

Bible Story 14: THE JUDGES: GIDEON AND SAMSON

SCRIPTURE: **Gideon:** JUDGES 6:11-16; 7:1-8,16-22; 8:3,28
Samson: JUDGES 13:1-5,24; 14:5-6; 15:9-15,20

MEMORY VERSE: "TRUST IN THE LORD WITH ALL YOUR HEART." PROVERBS 3:5A NIV

BIBLE STORY:

After the death of Joshua, God sent thirteen strong leaders to guide and lead the people of Israel. These leaders were called judges. This story tells about two judges, Gideon and Samson.

THE JUDGE GIDEON

The cattle and crops of the Israel people were being taken away by their enemies, the Midianites. An angel from God told Gideon to conquer this enemy, and said, "*You can do this with God's help.*"

Gideon left with many, many soldiers, thirty-two thousand men! God said there were too many men and let the men who were afraid to return to their homes. Now there were only ten thousand men.

God thought that there were still too many soldiers! When the soldiers came to a river, they were thirsty. All the soldiers who put their face in the water to drink water had to return home. All the soldiers who cupped the water with their hands, bringing it to their mouths, were able to stay. Now only three hundred Israelite soldiers were going to fight against the huge enemy army. Yet the Israelites trusted in God to help them.

Finally the Israelite soldiers arrived at the enemy's camp. In the middle of the night, all together the Israelite soldiers followed Gideon's example, blowing their trumpets, breaking their jars and raising up their lighted torches. The loud noises awoke the enemy soldiers and the lights startled them. All the commotion made them afraid! God caused them to fight against themselves while running away. The Israelites won with God's help.

THE JUDGE SAMSON

Many years passed, and Samson became a judge to the Israelite people. Ever since he was born, Samson was dedicated to God. His hair had never been cut. As he grew, Samson was stronger than any other man. One day he killed a lion with only his hands! Many times Samson fought against the Philistines, the enemy of the Israelite people. With the help of God, he won many victories. Samson led the Israelite people for twenty years.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What do you like about the story?
2. Is there anything in the story that is hard to understand?
3. Who are the main people in the story?
4. What problems did the people face?
5. How did the people face their problems?
6. How have you faced similar problems?
7. Is there someone in the story who is similar to you or who is different from you?
8. What does the story tell about God?

RETELL THE STORY:

Ask volunteers from the group to retell the story.