Samson Receives Strength From God Judges 15:9-16; 16:4-30

Third- and fourth-graders enjoy challenges but also want to succeed at what they do. They know which things they can do well and are willing to do those things. You'll want to encourage them to try new things, helping them only as much as they let you. Allowing kids to try something new and to succeed on their own will help them be ready and willing to try something new again in the future.

LESSON  WHAT CHILDREN DO  SUPPLIES  EASY PREP

1  Getting Started  You Can, Toucan (about 10 min.) Tell their friends what they can do.  colored construction paper, scissors, gel pens, tape or glue sticks, stapler, elastic string, sticky notes  Cut colored construction paper into 2x3-inch strips. Each child will need at least 10 strips in a variety of colors.

2  Bible Exploration  Samson: God’s Gift to Israel (about 25 min.) Try to create an unbreakable cord, and play a game to find out how tough it was for Samson to keep his secret.  Bibles, 1-yard length of rope, scissors  Teacher Pack: lanyard cord  Remove the lanyard cord from the Teacher Pack, and cut the following lengths: a 6-inch piece for every two kids, a 1-foot piece for every two kids, and a 1-foot piece for each child.

Key Verse “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).

Weaving Faith Into Life Kids will use their gifts to serve God and others.

Bible Point God gives us gifts to serve him.

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.
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| 3 Weaving Faith Into Life | A Gift Well Used  
(about 25 min.)  
Learn the Key Verse, write newspaper articles about using their abilities to serve others, and make something to keep their gifts in as reminders to use them. | Bibles, CD player, Bible Truth Sleuth, pens, 1 envelope per child, paper, markers, scissors, copies of the lyrics (at the end of this lesson)  
**Teacher Pack:** CD | Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book. Cut slips of paper; you’ll need about six per child. |
| 4 Lasting Impressions | Daily Challenges  
(about 5 min.)  
Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God’s Word. | Bible Truth Sleuth | |
Samson Receives Strength From God
Judges 15:9-16; 16:4-30

The Nazarite Vow
Before he was born, Samson was set apart to live the life of a Nazarite (Judges 13:2-7). A Nazarite abstained from wine, never used a razor, and avoided contact with any dead body.

Even though Samson was declared a Nazarite, he likely adhered only to the second of these practices. In fact, an examination of his life as described in Judges 14–16 reveals that he was not a particularly religious or even morally upright person. Even so, God selected him and used him mightily in delivering Israel from the Philistines.

Samson’s Great Victories and Failures
In spite of his great victories for Israel, Samson is especially known for his failure. He could have led Israel to a position of great strength. He could have led people back to God. He could have wiped out the Philistines, preventing them from ever bothering Israel again. Instead, he confided in the foreign woman whom he apparently loved, but who was set on his destruction. Even so, the New Testament doesn’t remember Samson as a failure. In Hebrews he is listed among those who faithfully served God (Hebrews 11:32).

In spite of his failings, Samson had kept his vow to keep his hair long. When he told Delilah the secret of his strength and his hair was cut, everyone could see that God was no longer working in Samson’s life.

Samson, Humiliated by Philistines, Is Redeemed
The temple in which Samson was mocked was not only a temple to the god Dagon, but it was also an entertainment center. Thousands crowded into the temple to see Samson in disgrace. They even gathered on the roof to see the spectacle below. Archaeological evidence has revealed that one type of ancient temple was supported by two central wood pillars on marble bases. His strength renewed by God, Samson was able to push those pillars off their bases, thereby collapsing the whole roof and killing everyone under and on top of it.

The Jesus Connection
It’s great to have a friend in Jesus! When we mess up, he’s always there to forgive us.

Samson had unbelievable strength that he started out using for God. But then he messed up—big time! When have you felt you’ve really messed up? How has that failure affected your serving God? Talk to God about that. You can write your prayer here.
GETTING STARTED

You Can, Toucan

What You’ll Do

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went. Direct kids to form groups of three to five.

Say: Today we’re going to play a fun game called You Can, Toucan. And because toucans are birds with brightly colored beaks, we’ll make beaks to use during our game.

Set out the colored construction paper strips, gel pens, glue sticks or tape, and elastic string.

Have kids form a blank piece of construction paper into a cone shape and attach the colored pieces of construction paper to the cone, using either tape or glue. Fold in the edges of the open end so that they are smooth.

After kids have decorated their toucan beaks, poke holes in the sides of each child’s beak at the open end and attach enough elastic string so that the beak will fit snugly around the child’s head.

Say: In this game, you’ll need to choose one person to be the first “Toucan.”

Everyone has talents and abilities. Some talents we know about, and others we may not realize we have. Each person in your group will get a chance to be the Toucan and to find out what talents and abilities your friends say “you can” do. I’ll give you one minute to think of as many things as you can that your Toucan can do. Write each talent or ability on a sticky note, and attach it to your Toucan’s arms to represent feathers. As you stick the talent onto your Toucan, you must tell your Toucan what you think he or she can do. We’ll use the phrase “Toucan, you can...” and follow with what you think your Toucan can do. For example, I might write on this sticky note that [name a child in class] draws cool pictures. Then I’ll quickly stick my note to [name the child] and say, “Toucan, you can draw cool pictures.”

We’ll keep playing until everyone in your group gets to be a Toucan. Are you ready? Toucans, put your arms up and spread those wings. Go!

Encourage kids to quickly stick as many talent feathers onto their Toucans as they can in one minute. When the minute is over, shout “Stop!” Have the groups choose new Toucans, and have those children wear the beaks they have made. Begin the game again. Play until everyone has had a turn to be a Toucan. At the end of the game, have kids remove their talents, staple them together, and place them inside their beaks to take home to read.

You Can, Toucan

Supplies

- colored construction paper
- scissors
- gel pens
- tape or glue sticks
- stapler
- elastic string
- sticky notes

Easy Prep

Cut colored construction paper into 2x3-inch strips. Each child will need at least 10 strips in a variety of colors.
Talk With Kids

Have kids form pairs to answer the following question.

Ask:

■ How can you use one of your “can do” talents for God?

Say: In our Bible story today, we’ll learn how a man named Samson used his gift to bring glory to God. We’ll also learn that ▶ GOD GIVES US GIFTS TO SERVE HIM. Let’s get started!

2

BIBLE

EXPLORATION

Samson: God’s Gift to Israel

What You’ll Do

Say: From the time he was born, Samson was special to God. He obeyed God, and God gave him special strength. God planned to use Samson’s mighty strength to bring glory to God’s name. Let’s find out how God used Samson’s strength.

Ask a few volunteers to read aloud Judges 15:9-16.

Ask:

■ What kind of a man do you think Samson was?
■ If you had strength like Samson, how would you use it?
■ What kinds of abilities does God give people today?

Have another volunteer read aloud Judges 16:4-6.

Say: Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman who was very beautiful but sneaky. Her name was Delilah, and she was willing to be disloyal to Samson for money. She begged and pleaded with Samson to tell her the secret of his strength, but he wouldn’t do it. One night she tied him up with seven wet cords that had been woven together.

Have another volunteer read aloud Judges 16:7-14. Then have kids form pairs, and give each pair a 6-inch piece of lanyard cord. Have partners stand across from each other, holding the lanyard between them.

Say: This lanyard seems pretty strong. Let’s see if you can break it.

Then have kids pull on the lanyard until it breaks. The cord should break within a few seconds.

Say: Samson broke through the cords Delilah had tied him up with. So another
night Delilah tied up Samson with brand-new ropes. She even used a weaving loom, used to make large pieces of fabric, to weave the seven braids he had worn on his head into the fabric and then tightened it with a special pin. She waited until Samson was asleep and secretly called the Philistine men to come get Samson. Then she woke up Samson, expecting him to be weak and to struggle to get away from the Philistines. But to her surprise, Samson snapped the cords as if they were thin pieces of thread.

This time give each pair a 1-foot piece of lanyard. Have partners stand across from each other, holding the lanyard between them. Have them again stretch the lanyard until it breaks.

Have kids form a circle and sit down.

Ask:
- Would you say a person had a gift of strength if he or she could break a cord like this? Why or why not?

Give each of the kids their own 1-foot piece of lanyard.

Ask:
- What would it take to create a cord that even Samson couldn’t break?

Encourage kids to work together in groups to come up with their own solutions for creating a cord they think can’t be broken. When kids have finished the cords, play a game of Tug of War to see which cord is the strongest.

Hold up the cord that couldn’t be broken, or that stretched the farthest before breaking, and ask kids what they think made it strong.

Ask:
- What did your group have to do to your cord to make it strong?

Say: God gave Samson a gift of strength that no one else had. Even when Samson told Delilah to tie him up with seven cords, he could still easily snap them apart. Now that’s strong!

Show kids a small rope, about one yard long. Tell them the rope represents God and his power. Wrap one piece of lanyard around the rope, and invite kids to come up and try to break the rope and lanyard now that they are wrapped together.

**Talk With Kids**

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:
- What made this cord unbreakable?
- How did you feel when you couldn’t break the cords?
- How can your talents or abilities become better?
Say: We may be really good at the talents God has given us, like playing the piano, quickly solving math problems, or making people laugh, but if we use our talents to glorify God, he makes them stronger and better.

Have a volunteer read aloud Judges 16:15-16.

Say: Let's play a game to find out how Samson might have felt about listening to Delilah's constant nagging.

Have kids form groups of 5 to 10 and stand in a large circle. Choose one person to be “Delilah.” The players standing in the circle will be “Samsons” and will hold their arms up in a strong pose. Have Delilah go from player to player inside the circle and try to lower each of the Samsons’ arms while saying in a sad, whiny voice, “Oh, Samson! What makes you so strong?” Encourage Delilah to use dramatic facial expressions or a silly voice and to push or pull down on each Samson’s arms to make him or her laugh and become weak. After Delilah has succeeded in weakening each of the Samsons in the group, choose another Delilah and continue the game until everyone has had a turn to try to weaken the Samsons.

Ask:
- How did it feel to try to get the Samsons to weaken?
- How did it feel to try to stay strong and not give in to Delilah’s constant nagging?
- Why do you think Samson didn't want to tell Delilah the secret of his strength?

Have a few volunteers each read aloud a verse or two of Judges 16:17-30.

Ask:
- Do you think Samson used his gift of strength for God well? Why or why not?

Say: Samson didn't always use his gift of strength in ways that brought honor to God’s name, but in the end God used Samson to bring victory for all of Israel.

Ask:
- What kinds of gifts do you think God has given you?
- What are some ways those gifts could be used?
- How should we use the gifts God gives us?

Say: Let’s take a look at how we can use the gifts God gives us.
A Gift Well Used
Supplies
Bibles
CD player
Bible Truth Sleuth
pens
1 envelope per child
paper
markers
scissors
copies of the lyrics (at the end of this lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: “Jesus Loves Me Rock” (track 3)
A Gift Well Used
Easy Prep
Tear out the Lesson 2 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book. Cut slips of paper; you’ll need about six per child.

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

A Gift Well Used

What You’ll Do
Pass out copies of the lyrics, and lead kids in singing “Jesus Loves Me Rock” (track 3).

♫ Jesus loves me; (echo)
This I know, (echo)
For the Bible (echo)
 Tells me so. (echo)
Little children (echo)
To him belong. (echo)
They are weak, but (echo)
He’s so strong! (echo)

Jaaayyy! (J)
Eeeeee! (E)
Ssssss! (S)
Uuuuuu! (U)
Sssssss! (S)

And what’s that spell? (Jesus!) And who do you love? (Jesus!) And who loves you? (Jesus!) Who died for you? (Jesus!) And who’s your guy? (Jesus!) The apple of your eye! (Jesus!) And who’s your friend? (Jesus!) He’ll love ya to the end! (Jesus!) (Repeat from the beginning.)

* “Jesus Loves Me Rock” by Dean-o. © 2003 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

Say: Samson was a very strong man, but God gave Samson a special strength. It was God’s strength and ability inside Samson that made Samson so strong—not Samson’s desire to be strong. God is the strongest! God always cares for us and is the wisest at knowing what gifts he has given us to use for him. Let’s find out what our Key Verse says about using our abilities for serving others and, even more important than that, bringing honor to God when we serve others.

Have kids form groups of three to five. Have the groups read 1 Peter 4:10: “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s...
grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).

Say: I want you to think of someone who could be helped by the gifts God has given the people in your group. For example, maybe you have a friend at school who has trouble with math homework. If one of you in the group is especially good at math, you could help that person with his or her math homework. Then you could explain to that person that God gave you a gift for being really good at math and that you were happy to help.

Have kids turn to the “A Gift Well Used” activity on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages.

Say: I want you to write a newspaper article about how you used a certain gift to serve God by helping someone else. Focus on who, what, when, where, why, and how: who you helped, what you did, when you did it, where you did it, why it helped, and how it served God.

Distribute pens, and give kids several minutes to create their articles, adding pictures if they wish.

Ask:
- What are some ways you came up with to use your gifts?

Read aloud the Key Verse to the class one more time, and have kids repeat it after you: “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms” (1 Peter 4:10).

Say: Now let's make something to help us remember that ➤ GOD GIVES US GIFTS TO SERVE HIM.

Make markers available. Give each child an envelope, and have him or her decorate the envelope as if it were a gift. Then have kids write the gifts they feel God has given them on slips of paper and place them in the envelopes.

# LASTING IMPRESSIONS

## Daily Challenges

### What You’ll Do

Say: As your Daily Challenge this week, take your gift envelopes home with you. This week look at what you've written on your slips of paper, and pray about how God can help you use those gifts to serve him and others.

Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.
Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:
- What’s a practical way you’re going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.

Say: ► GOD GIVES US GIFTS TO SERVE HIM. Let’s use those gifts by following through on our Daily Challenges this week.

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about serving God. Kids can also do the activities in the “HomeConnect” section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church’s families. Available at group.com/digital.

Close in prayer.
Lyrics

Jesus Loves Me Rock

Jesus loves me; (echo)
This I know, (echo)
For the Bible (echo)
Tells me so. (echo)
Little children (echo)
To him belong. (echo)
They are weak, but (echo)
He's so strong! (echo)

Jaaayyy! (J)
Eeeeее! (E)
Sssssss! (S)
Uuuuuuu! (U)
Sssssss! (S)

And what's that spell? (Jesus!)  
And who do you love? (Jesus!)  
And who loves you? (Jesus!)  
Who died for you? (Jesus!)  
And who's your guy? (Jesus!)  
The apple of your eye! (Jesus!)  
And who's your friend? (Jesus!)  
He'll love ya to the end! (Jesus!)

(Repeat from the beginning.)

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