially if you have used them before with the group, this may be a good chance to sing them again. You can find them on YouTube at the links below.

Only A Prayer Away:
youtu.be/fq_BSFkxHys

Our God Is A Great Big God:
youtu.be/eSTfM8M2Md8

22. Weakness



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Judges 6 and 7,
2 Corinthians 12:9

God calls Gideon to lead the Israelites to victory over the Midianites



AIMS

To help the children understand that we all have times when we are weak and can't manage by ourselves, but that we can ask God for help and know his strength working through us

To help the children think about situations where they feel weak, and to bring those to God

God gives us strength in our weakness. If we depend on him when we are weak, that is when we can see his strength working through us.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- When are the times that Gideon feels weak, and how does God respond to him?
 - Is there a time when you have known God giving you strength when you felt weak?
- Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

► Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament

This game works well with a larger group. *(An adaptation of this game, connected with next week's story can be found in Session 23 of One Big Story.)*

Make sure the children understand the hand gestures for the game:

Rock (clench your hand into a fist)

Paper (hold your hand out flat with fingers together)

Scissors (have your thumb,

ring finger and little finger tucked away and your index and middle fingers extended like the blades of scissors)

Tell them they are going to compete against one another by choosing one of the three items and doing its hand gesture on the count of three.

Each of the items wins over one of the others as follows:

Rock beats Scissors as it blunts them.

Scissors beats Paper as it cuts it.

Paper beats Rock as it covers it.

After a couple of practice runs get the children to divide into pairs and compete against one another. If both people choose the same item they can play again until they have a winner.

Get the children who were

(continued overleaf)

defeated to sit down. Those who are left in the game find a new partner and repeat the process.

Keep on doing this until you have a winner.

▶ **Strength Test**

You will need: weights or heavy objects, timer

Choose a couple of volunteers who think they are strong. Give each of them two heavy objects to hold, one in each hand. You could use weights if you have them, otherwise you can use tins of food or filled bottles (1 litre or more).

Get the volunteers to hold their arms straight out by their sides and challenge them to keep them in that position for a minute. You could use a video timer such as this one: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uo9dAIQR3g8> to add to the drama.

At the end of a minute (or sooner if both volunteers drop their arms before then) ask the volunteers how they found it. Was it easier or more difficult than they expected? What would help them be able to hold their object in that position for longer?

Get them each to choose a friend to help. Then ask them to hold their arms out with the objects in each hand once again, but this time their friend can support them by holding up their arms under the biceps.

See if they are able to hold their arms out for longer, or complete the challenge more easily.

Ask them what difference it made having someone to help.

▶ **Tower Building**

You will need: newspaper, sellotape, scissors, book

If you have a larger group,

divide the children into groups of four or five. Give each group some newspaper, sellotape and scissors, and challenge them to build a tower that is strong enough to hold a book on top for at least three seconds. The tower needs to be free-standing, not fixed to the table. Give them 5-10 minutes to complete the challenge and then test the towers to see if any of them are strong enough.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ **Recap**

Remind the children of how, after years of travelling in the wilderness, Joshua finally led the Israelite people into the land that God had promised to give them, and they were able to conquer the city of Jericho because they trusted in God.

▶ **Setting The Scene**

You would expect that this would be the happy ending. The Israelites' journey was over, and they had reached the land that God had given them.

Unfortunately, it didn't quite work out like that. There were lots of battles to be fought as there were other tribes in the land that didn't want them there.

Things went well for the Israelites when they listened to God and obeyed him, but they weren't good at doing this and after Joshua died the people turned away from God and started worshipping the other gods that the people in the land worshipped.

Reaching the Promised Land hadn't fixed the problem of sin. It was still a big issue that had to be dealt with.

The book of Judges tells the story of the Israelites during

this time. They had turned away from God, and there were consequences - at times God allowed them to be defeated by their enemies - but he still cared for them and he provided leaders for the people to help get them back on track. These leaders were called Judges and over the next few weeks we are going to hear about some of those Judges.

The first one we're going to think about is called Gideon.

▶ **Gideon's Story**

You will need: two plastic swords, pop-up tent (if you have one - an alternative could be a sheet or a blanket over a couple of chairs), words for Midianites (from additional document: Words for Midianites: Session 22), rams' horns (you could use party trumpets or simply roll sheets of card diagonally to form a horn shape and get the children to make the noise themselves)

Tell the story of Gideon - you could get the children to act it out.

(Choose child to be Gideon.)

God sent an angel to Gideon one day to give him a message. At this time the Israelites had been conquered by a tribe called the Midianites and they had been made to work as slaves for the last seven years. God sent the angel to Gideon with the message that he was the leader God was appointing to rescue the people. Gideon didn't really see himself as a mighty leader though. He thought "How can I rescue Israel? My family is the weakest family in our whole tribe, and I'm the youngest weakest person in my family."

Despite that, he was the one God had chosen so Gideon had to get an army together. He

knew the Midianites were pretty strong and powerful - they'd also got another couple of armies to join their side against the Israelites - and they'd set up camp nearby.

As we go through the story, look out for signs that Gideon was scared or worried about the task he faced.

(Choose two people to be Midianites - make sure they are people who are happy to read aloud. Give them swords and cards with their words, and get them to go to an area that represents their camp - a pop-up tent or chairs with a sheet or blanket over them.)

Gideon was quite scared, and he wanted to be sure the Israelites would win, so he spoke to God and said, "If you really are going to use me to rescue the Israelites, give me a sign to show me." Gideon took a wool fleece and said he was going to leave it out all night. In the morning, if the fleece was wet but the ground round about it was dry, he would know that God was going to help him. So he put the fleece out and in the morning it was just as he had said - the fleece was wet but the ground was dry.

So now Gideon was ready to fight the Midianites...

Actually no, he wasn't...

He was still pretty scared, so he said to God, "Please don't be angry with me but let me do one more test. I'll put the fleece out again tonight and this time I want the fleece to be dry but the ground to be wet. If that happens, I'll know you want me to lead the Israelites to fight against the Midianites." That night it happened just as Gideon had asked. The fleece was dry but the ground all around it was soaking wet.

Gideon knew God was with him and he wanted him to lead the people, so he got an army together - 32000 men in all.

(Tell all the rest of the children they can be in the army. If you have a very small group, you could use the images from additional document: Soldiers to represent the army. Use the seven sheets full of soldiers to represent the army and keep the final sheet with just two soldiers for later.)

They started to travel out to meet the Midianites but then God spoke to Gideon. He said, "Gideon, you have far too many men in your army. If I let this whole army fight the Midianites, then the Israelites will boast about their strength and think they won the battle all by themselves. Tell the people, "If anyone is scared to fight, he can go home.""

Gideon wasn't too sure about this idea but he asked the people how many of them were scared to fight. 22000 said they were scared and went off home, leaving only 10000. So that's less than a third of the army left!

(Send the majority of the children from the army back to sit down or take away five sheets of soldiers if you are using the pictures to leave only two sheets.)

The men who were left got ready to fight but then God spoke to Gideon again. "You've still got too many people. Take the men down to the river for a drink of water."

So Gideon did and God got him to split them into 2 groups - the ones who lay down and drank straight out of the river and the ones who scooped the water up in their hands to drink it. Only 300 men scooped the water up with their hands and God said to Gideon, "That's your army. I'll help you defeat

the Midianites with those 300 men."

(Choose two or three people to be in army. Send the other children to sit down. If you are using the pictures, replace the two sheets of soldiers with the final sheet showing two individual soldiers.)

That night, God spoke to Gideon and said, "If you still feel afraid to attack, go to the Midianite camp and listen to what they are saying."

So Gideon went to the edge of the camp and went up to one of the tents where he heard two of the Midianites talking.

(Get the children playing the Midianites to read their lines.)

Midianite 1: "I had a dream that a loaf of barley bread came tumbling into our camp. It hit a tent and knocked it flat."

Midianite 2: "That can only mean one thing - God is going to help Gideon and the Israelites to defeat us."

Gideon rushed back to the Israelite camp and shouted, "Get up! God will give us the victory!"

The men from the army got up and they each were given a ram's horn and a clay jar. (Give out rams' horns to the children in the army.) They surrounded the Midianite camp and, when Gideon gave the signal, they smashed their clay jars and they blew their horns and shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" (You could get all the children to join in with the shout.)

The Midianites rushed out of their tents in a panic and God confused them and made them fight against one another. Most of the Midianites were killed and those who weren't ran away, terrified, so amazingly God helped the Israelites and they didn't even

need to fight to win the battle!

▶ God's Story Video

You will need: equipment to play video

If you prefer not to use a drama to tell the story, you could use this video which summarises Gideon's story in around four minutes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U68cIMZSgvQ>



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

Talk together:

How do you think Gideon felt about his task of leading the Israelites? What signs are there that he might have been a bit scared at certain points?

Why do you think God kept asking him to cut down his army?

God wanted Gideon to trust him and to realise that when he won the battle it was because God was helping him, not because he had a great army. Gideon was pretty scared and at times he seems like quite a weak character, but God was with him and helped him to succeed.

Read out 2 Corinthians 12:9: "My grace is all you need, for my power is greatest when you are weak." (GNT)

This is something God said later in the Bible to a man called Paul, and it makes a lot of sense.

Gideon was in a situation where he knew he couldn't do it by himself, but he needed God's help. He asked for help and trusted God and as a result he was able to take on a big challenge and see God helping him. He was stronger than he could ever have been on his own because God was helping him.

The Israelites also had a problem they couldn't fix for themselves - the problem of sin. They didn't always realise that they were weak

and that they needed God's help. Often they would try to sort things out for themselves and the results were not good.

It's the same for us. Sometimes we have problems – situations where we feel weak, challenges that seem too big and we can't do it by ourselves. There's also the problem of sin which none of us can fix by ourselves, but God has dealt with that problem by sending Jesus to die, as we learned at Easter. God also has power to help us in other situations where we feel weak.

When we realise that we are weak and that we can't do things by ourselves, that is when we can ask God to help us and see how strong he is.

Think about situations where you feel weak. Maybe you struggle with something in school or getting on with someone in your family or in your class, or maybe you struggle to keep your temper or because there's something you are really scared of. We're all different in many of the things we struggle with, but all of us struggle with sin.

Lead the children in prayer, asking God to help and show his strength in situations where we are weak.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ Rams' Horn Craft

You will need: cardboard, sellotape, scissors, Bible verses (from additional document: Bible Verses), glue sticks, felt pens

You could get the children to make rams' horns to use as part of the drama. They could make the horns at the start of the session by rolling a sheet of cardboard diagonally and sticking it with tape. If they wish, they could decorate it with felt pens.

Then, after the story, they could stick on the Bible verse (2 Corinthians 12:9) and take it home as a reminder of the story.

▶ Stone Decorating

You will need: stones, permanent markers

The children could decorate stones with something to remind them of the story. It could be a picture, or it could be a single word like "Strength" or "Help".

Encourage them to take it home and put it somewhere they will see it regularly to remind them of God's strength in their weakness.

▶ Song: I Can Do All Things – Jim Bailey

You will need equipment to play music

This song ties in well with the theme for today: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6Fb1vxlyVM>

23. Strength



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

Judges 13-16

God calls Samson to lead the Israelites to victory over the Philistines



AIMS

To help the children reflect on the mistakes Samson made in using his strength

To help them reflect on their own strengths and to think about how they can use them well

The strengths and skills we have come from God and we should be seeking to see them as gifts from God and to use them in a way that pleases him and benefits others.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session. If you are pushed for time, focus on Judges 13:1-5 and Judges 16:4-30. Reflect:

- What are the mistakes Samson makes in the way he uses his strength?
- What are your strengths (gifts, skills or talents) and how can you use them for God?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Two truths and a lie

You will need: pens, paper (optional)

Get the children to come up with three statements about themselves - two that are true and one that is made-up. Get them to tell the group the three statements in a random order without saying which is which. See if the group can tell which statements are true and which is false.

If you have a large group, you

can divide them into smaller groups to play, or you can choose a few volunteers to share their statements with everyone and let the rest of the children vote on which one is false.

▶ Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament (Samson version)

You may have used the Rock, Paper, Scissors Tournament activity in the previous session of One Big Story. This is an alternative version introducing the characters from the story for today.

Instead of the hand gestures, teach the children actions for each of the characters in the game:

Samson: strong man pose

Delilah: pose with hands on

(continued overleaf)

hips

Lion: raise arms with hands forming claw shapes

Tell the children they are going to compete against one another by choosing one of the three characters and doing its action on the count of three.

Each of the characters wins over one of the others as follows:

The lion beats Delilah because it attacks her.

Samson beats the lion because he is super-strong.

Delilah beats Samson, and we'll find out how later in our story.

After a couple of practice runs get the children to divide into pairs and compete against one another. If both people choose the same character they can play again until they have a winner.

Get the children who were defeated to sit down. Those who are left in the game find a new partner and repeat the process.

Keep on doing this until you have a winner.

▶ **Thumb Wars**

Get the children to divide into pairs. They have to face their partner, then reach out with the same hand (left or right) and hook the four fingers of their hands together so that they are clasped tightly. Once they are ready, both players should chant the rhyme, "One, two, three, four, I declare a thumb war."

When they have completed the rhyme, the game begins. The aim is to hold their opponent's thumb down with their own for the length of time it takes to say, "One, two, three, four, I have won the thumb war."

You could have the winner from each pair finding a new partner

and repeating the game until you finish with one winner.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ **Recap**

Remind the children of the story so far. The Israelites got into the land that God promised them, but it hadn't fixed the problem of sin and they kept running into difficulties because they didn't obey God. During this time God provided leaders called judges. Last time we heard about Gideon and learned that in a lot of ways he seemed quite weak, but he was able to ask for God's help and know God's power working through him. Today we're going to think about another judge called Samson who was the opposite – he was known for being really strong.

▶ **Introduction to story** (skip if short of time)

Can you think of any examples of people who are very strong?

Pierre Gasnier was a French man who was really strong. He worked in a circus in the 1890s and he amazed people with his strength. He could rip a deck of cards in half with his bare hands and lift a weight that was almost twice his own weight!

(You can read about him here: <https://legendarystrength.com/pierre-gasnier/>)

Samson, the character we're thinking about today was a bit like that. The Bible tells us that once, when a lion attacked him, he killed it with his bare hands!

We're not all physically strong like Samson but all of us have strengths - things that we're good at. It could be maths or singing or writing or sports or

being a good friend. How we use those strengths is important, so let's see how Samson used his.

▶ **Samson's Story**

You will need: printed pictures (see below) or equipment to display pictures on PowerPoint

Tell the children the story, using pictures from <http://freebibleimages.org>

The numbers from 2 onwards in the script correspond with the slide numbers in the presentation here: <http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/samson-hair/> Instead of slide 1, you could use slide 6 from this link: <http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/samson-riddle/> to fill in the beginning of Samson's story.

1. Samson was marked out as someone special even before he was born. An angel appeared to his mother while she was pregnant with him and said that her son was to be dedicated to God. That meant he had never to eat any forbidden food, he had never to drink wine or any alcoholic drink and he had never to cut his hair, so by the time he grew up Samson had very, very long hair.

2. Samson's strength helped him to begin to defeat the Philistines but then something happened - he fell in love with a lady called Delilah.

3. The Philistines went to Delilah and they said to her, "Find out the secret of Samson's strength for us and we'll give you 1100 pieces of silver."

4. So Delilah said to Samson, "Please tell me the secret of your strength and what it would take to tie you up." Samson said, "If I was tied up with seven new bowstrings that have never been used, I

would be as weak as anyone else.”

5. So when he was sleeping Delilah got seven new bowstrings and tied him up. Some of the Philistines were hiding in the house and she woke him up shouting, “Samson, the Philistines have come to capture you!” but Samson snapped the bowstrings without any problem.

6. Delilah said to him afterwards “It’s not fair. You’re just making fun of me. Please tell me how you can be tied up securely.” Samson said “If you used brand new ropes to tie me up, I wouldn’t be able to get free.”

7. Once again, she tied him up while he was sleeping, got the Philistines into the house and woke him up shouting, “Samson, the Philistines have come to capture you!” but Samson snapped the ropes as if they were thread.

8. “Samson,” Delilah said later. “It’s not fair. You’re telling lies and making fun of me. Now tell me how I can tie you up.” “Well if you weave my hair into the fabric on your loom and tighten the shuttle, then I’d be trapped,” he said.

9. So when he fell asleep, she did this, got the Philistines into the house and shouted, “Samson, the Philistines have come to capture you.” But Samson woke up and just pulled his hair out without any bother.

10. Now Delilah was really in a bad mood! She said to Samson, “How can you say you love me if you won’t share your secrets with me? You’ve made fun of me three times and you still haven’t told me why you’re so strong.” She went on at him day after day, constantly nagging at him until eventually she wore him down. He got

sick of it and he finally said, “I’m strong because I was dedicated to God as a baby and I’ve never cut my hair. If my hair was cut, my strength would leave me.”

11. Delilah realised that this time he was telling the truth, so she called for the Philistines to come back one more time. They came in while Samson was asleep, she got one of them to shave off his hair, and then she shouted “Samson, the Philistines have come to capture you.” Samson jumped up, thinking he could get free like before, but his strength had left him.

12. He was captured by the Philistines and they took him away as a prisoner where they made him work grinding grain.

13. A while later, the Philistines were having a festival. They offered sacrifices to their god Dagon and they praised him saying, “Our god has given us victory over Samson.”

14. The people asked for Samson to be brought out so they could make fun of him, so he was brought out into their temple.

15. He said to the servant who was with him, “Put my hands against the pillars that hold up the temple. I want to rest them.” The temple was filled with 3000 people all laughing at Samson and he prayed to God and said, “Give me my strength back one more time. Let me die with the Philistines.”

16. He pushed with all his might against the pillars and the temple came crashing down, killing him and all the Philistines who were there.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

Talk together:

Do you think Samson used his strength well or not? Why do you think that?

What mistakes do you think he made?

Samson’s strength was a gift from God. It was God who made him strong. But although he was physically strong, he had weaknesses too. His strength sometimes made him forget his need to rely on God. Sometimes he used his strength to make fun of people and make himself look good instead of using it to help people and do what God wanted.

Like Gideon, Samson was someone God chose and used as a leader, but neither of them were perfect. The Israelites were still waiting for the perfect leader – the one who was going to rescue them once and for all. They were waiting for Jesus.

▶ Prayer Activity

You will need: small piece of card for each child, pens or pencils

Give each child a small piece of card. Get them to think about strengths that they have, and to write or draw something to represent them.

It could be subjects they do well in at school, sports or hobbies they are good at, or aspects of their personality – good at listening to others, trustworthy or friendly...

You could give them a chance to discuss this together and point out what they see as strengths in one another.

The Bible tells us that God made each of us unique, with different strengths and skills.

What difference would it make to think about the strengths you have as a gift from God? How might that change your attitude towards them or the way you use them?

Lead the children in prayer, asking God to help them to use their strengths in the right way – a way that honours him and benefits other people.

If an idea of how to use their strengths well comes to mind, encourage them to draw or write that on the other side of the card as a reminder.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ Bookmark Craft

You will need: strips of cardboard with a hole punched in one end, wool, coloured pens or pencils, scissors

The children could begin this craft when they arrive at the group. Give each of them a bookmark and let them choose some pieces of wool to loop through the hole and to plait to form a tassel representing Samson's hair.

Later on, once they have heard the story, you could either let them use the bookmarks for the prayer activity above, or you could get them to decorate their bookmark with a Bible verse as a reminder that the gifts we have come from God: "Every good and perfect gift is from above." (James 1:17 NIV)

24. Listening



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

1 Samuel 3

God speaks to Samuel



AIMS

To help the children understand some of the ways God speaks to us, especially through the Bible

To encourage them to be open to listen to what he is saying

God speaks - he spoke to Samuel and he speaks to us today. As we get to know him, we can learn to listen and to hear his voice.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- When have you heard God speak to you? (If you can think of an example of God speaking to you through the Bible, that will be helpful for the session.)
- How can we learn to listen and to recognise God's voice? Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Pass the Message Game

Have the children sitting in a circle. Choose one person to start the game by coming up with a short message – just one sentence. They whisper it into the ear of the person on their left, then that person whispers it to the person on their left, and the message travels round the whole circle. Each person is only allowed to whisper the message once so if the person receiving the message is not sure what was said, encourage them to do their best to pass on what they heard even if it

sounds strange. When the message reaches the last person, get them to say it out loud and compare it with the original message. You can then choose another person to start again with a new message.

▶ Sound Clip Quiz

You will need: equipment to play sound or video

Run a quiz which involves the children listening and identifying particular sounds. There are several of these ready-made on YouTube, for example:

Guess The Sound Game-
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IzsssS_I_2Y

A list of answers is provided at the end of the video. You may want to make a note of these and just use part of the quiz with the children as there are

(continued overleaf)

22 sounds. You could play the video, pausing after each sound to get them to give their answers, or you could get them to write down the answers and go through them at the end.

Guess The Disney Song

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ChrRWq7fmQ>

In this quiz, the answers come up on the screen after the song has played for ten seconds, so you may want to pause it after each song to allow the children to give their answers.

Guess The Movie Theme

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PeFrFunDngc>

In this quiz, the answers come up on the screen after the music has played for fifteen seconds, so you may want to pause it after each piece to allow the children to give their answers.

Alternatively you could create your own quiz by making a playlist of songs and playing the children a few seconds of each one.

▶ Hum That Tune

Choose one person to start and get them to hum a tune without saying what it is. It could be a nursery rhyme/ a TV theme/ a pop song... any tune that is likely to be familiar to others.

See how quickly the rest of the group are able to guess the tune and allow the person who guessed first to hum the next tune.

If you have a larger group, you could divide the children into teams and give each team a time limit (one or two minutes) to see how many tunes they can identify.

▶ Sword Drill

You will need: a Bible for each child (ideally multiple copies of the same version)

This activity is only suitable for groups who are used to looking

up the Bible.

Give each child a Bible, then call, "Sheath swords," which means they put the Bible under their arm. Call, "Draw swords!" which means they hold their Bible in the air. Tell them the reference of the verse you want them to find and get them to repeat it back to you. Shout, "Charge!" which means the children should try to look up the verse as quickly as possible.

Get them to stand up when they have found it so that you can see who is first, and then get them to read the verse to the group.

(Remember to make sure they are happy to read and, if not, let someone else volunteer to do it.)

Some verses you could use, which would connect with today's theme are:

John 10:27, 2 Timothy 3:16, Hebrews 1:1-2, Psalm 19:1-2

Another game that would fit with this session is the Guess The Voice Game from Session 12 of One Big Story.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap

Remind the children that they have been learning about a time when the Israelites were living in the Promised Land but were struggling to obey God. They were being led by people called the Judges. We have thought about two of those judges - Gideon and Samson. There were lots more judges and we don't have time to think about all of them, but we are going to think today about Israel's final judge who was called Samuel. The story we are going to think about takes place before he became a judge -

when he was a young child.

▶ Samuel's Story

You will need: simple costumes for Samuel and Eli (for example, a headdress or robe; if you have a white wig or beard, you could use this for Eli)

Samuel's mum was a lady called Hannah. For a long time she and her husband weren't able to have any children. Hannah really wanted to have a child so she prayed to God about it. She prayed and prayed and prayed some more, and she promised God that if she had a child, she would dedicate the child to God and that they would serve God.

Finally her prayer was answered and she had a son whom she called Samuel. When Samuel was old enough she took him to the Tabernacle, the place where the people went to worship God, and Samuel stayed there with Eli, the priest, helping him with his duties. One night something really exciting happened to Samuel.

(Choose children to be Samuel and Eli and give them their costumes. Get them to act out the story as you tell it. Have another leader ready to play the part of God's voice by reading the words marked in bold.)

It was night time and Samuel and Eli were both asleep in the Tabernacle, when suddenly Samuel was woken up by a voice calling his name.

Samuel, Samuel.

Samuel thought it must be Eli calling him, so he went to Eli and asked what he wanted.

Eli had been asleep, but he woke up and was confused by what Samuel said. He hadn't called him. He told him he must have imagined it and to go back to bed, so Samuel did.

But, just as he was drifting off

to sleep, the voice came again.

Samuel, Samuel.

"I definitely heard Eli call this time," he thought, so he went to see what Eli wanted. "What is it?" he asked Eli.

Eli woke up again and told Samuel "I didn't call you. Go back to bed." It must have been pretty annoying to keep getting woken up like that.

Samuel went back to bed. But just as he was drifting off to sleep the voice came again.

Samuel, Samuel.

Once again, he went to Eli to ask him what he wanted, and again Eli said that he hadn't called Samuel.

Then Eli realised what could be happening. Maybe it was God speaking to Samuel!

He told Samuel this and said to go back to bed, but if the voice spoke again to say "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

So Samuel went back to bed and sure enough the voice spoke again.

Samuel, Samuel.

So Samuel replied, "Speak, Lord, your servant is listening."

And God spoke to Samuel. He gave him a message to pass on to Eli. It was difficult message. God was saying that he wasn't happy with the way Eli was bringing up his sons. They were doing bad things and Eli wasn't stopping them.

In the morning Eli asked Samuel what God had said so Samuel told him. Eli realised that the words were true and that what Samuel was saying must have come from God.

That was the first time Samuel heard God speak to him, but he became really good at listening to God and as well as being a judge, he became known as a

prophet- someone who hears God speak and passes his messages on to others.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ **God Speaks Today**

You will need: pictures (from additional document: God speaks today pictures)

Christians believe that God can still speak to people today. It's not usually in a voice we can hear in the way that Samuel did or the way that you can hear my voice just now, but there are ways God can speak to us.

That's important because we've talked a lot already about prayer and the idea of talking to God. (You could ask the children if they can remember any of the different things we can pray about, e.g. thanking God, saying sorry, asking for help.) **Prayer is meant to be a conversation and that doesn't work very well when one person does all the talking!**

So, how does God speak to us today?

(Go through the following points, using the pictures as visual aids.)

The main way is through the Bible. Christians believe it is God's Word, the way God communicates with us. It teaches us about who God is so that we can know him and be in relationship with him, and it helps us to know how he wants us to live. Sometimes when we read the Bible it seems as if it is speaking right to us and to our situation. (If possible, give an example of a time when God has spoken to you through the Bible.)

Another way is through the world around us - that can show us things about God. We can look at the sea or at the stars in the sky or at a beautiful sunset and remember that God created it all. It can show us things about his strength and power or the way he cares for the world and for us.

Sometimes God can speak to us through another person when they say the words we really need to hear.

Sometimes it is when we pray and ask for God's help - maybe we have a difficult decision and when we pray he helps us to know what to do.

There are other ways as well, but those are some examples. It's not always easy to know when God is speaking or what he is saying, but if we learn to listen like Samuel we can get used to hearing God and learn to do it better. We recognise the voices we hear a lot. If you hear a close friend or family member say a few words you know right away who it is, but that's because you've spent a lot of time with them and got to know them. As we get to know God more, we can get better at hearing his voice.

▶ **Prayer**

You will need: speech bubbles printed (from additional document: Speech Bubbles) - optional

Point out the prayer that Samuel used, "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." Encourage the children to pray that if they want to and then give them a short time (30 seconds to a minute) to be quiet and to reflect on what they have heard.

If you have a little more time, you could lay out some speech bubbles (from additional document: Speech Bubbles) which contain a statement

about how the children may be feeling, e.g. I'm worried, I'm sad, I'm happy. They have a Bible verse on the reverse, which relates to that feeling. You could let the children pick one that is relevant to them and let them take a moment to read the Bible verse and reflect on it.

Lead the children in prayer, asking God to help them to know him more and to learn to recognise his voice.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ Daily Bible Reading

You will need: copies of Mark's Gospel, Bible reading plans from additional document: Through Mark's Gospel in 80 Days

Depending on the stage your group are at, this might be a good opportunity to encourage them that they can get to know God more and learn to recognise his voice by spending time reading the Bible each day. The leaflet in the additional document: Through Mark's Gospel in 80 Days gives a simple reading plan to work through the Gospel in short sections. You could offer this along with a copy of Mark's Gospel to those who are interested. Make sure you check that this is ok with the head teacher first!

▶ Video

You will need: equipment to play video

This video from Saddleback Kids is a fun way to tell or recap Samuel's story in under two minutes: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g9albNjFjWk>

25. Heart



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

1 Samuel 16:1-13, Psalm
139:13-18

David is chosen as king



AIMS

To help the children reflect on the fact that appearances don't always reflect reality

To help them understand that God sees what is inside and that is what matters to him, that no matter what others may say about us or what we may think of ourselves, he looks on us with love

God chose David as king because he knew what was in his heart. God knows what we are really like inside and that is what matters to him more than how we look on the surface.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What is the difference between the way people tend to see things and the way God sees things?
- How do you feel about the fact that God sees the heart and not just the outward appearance? Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

► Farmer, Farmer Game

Choose one child to be the farmer. Get them to stand at one end of the hall while all the rest of the children form a long line along the opposite end of the hall. The farmer and the line of children face one another, and the children in the line call out together: "Farmer, Farmer, may we cross your golden river?"

The farmer responds; "Only if..." and adds something relating to their appearance, e.g. "Only if you have red hair",

"Only if you have glasses", "Only if you're wearing blue," etc.

All the children who fit the description the farmer has given can cross the river safely (walk to the other end of the hall). The children who don't fit the description then have to try to cross the river too, but the farmer will try to catch them. If they are caught by the farmer, they have to stay at the farmer's end of the hall and help with catching people on the next round.

► Crisps Challenge

You will need: blindfolds, three or four packets of crisps in different flavours (before coming to the group, open the packets carefully at the bottom, switch the crisps into different bags, and reseal them with some rolled up

(continued overleaf)

tape)

Get one or two of the children to volunteer to take part in a challenge. Say that you are going to blindfold them and give them some crisps to eat, and they have to identify the flavours. Make you sure you check for any allergies.

Show the other children the bags as you let the child(ren) taste them but tell them not to say anything about whether they think they are right or wrong. Tell them that you will keep score and reveal how many were correctly identified after all the flavours have been tasted.

The children watching will probably think the child(ren) tasting them are getting all the answers wrong but, actually, appearances were deceptive. It is likely to be those tasting the crisps who really have a better idea of which flavour they are.

EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap and intro to story

Remind the children that they have been learning about the time when the Israelites were living in the Promised Land. They were struggling to follow God and obey him, so God provided various leaders, known as judges. None of these leaders was perfect but God used them to help his people turn back to him and defeat their enemies.

The last judge was Samuel. We heard last time about how he learned to listen to God's voice when he was just a young boy. He grew up and became Israel's judge but, when Samuel was getting older and planning to retire, the Israelites decided that they didn't want to have a judge any more. They wanted to have a king like the people in

the other countries round about. God chose a man called Saul to be king and at first he was a good king but then he started to turn away from God so God decided he was going to replace him. God sent Samuel to see a man called Jesse and told him that one of his sons was going to be the next king.

▶ Story - David is chosen as king

You will need: sheep toy, small jar or flask to represent jar of anointing oil, image of David and his brothers (from additional document: David and brothers) - optional

Choose eight children to be Jesse's sons and ask them to form a line in order of height and stand facing the rest of the children. If you have less than eight children, you could allow all of them to take part - have some as the eldest two or three sons and one as David; you can imagine the other sons in the middle of the line. Alternatively, you could use the image from the additional document: David and brothers to tell the story. Have the small figure representing David folded behind the others until he comes into the story.

There was a man called Jesse and he had eight sons. One day Samuel was sent to Jesse's house. God had told him that one of Jesse's sons was to be the next King of Israel and Samuel had to go and anoint him.

So Samuel set out for Jesse's house and when he arrived, Jesse got his sons to line up in order of age to meet Samuel. There was one son that wasn't there though. That was the youngest son David who was a shepherd and he was off in the fields looking after the sheep. *(Give the smallest child a toy sheep to hold and send them to stand off at the side of the room.)*

Samuel came in and he looked at the first son who was called Eliab. *(As you go through the story, work your way along the line of children, pointing out each one in turn.)* **He was tall and strong and handsome. Samuel thought he'd make an ideal king- he looked the part. But then God spoke to Samuel and he said, "Don't judge by his good looks or his height because this is not the one I have chosen. People judge others by how they look but I judge people by what is in their heart."**

So Samuel moved on to the next son, Abinadab. Again he thought Abinadab looked just right to be a king but again God said, "No, this is not the one I've chosen." Samuel moved on to the next son, Shimea, but he wasn't the son that God had chosen either. Samuel worked all the way down the line of sons and each one of them had something good about them which made Samuel think maybe this one would be the king, but none of them was the one God had chosen. Samuel wondered if he'd made a mistake and come to the wrong place. He said to Jesse, "Have you any other sons?" and Jesse said, "Well, there is my youngest son but he's out in the fields looking after the sheep."

"Send for him," said Samuel. "We must not sit down to eat until he arrives."

So Jesse sent for his youngest son David. *(Get the child playing David to come over to join the others.)*

When Samuel saw him, he thought there was no way this could be the next king. He was just a boy - he was far too young and small. But Samuel asked God and God said, "This is the one I've chosen to be king."

So Samuel got his flask of olive

oil and he poured it on David's head to anoint him, (*mime doing this*) which was what they did when a new king was chosen. Then Samuel went back home. David didn't become king right away but he knew from that point on that he was the one God had chosen to be the next king of Israel.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

You will need pictures of people (from additional document: people pictures)

Ask the children: **Why do you think God chose David to be king?**

Although he was just a young boy, God could see what he was like inside. Read 1 Samuel 16v7 - God says, "People judge others by what they look like, but I judge people by what is in their hearts."

If you did the Crisps Challenge above you could refer back to that - it is not what things look like on the outside that really matters, but what is inside.

Show the children some pictures of unfamiliar people.

What words would you use to describe these people? What things can we know about these people by looking at them? (e.g. we can get an idea of their age, we can maybe have an idea of their mood at the time the photo was taken)

What things are impossible to know just by looking at them? (e.g. what they're really thinking and feeling, what their personality is like, what has happened in their lives)

It's easy to make judgements about people just by looking at

them, but it's not fair to do that. I'm sure none of us like it when people judge us without getting to know us.

The Bible says that God knows what each of us are like inside and our character is much more important to him than what we look like or how we seem to others.

▶ Reflection Card Activity

You will need: Reflection Card for each child (from additional document: Reflection Cards), pens or pencils, Bible

Give each child a reflection card. Get them to fold it in half so that the picture of the figure is on the outside and the picture of the heart is on the inside. Give them a moment to think about words that would describe them on the outside - words to do with their appearance or words that others would use to describe them - and get them to write or draw those around the figure on the front of the card.

Then get them to open the card and think about words that would describe them on the inside - how they feel or what they think they're really like.

Sometimes it can feel like people judge us without getting to know us and sometimes they can say nasty things about us.

Sometimes we can feel bad about ourselves when we look inside. All of us make mistakes at times and none of us is perfect, but when God looks at us, he does it with love - no matter what other people think of us or what we think of ourselves, and no matter what wrong things we have done.

David did some good things, but he also did some terrible things. These are some words, he wrote, talking about how God knows us and loves us.

Read Psalm 139:13-18

The Bible teaches that God knows us even better than we know ourselves so we can be honest with him. Because he loves us, we can go to him as we are, and he will change our hearts so that we can be right with him. Because of Jesus' death on the cross, which we thought about last term, we can be forgiven for the things we have done wrong by trusting in Jesus. If we ask God, he will change our hearts so that we can live in a way that pleases him more and more.

Lead the children in prayer.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ **Song: Man looks on the outside by Nigel Hemming**

You will need: equipment to play music

This song ties in well with the theme for this session: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoQwSChEhtU>

26. Giants



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

1 Samuel 17:1-51

David fights against
Goliath



AIMS

To encourage the children that God is bigger and more powerful than any situation we face

To help them see that through his death on the cross, Jesus defeated the biggest giant of all – sin

God is powerful. He provided a champion for the Israelites in David, and he provides a champion for us in Jesus.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- What situations cause you fear or seem too big to face?
- What does this passage teach us about God's power in these situations?
- How does David's story point to Jesus?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

▶ Screaming Toes

Get everyone to stand in a circle. Tell them to look down at their toes and then on the count of three, everyone has to look up at the face of someone else in the circle. If two people find that they have both chosen one another, and so are making eye contact with one another, they have to scream. Then they sit down and are eliminated from the game. Keep playing until you have a winner. (If you begin with an even number of players you will end with two winners.)

▶ Goliath Game

For this game you will need a large space where the children can run about.

Choose one child to be Goliath and get them to stand in the middle of the hall. Everyone else gathers round Goliath – make sure that they are gathered closely. Goliath then calls out words at random. The rest of the children have to stay where they are until the word Goliath is called. When they hear the word Goliath, the rest of the children have to run away while Goliath tries to catch them. The first person who is caught by Goliath takes their place as Goliath for the next round.

▶ Minute To Win It Challenges

Choose volunteers to compete in one-minute challenges. Some examples

(continued overleaf)

are listed in Session 13 of One Big Story and you can find a longer list of ideas here: <https://birthdayinspire.com/minute-to-win-it-games/>



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Recap

Last time we heard about David being chosen as king of the Israelites. He didn't become king right away, but he knew that one day he would. For the moment, David was still just a young boy, but all the time he was learning about God and learning things that would help him to live well as a leader. Today we're going to hear one of the most famous stories in the Bible.

▶ David's Story

You will need: words for children to read (from additional document: David and Goliath words), plastic sword for Goliath

Tell the story of David and Goliath. You could get the children to act it out.

Choose children to be David, Goliath and Saul. You can give them words to read (from additional document: David and Goliath Words) if you have children who will be happy to read aloud, or alternatively you could include the characters' words as you tell the story and let the children mime. Divide the rest of the children into two groups to be the Israelites and the Philistines. Have the groups facing one another. Saul is with the Israelites and Goliath is with the Philistines. Have David standing off to the side for the moment.

The Israelites had a problem. The Philistine army had come against them and wanted to fight them. They were stuck in a situation where

the Israelites were on one side of the valley and the Philistines were on the other. The Philistines were really fierce, and the Israelites were really scared. *(Get the children to do appropriate facial expressions.)*

But the even bigger problem for the Israelites was that the Philistines had a champion fighter- a man called Goliath. He was massive. He was nine feet tall and he was extremely fierce and scary. He came out before the Israelites and set them a challenge.

Goliath: We don't all need to fight. Choose one man to come and fight me. If he wins, we will be your slaves, but if I win you will all be our slaves.

The Israelites were terrified, and no one was willing to fight Goliath, so they waited. This went on for forty days - every morning and every night Goliath strutted in front of the Israelites, making fun of them because no one was brave enough to fight him.

David was still a young boy - too young to be in the army - but some of his older brothers were in the army. One day David's dad sent David to take some food to his brothers.

(Get the child playing David to go and join the Israelites.)

He saw what was happening and he saw Goliath making fun of the people. David was furious.

David: Who is this man to make fun of God?

David's brothers weren't happy to see him. They said he should be at home looking after the sheep. But David went up to King Saul and spoke to him.

David: I'll do it. I'll fight the giant.

Saul laughed at David.

Saul: Don't be silly. You're just a boy. Goliath has been fighting men for years. There's no way you can win.

David insisted that he would go and fight. He said that God had always kept him safe when he was out in the fields with his sheep and he had to fight off lions and bears, and he knew that God would keep him safe now.

Saul gave David his armour to put on to protect him, but it was far too big and heavy for David and he wasn't used to wearing armour. It wasn't helping him - it was holding him back - so he decided to go without. Instead he got his sling and went to the river and picked up five little stones. That was what he used to defend himself when he was out in the fields. He headed across to fight Goliath.

Goliath laughed when he saw David coming. How could this little boy think he stood a chance? But David spoke confidently to him.

David: You might come with a sword and a shield, but I come to you in the name of the Lord. He will help us win this battle.

They moved towards each other. David put a stone into his sling, swung it round and round and then launched it at Goliath. The stone hit Goliath in the forehead and he fell face down on the ground, unconscious. David ran over, took Goliath's own sword and used it to cut off his head. God had protected David and helped him to win the battle because he put his trust in him.



REFLECT & RESPOND

▶ Reflection

You will need: 2 litre plastic bottle with a picture of Goliath

stuck onto it (you could print out the picture found at slide 4 on this link: <http://freebibleimages.org/illustrations/isc-soldiers-guards/>), post-it notes, pens or pencils, newspaper rolled into balls

Place the bottle with the picture of Goliath in front of the children on the floor or on a table.

In the passage from the Bible, the Israelites were facing a big threat. The challenge of facing Goliath seemed too big for them and it felt like there was nothing they could do, but God provided David to save them.

Sometimes there can be things in our lives, or that we see in the world around us, that can feel a bit like that. They just seem too big.

It could be illness or problems in our family; it could be things we see in the world like poverty or homelessness. Think of some other examples together.

One problem we all face is the problem of sin. That is a problem that is too big for us to fix by ourselves, but God sent Jesus to save us.

Get the children to choose one of these things and to write or draw it on a post-it note. Then they can stick their post-it note onto the bottle representing Goliath.

What was the difference in David's attitude compared to the rest of the Israelites?

Why was his attitude so different?

The rest of the Israelites were scared, but David was brave. The others were focusing on the size of the challenge, but David was focusing on God. He didn't like that Goliath was making fun of God and his people, and he knew that no

matter how big and powerful Goliath was, God's power was stronger.

Although we still face problems today that can be really hard and scary, Christians believe that God's power is still stronger than any of those things and that he can help us. That doesn't mean he always takes our problems away. Sometimes he does, but other times he is with us in the problems, helping us to face them and helping us to know what to do. The main thing God has done for us is sending Jesus to defeat the biggest giant of all – sin.

Let the children take turns throwing balls of newspaper at the bottle to knock it down, encouraging them as they do so to think of the things they wrote or drew on their post-it notes, but also to remember that the Bible teaches that God is bigger than those things.

Lead the children in prayer, asking for God's help in facing difficult situation and thanking him for his power.

▶ Stone Painting

You will need: stones, acrylic paints, paint pots/ palettes, paintbrushes, containers for water, wipes or paper towels for cleaning up. As an alternative to paint, you could use permanent markers such as Sharpies.

Give each of the children a stone and let them paint something on it that will remind them that God is bigger than the problems we face. It could be a word, for example: God, power, Jesus, cross. It could be a picture of part of the story, or it could be a pattern or design – anything that will serve as a reminder for them. You could encourage them to keep the stone somewhere they will see it regularly to remind them that God is with them – for example, in their desk or pencil case at

school, or in their room at home. You may want to keep the stones until they dry and give them to the children the following week.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

▶ God's Story Video

You will need: equipment to play video

There are two versions of this video – one which includes the whole story including David cutting off Goliath's head, and one which misses out this part and may be more suitable for younger groups or children who are more sensitive.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7zLAcUZkxHA&list=PLactlIEFMk_I0Lq05DebtTLDjFcLajXGB&index=31&t=0s (full version)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L5MPhNtGqwl&list=PLactlIEFMk_I0Lq05DebtTLDjFcLajXGB&index=31 (most of the story)

▶ Songs

You will need: equipment to play music

These songs fit well with this session's theme.

Our God Is A Great Big God: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSTfM8M2Md8>

Fully Rely On God: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5fqK35DEIQ>

27. Wisdom



BIBLE STORY / REFERENCE

1 Kings 3,
2 Timothy 3:15-17

God gives Solomon
wisdom



AIMS

To help the children
reflect on the value of
wisdom and to
understand that true
wisdom comes from God

Wisdom comes from God. He gave Solomon the wisdom to rule well as king, and he gives us wisdom as we get to know him through the Bible.



PREP FOR LEADERS

Read through the Bible passages for this session and reflect:

- Why do you think Solomon asks God for wisdom?
- Is there a time when you have known God giving you wisdom?
- How does the Bible give us wisdom for living?

Take some time to pray for your group.



GAMES / INTRO ACTIVITIES

Choose one of the following activities to introduce today's theme:

► Under Pressure

You will need: a spray bottle filled with water

Get the group to stand in a circle and have a leader standing in the middle of the circle holding a water spray.

The leader chooses a category, e.g. fruits, sports, chocolate bars... They also have to choose an item from that category to be the taboo word, but they should not tell anyone what that word is.

Go round the circle with each

person in turn saying an item that fits with the category. If they say something that doesn't fit the category, if they say the taboo word, if they repeat something that has already been said, or if they hesitate for more than a few seconds, the leader sprays water in their face.

Choose a new leader to go into the middle of the circle (this can be one of the children) and pick a new category.

► Lateral Thinking Puzzles

Challenge the children to solve these tricky problems:

1. There are six eggs in a basket and six people each take one. How can it be that there is still an egg left in the basket?

Answer- The final person takes the egg in the basket.

2. A police officer sees a truck driver going the wrong way down a one-way street but he does not stop him. Why?

Answer- The truck driver is walking down the street.

3. Train A and Train B are travelling along a railway track 3000 miles long. Train A is travelling at 70mph from the east coast to the west coast and Train B is travelling at 80 mph from the west coast to the east coast. Which train will be furthest from the west coast when they meet?

Answer- They will both be the same distance from the west coast when they meet.

4. Sarah is trapped in a room which has three exits:

Door 1- guarded by a deadly lion

Door 2- the door is constructed from magnifying glass and the sun instantly fries anyone or anything nearby

Door 3- on the other side are lots of poisonous snakes

Which door should she use?

Answer- She should wait until night time when there is no sun and use Door 2.

5. Five pieces of coal, a carrot and a scarf are lying on the grass. No-one put them there but there is a good reason why they are there. What is it?

Answer- Someone had built a snowman and used the items to decorate it. When it melted the items were left behind.

▶ One Big Story Recap

You will need: cards (from additional document: One Big Story Recap Cards)

Since this is the last session for year 1 of One Big Story, you may want to take some time to recap the story so far.

Before the session, hide the cards around the room. If you have a large group you may want to split the children into teams. You could print the cards on different colours of paper for each group.

Get the children to go one at a time (or one child from each team) to find one of the cards and bring it back to the group. Their challenge is to find all eight cards and to sort them into the correct order as quickly as possible.



EXPLORING THE BIBLE

▶ Solomon's Story

You will need: baby doll, toy sword, cloak and crown

Imagine that you're at home in bed, you're fast asleep and you're dreaming. In that dream suddenly God appears before you and asks you "What do you want? Ask me for anything you want and I'll give it to you." What would you ask for? (Get some answers from the children.)

This actually happened to a man called Solomon. Solomon was one of the kings of the Israelites, God's people. Last week we heard about David who defeated the giant Goliath. David went on to be king and Solomon was his son, so after David died Solomon became king, and God appeared to him in a dream and asked him this question.

What do you think Solomon asked for?

As a king there were lots of things he could have asked for - for lots of wealth and riches, for a long life, to be really famous, to have the power to defeat his enemies - but he asked for wisdom - help in knowing the right thing to do and to be able to make good

and fair decisions as king. God was pleased and said he would give Solomon what he asked for.

Although this was a dream, it came true. God did give Solomon great wisdom and he needed it because he had some difficult situations to deal with and hard decisions to make as king.

Tell the story of the two ladies coming to Solomon arguing over the baby. You could have a cloak and crown for Solomon and a baby doll, and get some of the children to act it out, taking on the roles of Solomon and the two women.

One day, two women came to Solomon to ask him to settle an argument they were having.

One of them said to him, "King Solomon, this woman and I live in the same house. I gave birth to this baby and she had a baby a few days later. But during the night, while we were sleeping, her baby died. I was still sleeping and she took my baby from me and put her dead baby beside me. She says that this baby is hers and the dead baby is mine but she's lying. This is my baby!"

But the other lady said, "No, this baby is mine. The dead baby belongs to her."

Both women kept on arguing and insisting that the living baby was hers. They wanted Solomon to sort it out for them. Do you have any ideas what Solomon could do? How could he solve the problem?

Solomon thought and then he said, "Bring me a sword."

His servant brought him a sword. (Give a sword to the king.)

Then Solomon said, "Cut this baby in two and give half to each woman." (Take the sword

and raise it as if about to cut the baby in two.)

Immediately the first woman cried out, “No, please don’t kill the baby. Give him to her if you have to, but please don’t kill him.”

The other lady said, “No, cut the baby in half. That will be fair.”

King Solomon said, “Don’t kill the baby. Give the child to the first woman. She is his real mother.” *(Take the baby and give it to the other woman.)*

The people were amazed by Solomon’s wisdom.

How did that help him know who was the real mother? She loved her baby and didn’t want him to be killed no matter what.

(Let the children playing the parts sit back down.)

Solomon was a good king and a wise king, but he was not a perfect king. The Israelites were still waiting for the perfect king to come – someone who was going to deal with the problem of sin that had begun so long ago when people disobeyed God. They were waiting for Jesus.



REFLECT & RESPOND

► Wisdom from the Bible

For Christians, wisdom starts with knowing God.

Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17 – **this is a letter from Paul, one of the leaders in the early church, to a younger man called Timothy. He writes about the importance of getting to know God more through the Bible.**

“You have been taught the holy Scriptures from childhood, and

they have given you the wisdom to receive the salvation by trusting in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong, and teaches us to do what is right. God uses it to prepare and equip his people to do every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:15-17 NLT)

As we get to know God more, he can give us wisdom for difficult situations we might face just like he did for Solomon.

Lead the children in prayer asking God to help them know him better and give them wisdom.

You could ask permission from the school to offer Gospels to the children who are interested so that they can begin reading the Bible for themselves. This might also be a nice gift for P7s who are moving on from the group. Session 24 of One Big Story contains an additional document: Through Mark’s Gospel in 80 Days, which you could give the children along with a copy of Mark’s Gospel if you haven’t given them this already.



ADDITIONAL IDEAS

► Review One Big Story

You will need: flip chart paper, pens

If you have time, you could give the children a chance to reflect on what they have learned from One Big Story so far.

You could have sheets of flip chart paper with headings such as:

Stories I remember

Things I have learned about God

Questions I have

My favourite part

Give the children some pens and let them write their responses. You could either let them do this individually or they could discuss their answers in a group. If you have a large group, you could split them into smaller groups and give each group one of the sheets. After a couple of minutes you can get them to pass the sheet round to the next group until each group have had them all.

Make sure you take a note of questions the children have so that you can look at addressing these in the group at some point.