

LESSON 1

DEBORAH AND BARAK

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Can Work through Unlikely People

SCRIPTURE: Judges 4-5

GOD'S BIG STORY: With the wisdom God gives Deborah, the courage of Barak, and the help of a woman named Jael, King Jabin's army is defeated through unlikely people, and God wins the victory!

WORD OF WONDER: Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. God will be with you wherever you go.

—from Joshua 1:9

CURIOSITY

BELIEF

FAITH

- Play Stations:
 - Victory Song Music
 - Finding Sisera Sensory Bin
 - Deborah and Barak Coloring Sheet
- Word of Wonder: From Joshua 1:9
- God's Big Story
- Circle Time: Who Do You See?
- Craft: Craft Stick Puppets
- Game: Pair Relays
- Responding in Worship: Watercolor Response
- Closing Game: Four Corners



[Victory Preschool Spotify playlist](#)



INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Can Work through Unlikely People

SCRIPTURE: Judges 4–5

WORD OF WONDER: From Joshua 1:9

As a “girl dad” four times over, I’m always intrigued by the biblical stories that highlight women of faith. Now, don’t get me wrong—I love football, red meat, and *Gladiator* just as much as the next guy. But I do have a soft spot for the heroines of Scripture.

There was nothing soft, however, about Deborah. Check out Judges 4–5. This woman was a lean, mean, judgin’ machine! As the only female judge in the book of Judges, she thrived in a male-dominated society and proved she was just as capable—and often more so!—than the men of her era. And after her resounding victory over Canaanite king Jabin’s army, it was Jael, another woman, who dealt the final blow to Jabin’s fleeing general with a tent peg!

Deborah and Jael were unlikely heroines because women had far less social clout in this time. But choosing those who might seem unsuitable is God’s *modus operandi*. He loves working through unlikely people.

Aren’t you glad for that? Because it’s so easy to dismiss ourselves as unfit for service in God’s kingdom.

I’m not gifted enough.

My sins and shortcomings are too great.

I’m just so ... regular.

If you’ve ever felt like that (and we all have), you’re qualified to serve the Lord! He displays His power most prominently through weak human vessels (2 Corinthians 12:9). He puts His perfect wisdom on display in situations that seem impossible to us (1 Corinthians 1:25).

If you’re feeling pretty unlikely this week ... get ready. Because God will work through you!

—**Josh Cooley**

Children’s Minister and Author

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Deborah was a judge and prophet who led Israel after Ehud. Barak was a commander summoned by Deborah to fight Jabin, a Canaanite king, and his general Sisera. Jael was the wife of Heber the Kenite. Kenites were nomadic people descended from Moses' brother-in-law Hobab.

WHAT?

Jabin oppressed the Israelites after God's people continued to do evil in God's eyes. They cried out to God, who raised up Deborah and Barak to confront Sisera, Jabin's commander. God worked through Jael, a Kenite, to defeat Sisera, breaking Jabin's hold on the Israelites and bringing peace.

WHERE?

Mount Tabor was located well north of Jerusalem and west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee. It overlooked an important crossroads in the Jezreel Valley, so many people coveted control of the area. Jael lived near Kedesh, south of the Sea of Galilee.

WHEN?

The time Judges describes comes after the Israelites entered the Promised Land and before their first king. During this time, "everyone did as they saw fit" (Judges 21:25, NIV). God would raise up leaders (judges) to deliver His people, who would soon return to evil after each leader died.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Judges 4–5 highlights how God works through unlikely people to fulfill His promises. God faithfully does this throughout His big story. Jesus' own genealogy is full of wayward, broken people. But this imperfect line leads to a baby in a manger who is the Messiah.



LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Can Work through Unlikely People

SCRIPTURE: Judges 4–5

WORD OF WONDER: From Joshua 1:9

Play Stations (pre service)

SUPPLIES: uncooked rice, small bin, toy person figure, musical instruments, coloring utensils

RESOURCES: Deborah and Barak Coloring Sheet (1 per kid)

Greet kids warmly as they arrive and briefly explain the play stations. Invite them to play at any of the play stations.

"Welcome to church! While we're getting ready to start, you can play at any of these stations to help get ready for our lesson today. Do you have any ideas of what we'll be learning about today?"

Play Station: Victory Song Music

Set-up: Set out different musical instruments for kids to play with.

Play: Encourage kids to play with the different musical instruments. Ask them what they think a victory song might sound like and see if they can play a victory song with the different instruments.

Leader Tip: Don't have toy musical instruments on hand? Make your own! Anything that makes sound can be used to make music. Try rice in plastic eggs, pots and pans with wooden spoons, water bottles and spoons, or rubber bands around a piece of cardboard.

Play Station: Finding Sisera Sensory Bin

Set-up: Place uncooked rice in a small bin and hide a toy person figure in the rice.

Play: Tell kids that in today's story, a man searches for a soldier named Sisera. Encourage the kids to try to find the soldier—Sisera—hidden in the rice and then hide him again for friends to find.

Allergy Caution: Be aware of any food allergies or sensitivities among your kids and volunteers before doing this activity!

Play Station: Deborah and Barak Coloring Sheet

Set-up: Print one copy per kid of the Coloring Sheet. Set out the Coloring Sheets and coloring utensils.

Play: Let the kids color. The kids can also turn the sheet over and draw a picture of someone who has helped them.

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible, tape

RESOURCES: *Word of Wonder Printable* (**Keep this poster on the wall all series!)

Before kids arrive, print one copy of the Word of Wonder Printable.

"Today we're learning a new Word of Wonder. Hold up the first page ("Be strong and brave") and show the kids the picture. **Can you flex your muscles like the kid is in this picture? Sometimes a person does this to show that she is strong. The first part of our Word of Wonder is "Be strong and brave." Can you say that with me? "Be strong and brave." Let's flex our arms and show our muscles while we say it.** Repeat "Be strong and brave" while flexing muscles with the kids.

Next, hold up the second page that says "Do not be afraid." Tape the second picture up next to the first. **Can you think of times we might be afraid?** Allow kids to answer. **We might be afraid of going to the doctor or when there is a thunderstorm. But** (point at first picture and flex your muscles) **God reminds us to "Be strong and brave."** Point at the second picture. **God says, "Do not be afraid." Can you shake your head back and forth like you're saying no?** Repeat shaking head while saying "Do not be afraid" with the kids. **We don't have to be afraid because God will be with us.** Hold up the third page. **This picture says, "God will be with you."** Tape the third picture up next to the other two. **Let's point up as we say this."** Repeat several times with the kids.

Let's say all of our Word of Wonder so far: Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. God will be with you ..." Repeat the words and motions to all three parts of the Word of Wonder that have been introduced so far.

WORD OF WONDER

Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. God will be with you wherever you go.

—from Joshua 1:9

Our Word of Wonder has one more part. Hold up the fourth page. **This last page says, "wherever you go." God will be with us wherever we go, so we can be strong and brave! Let's pretend we're walking in place while we say "wherever you go."** Repeat this phrase and action with the kids several times and then go through all four pages and motions. Encourage kids to say Joshua 1:9 at the end.

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

- **BE STRONG AND BRAVE.**—Flex both arms.
- **DO NOT BE AFRAID.**—Shake head.
- **GOD WILL BE WITH YOU**—Point up.
- **WHEREVER YOU GO.**—Walk in place.
- **FROM JOSHUA 1:9**—Hold your hands together in front, palms together, as if opening a book.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **When are times that we might feel afraid and need to remember that God will be with us?**
- **How does God help us be strong and brave?**

God's Big Story / Snack

SUPPLIES: Bible, [God's Big Story Summary \(1 per SG\)](#)

Hold up a Bible and show the kids. Tell them today's story comes from the book of Judges in the Bible. Open a Bible and show them where to find the story.

***Leader Tip *** Kids can color their [Coloring Pages](#) while you read to help with the wiggles!

Bible Time Rhyme

Say the Bible time rhyme (with motions) each week before the Bible story to remind kids that what they're about to hear is part of God's big story.

I open my Bible and what do I see? (*Hold your hands together, then open your palms, as if opening a book.*)

God's big story, waiting for me! (*Point to yourself.*)

"Let's read part of God's big story, which comes from the book of Judges in the Bible."

Read the [God's Big Story Summary](#) from the additional activity page.

Circle Time: Who Do You See?

RESOURCES: [God's Big Story Pictures](#)

Ahead of time, print the God's Big Story Pictures

Gather kids together in a circle and place the God's Big Story Pictures used during the God's Big Story teaching time face down in the middle of the circle.

Let's play a game to help us remember what we learned from God's big story.

In the middle of our circle are the pictures we looked at earlier. We're going to

take turns flipping the pictures over one at a time and answering a question

based on the person in the picture. Allow kids to take turns flipping over pictures

while you ask the questions below based on the picture flipped over. Encourage

kids to all say the name of the person in the picture with you each time a picture is turned over. You may need to shuffle the pictures in between turns so kids don't keep picking the same picture.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- **Deborah: What was Deborah's job?** (*a prophetess and judge for God's people*)
- **Deborah: Have you ever had an unlikely person help you?**
- **Barak: Was Barak brave at first, or did he hesitate?** (*He hesitated.*)
- **Barak: Can you think of a time you weren't brave?**
- **King Jabin: Was King Jabin a powerful or weak king?** (*powerful*)
- **King Jabin: Can you think of a time that God helped you be brave?**
- **Sisera: What did God make Sisera's army do?** (*become scared and worried*)
- **Sisera: How might God work through you to help someone?**

Even though Deborah and Barak seemed like unlikely people to help God, God chose them to help achieve victory for God's people. God can work through unlikely people.

Let's talk to God now in prayer!"

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praises and to pray for each other. Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK! Encourage them to pray silently and to thank God for working through unlikely people.

Head to Large Group!

Responding in Worship: Watercolor Response

SUPPLIES: watercolors (several trays for kids to share), paintbrushes (1 per kid), paper (1 sheet per kid), cups of water (several for kids to share), paper towels, [back of ColoringSheet](#)

Set out watercolors, paintbrushes, paper, cups of water, and paper towels. When ready to begin the activity, give each child a paintbrush and instruct them to turn to the back of their ColoringSheet.

"God can work through unlikely people. God even works through people like us! Let's spend some time thinking about how God might work through unlikely people like us! I'm going to give you some paper and watercolors, and then I'll ask you some questions. As I ask a question, you can paint a picture of your answer.

The first question is: when you think of a hard situation in your life—like a fight with a sibling, or trouble obeying parents, or something you're worried about or scared of—what do you think God might ask you to do? Give kids time to process and think about this answer and then encourage them to paint on their paper what they think God might ask them to do.

After a few moments, ask kids the second question and give them time to paint their responses.

Our next question is: as you think of the same situation, what do you think God might ask you to say? Paint a picture of what God might ask you to say.

After a few moments, ask kids the third question and give them time to paint their responses.

The last question is: what do you think He might ask you to help with? Paint a picture of how God might ask you to help in this situation.

You did a great job painting! We never know how God might work through us! Even if you feel like you are an unlikely person, God can do things through you in ways you can't even imagine!"

Leader Tip: If kids struggle with thinking of responses or painting pictures, help them brainstorm. Remind them that their worshipful responses don't have to be particular or fully-defined: they can be abstract. They can simply paint colors and lines and swirls while thinking about their answers to the questions!

Closing Game: Four Corners

SUPPLIES: tape

RESOURCES: [God's Big Story Pictures \(from circle time\)](#)

If you haven't already, print the God's Big Story Pictures. Tape one of the pictures up in each corner of the room (or write the names on papers and hang them on the corners): Barak, Deborah, Sisera, King Jabin.

We're going to play a game using our pictures from our part of God's big story today. Can you remember the names of each of these people? Hold up each picture and ask kids to shout out the name of the person pictured. **God chose Deborah and Barak to defeat their enemies: Sisera and King Jabin and their army. Let's play a game to help us remember the people in the story.**

Explain the rules to the kids. One person will stand in the middle of the room and will cover his eyes and count backwards from 10, loudly and slowly. Everyone else should move to one of the four corners; they will need to move very quietly so the person in the middle can't hear them. When the person in the middle finishes counting down, he will call out the name of one of the four people from the story—Barak, Deborah, Sisera, or King Jabin. Anyone who is standing in the corner with the picture that was called out will be eliminated from the game and sit down in the middle of the room. The game continues until only one person is left. Then that person gets to stand in the middle and call out names for the next round.

Pick one person to start as the caller in the middle of the room. Play multiple rounds as time allows.