

Lesson Two

Samson Prays for Strength



Growing as a Teacher

Scripture

Judges 13–16

Bible Truth

Even though Samson was sinful and weak, God used him to accomplish his purposes.

Lesson Aim

To know that God gives us the ability and desire to serve him, not ourselves.

God gave Samson many gifts and abilities, yet Samson lived a life of flagrant sin. He did not live in the grip of God's Spirit, choosing most often to follow his selfish desires wherever they led him.

Samson had loving parents who raised Samson as a Nazirite, dedicated to the service of the Lord. The Spirit of God was clearly active in Samson and was the source of his amazing physical strength. This physical prowess enabled Samson to do great feats, including battling the fierce and overpowering Philistines—the enemy of Israel—with his bare hands.

Yet in spite of God's call upon his life, Samson often chose not to follow God's leading or the spiritual guidance of his parents. Time and time again Samson broke God's law and violated all the conditions of his Nazirite vow. This led to grave consequences for Samson, as he ended up drained of his power, sightless and enslaved to the enemy.

Even though Samson's story is primarily one of disappointments and failures, God was still at work in his life. In his final moments, Samson asked God for the strength to destroy the Philistines around him. God gave Samson a burst of power, and God delivered Israel from the enemy as the Philistines, along with Samson, were crushed when Samson destroyed the temple.

God accomplishes his purposes even when we are not obedient.

Pray that as you tell the children about Samson, the Holy Spirit will help them understand that our abilities and gifts come from the Lord. Pray that they will see that God wants us to serve him, not ourselves, and that God accomplishes his purposes even when we are not obedient and faithful.

Bible Background


Samson was set apart for the work of God from birth, but Samson did not live a life of holiness. He was named as one of Israel's judges and ruled from 1095 to 1075 B.C. Samson, whose name means "distinguished," was not known for his wisdom, sound moral judgment or personal integrity but for his great physical strength. Yet in spite of Samson's many failures, God used him to begin the deliverance of Israel from Philistine influence and control.

Memory Verse

For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose.

PHILIPPIANS 2:13

Lesson Two at a Glance

Step	Minutes	Children's Activities	Supplies (complete list, p. 11)
1 Welcome	5–10	Play <i>I Can Do It!</i> to recall last week's lesson and prepare for Bible Time.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 2a cards* <input type="checkbox"/> Paper bag
2 Bible Time	15–20	Hear the story of Samson. Pray that God will help us choose to serve him.	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 2b Samson story strip*
3 Memory Verse	5–10	Memorize <i>Philippians 2:13</i> .	<input type="checkbox"/> TA 1a Memory Work* <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Philippians 2:13</i> gift** <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils
4 Activities	10–15	Do activities that reinforce the Bible Truth and Lesson Aim. Focus on missions.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>At Home 2</i> ** <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils <input type="checkbox"/> Markers or crayons <input type="checkbox"/> SA 2 coloring sheet**
5 Final Focus	5	 Sing "Jesus Bids Us Shine" (Songbook, p. 22).	<input type="checkbox"/> Songbook <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Optional:</i> song poster, <i>Younger Elementary Vol. 2</i> CD

Total time: 40–60 minutes

* *Younger Elementary Teaching Aids Pack*

** *Younger Elementary Student Activities Pack*



Enrichment

Before class, use a children's Bible handbook or dictionary to find out all you can about Samson. Write an illustrated poem or song about Samson and share it with the class.



Teaching Tip

Consider putting a set of markers or crayons and a pencil in a plastic sandwich bag for each student. Label the bags—including a few bags for visitors—so each student will have a set of writing and coloring materials to use as needed.



Practical Preparation

Before class, tear along the perforations on TA 2a cards and place them in a paper bag to prepare to play *I Can Do It!* during Welcome.

Spend some time going over the story of Samson. Read Judges 13–16 and study the lesson. Be prepared to tell it as written or in your own words. During the Bible story, you will use TA 2b Samson story strip to help teach the lesson. The pictures will give meaning to your words.

Memorize *Philippians 2:13* ahead of time so that you are prepared to teach it to the students during Memory Verse. Explain what the verse means in light of Samson's life and how the verse relates to them. At the end of the lesson, each student will take home a *Philippians 2:13* gift to put in his or her *Serve the Lord* gift bag at home. Assemble one gift and place it in the classroom bag.

Children will work in *At Home 2* during Activities. Focus on the missionary story on the back of the paper at the end of this step or in Final Focus. The students will sing "Jesus Bids Us Shine." Have a song poster available (see p. 10) and include musical accompaniment or the *Younger Elementary Vol. 2* CD. The words also appear in *At Home 1*.

1

Welcome

5-10 minutes

Welcome children and tell them how to play the game *I Can Do It!* Students take turns drawing one TA 2a card out of the paper bag. Then they identify the word on the card and make up a sentence with the word. If the word is from last week's lesson, the sentence should tell something about that lesson (for example, *DAVID—David trusted God* or *David killed Goliath*). If the student can complete a sentence, he or she may keep the card. If not, the card goes back in the bag.

Let students know that although most of the words are taken from last week's lesson, a few words have been included from the Bible story they will hear next. Encourage them to try and make up sentences with these words also—just for fun!

Provide reading help when needed and encourage students as they make up sentences. Use this opportunity to review the lesson about David relying on the faithful God and to prepare them to focus on Samson's story.

At the end of the game say Last week we learned about David, who trusted in our ever-faithful God. Next we will learn about Samson the judge, who was very strong but did not always serve God. Let's discover what happened when he prayed for strength.

David	stones
Goliath	trust
King Saul	serve
Philistines	faithful
Israelites	battle
sword	God
armor	Samson
sling	strong
	hair

2a

2

Bible Time

15-20 minutes

Gather children in a story circle and open your Bible to the story of Samson in the book of Judges.

For many years the Israelites were bullied by the Philistines, the people who later would send Goliath to fight Israel. Then one day an angel appeared to an Israelite woman and told her that she was going to have a baby boy. "He will rescue Israel from the Philistines," the angel said. "The child will be a Nazirite. That means he will be set apart by God for this special work, so his hair must never be cut."

When the baby was born, his parents named him Samson, and year after year they watched him grow stronger and stronger. God's Spirit had made Samson so strong that he could do things other men could not do.

Once, on a journey to another town, a young lion attacked Samson. The strong young man easily ripped the lion's jaw apart with his bare hands. *Show the picture of Samson killing the lion on TA 2b.*

Soon, news spread that Samson was very strong, and he began

Early Arrivals



Early arrivals can help you set up a missions center. Choose an area in the classroom where you can display missionary stories, pictures, games, crafts and items from places highlighted in your missions emphasis.



Serving and Helping

This quarter emphasizes missions and helping others. There are several practical activities for the children to do, games to play, things to make and missionaries to learn about. You will find a missions/serving emphasis on the back page of each weekly take-home paper.

If you need more information and additional missions ideas, check out *Making the Most of Missions* on p. 46 of this manual. The Enrichment and Early Arrival activities included in each lesson also provide more hands-on suggestions for learning about God's servants and how your students can serve.

Plan to include some missions activities in your curriculum this quarter. The learning experience will be enriched, and the children will grow and benefit as they serve and help others.

2b





2b



2b



Something Extra!

To accent a missions theme, make a bulletin board or mural collage of different people and places. Use pictures from an assortment of magazines to start the children off; then let children bring in newspaper and magazine pictures they find during the week.



2b

to make life difficult for the Philistines. Of course, they didn't know that Samson got his great strength from God. They only knew that he was powerful enough to challenge them. So they wanted to get rid of Samson!

Even the Israelites became alarmed by all the trouble between Samson and the Philistines. And since they didn't want the Philistines to make life harder for them, they tied Samson up with two new ropes and gave him to the Philistines. When the Philistines came toward Samson, God gave Samson the strength he needed to snap the new ropes like thread, freeing himself. Then, catching sight of a donkey's jawbone, Samson used it as a weapon and killed a thousand Philistines. *Show the picture of Samson fighting.*

After he had finished fighting, Samson cried out to God, "You have given your servant this great victory!" Then Samson told the Lord how thirsty he was, and God provided water for Samson to drink, lovingly caring for Samson's needs.

Some time later, Samson went to the city of Gaza (*GAH-zuh*). The Philistines of Gaza locked the city gates, certain that they would now capture Samson. But at midnight, Samson decided to leave the city. When he discovered that the gates were locked, Samson reached out with his strong arms, lifted the gates—posts and all—threw them across his shoulders and carried them off.

Show the picture of Samson and the gates.

"We have to find out what makes Samson so strong," the Philistines said to each other. "But how? He will never tell us his secret!"

Someone said, "Samson loves a woman who lives in the valley. Her name is Delilah. Maybe she will help us if we offer to give her some money."

Delilah agreed to help the Philistine leaders for a sum of money. Three times she asked Samson to tell her the secret of his great strength, and three times Samson gave her the wrong answer. Delilah grew impatient and angry. "You do not love me," she cried, "for if you did, then you would tell me the truth!"

She nagged and begged him day after day until Samson could bear it no longer and told her the truth. "I have been set apart to God since birth," Samson said. "If my head were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become weak."

Later, when Samson fell asleep, Delilah had his hair cut off. Then she sent for the Philistine rulers. "Samson," Delilah called, "the Philistines are here!"

This time, Samson could not fight the Philistines, for the Spirit of the Lord had left him. Without God's Spirit, Samson was no stronger than any other man. God had been faithful to Samson but Samson had not been faithful to God. Samson had been selfish and disobedient. How sad!

The Philistines grabbed Samson, blinded his eyes and took him away. *Show the picture of Samson being led away.* In Gaza, Samson was thrown into prison. Bronze shackles were locked around his legs,

and Samson was made to work hard grinding grain. *Show the picture of Samson in prison. How do you think Samson felt now? Listen as the children explore Samson's thoughts, feelings and predicament.*

Some time later, the Philistines held a great festival in honor of their chief god, Dagon (*DAY-gahn*). "Our god delivered Samson into our hands," they cried as they danced and feasted in the temple. Then they shouted for Samson to appear so that he could entertain them.

Samson—whose hair had grown back—was led into the crowded temple, and he placed his hands on the two main pillars of the temple. While the Philistines teased and mocked him, Samson prayed to the Lord. "Sovereign LORD, remember me," he asked. "O God, please strengthen me just once more." And with that, Samson pushed against the pillars with all his might. The temple crashed down on the Philistine leaders and the great crowd of people, killing everyone, including Samson. *Show the final picture on TA 2b.*

In the end, Samson remembered that his strength came from God, and he trusted God to help him deliver Israel from the Philistines.

Discuss with the children that our gifts and abilities come from the Lord, and he wants us to serve him with our hearts and lives. Samson was not always obedient and faithful, but God was still able to use him.

Close in prayer. Thank the Lord for the gifts and abilities he has given each child. Ask him to give us hearts that want to serve him, not ourselves.



Memory Verse

5-10 minutes

Assemble the children by TA 1a Memory Work. Have both the Serve the Lord gift bag and Philippians 2:13 gifts handy.

Ask the children Where did Samson get his great strength? (from the Holy Spirit) Then say God made Samson's body very strong. But there is another kind of strength that God gives us—strength to want to obey him. The new memory verse tells us about this kind of strength.

Point to the words on the memory work poster as you read Philippians 2:13. Explain that This verse says that God is working in us, helping us want to obey him and giving us the power to do what pleases him.

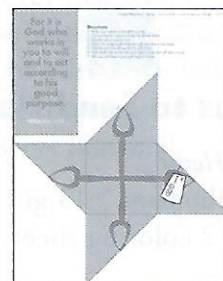
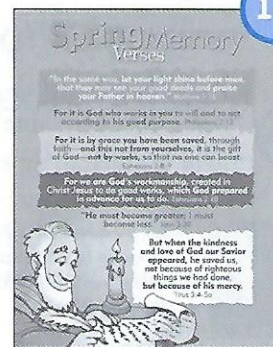
Say the verse together a few times. Then hand out the Philippians 2:13 gifts, scissors and pencils. Have the students write their names on the tags. Then cut out both shapes along the dotted lines. Fold the verse card in half. Place the verse card inside the gift box (white side). Fold the gift box along all the solid lines. Tuck each flap under the next flap to keep the gift box closed. Tell the students to take the memory work gifts home. They should review the verse during the week, keeping it in their Serve the Lord gift bags. Remind them to go over the Matthew 5:16 gift they received last week.



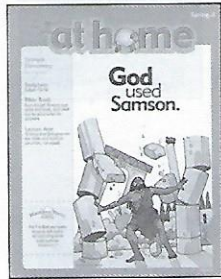
God's Blessings

God has chosen to partner with His people. The partnership works as He blesses us and we pass on His blessing to the whole world.

A Sunday for the World,
William Stearns



See page 37 for optional ways to use the memory work gifts.



4

Activities

10-15 minutes

Give each child a copy of *At Home 2*, a pencil and crayons or markers. Read aloud the title and directions for the part(s) you choose to do.

When students have completed the activities, turn to the missionary story of Betty Greene on the back page. Have children follow along as you read about the strong and courageous pilot who served God faithfully. Then take some time to discuss the question at the bottom of the page. Children need to know that what they are learning now—how to play the piano, computer skills, how to speak another language and so on—may be useful in serving God now and especially in the future.

Hand out SA 2 coloring sheets and crayons. Allow students to color the picture as you review the Bible story. They may color them at home if time is limited.

5

Final Focus

5 minutes

Conclude the lesson by singing “Jesus Bids Us Shine.” The words are found in *At Home 1* and in the Songbook. If available, use a keyboard or the *Younger Elementary Vol. 2* CD to accompany the singing.

Say God has given us someone even stronger than Samson to be our deliverer. The Lord Jesus delivered us from the enemy Satan by dying on the cross for our sins. Now he lives forever with his Father in heaven, and he continues to help his children. He helps us to *shine* for him!

Finally, close in prayer.

9 “Jesus Bids Us Shine” Songbook, p. 22



Order CD and/or extra Songbooks from Great Commission Publications at 800-695-3387 or www.gcp.org.



Items to Send Home

- At Home 2*
- Philippians 2:13 gift
- SA 2 coloring sheet