

Samson

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 13–16

MAIN POINT: God gave Samson power.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

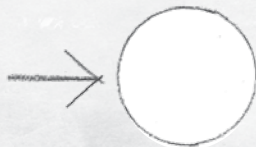
SMALL GROUP OPENING
(10–15 MINUTES)

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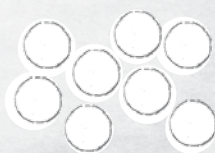
LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY
(25–30 MINUTES)

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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES
(25–30 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Samson was the last of the major judges of Israel. He was born to parents who dedicated him to the Lord as a Nazirite after the Angel of the Lord announced that Samson would be born to save the Israelites from the power of the Philistines. Samson grew up, and God blessed him with great strength. But when Samson requested to marry a Philistine woman, his parents were confused. Samson was supposed to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines. Why would he want to marry one of them? But God had a plan in all of this. (See Judg. 14:4.)

As Samson prepared for the wedding, he gave a riddle to the men with him about an event that occurred on his way

to Timnah. (See Judg. 14:9-14.) Days passed, and the men convinced Samson's wife to tell them the answer to the riddle. This action sparked a series of events that would eventually lead to the death of Samson.

When the men solved his riddle, Samson was so angry that he torched the fields of the Philistines. He used the jawbone of a donkey to kill 1,000 men, and he left his wife. The Philistine leaders determined to kill Samson. When Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah, the leaders bribed her into telling them where Samson's strength came from.

A man came and shaved the braids from Samson's head. He lost his strength and became helpless. The Philistines gouged out his eyes and took him prisoner. They had him stand between the pillars of a pagan temple. In a final plea to God, Samson asked for his strength back. God gave him strength, and Samson knocked over the pillars, collapsing the temple. In his death, Samson killed more Philistines than he had killed in his life. (Judg. 16:30)

Though Samson disobeyed God, God used him to accomplish His purpose of delivering the Israelites from the Philistines. Jesus would come as the last Deliverer, saving through His life and His death those who would trust in Him.

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Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Samson

Judges 13–16

The Israelites disobeyed God, so God let their enemies, the Philistines, rule over them. One day, the Angel of the Lord appeared to two of God's people: Manoah (muh NOH uh) and his wife. He told them they would have a son who would save the Israelites from the Philistines. God had special instructions for their son: He should never cut his hair.

Manoah's wife had a baby, and she named him Samson. God blessed Samson and made him strong. When Samson grew up, he saw a Philistine woman he wanted to marry. He went with his parents to meet the woman. On their journey, a young lion jumped out at Samson. Samson killed the lion, but he did not tell his parents what he had done.

When Samson and his parents returned for the wedding, Samson found the lion. Some bees had made honey in the lion's body. Samson scooped up some honey and gave it to his parents.

Some Philistine men came to help Samson prepare the wedding feast. Samson told the men a riddle:

Out of the eater came something to eat,
and out of the strong came something sweet.

The riddle was about the lion and the honey, but the men could not figure it out. They asked Samson's new wife for help. Samson told his wife the answer to the riddle, and she told the men. Samson had been tricked! He was angry, and he left his wife. When he went back to get her, she was gone. Samson was so upset that he burned the Philistines' fields. This made the Philistines angry. They

wanted to kill Samson.

Samson escaped to another city, where he fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistines offered Delilah money if she would find out why Samson was so strong.

Samson gave Delilah reasons for his strength, but none of them were true. Delilah tested his explanations, but Samson was still strong.

Finally, Samson told Delilah the truth. “If you cut my hair, I will not have my strength,” he said. So when Samson was sleeping, the Philistines cut his hair. Delilah shouted, “Samson! Wake up! The Philistines are here to kill you!”

But Samson wasn’t strong anymore. The Philistines grabbed him and made him blind. They took him away in chains.

Samson’s hair began to grow back. One day, the Philistines made Samson stand between two pillars in their temple. Samson cried out to God, “Lord, please remember me. Strengthen me once more.” So God strengthened Samson. Samson pushed on the pillars and collapsed the temple. Samson and everyone in the temple died.

Christ Connection: Samson’s sin led to his own death, but God used his death to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. Samson’s story reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but God sent Him to die on the cross and rise again to rescue believers from sin and give them eternal life.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that like the Israelites, when Samson was blinded and mocked by enemies, he cried out to God, “Lord God, please remember me” (Judg. 16:28). Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Samson

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 13–16

MAIN POINT: God gave Samson power.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, invite them to engage in “feats of strength” such as push-ups, sit-ups, squats, lunges, or jumping jacks.

SAY • You all did fantastic with your feats of strength! In today’s Bible story we are going to hear about a man named Samson who also performed great feats of strength. **God gave Samson power**—and not just a little! We are going to learn how God used Samson in His plan.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Power Source” on the activity page.

SAY • Think about the things we use every day that need power: cars, computers, lights, refrigerators, televisions—the list goes on and on. Every one of these items would be pretty much useless without power. The same goes for people.

Where does our power come from? Today we will see that **God gave Samson power**.

- “Power Source” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Thumb wrestling

Invite kids to find a partner and clasp hands, making a fist with each partner and holding her thumb up. When you say go, kids will try to pin down the other person's thumb for three seconds. Change partners and play again.

SAY • Which is better in thumb wrestling, being strong or having flexible thumbs? Both skills could come in handy in a thumb wrestling match. Today, we are going to learn about Samson. God made Samson incredibly strong so God could use him to defeat the Israelites' enemies, the Philistines. We will learn what kind of a judge Samson turned out to be.

OPTION 2: Who is stronger?

Invite kids to vote by raising their hands to determine who would win a fictional battle. If you have a tie, invite a few volunteers from opposing viewpoints to explain why their character would win and then vote again.

Suggested battles:

- Batman v. the Joker
- Tyrannosaurus Rex v. Godzilla
- Darth Vader v. the Emperor
- Wonder Woman v. Cat Woman

SAY • In our favorite books, comics, video games, and movies, our heroes often have weaknesses that make it harder for them to win the battle. In today's Bible story, Samson had great strength, but he also had a weakness. We will find out more in a moment.

Transition to large group



Tip: If you are not familiar with comic book, video game, or kids' literature heroes, invite kids to supply the heroes and villains to battle.

Large Group LEADER

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Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• notepad
• pen

[Large Group Leader enters dressed in a polo shirt and slacks with an apron and a name tag. Leader is also carrying a notepad and pen to take orders.]

LEADER • Hi, everybody! Glad you came back! *[Rub your shoulders as if you are sore.]* You know, being a server means I constantly have to carry trays loaded with food or drinks. I also have to stand on my feet for many hours a day. Working in such a fast-paced environment can make you pretty strong, but it can also make your muscles stiff and sore. How about we all stand up and stretch a little bit before we jump into our Bible story?

Invite kids to stand up and spread out a little. Guide them through simple stretches, such as reaching their arms high over head, making arm circles, twisting side to side, and so forth. After a couple minutes, invite kids to sit again.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • We've been learning about the Israelites during the time of the judges. Who can remind us about the Israelites' cycle of sin during this time? [*Invite a volunteer to respond. Be prepared to assist or gently correct if she stumbles. Thank the volunteer.*]

In today's Bible story, we're going to learn about another judge named Samson. God had a special plan for Samson before he was even born. We will learn more about God's plan for Samson in just a moment.

• Giant Timeline

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Before we jump into our Bible story, let's say our big picture question and answer together. I'm going to say the question, and you're going to say the answer together. Are you ready? ***How does God accomplish His plan?*** [*Pause for kids to say **God uses people for His glory and our good.***] Great! Today, we're going to see that God used Samson in His plan to rescue His people from the Philistines—but probably not in the way the Israelites imagined.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Judges 13–16. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video “Samson.” For a shorter version of the Bible story, read only the bolded text of the Bible story script.

LEADER • God sent an angel to Manoah and his wife to tell them they would have a son. Do you remember the special instructions the angel gave them concerning Samson's hair? Right! He was not supposed to cut

• Bibles
• “Samson” video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster
• Main Point Poster

it—ever! The Bible says that Samson was a Nazirite from birth. A Nazirite was someone who made a vow to the Lord, and he did not cut his hair until after he had completed his vow. [See Num. 6.] Because Samson was a Nazirite for life, he had to keep his vow for good.

Ask the following multiple choice questions:

1. What did the angel tell Manoah and his wife: A) They would have a son; B) They won a new car; or C) They were going to be rich? (A. *They would have a son; Judg. 13:1-7*)
2. What really gave Samson his power: A) his hair, B) spinach, or C) God? (C. **God gave Samson power; Judg. 14:6,19; 15:14**)
3. What animal did Samson kill with his bare hands: A) a bear, B) a lion, or C) a wolf? (B. *a lion; Judg. 14:6*)
4. Who was the Philistine woman Samson loved: A) Lillian, B) Phyllis, or C) Delilah? (C. *Delilah; Judg. 16:4*)
5. **How does God accomplish His plan:** A) God uses people for His glory and our good; B) God hopes everything works out OK; or C) God doesn't have a plan? (A. **God uses people for His glory and our good.**)

LEADER • Was it really Samson's hair that made him strong? No! **God gave Samson power.** Samson's hair was only a symbol of obedience to God. The problem was that Samson didn't make wise decisions. I don't know about you, but when we got to the part of the Bible story where Delilah asked Samson for the secret of his power, I thought, *No, Samson! Don't do it! Don't trust Delilah!*

Unfortunately, Samson’s foolish choice to tell Delilah—an enemy of his people—about his hair meant that he lost his strength. Samson’s sin led to his own death, but God used his death to deliver the Israelites from their enemies. Samson’s story reminds us of Jesus. Jesus never sinned, but God sent Him to die on the cross and rise again to rescue believers from sin and give them eternal life.

The Gospel: God’s Plan for Me (optional)

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

*Tip: Provide *I’m a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.*

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together Isaiah 33:22. Invite kids to flex their muscles like Samson as they say the key passage.

- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- “He Will Save Us” song

LEADER • I’m sure when the Philistines weakened Samson, they thought the battle was over. They knew Samson was a judge—a leader appointed by God—for the Israelites. So they made fun of Samson in the temple of their false god. But the one true God proved that He is our Judge, our lawgiver, and our King by allowing Samson to defeat the Philistines one more time. God will always save His people.

Invite kids to sing together the key passage song.

• “Unit 9, Session 4”
discussion starter
video

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Have you ever seen something that was out of control? Check out this video.

Show the “Unit 9, Session 4” discussion starter video.

LEADER • Was it bad that the plane was really fast? What was it that created the problem then?

Guide kids consider whether Samson properly used his gift of strength. Lead them to discuss how God-given gifts or talents could be used for good or for bad. For example, how might a person with a lot of wealth use that gift to bless others? How might they waste the gift?

LEADER • **God gave Samson power**, but he didn’t always use what God had given to him for God’s glory. God has given us good things too, but we need to be careful to always seek to use what He has given us for His glory.

Sing (4 minutes)

• “All for Your Glory” song

LEADER • As powerful as Samson was, he was puny and weak compared to all-powerful God! Let’s sing to Almighty God!

Sing together “All for Your Glory.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Dear God, You are the true Rescuer. You are our source of power. Thank You for doing what we could not do by saving us from our sin. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:19.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Samson

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MAIN POINT: God gave Samson power.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- dry erase board or chalk board
- dry erase markers or chalk
- strips of black or brown construction paper
- gel pens or chalk
- tape

Cut strips of black or brown construction paper and use a gel pen or chalk to write one word of the key passage on the strips. On a chalkboard or dry erase board, draw a simple stick figure “Samson.” Mix up the key passage strips and provide tape. One at a time, kids will grab one strip and tape it to Samson’s head, going clockwise around him. Once finished, invite kids to say the key passage together.

SAY • God gave Samson power so Samson could rescue the Israelites from their enemies. Samson’s sin led to his death. Jesus never sinned, but He died on the cross and rose again to take the punishment for our sin so we can have forgiveness when we trust in Him.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- index cards
- marker

Open your Bible to Judges 13–16. Before class, write a few phrases from the Bible story on index cards. Explain that kids are going to pick a card and then silently act out the scene on the card. The other kids will guess the part of the Bible story they are trying to portray. Be prepared to give kids suggestions for the actions if they have trouble thinking of gestures.

Suggested scenes:

- The angel appeared to Manoah and his wife.
- Samson killed the lion.
- Delilah tricked Samson.
- The Philistines captured Samson.
- Samson pushed down the temple pillars.

SAY • **God gave Samson power**, and Samson was physically strong. When it came to making wise decisions, however, Samson was pretty weak. Samson was hot-headed and impatient, and he didn't always think before he acted. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.*** God used Samson's strength in battle to defeat the Philistines, but God also used Samson's mistakes to fulfill God's plan to defeat the Philistines. God is all-powerful, and nothing can stop His plan!

Jesus is God the Son. Jesus is all-powerful, but He came to earth as a man to die on the cross and rise again to rescue us from sin. Whom can you tell this week about God's plan to rescue us from sin?

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Samson, Delilah, Philistines

Explain to the kids that you're going to play a new version of "Rock, Paper, Scissors." Kids are going to stand back to back with a partner.

When you count to three, the kids will turn to face their partner. They must strike one of three poses:

- *Samson*: Flex your muscles in a strong man pose.
- *Delilah*: Put one hand on your hip; the other hand fluffs your hair.
- *Philistines*: Hold up both fists in a boxing stance.

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.



Philistines beat Delilah, Samson beats the Philistines, and Delilah beats Samson.

If you have a large group of kids, after one kid wins the match, he will choose a new partner from the kids who won against their partners. Play until one kid remains.

SAY • God gave Samson power to defeat the Philistines, but Samson made some wrong choices. The Philistines offered Delilah money to find out the secret of Samson’s strength, and she did. Even when Samson seemed like he ruined God’s plan, God was still in control. Samson defeated more of God’s enemies in his death than he did in his life. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.***

OPTION 2: Make Samson’s hair wigs

Before class, cut construction paper into strips about two inches wide. Help kids tape the strips together to make a headband. Kids will then cut pieces of yarn or felt and glue them to the outside of the band. Once the glue has dried, kids can wear their Samson “wigs.”

SAY • Even though he lost his strength when Delilah cut his hair, Samson’s power was not really in his hair. **God gave Samson power.** The Bible says that when we trust in Jesus as our Savior, God gives us the Holy Spirit to give us the power to love and obey Him.

- construction paper strips, 2 inches wide
- yarn or felt strips
- glue
- tape
- scissors

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal and instruct kids to draw a picture of Samson before he cut his hair and after he cut his hair. As kids work, talk about the big picture question and answer.

SAY • **God gave Samson power** to defeat the Philistines.

Samson made a lot of mistakes, but Samson's mistakes could not stop God's plan. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses His people for His glory and our good.***

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for His plan to rescue His people. Thank God that nothing can stop His plan, even the weaknesses and sins of God's people. Pray for the kids to trust God's plan to rescue them from sin by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and rise again.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid
- crayons or markers

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

Journal Page

God Judges His People

Key Passage: Isaiah 33:22

Big Picture Question: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

Session 1: The First Judges

Judges 3:7-31

God's people turned from Him to worship idols.

Session 2: Deborah and Barak

Judges 4-5

God's people needed someone to rescue them from their enemies.

Session 3: Gideon

Judges 6-8

God used Gideon's weakness for His glory.

Session 4: Samson

Judges 13-16

God gave Samson power.

Session 5: Ruth and Boaz

Ruth 1-4

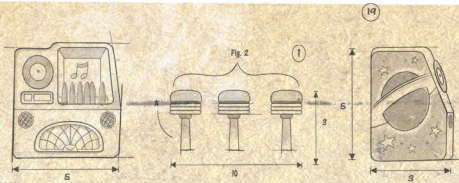
God provided a redeemer for Ruth.

Session 6: Eli and Boy Samuel

1 Samuel 1-3

God called Samuel to share God's plan.

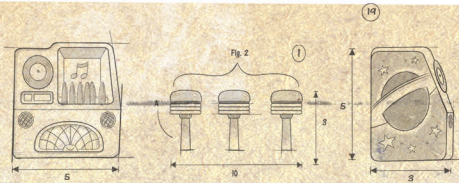




The LORD is our
Judge, the LORD is
our lawgiver, the
LORD is our King.
He will save us.

Isaiah 33:22

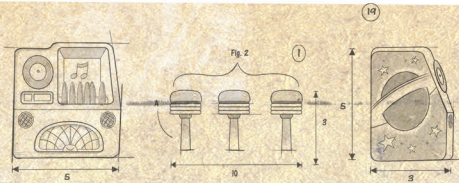




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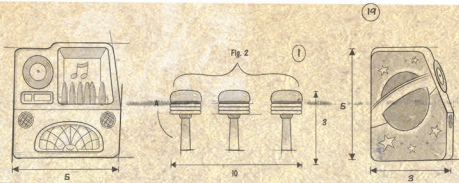




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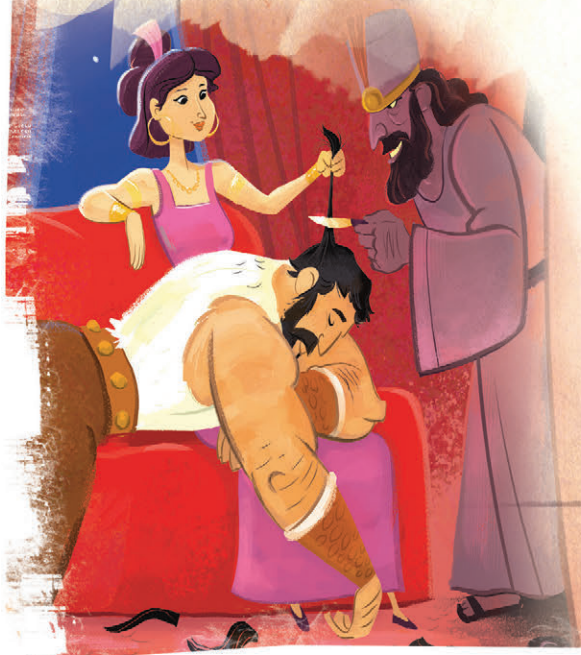


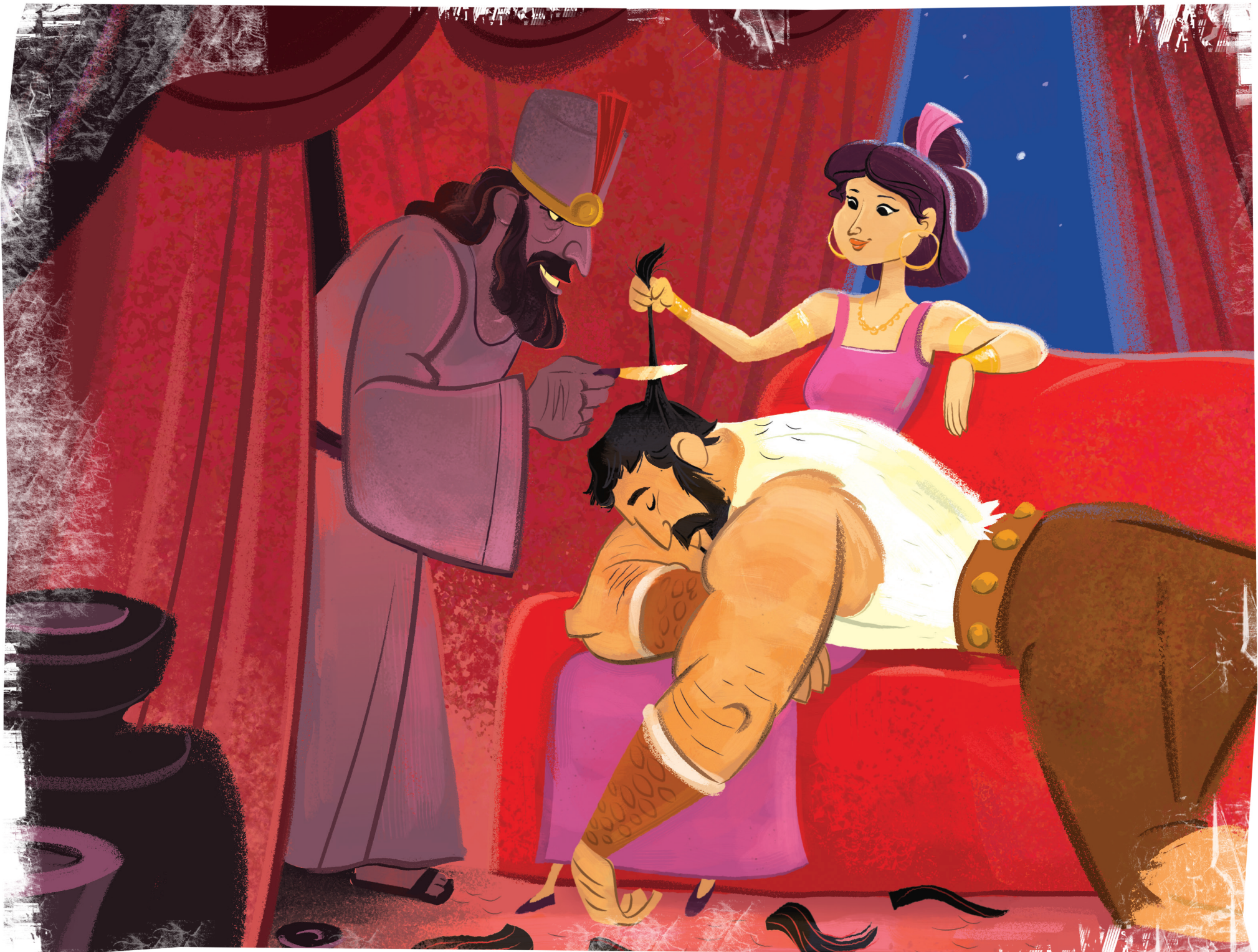
The LORD is our
judge, the LORD is
our lawgiver, the
LORD is our king; it is
he who will save us.

Isaiah 33:22



God gave
Samson
power.





Power Source

DOWNLOAD THE
TGP FAMILY APP

INSTRUCTIONS: Match the four items on the left with its power source on the right. Not all power sources will be used.



KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

BIBLE STORY:

SAMSON

- God chose Samson to deliver Israel from the Philistines.
- God made Samson strong.
- Delilah told the Philistines the secret to Samson's strength.
- Samson pushed on the pillars of the Philistine temple and it collapsed.

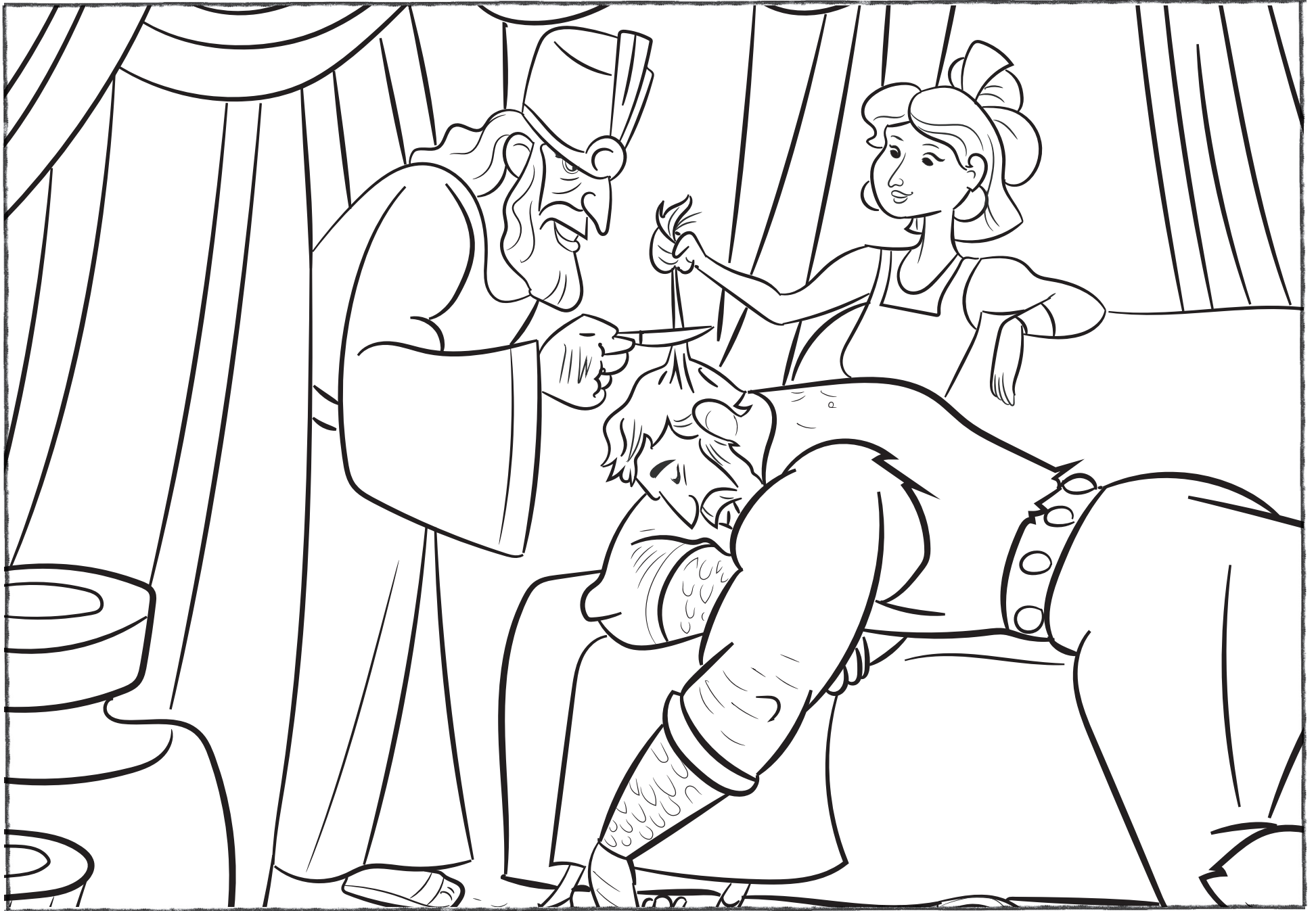
FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Do you think Samson loved God like he should have? How do we fail to love God at times?
- What are you good at? How can you use that talent for God's glory?

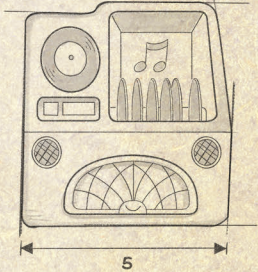
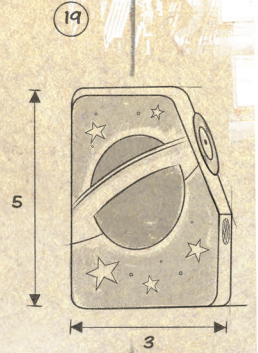
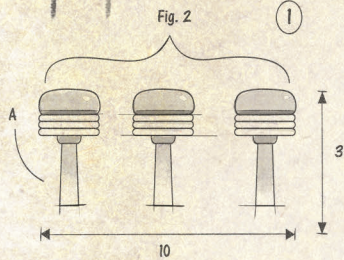
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Conduct a family olympics or feats of strength competition.
- Go further: Take bottled water or sports drinks to a local park where people run or exercise and give them away for free.

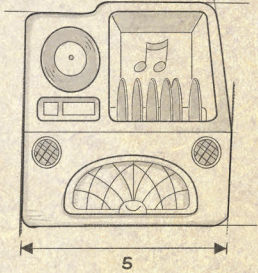
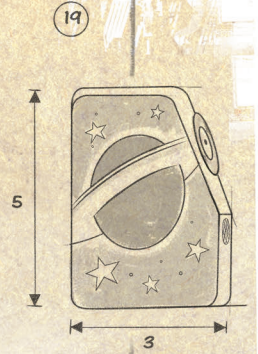
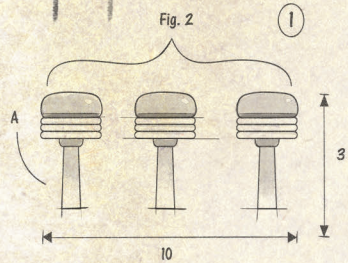
Younger Kids Activity Pages
Unit 9, Session 4



How does God accomplish His plan?



How does God accomplish His plan?



God uses people for His glory and our good.

