

Year 1 Overview: Old Testament

- Module 1: God, the Creator Creation, the Fall, and the Flood
- Module 2: God, the Promise Keeper The Patriarchs
- Module 3: God, the Rescuer The Exodus
- Module 4: God, the Rule-maker The Covenant
- Module 5: God, the Peacemaker The Tabernacle
- Module 6: God, the Warrior The Promised Land
- Module 7: God, the King of Kings The Kings
- Module 8: God, the Judge The Kingdom Divided
- Module 9: God, the Faithful One Judgment and Exile
- Module 10: God, the Kingdom Builder Exile and Return

Phrases used throughout these lessons:

- *special space*: God’s Creation; heaven and earth
- *depend on/dependence on God*: what people were made (and failed) to do; a broader concept than simply “obey”
- *evil and broken*: the sinful human condition after the Fall: evil by being opposed to God and broken by being useless for the ultimate purpose God made people for – to glorify God; every human inherits this condition from Adam and Eve, the first man and woman, who chose to leave God and follow their own way

Module 6: God, the Warrior

The Promised Land

<i>Lesson</i>	<i>Summary</i>	<i>Themes</i>	<i>Scripture</i>
p. 3 6-1 Even God’s Friends Cannot Stop Him	God cannot allow contempt for him to go unpunished, but he will still be faithful to his promises even when his own people fail.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s people must trust what God says, even when it looks like they cannot. • God overcomes sinful behavior to accomplish his purposes. • God can always be trusted to keep his promises, even when his people fail. 	Numbers 13–14, Deuteronomy 1
p. 10 6-2 God Wins the Land for His People	No matter where people come from, no matter what their nationality or family background, they all come to God in the same way: by depending on him and not on themselves.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God does the work of saving people by himself. • People must depend on God to solve their true problem, which is their broken, evil hearts. • God will save anyone who depends on him, and anyone who depends on him can be part of his people, no matter where they come from. 	Joshua 1–6
p. 18 6-3 The Lord God Fights for His People	God does all the work of saving people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s promises are bigger than people can imagine. • People cannot be faithful to depend on God because of their broken hearts. • God is patient and keeps teaching people to depend on him. 	Joshua 23–24; Judges 3–5
p. 25 6-4 Even When Things Look Bad, God Continues to Do Good	God is preparing the things his people need, even while they are failing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God’s plan is going forward, even when people cannot see it. • God wants people to depend on him and not on their own way. • God’s people need a perfect leader to lead them to follow God’s rules perfectly. 	Judges 17–18; Ruth



Memory Verse Game Ideas

Chant It!

Create a chant by finding the natural emphasis of the text (or if you're particularly musical, put the text into a song!). Lead the children in chanting (or singing). After practicing several times with the verse on the board to see, ask small groups or individuals to chant (or sing) without the text to help them.

Erase and Remember

Version 1: Write the verse on the board and lead children in reading it several times. Then erase two or three key words from the board and ask children if they can still say the verse with those words missing. Continue in this way until all that is left is only the simplest words, such as articles and prepositions. At this point, ask kids to try "reading" the verse individually. If you like, bring candy as a sudden unexpected reward for children who can do it. (Just don't tell the children about the candy beforehand, and don't bring/offer it every week! Make it a sudden unexpected reward for the children who tried without knowing that they might receive something for their efforts.)

Version 2: Divide the class in half: boys vs. girls, red clothing vs. other colors, birthdays in Jan–June vs July–Dec., sneakers vs. other kinds of shoes, etc. Then line out the verse: mark phrases where the verse divides. Have one group say the first line/phrase of the verse, the other say the second, and so on. Keep the words up on the board at first, and then start erasing them to see which group can remember the verse, and not just read it. After the first try, switch which group begins first, so each group will get to say all the lines. Try several different class divisions/competitions to give kids as much chance to practice the verse as possible.

Reassemble the Puzzle

Print the memory verse on large pieces of paper, one copy for each small group. Then cut each piece of paper into unevenly shaped pieces and give each group a puzzle to reassemble. (Hide the verse on the board so children must rely on their memory to put the verse together.) For younger children, cut the pieces across words, so younger children can rely on their knowledge of spelling to help them put the puzzle together. For older children, cut the pieces between words, so that older children must rely on their memory of the correct word order in the verse.

Put Yourselves in Order

Print out the verse on sheets of paper, one or two words per sheet. Invite one small group up to the front and hand out the sheets of paper so that each child has one or two. Give the group and leader a minute or two to line themselves up so the words are in the correct order. (Keep track of how long they take.) When the children are all in a line, ask the class to read the verse, with the children holding their word up above their head as it is read. If kids are in the wrong order, go ahead and have the class read it wrong! See if the group can catch the mistake and correct themselves. Then ask another small group to come up and try. See which group can arrange themselves/the words correctly the fastest.

Catch It! Say It!

Practice the verse with a ball or bean bag! Have the children stand in a big circle, either as a class or in their individual small groups. Children can either pass the ball/bag from one child to the next around the circle or toss the ball/bag across the circle to children at random. (If the class is large, have children toss the bag back to the teacher/adult volunteer rather than choosing the next child themselves, lest the game get out of control.) Whoever has the ball or bean bag thrown to them has to say the next word of the verse – yourself included! Keep the verse up on the board at first to prompt kids during the beginning of the game. Then as the kids get better, start erasing words from the board and see how well the children can remember the verse.

Fill in the Blanks

This is a good game for the last lesson of the module, when children review the month's verses. Print out the verse(s) in large size font, one memory verse per sheet, replacing key words with blanks. (Be sure to use the NIV version used in the lessons, so the children are not frustrated when they try to fill in the blanks but the words don't quite fit!) Give each small group its own copy of the verse(s), and instruct them to work together to fill in the blanks, i.e. if there are three review memory verses, each group should have three sheets of paper. The first group to finish all the verses and bring them to you is the winner – as long as all their answers are correct!

Module 6: God, the Warrior

Lesson 1: Even God’s Friends Cannot Stop Him

Summary

God cannot allow contempt for him to go unpunished, but he will still be faithful to his promises even when his own people fail. (This highlights the reality that God is at the same time a moral being, and also a faithful covenant-keeper. [See Note 1.]

Themes

Emphasize these themes during the lesson.

- God’s people must trust what God says, even when it looks like they cannot.
- God overcomes sinful behavior to accomplish his purposes.
- God can always be trusted to keep his promises, even when his people fail.

Scripture

Read entire passage for context.

Numbers 13–14; Deuteronomy 1

Memory Verse

Check whether the curriculum is in the 1st or 2nd round.

Note to BICF teachers: We are using the NIV 1984 Bible (our donated classroom Bibles) to avoid confusing the children.

1st round This month’s memory verses are Numbers 14:17-18a. Today children memorize only the underlined part.

Now may the LORD’s strength be displayed, just as you have declared: ‘The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished... (Numbers 14:17–18a)

2nd round Review Psalm 135:1–12 (the memory verses learned in the previous five modules).

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| <p>¹ Praise the LORD. Praise the name of the LORD; praise him, you servants of the LORD,</p> <p>² you who minister in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God.</p> <p>³ Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant.</p> <p>⁴ For the LORD has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his treasured possession.</p> <p>⁵ I know that the LORD is great, that our Lord is greater than all gods.</p> <p>⁶ The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.</p> | <p>⁷ He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.</p> <p>⁸ He struck down the firstborn of Egypt, the firstborn of people and animals.</p> <p>⁹ He sent his signs and wonders into your midst, Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants.</p> <p>¹⁰ He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings—
¹¹ Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan, and all the kings of Canaan—</p> <p>¹² and he gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to his people Israel.</p> |
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Suggested Visual

Incorporate this visual element into the lesson however you see fit.

Activity: [Hold up mirror.] Do you guys know what this is? Yes – a mirror. And what do I see when you look in a mirror? That’s right – myself! What does “Mirror Me” do? Exactly what I do. [If there’s time, you could play a 30-second mirror game: you are the “original” and all the children are your mirrors, copying what you do the moment you do it, i.e. yawning, stretching, standing, sitting.] A mirror image does exactly what the original does. There’s something in today’s lesson that’s like a mirror image, copying the original; at the end of the lesson, I want you to tell me if you figured it out.

Notes

Please read all notes before and once again after preparing the lesson.

- FORGIVENESS YET STILL PUNISHMENT?** God declares in Numbers 14 that he has forgiven the people; yet there remains punishment for their stubborn refusal to depend on him despite his constant kindness, faithfulness, and provision. God’s



relationship to his people highlights his existence as both a moral being and also a faithful, saving, covenant-keeping God. God is not controlled by his covenant to the extent that he sets aside all punishment for sin. This tells us he is a moral being; one who responds with favor to obedience and faithfulness. On the other hand, God is much more than just the spiritual embodiment of ethics. If he were, then self-salvation by righteous behavior would be the only way of salvation (if he did not simply destroy all unrighteous people first, which would be completely in keeping with his perfect ethical nature). However, since he is both faithful covenant-keeper and also righteous moral being, he both punishes sin and disciplines his people; and yet also faithfully keeps his covenant and overcomes the sinful nature of his people, saving them in spite of themselves.

2. **YOUR TEACHING MANNER** Keep your Bible open, even when teaching from notes, so that children see that the Bible is what they’re learning. Don’t lose heart if you see the children losing focus during the lesson. Remember that God causes blind eyes to see, deaf ears to hear, and dead hearts to live. Your responsibility is to pray, teach, and trust – pray for the hearts of the children in your class, teach as well as you possibly can, and trust that the Lord will use the lesson to accomplish his purposes both for the children and for you.
3. **HANDLING QUESTIONS** As you teach, the children will naturally have questions and comments. God gave them minds able to make connections between the things they have learned already and what they are learning at that moment. However, stopping teaching to take and answer these questions can often break the flow of the lesson, and it can be difficult to get the attention of all the children back. The same can also be said for you asking questions and taking answers during the lesson. Of course, it is good to keep the children involved and paying attention; however, this can be done effectively by asking only rhetorical yes/no questions, and encouraging nodding and shaking of heads for answers rather than shouting out answers in the middle of the lesson. This also gives the children the chance to move a bit during the lesson time (which may help them to be less wriggly overall). The children will have the opportunity to ask questions during their time in small groups, so you do not need to worry that their questions will go unanswered. If lots of hands are going up, tell the children that you are not taking questions right now, but that they can save them to ask in their small groups.
4. **ADDING TO THE LESSON** We are not aiming to improve the children’s knowledge of history, geography, or science. Our primary goal is to lead the children to know God and to understand a little of God’s great plan throughout history. This goal is not achieved by including interesting but non-essential facts (e.g. “Did you know that the Red Sea was not actually a sea?”). When teaching the Bible, it is always essential to know the main point of the lesson and teach *only* that; do not allow yourself or anyone else to be distracted by trivia or other true things that are not the main point that you are teaching. Just as preachers do not teach on every single thing they find in their study and preparation of a passage, we do not include everything. Bear in mind that the human heart is “deceitful above all things and beyond cure” (Jeremiah 17:9). It will always try to wriggle away from what it *should* be focused on (God, conviction of sin/need, etc.) to focus on trivial things (like “How did God make Eve from Adam’s rib?”). As these trivial questions inevitably come up, promise to answer them if necessary after the lesson, not during, and if you do take time to answer the trivial questions, immediately point the children back to the main point of the passage. Only God can cure the deceitful heart, but we ought to do all we can as teachers to point children to God and stop them from running off in wrong directions.

Suggested Class Timing		<i>Feel free to adapt this according to your assessment of class needs.</i>	
How long?	When?	What’s happening?	Where?
30 minutes	11:00 – 11:30	Worship in song	Main service
30 minutes	11:30 – 12:00	Lesson: review and teach	Around the teacher
15 minutes	12:00 – 12:15	Small group: discuss & pray	Groups around room
15 minutes	12:15 – 12:30	Memory verse: intro & game	Based on activity
End of class	12:30 – til end	Sword drill (if there’s time)	Around teacher

CLASS TIME: Lesson **11:30 – 12:00 (30 minutes)**

VISUAL You might incorporate the skit here or choose to use it at the end of the lesson, before the Small Group Time.

REVIEW

Note: Be sure to take time each week to review. The key to teaching Scriptural truth is leading students to see how the seemingly isolated Bible stories actually all fit together into one “big picture”. Going back over that “big picture” each week is essential to grasping why God put all these stories in the Bible. Don’t get bogged down, though; keep it moving!

- Why did Adam and Eve disobey God? [They didn’t believe what he said or depend on him. They thought they knew best how to live their lives.]
- Adam and Eve thought they knew the best thing for their own lives: were they right? [No; in disobeying God they ruined their whole lives and the lives of their children and grandchildren and all human beings.]
- What has God done so far to show his people that he loves them? [He has made a way to come to live with them. Children may also mention his salvation from Egypt, provision of food and water, etc. All of those are true signs of God’s love,



but make sure the children understand that none of them are such important demonstrations of his love as his providing his rules, sacrifices, priests, and tabernacle so that people could be with him: his presence, the greatest demonstration of his love.]

- What did God tell his people to make for him? Why? [*A special tent, the tabernacle; so that he would have a home among their homes.*]
- How was it possible for a holy God to come and live in the middle of sinful people? [*He gave the people rules to show them how to live with him and with each other; he then gave them sacrifices to cleanse the people from their sin.*]
- How many times did these sacrifices have to be made? [*Every day, because the people were sinful every day.*]
- What are the people waiting for now? [*To go to the land that God had promised to them.*]

TEACH

Note: If you want to give children practice in reading God’s Word aloud in class, it would be wise to write out references on pieces of paper and distribute them to good readers at the beginning of class, asking them to be ready to stand up and read when you ask them. Another option is to ask the entire class to read aloud together. And of course, you can just read the Scripture yourself. However, if you do choose to read the Scripture yourself, practice reading at home with expression and motions, so the children find it interesting to listen to. (No monotone!) (Be aware that the classroom Bibles are the NIV 1984 Bible; that is the version used in these lessons to avoid confusion for the children.)

Note: Be sure to emphasize the main points of the lesson (text in bold), as this lesson lays the foundation for future lessons and is key for the children to understand what comes after. Do not take too much lesson time on points not mentioned in the lesson. Practice teaching the lesson at home once or twice to check your time, lest you let it drag on and lose the kids. Move quickly, and direct all questions, comments, and rabbit trails back to the main themes.

Do you remember all the promises that God has been making? [*Hold up fingers as if counting off.*] He told Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that their children would have a land that belonged just to them, and that he would be their God and the God of their descendants. He promised Israel in Egypt that he would take them back to this land.

And do you remember all the good gifts God has given to his people Israel? [*Hold up fingers as if counting off.*] God led them through the desert on the way to the land he had promised. The whole way, he gave them food and water and everything they needed. God provided a way for his people to be forgiven: he gave them sacrifices to cover their sins and priests to go between them and God. Then, God actually came to live *with* them.

But the whole way they traveled, the people kept complaining! They had *said* they wanted to be God’s people. They had *said* they wanted to depend on God. But everywhere they went, they were never satisfied with the things God gave them. They always thought that they knew what they needed better than God did.

I. The Promised Land!

Finally, the amazing moment came – the people of Israel came to the land that had been promised to them and to their ancestors! Have you ever taken a really, really, *really* long ride on a plane or train? The Israelites had been traveling a lot longer than that – many, many months. This was the most exciting moment of their lives. They’re at the land! They should celebrate! How many times has God failed his people up till now? That’s right: not once. Not even one time has God failed to take care of them, and now, God has kept his great promise!

But the people of Israel were just like me, and just like you. They were not satisfied with the good things God gave them; and they didn’t depend on God. Do you remember what Eve did, after all the good things God had done? She ate from the tree God said not to eat from – and even before she ate, she went to look at the tree. Why? Because she had decided to be in charge instead of God. She decided to go and look at the fruit and then choose for herself whether she should obey God or not. The people of Israel did something very similar to what Eve did. (That’s not surprising, is it? They’re her great, great, great, great... grandchildren!) Let’s read about it:

Numbers 13:1–2

¹ The LORD said to Moses, ² “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

Note: As you teach, model a sound pattern of Scripture study: observation, interpretation, and application. Observation asks, “What does it say?” Interpretation asks, “What does it mean?” Application asks, “So what’s the point for me?” (Application will sometimes happen in the lesson itself but will happen more often in Small Group time.)

OBSERVE [*If children get an “observation answer” wrong, say, “Read verse X and tell me if that’s really the right answer.” Always let the Scripture itself correct the children.*] What did God say? [*Send some men to explore the land he was giving to them.*]

Numbers 13:21, 23, 25

²¹ So they went up and explored the land from the Desert of Zin as far as Rehob, toward Lebo Hamath. ... ²³ When they reached the Valley of Eshkol, they cut off a branch bearing a single cluster of grapes. Two of them carried it on a pole between them, along with some pomegranates and figs. ... ²⁵ At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land.

OBSERVE Did the people send men out to explore, like God had told them to do? [*Yes.*] What did they bring back with them? [*Fruit, to show the rest of the people what the land was like.*] How long did they explore? [*Forty days.*]

INTERPRET God told them to go and look at the wonderful land he was giving them. He sent them to see the people and the towns and even the fruit! God wanted them to prepare to take their new land that he was giving them, and God wanted them to see how good it was. But listen to what happened when they got back:

II. The Report and the Response**Numbers 13:27–28**

²⁷ They gave Moses this account: “We went into the land to which you sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. ²⁸ But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large...”

OBSERVE What did the men report when they came back? [*A rich, wonderful place – with strong people and cities.*]

Numbers 13:30–32

³⁰ Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” ³¹ But the men who had gone up with him said, “We can’t attack those people; they are stronger than we are.” ³² And they spread among the Israelites a bad report about the land they had explored. They said, “The land we explored devours those living in it. All the people we saw there are of great size.

OBSERVE What did Caleb try to convince everybody to do? [*To go up and take the land; they could certainly do it.*] What did the other men say? [*“We can’t do it”; the men spread a bad report about the land, to frighten the people of Israel.*]

INTERPRET Just like Eve, the people of Israel decided to trust what they saw instead of what God said. One of the men who had gone to explore the land, Caleb, told the people they should do what God said and trust his promise. But everyone else was afraid. They did not depend on God. Let’s see what happens next:

Numbers 14:1–4

¹ That night all the members of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. ² All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! ³ Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” ⁴ And they said to each other, “We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”

OBSERVE That night, what happened? [*Everyone in Israel cried and grumbled against Moses and Aaron.*] What did they say about God? [*That he brought them there to be killed.*] What did they want to do? [*Get rid of Moses; go back to Egypt.*]

INTERPRET Aren’t those terrible things to say? After all the good things that God did for them, the Israelites refused to believe he would keep his promise to keep them safe and give them the land. They had all just seen God destroy the greatest country in the whole world, Egypt, just to protect them; but they didn’t believe he would protect them now. God had given them a great leader, Moses – but now they thought they could choose a better one. And *these people were lying!* Did they *really* wish that they had died? No, the people didn’t really wish they were dead. They were being spoiled and childish. They wanted to have their own way.

But things got even worse than that!

Numbers 14:5–10

⁵ Then Moses and Aaron fell facedown in front of the whole Israelite assembly gathered there. ⁶ Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had explored the land, tore their clothes ⁷ and said to the entire Israelite assembly, “The land we passed through and explored is exceedingly good. ⁸ If the LORD is pleased with us, he will lead us into that land, a land flowing with milk and honey, and will give it to us. ⁹ Only do not rebel against the LORD. And do not be afraid of the people of the land, because we will swallow them up. Their protection is gone, but the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them.” ¹⁰ But the whole assembly talked about stoning them. ...

OBSERVE Who tried to convince Israel to do what was right? [*Moses, Aaron, Joshua, and Caleb.*] Why were they so certain that they could take the land? [*They were certain God would give it to Israel if he was pleased with them; they were not afraid of the land’s people, because the Lord was with Israel.*] What did Israel talk about doing? [*Stoning, killing them.*]

INTERPRET A few men tried to tell the people what was right. They tried to remind them to depend on God. And can you believe it? The people wanted to murder these men. They wanted to get rid of Moses, the good leader God had given them. They wanted to kill Aaron, the man God gave to go between them and God and make sacrifices so God would accept them. And they wanted to kill Joshua and Caleb because they spoke the truth.

III. Forgiveness – and yet Judgment

Let's see what God does:

Numbers 14:13, 19–23

¹³ Moses said to the LORD ...

¹⁹ In accordance with your great love, forgive the sin of these people, just as you have pardoned them from the time they left Egypt until now.” ²⁰ The LORD replied, “I have forgiven them, as you asked. ²¹ Nevertheless, as surely as I live and as surely as the glory of the LORD fills the whole earth, ²² not one of the men who saw my glory and the miraculous signs I performed in Egypt and in the desert but who disobeyed me and tested me ten times— ²³ not one of them will ever see the land I promised on oath to their forefathers. No one who has treated me with contempt will ever see it.

Numbers 14:30

³⁰ Not one of you will enter the land I swore with uplifted hand to make your home, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

OBSERVE What did Moses beg God to do? [*Forgive the people – again.*] Did the Lord listen to Moses? [*Yes.*] Did God also judge the people? [*Yes.*] What was the judgment? [*That not one of those people could enter the land.*] Why did God decide that those people would never see his promise come true? [*Because they treated him with contempt.*] What does “treat with contempt” mean? [*To treat someone as if they're worthless, lower than you.*] Did God still plan to bring his people, Israel, into the land? [*Yes; just none of those people alive at that time, except Caleb and Joshua.*]

INTERPRET The people deserved to be cut off from God forever; they deserved for God to destroy them – but God forgave them. God did *not* destroy them right then and there; but he also did *not* give them the promised land.

What was God doing? **God was keeping his promise: but God was also showing everyone that they *must* depend on him, not matter how things appeared.** God knew his people could not keep his rules perfectly; that's why he gave them sacrifices and priests and Levites. But God wanted his people to understand they had to depend on him and not on their own hearts. This was the *most important* thing of all! The people had to depend on God – and depend on him completely. That was the only way to be forgiven and live with God. They had to trust God's way was always, always, *always* best.

Only Joshua and Caleb depended on God: so out of all the grown-ups who were alive on that day, those two men were the only ones who would be allowed to enter God's promised land.

At the beginning, I told you keep your ears open for something that was like a mirror – a perfect image of something else. Did anyone figure it out? Let's think for a moment. What did Israel do when they were in the desert without food and water – trust God or depend on themselves? What did Moses do when he was a young man and tried to free his people from Egypt? Did he go to God for help, or did he depend on his own strength? How about Jacob and his mother, Rebekah? Did they trust God to keep his promise to bless Jacob, or did they depend on their own ideas, tricking Isaac to get the blessing? How about Abraham? God had promised to give him and Sarah a son. Did Abraham trust God, or did he listen to Sarah's idea to get a son by themselves? And what about Adam and Eve? God told them not to eat the fruit from the tree in the Garden of Eden, but when the snake came along and told Eve something opposite from what God said, did Eve trust God – or trust her own ability to decide what was true? Did Adam trust God, or did he depend on his own wisdom?

This is the *same* problem in everybody's hearts! All of us are mirrors, doing the same thing as our parents, and their parents, and *their* parents, all the way back to Adam and Eve! We are all following our own way, not God.

But our God is so powerful that this can't stop him. **God can overcome sin, even when it's in the hearts of his own people.** Next week we will see **God keep his promises to the children of all these people, just as he said.**

CLASS TIME: Small Group

12:00 – 12:15 (15 minutes)

DISCUSS

Check observation and interpretation.

Note: Small group leaders, please adapt these questions to the needs of your group, changing the wording as necessary to help children understand the point of the questions and leading them to understand the lesson more deeply.

- What are some of the ways in which God has taken care of the Israelites? [*Rescued them from Egypt; protected them from the Egyptian army; given them food and water in the desert; led them safely through the desert; given them rules, the tabernacle, sacrifices, priests & Levites.*]
- What does this show about how he feels about them? [*He loves them very, very much.*]
- How have the Israelites behaved towards God? [*They have been happy when they’ve received good things, but complained as soon as they were unhappy and turned away from God to idols as soon as they got impatient.*]
- What does this show about their attitude towards him? [*They don’t really trust him; they don’t depend on him; they still feel that they are better able to care for themselves than God.*]
- Could the people have been sure God would keep his promises to them? Why? [*Yes, they could have been sure, because God has kept every promise he’s made so far; they have no reason to doubt he will break his promises in the future.*]
- Why is it so important for the people to depend on God completely? [*No one else can take care of them and their real problem – their sinful hearts will destroy them, unless God can fix the problem.*]

PRAY

Use this time for application.

There are different ways to pray to God. Today, let’s pray in three ways: let’s praise God, let’s thank God, and let’s say sorry to God. What did you learn about God in today’s lesson that we can praise God for? [*That God never ever changes; that he is always faithful.*] ... that we can thank God for? [*For never leaving his people, even when they don’t trust or depend on him.*] ... that we can say sorry to God for? [*For not trusting him when we can’t see the future clearly; for depending on ourselves, not on God.*]

Note: Lead the children to connect their ideas directly to what was taught in today’s lesson. Then lead them in a prayer of praise, thanksgiving, and repentance to God. If the children are being silly, stop them immediately; they must not be permitted to make themselves the focus of this time or to distract other people from worship. Remind them very directly that this time is all about God, not about them. If the children are being calm and respectful toward God, then ask those who are willing to pray a sentence of praise, thanksgiving, or repentance to God themselves.

These lessons teach children to pray like this:

- **Praise:** We praise God for who he is.
- **Thanks:** We thank God for what he does.
- **Sorry:** We say sorry to God for what we’ve done.
- **Please:** We ask God for what we need.

IF YOU FINISH EARLY...

Check whether the curriculum is in the first or second round.

If you finish discussion and prayer before other groups have finished, take time to review some of the memory verses from previous months. If you are leading a group with younger children, you might want to use some of the memory verse game ideas (page 2) to help keep the children’s attention until it is time for the groups to come together again.

1st round Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and the seventy elders of Israel went up and saw the God of Israel. Under his feet was something like a pavement made of sapphire, clear as the sky itself. But God did not raise his hand against these leaders of the Israelites; they saw God, and they ate and drank. (Exodus 24:9–11)

2nd round He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings – Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan, and all the kings of Canaan – and he gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to his people Israel. (Psalm 135:10–12)

CLASS TIME: Memory Verse

12:15 – 12:30 (15 minutes)

It would be wise to ask one of the small group leaders to lead this part of the lesson to give your voice a break from teaching and to give one of the other volunteers practice in leading the children. If the small group leader is not comfortable teaching the verse, then you, the teacher, can give the explanation and then he/she can lead the game.

Note to BICF teachers: We are using the NIV 1984 Bible (our donated classroom Bibles) to avoid confusing the children.

INTRO

1st round Now may the LORD’s strength be displayed, just as you have declared... (Numbers 14:17a)

When the people were so sinful that they refused to believe the things that God said, even after all the wonderful things God did for them, Moses prayed for them. Isn't that amazing? The people were saying they didn't want Moses to be their leader. They thought they knew better than God did, and they wanted to choose their own leader to take them back to Egypt. After saying such a terrible thing, shouldn't Moses have said, "Fine. Go back and die in Egypt." But God *does* know best. His ways are *always* the best ways. God is the one who chose Moses, and here we can see that God made the best choice for the people. Moses, God's chosen leader, didn't get upset and leave the people. Instead he prayed for them!

This month we're going to memorize a little part of Moses' prayer, starting with this line: "Now may the Lord's strength be displayed, just as you have declared..." Who is "you" here? It's God. Moses said, "God, the people deserve to be destroyed. But if you destroy the people, then the Egyptians and everyone else who have heard about you... what will they think? They'll think: 'Wow, the enemies of this God couldn't stop God; but the people of God could! They wouldn't do what their God said, and their God is too weak to fix the problem. God is too weak to keep his promises if his people won't cooperate.' So, God, please show everyone how great your power is, just like you said you would." We'll read more about what Moses says about God's strength next week, but for right now, let's practice our verse!

2nd round *Review Psalm 135:1–12 (the memory verses learned in the previous five modules).*

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>¹ Praise the LORD. Praise the name of the LORD;
praise him, you servants of the LORD,</p> <p>² you who minister in the house of the LORD,
in the courts of the house of our God.</p> <p>³ Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good;
sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant.</p> <p>⁴ For the LORD has chosen Jacob to be his own,
Israel to be his treasured possession.</p> <p>⁵ I know that the LORD is great,
that our Lord is greater than all gods.</p> <p>⁶ The LORD does whatever pleases him,
in the heavens and on the earth,
in the seas and all their depths.</p> | <p>⁷ He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth;
he sends lightning with the rain
and brings out the wind from his storehouses.</p> <p>⁸ He struck down the firstborn of Egypt,
the firstborn of people and animals.</p> <p>⁹ He sent his signs and wonders into your midst, Egypt,
against Pharaoh and all his servants.</p> <p>¹⁰ He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings—
¹¹ Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan,
and all the kings of Canaan—</p> <p>¹² and he gave their land as an inheritance,
an inheritance to his people Israel.</p> |
|---|---|

GAME

See page 2 for memory verse game ideas.

WHILE WAITING FOR PARENTS: Sword Drill

12:30 until all children leave

It would be wise to ask one of the small group leaders to lead this part to give your voice a break from teaching and to give one of the other volunteers practice in leading the class.

A "Sword Drill" is practice in finding references in the Bible, God's "double-edged sword". Before class, prepare a list of Scripture references from book(s) referenced in this lesson, e.g. Numbers 10:34, Numbers 14:19, etc.

Take a few moments to explain how to find chapters and verses in the Bible, for any children who might not know how the Bible is organized. Remind the children that while the purpose of this game is to find the references as quickly as possible, the most important thing is actually *knowing God*: learning who he is from his Word.

Ask all the children to sit on the floor with their Bibles closed in front of them. As soon as you call out the reference and say "Go!", children may begin to search. The first one to find it and stand up is the winner – if it's the right verse!

Vary each round to help children work out some of their energy from sitting for an hour: for each new round, ask kids to show that they've found the reference in a different way, i.e. jump up and pat their head when they find it, or turn around and stick their finger in their ear, or stand up and balance on one foot. Be creative!

To keep kids who already know their Bibles well from dominating the game, try changing the participants for each round, for example, only the girls, or only the boys, or only seven-year-olds, or only children wearing red, or only children with birthdays from January to June. Again, be creative to keep kids engaged!

Module 6: God, the Warrior

Lesson 2: God Wins the Land for His People

Summary

No matter where people come from, no matter what their nationality or family background, they all come to God in the same way: by depending on him and not on themselves.

Themes

Emphasize these themes during the lesson.

- God does the work of saving people by himself.
- People must depend on God to solve their true problem, which is their broken, evil hearts.
- God will save anyone who depends on him, and anyone who depends on him can be part of his people, no matter where they come from.

Scripture

Check whether the curriculum is in the 1st or 2nd round.

Joshua 1–6

Memory Verse

Check whether the curriculum is in the 1st or 2nd round.

Note to BICF teachers: We are using the NIV 1984 Bible (our donated classroom Bibles) to avoid confusing the children.

1st round This month's memory verses are Numbers 14:17-18a. Today children memorize only the underlined part.

Now may the LORD's strength be displayed, just as you have declared: 'The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished...
(Numbers 14:17–18a)

2nd round Your name, LORD, endures forever, your renown, LORD, through all generations. (Psalm 135:13)

Suggested Visual

Incorporate one of these visual elements into the lesson however you see fit.

Skit: This skit requires four people and an item that will work *only* with an external power source, e.g. a stereo. Persons 1–3 should be in the room and Person 4 outside the room. Person 1, the “owner” of the stereo, should sit in front of the plug (power point), i.e. the *only* one with access to connect the stereo to power.

Person 1 begins with something like, “I know you like music! This stereo will play music if I connect it to the power, so if you'd like some music, just let me know! I'll connect it for you.” Person 2 might say, “I'd like some music! I'll turn it on” and then start pushing buttons – with no result, since the stereo is disconnected from the power source. Person 3 might try something else to turn it on, such as flipping the switch for the classroom lights. Neither Person 2 nor Person 3 *ever* does what they were told to do (never asks Person 1 to connect the stereo to the power). After a few moments, Person 4 enters, walks up, looks at the stereo and situation, and then says to Person 1, “Hey, would you mind connecting the stereo so there's power?”

Let the class listen to a song, and then ask them to analyze the situation. Had the people in the room been told what to do if they wanted to hear music? Yes; they just wouldn't do it. Had the person outside the room been told what to do if he/she wanted to hear music? No; and yet the one who hadn't been told directly was still able to see the situation, understand what was going on, and know who to go to for help.

How to relate this to the lesson: Later, remind the students of this when talking about Rahab: God's people forty years ago had been told exactly what to do, but they wouldn't. Rahab *hadn't* been told to depend on God, but she saw the situation and knew what it was saying about God: she knew that the only right thing to do was depend on this God.

Notes

Please read all notes before and once again after preparing the lesson.

1. **RAHAB'S LIE** Do not be distracted by questions about Rahab's lie and whether God was pleased with the lie or not. (It might be useful to teach children the concept of a “red herring”: an irrelevant issue used to distract someone from the main point.)

If children ask about Rahab’s lie, remind them to focus on the key point about Rahab’s behavior, which is that amongst all the Canaanites (all of whom believe this God is powerful and someone to be afraid of [Joshua 2:24] and the majority of whom respond by strategizing a way to resist him), Rahab alone responds by turning to him instead of away from him. Even more important than her behavior is the fact that God chooses to give her faith: her, the most unlikely person imaginable – not only is she one of the people who God has determined to destroy, but she is one people would consider “most sinful” as a prostitute. In Rahab, God illustrates what kind of people he has come to save (sinners), what is required (dependence/faith alone), and that he plans to fix the broken relationship between not only himself and the physical children of Abraham but also every kind of person.

2. **NOT AN EXHAUSTIVE STUDY** There is much more to be said about entering of Canaan than the lesson covers. This lesson is intended only as a broad overview of key details in God bringing his people into the promised land. Keep the lesson short and direct, rather than giving an exhaustive presentation of every event; children and parents should be reading the Scripture at home together, so the goal in Sunday School is to focus on the key points that children should understand from these stories.
3. **YOUR TEACHING MANNER** Keep your Bible open, even when teaching from notes, so that children see that the Bible is what they’re learning. Don’t lose heart if you see the children losing focus during the lesson. Remember that God causes blind eyes to see, deaf ears to hear, and dead hearts to live. Your responsibility is to pray, teach, and trust – pray for the hearts of the children in your class, teach as well as you possibly can, and trust that the Lord will use the lesson to accomplish his purposes both for the children and for you.
4. **HANDLING QUESTIONS** As you teach, the children will naturally have questions and comments. God gave them minds able to make connections between the things they have learned already and what they are learning at that moment. However, stopping teaching to take and answer these questions can often break the flow of the lesson, and it can be difficult to get the attention of all the children back. The same can also be said for you asking questions and taking answers during the lesson. Of course, it is good to keep the children involved and paying attention; however, this can be done effectively by asking only rhetorical yes/no questions, and encouraging nodding and shaking of heads for answers rather than shouting out answers in the middle of the lesson. This also gives the children the chance to move a bit during the lesson time (which may help them to be less wriggly overall). The children will have the opportunity to ask questions during their time in small groups, so you do not need to worry that their questions will go unanswered. If lots of hands are going up, tell the children that you are not taking questions right now, but that they can save them to ask in their small groups.
5. **ADDING TO THE LESSON** We are not aiming to improve the children’s knowledge of history, geography, or science. Our primary goal is to lead the children to know God and to understand a little of God’s great plan throughout history. This goal is not achieved by including interesting but non-essential facts (e.g. “Did you know that the Red Sea was not actually a sea?”). When teaching the Bible, it is always essential to know the main point of the lesson and teach *only* that; do not allow yourself or anyone else to be distracted by trivia or other true things that are not the main point that you are teaching. Just as preachers do not teach on every single thing they find in their study and preparation of a passage, we do not include everything. Bear in mind that the human heart is “deceitful above all things and beyond cure” (Jeremiah 17:9). It will always try to wriggle away from what it *should* be focused on (God, conviction of sin/need, etc.) to focus on trivial things (like “How did God make Eve from Adam’s rib?”). As these trivial questions inevitably come up, promise to answer them if necessary after the lesson, not during, and if you do take time to answer the trivial questions, immediately point the children back to the main point of the passage. Only God can cure the deceitful heart, but we ought to do all we can as teachers to point children to God and stop them from running off in wrong directions.

Suggested Class Timing *Feel free to adapt this according to your assessment of class needs.*

How long?	When?	What’s happening?	Where?
30 minutes	11:00 – 11:30	Worship in song	Main service
30 minutes	11:30 – 12:00	Lesson: review and teach	Around the teacher
15 minutes	12:00 – 12:15	Small group: discuss & pray	Groups around room
15 minutes	12:15 – 12:30	Memory verse: intro & game	Based on activity
End of class	12:30 – til end	Sword drill (if there’s time)	Around teacher

CLASS TIME: Lesson **11:30 – 12:00 (30 minutes)**

VISUAL *You might incorporate the visual here or choose to use it at the end of the lesson, before the Small Group Time.*

REVIEW

Note: Be sure to take time each week to review. The key to teaching Scriptural truth is leading students to see how the seemingly isolated Bible stories actually all fit together into one “big picture”. Going back over that “big picture” each week is essential to grasping why God put all these stories in the Bible. Don’t get bogged down, though; keep it moving!

- Did God still love Adam and Eve after they turned away from him and broke their relationship with him? [Yes, and he continued to care for them in their broken state.]



- Can you remember any other time in the Bible stories we've studied when people depended on themselves and their own wisdom instead of on what God said? *[Abraham, when he decided to follow Sarah's advice on how to get the son that God had promised; Jacob, when he tricked his father to get the blessing that God had promised; Moses, when he tried to save his people with his own strength by killing one of their Egyptian oppressors; the people of Israel, when they decided to make a golden calf to worship and follow rather than depending on God, who had done nothing but good for them.]*
- How were the rules that God gave his people a good gift? *[God's rules told the people how to love him and how to love each other – but most importantly, they revealed to the people who God is so they could have a relationship with him.]*
- God knew that his people could not obey his rules perfectly, because they were broken. Obeying God's rules doesn't come from knowing the rules; obeying God's rules comes from pure hearts – and the people's hearts were broken and destroyed by sin. So how were the sacrifices a good gift? *[God knew that his people could not keep his rules, because their hearts were broken; God gave the sacrifices to teach them that death was necessary because of their broken, sinful condition; God was also teaching them they needed something to go between them and God, and that they had to depend on God's way in order to be with him. Finally, through the constant repetition, God was beginning to teach them that animal sacrifices can never perfectly fix the problem of human sin.]*
- Why did God want Israel to be his people? Was it because they were good? *[No; there was nothing good in them at all; God chose to love them because of his promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – and God chose to love Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob simply because he chose to love them, not because of anything good in them that obligated God to choose or love them.]*
- Last week, God brought the Israelites to the land which he'd promised to Abraham, but they refused to go in. Why did they refuse? *[Were afraid of the powerful people there; didn't trust God to protect them and give them the land.]*
- Last week, when the Israelites refused to go into the land after God brought them there, how was their sin the same as what Adam and Eve did? *[They depended on themselves and their own view of the situation, rather than on God and what he said; their hearts were exactly the same as their parents, Adam and Eve, broken and destroyed.]*

TEACH

Note: Since this lesson is quite long it would be wise to read the passages yourself. (Be aware that the classroom Bibles are the NIV [1984], so check for differences in terminology if you use another version to prepare.) Practice reading at home with expression and motions, so the children find it interesting to listen to: no monotone!

Note: Be sure to emphasize the main points of the lesson (text in bold), as this lesson lays the foundation for future lessons and is key for the children to understand what comes after. Do not take too much lesson time on points not mentioned in the lesson. Practice teaching the lesson at home once or twice to check your time, lest you let it drag on and lose the kids. Move quickly, and direct all questions, comments, and rabbit trails back to the main themes.

The things we read in the Bible last week were sad, weren't they? The people of Israel believed what they saw with their eyes instead of what God said. *What* was their problem? Let's think about that for a moment...

In Egypt, the really serious problem wasn't that they were slaves or that they needed their own land. In the desert, it wasn't that they needed food or water. **Their problem all along was the same problem you and I have: broken, evil hearts, that turn away from God and destroy relationships with God and with each other.**

But God was good and kind to his people! He gave them a way to live with him. He gave them his good rules. He gave them the sacrifices to cover their sin and take it away. He gave them priests to go between them and God. God provided everything his people needed. **All they had to do was to depend on him...**

And last week we saw the whole nation of Israel fail to do just that. God forgave them, but he still judged them for their constant unbelief. God said that none of them except Joshua and Caleb – the men who depended on what God said – would see the special land. All the rest of them died in the desert, wandering for 40 years.

Now, 40 years later, all those adults were dead, and their children were all grown up. It was time to go back to the land God had promised. Israel's leader now was Joshua, the same man who had believed God 40 years ago.

I. Trusting God Across the Jordan

To even get into the land, all the people of Israel first had to cross a great river named the Jordan. God took them all across in a very unusual way. Let's read about why God chose to do it in that unusual way:

Joshua 4:23–24

²³ “For the LORD your God dried up the Jordan before you until you had crossed over. The LORD your God did to the Jordan just what he had done to the Red Sea when he dried it up before us until we had crossed over. ²⁴ He did this so

that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the LORD is powerful and so that you might always fear the LORD your God.”

Note: As you teach, model a sound pattern of Scripture study: observation, interpretation, and application. Observation asks, “What does it say?” Interpretation asks, “What does it mean?” Application asks, “So what’s the point for me?” (Application will sometimes happen in the lesson itself but will happen more often in Small Group time.)

OBSERVE [If children get an “observation answer” wrong, say, “Read verse X and tell me if that’s really the right answer.” Always let the Scripture itself correct the children.] How did God take his people across the Jordan River? [He dried it up, like at the Red Sea.] Why did God take his people across in this way, and not in a normal way, like in boats? [So that all the people of the world would know that God is powerful, and so that Israel would always fear God.]

INTERPRET When God took the people out of Egypt, he did the same thing with the Red Sea. All the grown-ups people who came out from Egypt, though, are dead except Joshua and Caleb. Now their children are grown up, so God is showing them they are his people, just like their parents, and he is just as powerful as he was then.

Joshua 5:1

1 Now when all the Amorite kings west of the Jordan and all the Canaanite kings along the coast heard how the LORD had dried up the Jordan before the Israelites until we had crossed over, their hearts melted in fear and they no longer had the courage to face the Israelites.

OBSERVE Were all the kings in the land afraid? [Yes.] Why? [Because they heard how God had dried up the river for Israel.]

INTERPRET God dried up the river to remind everyone that Israel was his people, and that he is a powerful God.

II. Trusting God in Jericho

God took his people to one of the biggest, strongest cities in the land, the city of Jericho. There, God was going to show his people – again – that they could depend on him. He was going to take this powerful city for them.

Joshua sent spies into Jericho. They were in the home of a woman named Rahab. There, they ran into trouble.

Joshua 2:2–7

2 The king of Jericho was told, “Look, some of the Israelites have come here tonight to spy out the land.” **3** So the king of Jericho sent this message to Rahab: “Bring out the men who came to you and entered your house, because they have come to spy out the whole land.” **4** But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, “Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from.” **5** At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don’t know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them.” **6** (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) **7** So the men set out in pursuit of the spies on the road that leads to the fords of the Jordan, and as soon as the pursuers had gone out, the gate was shut.

OBSERVE Did the king of Jericho hear about the spies from Israel? [Yes.] Did he find them? [No; Rahab hid them.]

INTERPRET Now were you expecting that? Even though Rahab lived inside the powerful, rich city of Jericho, this woman chose to help the men of Israel instead of her own people. Why did she do this?

Joshua 2:8–18

8 Before the spies lay down for the night, she went up on the roof **9** and said to them, “I know that the LORD has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you.” **10** We have heard how the LORD dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. **11** When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the LORD your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below. **12** “Now then, please swear to me by the LORD that you will show kindness to my family, because I have shown kindness to you. Give me a sure sign **13** that you will spare the lives of my father and mother, my brothers and sisters, and all who belong to them, and that you will save us from death.” **14** “Our lives for your lives!” the men assured her. “If you don’t tell what we are doing, we will treat you kindly and faithfully when the LORD gives us the land.” **15** So she let them down by a rope through the window, for the house she lived in was part of the city wall. **16** Now she had said to them, “Go to the hills so the pursuers will not find you. Hide yourselves there three days until they return, and then go on your way.” **17** The men said to her, “This oath you made us swear will not be binding on us **18** unless, when we enter the land, you have tied this scarlet cord in the window through which you let us down, and unless you have brought your father and mother, your brothers and all your family into your house. ...”

OBSERVE Why does Rahab say that she is helping the spies? [She knows God has given them the land; she knows that “God is God in heaven above and on the earth below.”] What does she ask? [To save her family when Israel takes the city.]

INTERPRET All the people of the land were afraid, but Rahab was the only one of them who was afraid and yet did the right thing. Rahab *knew* that the God of Israel was real and powerful – as did the king and everyone else in Jericho – but **Rahab was the only one who turned to God and asked for help. She depended on God.** In fact, she depended on God better than the Israelites had forty years ago. Those Israelites had all seen God’s great power in Egypt, but they wouldn’t depend on him. Rahab hadn’t *seen* what God had done – she had only heard about it – but she knew exactly what it meant: that God is over everything and will always do what he says.

III. Trusting God to Take Jericho

It was time for Israel to take this great city of Jericho. Israel had an army, but God wasn’t going to have them fight. **God was going to do it all himself.**

Joshua 6:2–5

² Then the LORD said to Joshua, “See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men. ³ March around the city once with all the armed men. Do this for six days. ⁴ Have seven priests carry trumpets of rams’ horns in front of the ark. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing the trumpets. ⁵ When you hear them sound a long blast on the trumpets, have all the people give a loud shout; then the wall of the city will collapse and the people will go up, every man straight in.”

OBSERVE What did God tell Joshua to have the people do? [*March around the entire city with the army, ark of God, and priests blowing on trumpets, once a day for six days, and seven times on the seventh day; at the end, a long blast on trumpets and a great shout from the army.*] What did God say would happen? [*The wall would collapse; the army could go in.*]

Did Israel depend on God this time? Did they do what God said?

Joshua 6:12–16

¹² Joshua got up early the next morning and the priests took up the ark of the LORD. ¹³ The seven priests carrying the seven trumpets went forward, marching before the ark of the LORD and blowing the trumpets. The armed men went ahead of them and the rear guard followed the ark of the LORD, while the trumpets kept sounding. ¹⁴ So on the second day they marched around the city once and returned to the camp. They did this for six days. ¹⁵ On the seventh day, they got up at daybreak and marched around the city seven times in the same manner, except that on that day they circled the city seven times. ¹⁶ The seventh time around, when the priests sounded the trumpet blast, Joshua commanded the people, “Shout! For the LORD has given you the city!”

OBSERVE Did the people do what God had said? [*Yes.*]

Joshua 6:20

²⁰ When the trumpets sounded, the people shouted, and at the sound of the trumpet, when the people gave a loud shout, the wall collapsed; so every man charged straight in, and they took the city.

OBSERVE And what happened when the army shouted? [*The wall collapsed; the army of Israel took the city.*]

INTERPRET The city fell, just like God said it would. The people of Israel didn’t do anything at all except show that they depended on God. They carried God’s ark around the walls to show everyone that it was God who was defeating the city, not the people of Israel by themselves.

IV. Trusting God as One of His People

And do you remember the woman, Rahab? Let’s read about what happened to her:

Joshua 6:23

²³ So the young men who had done the spying went in and brought out Rahab, her father and mother and brothers and all who belonged to her. They brought out her entire family and put them in a place outside the camp of Israel.

Joshua 6:25

²⁵ But Joshua spared Rahab the prostitute, with her family and all who belonged to her, because she hid the men Joshua had sent as spies to Jericho—and she lives among the Israelites to this day.

OBSERVE Did the spies keep their promise? [*Yes.*] Did Rahab and her family become part of God’s people? [*Yes.*]

INTERPRET The woman Rahab was saved and all her family. Rahab was the only one of all the people in Jericho who said, “God is real, and God is strong, so I must go to God for help and depend on him.” Everyone else in the city of Jericho tried to go their own way instead, and they were destroyed.

God was teaching his people that they could depend on him to give them the land. God was teaching that **it doesn't matter where people come from, who they are, or what they've done: if they depend on him, like Rahab, he will save them. But most of all, he was teaching them (and us) that he wants people to depend on him.**

CLASS TIME: Small Group

12:00 – 12:15 (15 minutes)

DISCUSS

Check observation and interpretation.

Note: Small group leaders, please adapt these questions to the needs of your group, changing the wording as necessary to help children understand the point of the questions and leading them to understand the lesson more deeply.

- Why did God dry up the Jordan river for the Israelites to cross over? *[To teach them again that he would take care of them; to make their enemies afraid of him.]*
- What did all the Canaanites think about God? *[They were afraid.]*
- What did they do? *[They hid in their cities and opposed God's people, all except for Rahab, who hid the two men of Israel.]*
- Why was Rahab's response different? *[She believed that the only way to be safe was to be on God's side, so she depended on him, not on her strong city or people.]*
- What do we learn about God from this story? *[He is mighty; he keeps his promises; he will save anyone who depends on him, and anyone who depends on him can be part of his people, no matter where they come from.]*

These lessons teach children to pray like this:

- **Praise:** We praise God for who he is.
- **Thanks:** We thank God for what he does.
- **Sorry:** We say sorry to God for what we've done.
- **Please:** We ask God for what we need.

PRAY

Use this time for application.

There are different ways to pray to God. Today, let's pray in two ways: let's *praise* and *thank* God for something that he has done for us. What did you learn about God in today's lesson that we can praise God for? What did you learn about today that we can thank God for doing for us? *[See final question above.]*

Note: Lead the children to connect their ideas directly to what was taught in today's lesson. Then lead them in a prayer of praise and thanksgiving. If the children are being silly, stop them immediately; they must not be permitted to make themselves the focus of this time or to distract other people from worship. Remind them very directly that this time is all about God, not about them. If the children are being calm and respectful toward God, then ask those who are willing to pray a sentence of praise or thanksgiving to God themselves.

IF YOU FINISH EARLY...

Check whether the curriculum is in the first or second round.

If you finish discussion and prayer before other groups have finished, take time to review the memory verse from last week. If you are leading a group with younger children, you might want to use some of the memory verse game ideas (page 2) to help keep the children's attention until it's time for the groups to come together again.

1st round

Now may the LORD's strength be displayed, just as you have declared: (Numbers 14:17a)

2nd round

Review Psalm 135: 1–12 (the memory verses learned in the previous five modules).

- ¹ Praise the LORD. Praise the name of the LORD; praise him, you servants of the LORD,
- ² you who minister in the house of the LORD, in the courts of the house of our God.
- ³ Praise the LORD, for the LORD is good; sing praise to his name, for that is pleasant.
- ⁴ For the LORD has chosen Jacob to be his own, Israel to be his treasured possession.
- ⁵ I know that the LORD is great, that our Lord is greater than all gods.
- ⁶ The LORD does whatever pleases him, in the heavens and on the earth, in the seas and all their depths.

- ⁷ He makes clouds rise from the ends of the earth; he sends lightning with the rain and brings out the wind from his storehouses.
- ⁸ He struck down the firstborn of Egypt, the firstborn of people and animals.
- ⁹ He sent his signs and wonders into your midst, Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his servants.
- ¹⁰ He struck down many nations and killed mighty kings—
¹¹ Sihon king of the Amorites, Og king of Bashan, and all the kings of Canaan—
- ¹² and he gave their land as an inheritance, an inheritance to his people Israel.



CLASS TIME: Memory Verse**12:15 – 12:30 (15 minutes)**

It would be wise to ask one of the small group leaders to lead this part of the lesson to give your voice a break from teaching and to give one of the other volunteers practice in leading the children. If the small group leader is not comfortable teaching the verse, then you, the teacher, can give the explanation and then he/she can lead the game.

Note to BICF teachers: We are using the NIV 1984 Bible (our donated classroom Bibles) to avoid confusing the children.

INTRO

1st round **‘The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. (Numbers 14:17b)**

Remember last week we learned that Moses was praying for the people? Even when they were refusing to depend on God and wanted to go their own way and choose their own leader, the good leader that God chose for them, Moses, was helping them. He was praying for them, and he was asking God to show everyone that he is strong enough to keep all his promises, not just when his enemies try to stop him, but even when his people fail. Last week we read the first part: “Now may the Lord’s strength be displayed, just as you have declared.” But what did God declare? How does God say that he is strong?

Today, God says this: “The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion.” This is the first way God tells us that he is strong. He shows great strength by showing great love and forgiveness. When someone hurts you, what do you want to do? Hurt them back, right? Yell? Be angry? When they hurt you and you get angry and do bad things back, you are being controlled by what the other person did. Instead of doing what’s right, you’re letting your anger be in charge of you. When the great king of Egypt, Pharaoh, got angry, what did he do? Pharaoh was controlled by his anger, too. But God is nothing like that. God is much stronger than people. God is so strong that his anger is slow. No one can control God by sinning against him. God isn’t scared when people rebel against him or threaten him. God is so strong that he is slow to anger and ready to forgive.

2nd round **Your name, LORD, endures forever, your renown, LORD, through all generations. (Psalm 135:13)**

Our Psalm has been telling us how to praise God. First it told us it’s right for us to praise God: because God is so great, the right thing to do is to praise him! Then it told us *how* God is great and good. He’s great and good because he chose his people, because he can do whatever he wants anywhere in the universe, and because he controls the weather. He’s also great because he destroyed Egypt and the strong king Pharaoh; he also destroyed other kings, like Og and Sihon, and gave their land to his people.

Do you remember we read today that Rahab knew what had happened to the kings Og and Sihon? Rahab said, “I know that the Lord has given this land to you and that a great fear of you has fallen on us, so that all who live in this country are melting in fear because of you. We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt, and what you did to Sihon and Og, the two kings of the Amorites east of the Jordan, whom you completely destroyed. When we heard of it, our hearts melted and everyone’s courage failed because of you, for the Lord your God is God in heaven above and on the earth below” (*Joshua 2:10–11*). Rahab knew that God was great, and she knew she should depend on him.

Now our psalm says this: “Your name, Lord, endures forever, your renown, Lord, through all generations.” The psalm is telling us that God’s great power won’t ever be forgotten, no matter how much time passes. By the time the new generation of Israel came to Jericho, it had been more than 40 years since God brought his people out of Egypt. Rahab probably wasn’t even alive when God did all those great things, but she knew about the great acts of this powerful God. And now, today, you and I are reading about the same things, too. God’s name will never be forgotten, and he will be famous forever, so we should praise him! Let’s praise him by learning our verse.

GAME

See page 2 for memory verse game ideas.

WHILE WAITING FOR PARENTS: Sword Drill**12:30 until all children leave**

It would be wise to ask one of the small group leaders to lead this part to give your voice a break from teaching and to give one of the other volunteers practice in leading the class.

A “Sword Drill” is practice in finding references in the Bible, God’s “double-edged sword”. Before class, prepare a list of Scripture references from book(s) referenced in this lesson, e.g. Joshua 4:23, Joshua 6:5, etc.

Take a few moments to explain how to find chapters and verses in the Bible, for any children who might not know how the Bible is organized. Remind the children that while the purpose of this game is to find the references as quickly as possible, the most important thing is actually *knowing God*: learning who he is from his Word.

Ask all the children to sit on the floor with their Bibles closed in front of them. As soon as you call out the reference and say “Go!”, children may begin to search. The first one to find it and stand up is the winner – if it’s the right verse!

Vary each round to help children work out some of their energy from sitting for an hour: for each new round, ask kids to show that they’ve found the reference in a different way, i.e. jump up and pat their head when they find it, or turn around and stick their finger in their ear, or stand up and balance on one foot. Be creative!

To keep kids who already know their Bibles well from dominating the game, try changing the participants for each round, for example, only the girls, or only the boys, or only seven-year-olds, or only children wearing red, or only children with birthdays from January to June. Again, be creative to keep kids engaged!

Module 6: God, the Warrior

Lesson 3: The Lord God Fights for His People

Summary

God does all the work of saving people.

Themes

Emphasize these themes during the lesson.

- God’s promises are bigger than people can imagine.
- People cannot be faithful to depend on God because of their broken hearts.
- God is patient and keeps teaching people to depend on him.

Scripture

Read entire passage for context.

Joshua 23–24; Judges 3–5

Memory Verse

Check whether the curriculum is in the 1st or 2nd round.

Note to BICF teachers: We are using the NIV 1984 Bible (our donated classroom Bibles) to avoid confusing the children.

1st round This month’s memory verses are Numbers 14:17-18a. Today children memorize only the underlined part.

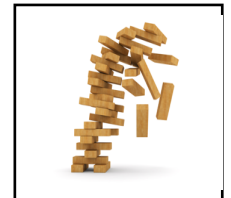
Now may the LORD’s strength be displayed, just as you have declared: ‘The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished...’ (Numbers 14:17–18a)

2nd round For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. (Psalm 135:14)

Suggested Visual

Incorporate this visual element into the lesson however you see fit.

Game: Bring a Jenga (stacking blocks) game and play a few rounds with the adult helpers or a few children (choose representatives from each small group while the rest watch). These can be long games if players take too long, so set a timer for each person (10-15 seconds per turn). Be sure that this game does not take too much time away from the lesson!



How to relate this to the lesson: Ask the class whether the tower ever just stayed up, the way it was built. No, it didn’t; it always, always fell down; and yet people keep playing this game, even though everyone knows how it will end! That’s kind of like God’s people in our story today. They kept living the same way, failing to depend on God and falling into sin, again and again and again.

Notes

Please read all notes before and once again after preparing the lesson.

1. **THE BOREDOM OF CONSTANT FAILURE** The children (and possibly you) may be getting bored with the constant failure of God’s people. That’s fine – that’s one of the points. If the children seem to feel this way, it would be a great time to ask them how they think God felt when the people kept doing this over and over and over again. If they are tired of hearing about it, how much more tiresome must it have been for God – and how great his patience! It would also be a good place to make the lesson personal to them: their hearts are evil and broken, too. They want to follow their own hearts instead of depending on God; help them recall practical examples of how they do this, and don’t be afraid to tell them about times you’ve followed your own heart instead of depending on God, too. Then perhaps take a moment to consider whether God is tired of our constant failures – and isn’t it a good thing that God doesn’t treat us according to how we act, but according to his goodness.
2. **YOUR TEACHING MANNER** Keep your Bible open, even when teaching from notes, so that children see that the Bible is what they’re learning. Don’t lose heart if you see the children losing focus during the lesson. Remember that God causes blind eyes to see, deaf ears to hear, and dead hearts to live. Your responsibility is to pray, teach, and trust – pray for the hearts of the children in your class, teach as well as you possibly can, and trust that the Lord will use the lesson to accomplish his purposes both for the children and for you.
3. **HANDLING QUESTIONS** As you teach, the children will naturally have questions and comments. God gave them minds able to make connections between the things they have learned already and what they are learning at that moment. However, stopping teaching to take and answer these questions can often break the flow of the lesson, and it can be difficult to get the attention of all the children back. The same can also be said for you asking questions and taking answers during the lesson.

Of course, it is good to keep the children involved and paying attention; however, this can be done effectively by asking only rhetorical yes/no questions, and encouraging nodding and shaking of heads for answers rather than shouting out answers in the middle of the lesson. This also gives the children the chance to move a bit during the lesson time (which may help them to be less wriggly overall). The children will have the opportunity to ask questions during their time in small groups, so you do not need to worry that their questions will go unanswered. If lots of hands are going up, tell the children that you are not taking questions right now, but that they can save them to ask in their small groups.

4. **ADDING TO THE LESSON** We are not aiming to improve the children’s knowledge of history, geography, or science. Our primary goal is to lead the children to know God and to understand a little of God’s great plan throughout history. This goal is not achieved by including interesting but non-essential facts (e.g. “Did you know that the Red Sea was not actually a sea?”). When teaching the Bible, it is always essential to know the main point of the lesson and teach *only* that; do not allow yourself or anyone else to be distracted by trivia or other true things that are not the main point that you are teaching. Just as preachers do not teach on every single thing they find in their study and preparation of a passage, we do not include everything. Bear in mind that the human heart is “deceitful above all things and beyond cure” (Jeremiah 17:9). It will always try to wriggle away from what it *should* be focused on (God, conviction of sin/need, etc.) to focus on trivial things (like “How did God make Eve from Adam’s rib?”). As these trivial questions inevitably come up, promise to answer them if necessary after the lesson, not during, and if you do take time to answer the trivial questions, immediately point the children back to the main point of the passage. Only God can cure the deceitful heart, but we ought to do all we can as teachers to point children to God and stop them from running off in wrong directions.

Suggested Class Timing *Feel free to adapt this according to your assessment of class needs.*

How long?	When?	What’s happening?	Where?
30 minutes	11:00 – 11:30	Worship in song	Main service
30 minutes	11:30 – 12:00	Lesson: review and teach	Around the teacher
15 minutes	12:00 – 12:15	Small group: discuss & pray	Groups around room
15 minutes	12:15 – 12:30	Memory verse: intro & game	Based on activity
End of class	12:30 – til end	Sword drill (if there’s time)	Around teacher

CLASS TIME: Lesson **11:30 – 12:00 (30 minutes)**

VISUAL *You might incorporate the visual here or choose to use it later in the lesson.*

REVIEW

Note: Be sure to take time each week to review. The key to teaching Scriptural truth is leading students to see how the seemingly isolated Bible stories actually all fit together into one “big picture”. Going back over that “big picture” each week is essential to grasping why God put all these stories in the Bible. Don’t get bogged down, though; keep it moving!

- When God called Abraham and made promises to him, did he choose Abraham because Abraham was a good man? *[No; God chose Abraham even though he was not good, and when he didn’t know anything about God.]*
- After God called him, did Abraham always rely on God with his whole heart? *[No; many times he didn’t.]*
- Did God decide to stop being Abraham’s God when Abraham didn’t depend on him? *[No; he was very patient and kind to Abraham.]*
- What about Abraham’s descendants (Isaac, Jacob, and all the people of Israel)? Did they always depend on God with their whole hearts? *[No; they often did not depend on God.]*
- Did God decide to stop being their God when they didn’t depend on him? *[No; he was very patient and kind.]*
- Can you think of some of the lessons God has taught his people to help them learn to depend on him? *[That they needed to depend on him completely all the time, that he always keeps his promises, etc.]*
- When God was teaching his people, did he need to teach them only once? *[No; he had to teach them lots of times.]*
- Why not? Why could the people not learn after being taught just once? *[They all had sinful broken hearts that forgot God’s goodness easily and wanted to turn away from him.]*

TEACH

Note: If you want to give children practice in reading God’s Word aloud in class, it would be wise to write out references on pieces of paper and distribute them to good readers at the beginning of class, asking them to be ready to stand up and read when you ask them. Another option is to ask the entire class to read aloud together. And of course, you can just read the Scripture yourself. However, if you do choose to read the Scripture yourself, practice reading at home with expression and motions, so the children find it interesting to listen to. (No monotone!) (Be aware that the classroom Bibles are the NIV 1984 Bible; that is the version used in these lessons to avoid confusion for the children.)



Note: Be sure to emphasize the main points of the lesson (text in bold), as this lesson lays the foundation for future lessons and is key for the children to understand what comes after. Do not take too much lesson time on points not mentioned in the lesson. Practice teaching the lesson at home once or twice to check your time, lest you let it drag on and lose the kids. Move quickly, and direct all questions, comments, and rabbit trails back to the main themes.

God has done amazing things for his people. God kept his promise to Abraham; he brought Abraham’s children to the land that he had promised them. He brought them over the Jordan River and destroyed the great city of Jericho. There were still more enemies to fight, but the people of Israel were now living in their special land!

While Israel’s leader Joshua was alive, God’s people had success against their enemies every time they depended on God. There were even some outsiders, like Rahab, that God blessed with hearts that depended on him. And anyone who would depend on God, God protected and made part of his people.

I. Serve the Lord

When Joshua grew old, he knew that the people still needed to remember to depend on God and not on themselves. Let’s read some of the things that Joshua told the people before he died:

Joshua 23:3
³ **You yourselves have seen everything the LORD your God has done to all these nations for your sake; it was the LORD your God who fought for you.**

Note: As you teach, model a sound pattern of Scripture study: observation, interpretation, and application. Observation asks, “What does it say?” Interpretation asks, “What does it mean?” Application asks, “So what’s the point for me?” (Application will sometimes happen in the lesson itself but will happen more often in Small Group time.)

OBSERVE [If children get an “observation answer” wrong, say, “Read verse X and tell me if that’s really the right answer.” Always let the Scripture itself correct the children.] Who fought for the people of Israel? [God.]

Joshua 24:12–13
¹² **I sent the hornet ahead of you, which drove them out before you—also the two Amorite kings. You did not do it with your own sword and bow. ¹³ So I gave you a land on which you did not toil and cities you did not build; and you live in them and eat from vineyards and olive groves that you did not plant.’**

OBSERVE Here Joshua is telling the people what God said. What is a hornet? [A type of insect with a terrible stinger.] God is using a picture to remind people of they got their land. How did they get the land and cities and vineyards and olive groves without working? [God drove out the people who lived there and gave it all to his people.]

INTERPRET Joshua reminded the Israelites that they did not save themselves. They did not earn God’s love by their good behavior. They did not work to earn the blessings they had. Everything they had was a gift from God. And what did God ask from them?

Joshua 24:14–15
¹⁴ **“Now fear the LORD and serve him with all faithfulness. Throw away the gods your forefathers worshiped beyond the River and in Egypt, and serve the LORD. ¹⁵ But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD.”**

OBSERVE What did Joshua tell them? [Fear and serve the Lord; throw away other gods.] What if they didn’t want to serve God? [They should choose another god to serve.] Who was Joshua and his family going to serve? [The true God.]

INTERPRET The people were *again* being asked if they wanted to be God’s people! It’s amazing how kind God was, isn’t it? After all the wonderful things that God had done for these people, God could have said: “You still haven’t thrown away your false gods? I will throw *you* away!” God had the right to do that. God could have also said: “After all the things I have done for you and all the things I have given you, you *must* serve me whether you like it or not.” God had the right to say this, too. But instead, God *asked* them again to choose to serve him.

Let’s hear what the people said to Joshua about this:

Joshua 24:16–18
¹⁶ **Then the people answered, “Far be it from us to forsake the LORD to serve other gods! ¹⁷ It was the LORD our God himself who brought us and our fathers up out of Egypt, from that land of slavery, and performed those great signs before our eyes. He protected us on our entire journey and among all the nations through which we traveled. ¹⁸ And the LORD drove**



out before us all the nations, including the Amorites, who lived in the land. We too will serve the LORD, because he is our God.”

OBSERVE What did the people say to answer Joshua? [*We will serve the Lord too; we know he has done great things for us.*]

INTERPRET This is *just* what the people should have said, right? “God did all those wonderful things for us: of course we will serve him! It would be wrong for us to leave him and serve other gods!” It was a great answer.

Listen to what Joshua told them:

II. You Cannot Serve the Lord

Joshua 24:19

¹⁹ Joshua said to the people, “You are not able to serve the LORD ...

OBSERVE What did Joshua tell the people? [*You are not able to serve the Lord.*]

INTERPRET Wait... What? Now that the people were *finally* in the land, everything should have been great, right? They could relax and everything in their lives would be easy, right? But that’s not what happened. Joshua knew the people could not do what they promised. The people didn’t understand what their real problem was.

People like to have easy lives with no problems, always getting what they want; but **God knows that when our lives are easy, our broken hearts will soon tell us that we can depend on ourselves.** When there are no problems, we think we can take care of everything. God knew that the people of Israel were like this.

God had given them the promised land, but he had not yet given *all* his promises. You see, **God’s promises were not just for those people and that time: his promises were much bigger than Abraham and Israel knew.** So God gave them the land, but he left some enemies in it for them to fight. God tells us why he did this:

Judges 3:1–4

¹ These are the nations the LORD left to test all those Israelites who had not experienced any of the wars in Canaan ² (he did this only to teach warfare to the descendants of the Israelites who had not had previous battle experience): ³ the five rulers of the Philistines, all the Canaanites, the Sidonians, and the Hivites living in the Lebanon mountains from Mount Baal Hermon to Lebo Hamath. ⁴ They were left to test the Israelites to see whether they would obey the LORD’s commands, which he had given their forefathers through Moses.

OBSERVE Why did God leave people in the promised land for Israel to fight? [*To teach war to the Israelites who had not grown up yet when Israel came into the land; to see whether they would obey the commands that God gave to their ancestors.*]

INTERPRET God knew that **each new generation of God’s people needed to learn that they must depend on God and not themselves. God was doing the same thing for Israel that we are doing this morning.** The reason we are teaching *you* in Sunday School is that you all also need to learn this. Your parents and your teachers and all of us grown-ups have broken, evil hearts that want to depend on ourselves instead of on God. We know that each one of you have this same kind of heart. All of you need to remember, all the time, to depend on God.

III. Sin, Judgment, Repentance, Salvation... Repeat!

The people of Israel did just what Joshua said they would. **They kept doing evil. They kept turning away from the true God to depend on themselves or on false gods.** Let’s read about one of these times:

Judges 4:1–3

¹ When Ehud died, the the Israelites once again did evil in the eyes of the LORD. ² So the LORD sold them into the hands of Jabin, a king of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor. The commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth Haggoyim. ³ Because he had nine hundred iron chariots and had cruelly oppressed the Israelites for twenty years, they cried to the LORD for help.

OBSERVE Ehud was a leader of Israel a while after Joshua. What happened when Ehud died? [*Israel stopped depending on God.*] What did God do? [*Stopped protecting them; let suffer under one of the kings in Canaan.*] Why were iron chariots so important? [*Iron was stronger than anything else that people had then; it was impossible to break iron, so whoever had iron was stronger than everyone else.*] What happened after twenty years? [*The people cried to God for help.*]

INTERPRET When the people had no leader, they turned away from God, so what did God do? He stopped protecting them. Are you surprised by that? God didn't do this just because he wanted the people to suffer! **God did it to teach them to come back him.** Let's see what happens when the people cried out to God for help.

Judges 4:4

⁴ Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lappidoth, was leading Israel at that time.

Judges 4:6–7

⁶ She sent for Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you: 'Go, take with you ten thousand men of Naphtali and Zebulun and lead the way to Mount Tabor. ⁷ I will lure Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River and give him into your hands.'"

OBSERVE Who was Israel's leader? [*Deborah.*] Who did she send for? What did God want him to do? [*Barak; lead 10,000 Israelite men to a mountain.*] Where would God lead Sisera? [*To a river.*] Who would give Barak victory? [*God.*]

Judges 4:12–16

¹² When they told Sisera that Barak son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor, ¹³ Sisera gathered together his nine hundred iron chariots and all the men with him, from Harosheth Haggioim to the Kishon River. ¹⁴ Then Deborah said to Barak, "Go! This is the day the LORD has given Sisera into your hands. Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?" So Barak went down Mount Tabor, followed by ten thousand men. ¹⁵ At Barak's advance, the LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots and army by the sword, and Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot. ¹⁶ But Barak pursued the chariots and army as far as Harosheth Haggoyim, and all the troops of Sisera fell by the sword; not a man was left.

OBSERVE What did Sisera do when he heard about Barak and the 10,000 men? [*Got his army together; spread them out all the way to the river.*] What did Deborah tell Barak? [*Go! God has given you victory over Sisera.*] Did Barak lead his men out to fight? [*Yes.*] Even against those strong iron chariots that had never been defeated? [*Yes.*] Who defeated Sisera and all his army? How? [*God; by using the swords of Barak and his men.*] What did Sisera, the great commander, do? [*Got out of his strong chariot and ran away.*] Did any of Sisera's army survive? [*No.*]

INTERPRET The enemies of God and his people were defeated. The prophet Deborah and the warrior Barak and the army of Israel won a great victory. Afterwards, Deborah and Barak sang a victory song. I'm going to read some of their song to you. Listen for who is the most important person in their song. [*Read the following yourself.*]

Judges 5:3–5, 19–21, 31

³ "Hear this, you kings! Listen, you rulers! I will sing to the LORD, I will sing; I will make music to the LORD, the God of Israel.

⁴ "O LORD, when you went out from Seir, when you marched from the land of Edom, the earth shook, the heavens poured, the clouds poured down water.

⁵ The mountains quaked before the LORD, the One of Sinai, before the LORD, the God of Israel.

...
¹⁹ "Kings came, they fought, the kings of Canaan fought at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo, but they carried off no silver, no plunder.

²⁰ From the heavens the stars fought, from their courses they fought against Sisera.

²¹ The river Kishon swept them away, the age-old river, the river Kishon...

...
³¹ "So may all your enemies perish, O LORD! But may they who love you be like the sun when it rises in its strength."

OBSERVE Who is this victory song really about? About Deborah? Barak? The army of Israel? [*No; it's all about God.*]

INTERPRET Deborah sings about the people who fought; about herself and other people. She even says that it was like the world itself – the stars and the river – fought against Israel's enemies: but the most important one in the battle was God. He was the one who told the people of Israel to go up and fight against their enemies, and he was the one who gave them the victory over those enemies and then gave the whole land rest for 40 years.

This story is like many of the stories in the book of Judges. **The people turn away from God, so God lets them have trouble. The people need God and cry out to him to save them. Then God saves them again. The people can never save themselves: they need God to do everything, every time. This happens over and over again.** Why does this keep happening? And what could ever fix this problem?

CLASS TIME: Small Group

12:00 – 12:15 (15 minutes)

DISCUSS

Check observation and interpretation.

Note: Small group leaders, please adapt these questions to the needs of your group, changing the wording as necessary to help children understand the point of the questions and leading them to understand the lesson more deeply.

- Why did God allow war to come to the people of Israel? *[To teach them again that he would take care of them, and to teach them again to depend on him.]*
- The people could never save themselves; they needed God to do everything, every time – over and over again. Why did this keep happening? What was the problem with people? *[Direct kids to see that the true problem is human hearts: human hearts are utterly broken, and outside changes can never change the problem inside.]*
- What could ever fix this problem? *[Ask kids a few leading questions: Do you think this problem is fixable at all? Could you ever fix your own heart? Could another person ever fix your heart for you? What if someone learned how to be good, was taught right/wrong from when they were very little, could they do what was right all the time? Some students may be ready to jump to “Jesus” as the answer, but you should focus on what is clear at this point in the Bible’s history: only God can be depended upon. It’s clear that people can’t fix their problems, so if it’s going to be fixed, God will have to do it.]*
- What had God already done to take care of his people’s sin? What did he give the people of Israel? *[Sacrifices to pay for sin; scapegoat on the Day of Atonement to take away people’s sins from them.]*
- Could the sacrifices and scapegoat that God gave the people actually fix their heart problems? *[No, the sacrifices had to be done again and again year after year; people need a perfect sacrifice – one that can actually pay for people’s sins – and a permanent scapegoat – one that won’t have to do it again year after year.]*

PRAY

Use this time for application.

There are different ways to pray to God. Today, let’s pray in two ways: let’s say *sorry* to God and then let’s say *please* to God. What did you learn about God and about people in today’s lesson that we should all say sorry to God for? *[For going our own way; for constantly following our own hearts, not depending on God every moment of every day. Encourage older children to think of concrete examples of ways they have followed their own hearts instead of God’s way; for younger children, give them examples.]* What should we all say please to God for? *[Please give us hearts to trust and depend on you; please forgive us when we fail over and over again to follow you.]*

These lessons teach children to pray like this:

- **Praise:** We praise God for who he is.
- **Thanks:** We thank God for what he does.
- **Sorry:** We say sorry to God for what we’ve done.
- **Please:** We ask God for what we need.

Note: Lead the children to connect their ideas directly to what was taught in today’s lesson. Then lead them in a prayer of repentance and petition to God. If the children are being silly, stop them immediately; they must not be permitted to make themselves the focus of this time or to distract other people from worship. Remind them very directly that this time is all about God, not about them. If the children are being calm and respectful toward God, then ask those who are willing to pray a sentence of repentance or petition to God themselves.

IF YOU FINISH EARLY...

Check whether the curriculum is in the first or second round.

If you finish discussion and prayer before other groups have finished, take time to review the memory verse from last week. If you are leading a group with younger children, you might want to use some of the memory verse game ideas (page 2) to help keep the children’s attention until it’s time for the groups to come together again.

1st round The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. (Numbers 14:17b)

2nd round Your name, LORD, endures forever, your renown, LORD, through all generations. (Psalm 135:13)

CLASS TIME: Memory Verse

12:15 – 12:30 (15 minutes)

It would be wise to ask one of the small group leaders to lead this part of the lesson to give your voice a break from teaching and to give one of the other volunteers practice in leading the children. If the small group leader is not comfortable teaching the verse, then you, the teacher, can give the explanation and then he/she can lead the game.

Note to BICF teachers: We are using the NIV 1984 Bible (our donated classroom Bibles) to avoid confusing the children.

INTRO

1st round Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished... (Numbers 14:18a)



We've been reading about Moses' prayer for the people. Even though they were being very evil and wanting to go their own way, he was asking God to keep all his promises and show how strong he is. He asked God to show his strength in the way God declared; That he is slow to anger and ready to forgive. But that's not all. If God never punished any sin, he would not be a good God. He would not be *right*, and we could not trust him, and our world would be a terrible place full of terrible sin that never stopped. But God *is* right.

Let's read the last part for today: "Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished..." God is slow to anger and ready to forgive, but he also does not let sin go on without punishment. This is part of God's strength: he is so strong that he is not controlled by people's actions. They cannot stop him by sinning. They cannot force him to get angry quickly. They cannot make God unkind. But they also cannot get away with their sin. God is strong enough to punish all the guilty. No one can hide their sin or stop God from being just and right. Because God is like this, we should trust him! Let's practice our verse together...

2nd round For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. (Psalm 135:14)

The Psalm has been teaching us ways that God is great and good. There is no one like him anywhere; he controls everything and can do whatever he wants; he chose his people and defeated their great enemies. Last week, we read that his name is famous and he will always be remembered. Now the writer tells us why all generations will remember him and know how great he is: "For the Lord will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants." That is, God will govern his people and do what is right and good for them.

GAME

See page 2 for memory verse game ideas.

WHILE WAITING FOR PARENTS: Sword Drill

12:30 until all children leave

It would be wise to ask one of the small group leaders to lead this part to give your voice a break from teaching and to give one of the other volunteers practice in leading the class.

A "Sword Drill" is practice in finding references in the Bible, God's "double-edged sword". Before class, prepare a list of Scripture references from book(s) referenced in this lesson, e.g. Joshua 24:19, Judges 5:5, etc.

Take a few moments to explain how to find chapters and verses in the Bible, for any children who might not know how the Bible is organized. Remind the children that while the purpose of this game is to find the references as quickly as possible, the most important thing is actually *knowing God*: learning who he is from his Word.

Ask all the children to sit on the floor with their Bibles closed in front of them. As soon as you call out the reference and say "Go!", children may begin to search. The first one to find it and stand up is the winner – if it's the right verse!

Vary each round to help children work out some of their energy from sitting for an hour: for each new round, ask kids to show that they've found the reference in a different way, i.e. jump up and pat their head when they find it, or turn around and stick their finger in their ear, or stand up and balance on one foot. Be creative!

To keep kids who already know their Bibles well from dominating the game, try changing the participants for each round, for example, only the girls, or only the boys, or only seven-year-olds, or only children wearing red, or only children with birthdays from January to June. Again, be creative to keep kids engaged!

Module 6: God, the Warrior

Lesson 4: Even When Things Look Bad, God Continues to Do Good

Summary

God is preparing the things his people need, even while they are failing.

Themes

Emphasize these themes during the lesson.

- God’s plan is going forward, even when people cannot see it.
- God wants people to depend on him and not on their own way.
- God’s people need a perfect leader to lead them to follow God’s rules perfectly.

Scripture

Read entire passage for context.

Judges 17–18; Ruth

Memory Verse

Check whether the curriculum is in the 1st or 2nd round.

Note to BICF teachers: We are using the NIV 1984 Bible (our donated classroom Bibles) to avoid confusing the children.

1st round Review memory verses from this module (the past three lessons).

Now may the LORD’s strength be displayed, just as you have declared: ‘The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished... (Numbers 14:17–18a)

2nd round Review memory verses from this module (the past two lessons).

Your name, LORD, endures forever, your renown, LORD, through all generations. For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. (Psalm 135:13–14)

Suggested Visual

Incorporate one of these visual elements into the lesson however you see fit.

Reprise mirror activity from Lesson 1. (See application on page 7, at the end of Lesson 1.)

Notes

Please read all notes before and once again after preparing the lesson.

1. **KEEP TO THE MAIN POINT** Do not dwell too much on the many complex details of Micah’s or Ruth’s story (and draw children back if they run down rabbit trails in the stories). Rather present key details to highlight the contrast between Micah, one of God’s chosen people, and Ruth, a foreigner to God’s covenant who knew nothing of his goodness. Emphasize the stark contrast between the Israelite and the foreigner: Micah, who had experienced the special blessings of God and yet treated all of God’s blessings with contempt, choosing instead to follow his own way; and the foreigner, who had experienced none of God’s special blessing and protection and yet was drawn into God’s family. The point is that God continues to carry out his long-term plan of salvation even when his own people, the ones chosen to show his glory and saving mercy to the world, fail miserably. In these contrasting stories, God raises up a woman who isn’t one of his people, showing his power to save whomever he chooses, and then makes her a part of the family through which he gives his people their great king, David, and ultimately their perfect King, Jesus.
2. **YOUR TEACHING MANNER** Keep your Bible open, even when teaching from notes, so that children see that the Bible is what they’re learning. Don’t lose heart if you see the children losing focus during the lesson. Remember that God causes blind eyes to see, deaf ears to hear, and dead hearts to live. Your responsibility is to pray, teach, and trust – pray for the hearts of the children in your class, teach as well as you possibly can, and trust that the Lord will use the lesson to accomplish his purposes both for the children and for you.
3. **HANDLING QUESTIONS** As you teach, the children will naturally have questions and comments. God gave them minds able to make connections between the things they have learned already and what they are learning at that moment. However, stopping teaching to take and answer these questions can often break the flow of the lesson, and it can be difficult to get the attention of all the children back. The same can also be said for *you* asking questions and taking answers during the lesson. Of course, it is good to keep the children involved and paying attention; however, this can be done effectively by asking only rhetorical yes/no questions, and encouraging nodding and shaking of heads for answers rather than shouting out answers in the middle of the lesson. This also gives the children the chance to move a bit during the lesson time (which may help them

to be less wriggly overall). The children will have the opportunity to ask questions during their time in small groups, so you do not need to worry that their questions will go unanswered. If lots of hands are going up, tell the children that you are not taking questions right now, but that they can save them to ask in their small groups.

4. **ADDING TO THE LESSON** We are not aiming to improve the children’s knowledge of history, geography, or science. Our primary goal is to lead the children to know God and to understand a little of God’s great plan throughout history. This goal is not achieved by including interesting but non-essential facts (e.g. “Did you know that the Red Sea was not actually a sea?”). When teaching the Bible, it is always essential to know the main point of the lesson and teach *only* that; do not allow yourself or anyone else to be distracted by trivia or other true things that are not the main point that you are teaching. Just as preachers do not teach on every single thing they find in their study and preparation of a passage, we do not include everything. Bear in mind that the human heart is “deceitful above all things and beyond cure” (Jeremiah 17:9). It will always try to wriggle away from what it *should* be focused on (God, conviction of sin/need, etc.) to focus on trivial things (like “How did God make Eve from Adam’s rib?”). As these trivial questions inevitably come up, promise to answer them if necessary after the lesson, not during, and if you do take time to answer the trivial questions, immediately point the children back to the main point of the passage. Only God can cure the deceitful heart, but we ought to do all we can as teachers to point children to God and stop them from running off in wrong directions.

Suggested Class Timing *Feel free to adapt this according to your assessment of class needs.*

How long?	When?	What’s happening?	Where?
30 minutes	11:00 – 11:30	Worship in song	Main service
30 minutes	11:30 – 12:00	Lesson: review and teach	Around the teacher
15 minutes	12:00 – 12:15	Small group: discuss & pray	Groups around room
15 minutes	12:15 – 12:30	Memory verse: intro & game	Based on activity
End of class	12:30 – til end	Sword drill (if there’s time)	Around teacher

CLASS TIME: Lesson **11:30 – 12:00 (30 minutes)**

VISUAL *You might incorporate the visual here or choose to use it at the end of the lesson.*

REVIEW

Note: Be sure to take time each week to review. The key to teaching Scriptural truth is leading students to see how the seemingly isolated Bible stories actually all fit together into one “big picture”. Going back over that “big picture” each week is essential to grasping why God put all these stories in the Bible. Don’t get bogged down, though; keep it moving!

- When God brought his people to the land he had promised to them, what did he ask again? *[He asked them again to be his people and depend on him only.]*
- What did the people say? *[They said yes.]*
- What did their leader, Joshua, tell the people when they gave that answer? *[That they were not able to depend on God.]*
- What sort of people did God give to teach and lead his people? *[Priests, Levites, leaders like Moses and Joshua, and judges.]*
- Why did Israel need people to teach and lead them? *[Because they had sinful broken hearts that wanted to turn away from him and were quick to forget his goodness.]*
- How important was it that the leaders of God’s people were faithful to God? *[Very important: if the leaders were not faithful, the people would not be faithful either.]*
- How important was it that the priests and Levites were faithful to God? *[Very very important: if they were not faithful, how could they expect God to accept their sacrifices?]*
- What have we learned about people who depend on God even though they are not from his special people? *[They too can become part of the people of God.]*

TEACH

Note: If you want to give children practice in reading God’s Word aloud in class, it would be wise to write out references on pieces of paper and distribute them to good readers at the beginning of class, asking them to be ready to stand up and read when you ask them. Another option is to ask the entire class to read aloud together. And of course, you can just read the Scripture yourself. However, if you do choose to read the Scripture yourself, practice reading at home with expression and motions, so the children find it interesting to listen to. (No monotone!) (Be aware that the classroom Bibles are the NIV 1984 Bible; that is the version used in these lessons to avoid confusion for the children.)



Note: Be sure to emphasize the main points of the lesson (text in bold), as this lesson lays the foundation for future lessons and is key for the children to understand what comes after. Do not take too much lesson time on points not mentioned in the lesson. Practice teaching the lesson at home once or twice to check your time, lest you let it drag on and lose the kids. Move quickly, and direct all questions, comments, and rabbit trails back to the main themes.

God’s people went into the special land, just as he promised. But still the people kept failing to depend on him! They kept turning away from God and breaking their agreement with him. Each time the people did this, God would send trouble – and when the trouble came, the people remembered that they needed God and would go to him for help. Then God would deliver them again. But even though God delivered the people over and over, and was always faithful to his covenant with them, each new generation of the people failed again. Their hearts were broken, and they just continued living their lives in their own way, following their own hearts.

I. God’s Own People Depend on Themselves

Today, we’re going to hear two stories that happened during this time. Today’s two stories are full of contrasts – opposites. Listen and see if you can figure out those contrasts! The first story is about a man named Micah.

Judges 17:1–2

¹ Now a man named Micah from the hill country of Ephraim ² said to his mother, “The eleven hundred shekels of silver that were taken from you and about which I heard you utter a curse—I have that silver with me; I took it.” Then his mother said, “The LORD bless you, my son!”

Note: As you teach, model a sound pattern of Scripture study: observation, interpretation, and application. Observation asks, “What does it say?” Interpretation asks, “What does it mean?” Application asks, “So what’s the point for me?” (Application will sometimes happen in the lesson itself but more often will happen in Small Group time.)

OBSERVE [If children get an “observation answer” wrong, say, “Read verse X and tell me if that’s really the right answer.” Always let the Scripture itself correct the children.] What had the man taken from his mother? [A lot of silver.]

INTERPRET This man was breaking God’s rules, wasn’t he? He was a thief, and he didn’t honor his mother: he stole money from his own mother! He admitted his crime only because he was afraid when he heard his mother curse the person who had stolen the silver. Let’s read about what his mother did when she got her money back:

Judges 17:3–5

³ When he returned the eleven hundred shekels of silver to his mother, she said, “I solemnly consecrate my silver to the LORD for my son to make a carved image and a cast idol. I will give it back to you.” ⁴ So he returned the silver to his mother, and she took two hundred shekels of silver and gave them to a silversmith, who made them into the image and the idol. And they were put in Micah’s house. ⁵ Now this man Micah had a shrine, and he made an ephod and some idols and installed one of his sons as his priest.

OBSERVE What did the mother do with the silver? [Set it apart for God to make an idol!] What did Micah do with the idol? [Put it in his house; made more false gods; made one of his sons a priest.]

INTERPRET Micah’s mother was no better! She broke God’s rules, too, worshiping God in her own way. She used God’s name to promise to do something sinful – to make an idol! Then Micah followed her example: he set up the idol as if it was the true God; he made more idols to go with it; and then he made one of his sons a priest – a terrible thing: no one could be a priest in Israel except the ones God chose!

Micah and his mother were both part of God’s people! They were supposed to keep their agreement with God and follow his rules. How could they have gone so far from God’s way? Let’s read one of the reasons why:

Judges 17:6

⁶ In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit.

OBSERVE Why did everyone do whatever they wanted? [Because there was no king in Israel.]

INTERPRET There was no king to lead the people to do what was right: so everyone did whatever they wanted to do. God had given the people priests and Levites to teach them and judges to rescue them. But now God was teaching his people that they needed another kind of leader, too. **They needed a righteous king who would lead them to depend God all the time.** Let’s find out what happens next in this story.

Judges 17:7–12

⁷ A young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah, who had been living within the clan of Judah, ⁸ left that town in search of some other place to stay. On his way he came to Micah’s house in the hill country of Ephraim. ⁹ Micah asked him, “Where are

you from?” “I’m a Levite from Bethlehem in Judah,” he said, “and I’m looking for a place to stay.”¹⁰ Then Micah said to him, “Live with me and be my father and priest, and I’ll give you ten shekels of silver a year, your clothes and your food.”¹¹ So the Levite agreed to live with him, and the young man was to him like one of his sons.¹² Then Micah installed the Levite, and the young man became his priest and lived in his house.¹³ And Micah said, “Now I know that the LORD will be good to me, since this Levite has become my priest.”

OBSERVE Who did Micah pay to live with him? [*A Levite.*] What did Micah want the Levite to do for him? [*Be his father (advisor) and priest.*] What did Micah think would happen? [*The Lord would be good to him because of the Levite.*]

INTERPRET This story is especially sad: even the Levites, God’s chosen servants, failed. Do you remember the priests and Levites that God gave to his people? Do you remember what the Levites were supposed to do? The Levites were supposed to help the priests, so the people of Israel could worship God. Instead, in this sad story, a Levite, one of the family God chose to be his special servants, turned away and broke covenant with God.

And Micah thought that he could *make* God bless him. He thought, “If I have something special from God in my house, like this Levite, then God *has* to bless me.” Micah thought the true God was like a false god – if Micah just said the right things, or prayed the right prayer, or did the right ceremony, he thought he could make God give him what he wanted. But God cannot be forced or manipulated into doing what people want!

We won’t read all of Micah’s story today, but I’ll tell you the ending: Micah’s priest, idols, and his silver were all stolen by a group of men. By the end, lots of people in Israel were just like Micah, worshiping God using idols!

II. An Outsider Depends on God

Do you think, though, that God was just watching his people fail and giving up on his big plan to fix the problem of people’s broken hearts? Of course not. **God was working on his plan, even when no one could see it.** Let’s read about something else that God was doing during this time – the second story we’re going to look at today:

Ruth 1:1–5

¹ In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab. ² The man’s name was Elimelek, his wife’s name Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Kilion... Now Elimelek, Naomi’s husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. ⁴ They married Moabite women, one named Orpah and the other Ruth. After they had lived there about ten years, ⁵ both Mahlon and Kilion also died, and Naomi was left without her two sons and her husband.

OBSERVE Where did this family of Israel go? Why? [*Out of Israel; because there was no food to eat.*] After a few years, who was the only one left in this Israelite family? [*The mother, Naomi.*]

INTERPRET This story happened during the time when Israel was being unfaithful to God so God had sent a famine – there was not enough food to eat. This family went to another country to find food, and all of them died there except for the mother. This starts out as another sad, sad story – but God was doing something amazing:

Ruth 1:6–8

⁶ When she heard in Moab that the LORD had come to the aid of his people by providing food for them, Naomi and her daughters-in-law prepared to return home from there. ⁷ With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah. ⁸ Then Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go back, each of you, to your mother’s home. May the LORD show kindness to you, as you have shown to your dead and to me...”

OBSERVE Why did Naomi decide to go home? [*God had provided food.*] Who went with her? [*Her two daughters-in-law.*] What did Naomi tell them? [*Go back home to your mother’s home (so you can get married again).*]

Ruth 1:14–18

¹⁴ At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law goodbye, but Ruth clung to her. ¹⁵ “Look,” said Naomi, “your sister-in-law is going back to her people and her gods. Go back with her.” ¹⁶ But Ruth replied, “Don’t urge me to leave you or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me.” ¹⁸ When Naomi realized that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped urging her.

OBSERVE Who made the logical choice? [*Orpah.*] Who made the unreasonable choice and refused to go? [*Ruth.*]

INTERPRET Why did Ruth want to be part of God’s people? The only Israelites she had ever met had a terrible life, right? They came from a place where God had sent famine. The one person left in the family – Naomi – was left with nothing. She was going to go back to Israel to be a beggar. Even Naomi kept telling Ruth to go back home! Why would Ruth think the God of these people was good? Why would she want to go back with Naomi and be a beggar? She could have stayed in her own home country, found a new husband, and lived with her family and friends and people? The reason is that God was doing something.

It was because of God that Ruth didn’t depend on what she saw, like the Israelites did when they would not go into the promised land because of the strong people who lived there. Even though she was a foreigner, and even though she was a beggar, God took care of Ruth.

We’re not going to read her story today, but I’ll tell you what happened at the end of her story: God took care of Ruth by giving her a new husband, a man in Israel who still depended on God even in the middle of this terrible time in Israel when everyone else was following their own hearts. Ruth and her new husband, Boaz, had a baby called Obed. When that baby grew up, he had children, and they had children, and finally a boy was born whose name was David. David was God’s special king, whom God gave to lead his people to depend on him.

Because Ruth depended on God, God made her part of his people. It didn’t matter that she wasn’t an Israelite. And God didn’t just make her part of his people; he made her part of his special plan to give Israel a good king, the king who was part of God’s plan to fix the terrible problems people had made in his perfect creation.

CLASS TIME: Small Group **12:00 – 12:15 (15 minutes)**

DISCUSS Check observation and interpretation.

Note: Small group leaders, please adapt these questions to the needs of your group, changing the wording as necessary to help children understand the point of the questions and leading them to understand the lesson more deeply.

- Why was what Micah, his mother, and the Levite did so bad? *[They turned away from God and ignored the good rules he had given to them.]*
- What are some of God’s good rules that they broke? *[No worshipping other gods; no stealing; no making idols; honoring parents; taking God’s name to a lie, etc.]*
- Why does the Bible say that these problems happened in Israel at that time? *[Because there was no king, so everyone did as they saw fit.]*
- Why was it so bad for people to do as they saw fit? *[Because people had sinful hearts: what they thought was right to do was often not right to do; their hearts were broken, so they couldn’t depend on their hearts to guide them the right way.]*
- Why did Ruth decide to go back to Israel with Naomi and not go back to her own family when her husband died? *[Because she depended on God, not on the gods of her people.]*
- When looking at Micah and Ruth, who would you expect to know more about what God is like and depend on him? *[Micah, since he was one of God’s people.]*
- Who actually depended on God? *[Ruth.]*

PRAY Use this time for application.

There are different ways to pray to God. Today, let’s pray in three ways: let’s *thank* God, let’s *say sorry* to God, and then ask God to *please do something for or give something to us*. What did you learn about in today’s lesson that we can thank God for? *[Thank you for accepting anyone who depends on you and making them part of your people.]* What did you learn about in today’s lesson that we can say sorry to God for? *[We are sorry for not remembering what we have learned about you; we are sorry that our hearts always want to go away from you, even after hearing your Word.]* What did you learn about God and about people in today’s lesson that gives you an idea for something to say “please” to God for? *[Please give us hearts that are faithful to God, that don’t leave God to follow our own way.]*

These lessons teach children to pray like this:

- **Praise:** We praise God for who he is.
- **Thanks:** We thank God for what he does.
- **Sorry:** We say sorry to God for what we’ve done.
- **Please:** We ask God for what we need.

Note: Lead the children to connect their ideas directly to what was taught in today’s lesson. Then lead them in a prayer of thanksgiving, repentance, and request to God. If the children are being silly, stop them immediately; they must not be permitted to make themselves the focus of this time or to distract other people from worship. Remind them very directly

that this time is all about God, not about them. If the children are being calm and respectful toward God, then ask those who are willing to pray a sentence of thanksgiving, repentance, or request to God themselves.

IF YOU FINISH EARLY...

Check whether the curriculum is in the first or second round.

If you finish discussion and prayer before other groups have finished, take time to review the memory verse from last week. If you are leading a group with younger children, you might want to use some of the memory verse game ideas (page 2) to help keep the children's attention until it's time for the groups to come together again.

1st round Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished... (Numbers 14:18a)

2nd round For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. (Psalm 135:14)

CLASS TIME: Memory Verse**12:15 – 12:30 (15 minutes)**

It would be wise to ask one of the small group leaders to lead this part of the lesson to give your voice a break from teaching and to give one of the other volunteers practice in leading the children. If the small group leader is not comfortable teaching the verse, then you, the teacher, can give the explanation and then he/she can lead the game.

Note to BICF teachers: We are using the NIV 1984 Bible (our donated classroom Bibles) to avoid confusing the children.

REVIEW

1st round **Review memory verses from this module (the past three lessons).**

Now may the LORD's strength be displayed, just as you have declared: 'The LORD is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished... (Numbers 14:17–18a)

2nd round **Review memory verses from this module (the past two lessons).**

Your name, LORD, endures forever, your renown, LORD, through all generations. For the LORD will vindicate his people and have compassion on his servants. (Psalm 135:13–14)

GAME

See page 2 for memory verse game ideas.

WHILE WAITING FOR PARENTS: Sword Drill**12:30 until all children leave**

It would be wise to ask one of the small group leaders to lead this part to give your voice a break from teaching and to give one of the other volunteers practice in leading the class.

A "Sword Drill" is practice in finding references in the Bible, God's "double-edged sword". Before class, prepare a list of Scripture references from book(s) referenced in this lesson, e.g. Judges 17:6, Ruth 1:16, etc.

Take a few moments to explain how to find chapters and verses in the Bible, for any children who might not know how the Bible is organized. Remind the children that while the purpose of this game is to find the references as quickly as possible, the most important thing is actually *knowing God*: learning who he is from his Word.

Ask all the children to sit on the floor with their Bibles closed in front of them. As soon as you call out the reference and say "Go!", children may begin to search. The first one to find it and stand up is the winner – if it's the right verse!

Vary each round to help children work out some of their energy from sitting for an hour: for each new round, ask kids to show that they've found the reference in a different way, i.e. jump up and pat their head when they find it, or turn around and stick their finger in their ear, or stand up and balance on one foot. Be creative!

To keep kids who already know their Bibles well from dominating the game, try changing the participants for each round, for example, only the girls, or only the boys, or only seven-year-olds, or only children wearing red, or only children with birthdays from January to June. Again, be creative to keep kids engaged!