

LESSON 5 THE JUDGES

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Is Merciful

SCRIPTURE: Judges 2–3

GOD'S BIG STORY: Time after time, the Israelites forgot about God and went their own way, worshiping false gods. As a result, their enemies attacked and defeated them, yet God continued to show them mercy by sending leaders called judges to rescue them.

WORD OF WONDER: God is faithful. That's who He is. —from 2 Timothy 2:13

Object Lesson: Sound Exploration

Activity: Erasing Sin

Worship

God's Big Story

Snack

Word of Wonder

Prayer and Blessing

Activity: You Be the Judge

Object Lesson: Sound Exploration

SUPPLIES: variety of items that make different sounds (bells, kid-sized pot, wooden items, plastic items, etc.)

Ahead of time, gather a variety of items that make different sounds (such as bells, kid-sized pot, wooden items, plastic items, etc.).

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Welcome! We're going to talk today about how God forgives us repeatedly. We'll see how He took care of His people by sending them helpers for the people to listen to. We'll also learn how God heard His people and showed His care for them. Let's listen to the different sounds these things make.

Allow the kids to explore making different types of sounds with the items. Help them explore volume levels and tempo. Have fun exploring together.

Activity: Erasing Sin

SUPPLIES: whiteboard, dry-erase markers, whiteboard eraser or cloths

Allow the kids to draw using the whiteboard and dry-erase markers. Talk with them as they draw. Ask them what they're drawing and help them with their desired pictures. As they're exploring, talk about the eraser or cloth and explain what its job is.

In God's big story today, we're learning that God loves and forgives us when we do wrong things. It's kind of like this eraser: When you draw something you don't want, you can wipe it off, and it's gone. The wrong things we do are called sin. Sometimes we do things we shouldn't do, but we can ask God to forgive us. God forgives us and shows us mercy. That means He is good to us, even if we don't deserve it. When we do wrong things, He wipes it away like this eraser (or cloth). Hold up the eraser or cloth for kids to see. That's what "merciful" means. God is so good to us!

Our Wonder Truth today is: GOD IS MERCIFUL.

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

GOD—Point up.

IS MERCIFUL—Hold left palm up and rub right hand over the top of the left, like you're erasing something.

Worship

Today we're learning that God is merciful. That means that when we do something wrong, God forgives us. We'll learn in God's big story how God forgives us over and over. Let's sing and thank God.

Play songs from the Little Learners Playlist and encourage the kids to sing and dance as they praise God.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bible, whiteboard, dry-erase marker, whiteboard eraser or cloth

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Bible Story Picture (1/SG)

Our part of God's big story today is a great story from the Bible about how God forgives and shows mercy. Encourage the kids to say, "God forgives." **Let's find out from the Bible how God forgives!**

Show the kids the God's Big Story Video, or read the story from the Bible, or use the script provided. You can print the Bible Story Picture to give kids a visual depiction as you tell the story.

God saved His people, the Israelites, and led them to a special land where they lived. After a while, more and more Israelites were born, and they forgot about how God had taken care of His people. God's people even stopped following God and worshiped pretend gods. Draw a sad face on the whiteboard. **Do you think that made God sad?** Allow the kids to respond.

God was upset that the Israelites had stopped following Him. They did things that hurt God and hurt each other. Even when the Israelites didn't follow God, though, He still loved them. Erase the sad face (or invite a kid to help erase it) and draw a heart. **God sent judges to be leaders to help them and lead them. The people realized they were wrong and asked for forgiveness. They followed the judges, and God forgave them.** Draw a simple picture on the whiteboard (such as a star or a stick figure person). **Let's erase the picture.** Invite a kid to help you erase the picture. **When God forgives us, He forgets about our sin and makes it go away.**

But later, the people forgot about God and they sinned repeatedly. They kept on sinning and then asking for forgiveness, and God—in His love and kindness—continued to give them judges to lead them. God forgave them every single time because He is merciful. Pretend you're erasing something again, like we did with the whiteboards. Encourage kids to pretend to erase something. **God did this repeatedly! He never stopped.**

Even now, God forgives every time, no matter what. He loves us and shows us mercy, even when we do wrong things!

Snack

Instruct kids to sit in the floor. Pass out snacks and say a prayer together.

Invite kids to repeat after you:

Dear God. kids repeat

You know me, love me, and lead me too. kids repeat

Please help me follow You. kids repeat

Thank you for snacks so yummy. kids repeat

That fill my happy tummy! kids repeat

Amen

Word of Wonder

SUPPLIES: Bible

WORD OF WONDER

God is faithful. That's who He is.

—from 2 Timothy 2:13

Our Word of Wonder for the Think Again series is from 2 Timothy 2:13. Let's practice saying the Word of Wonder together. Open a Bible to 2 Timothy 2:13 and practice the verse with the kids.

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

- **GOD**—Point up.
- **IS FAITHFUL**—Give two thumbs-up (one on each word).
- **THAT'S WHO**—Put your arms out in front of you, palms up (one on each word).
- **HE IS**—Point up (once on each word).
- **FROM 2 TIMOTHY 2:13**—Hold your hands open in front of you, as if holding a book.

Prayer and Blessing

Let's talk to God. Wrap your arms around yourself, like a big hug. God loves you so much!

Dear God, thank You for loving us and for forgiving us. We thank You that even when we do things we shouldn't do, You always love us and show mercy. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands are open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: Our God is the God who delights in mercy and longs to be near to us. May you never stop following God, but if you do, may you always be ready to receive God's forgiveness and mercy.

Activity: You Be the Judge

Today we're learning about how God took care of the Israelites by sending judges to lead them and help them. A judge tells people how to do things and what is right. God showed mercy and love when He sent judges for His people. God shows us mercy by sending Jesus to forgive us. Let's play a game where you'll get to be the judge. I'll choose one person to be the judge, and the judge will say who wins each challenge.

Choose a kid to be the judge for each round. Give the kids a challenge and allow them time to complete the challenge. Then let the judge choose the winner of each challenge. Use the following challenges (or make up your own if your kids can't do all of these things):

- Who can run the fastest?
- Who can take the biggest step?
- Who can jump the highest or farthest?
- Who can do five jumping jacks the fastest?
- Who can clap the loudest?
- Who sings the loudest (only use this one if your room isn't close to the main service!)?