

STORIES WITHIN THE TRUE STORY



Week Thirteen - Days of the Judges

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

This week's lesson is an overview of the book of Judges, which highlights a cyclical pattern the people of God have been in throughout history: rest, rebellion, reaping, rescue - repeat. Help the kids see that our own hearts go through this cycle of repeating our rebellion and sin and we are just as much in need of rescue as the Israelites were.

- **Big Idea:** When we put anyone or anything on the throne in place of God, we lose our purpose and have no rest.

Starter

- **Evidences of Grace**

Take some time to ask kids to share ways they've seen God at work this week, month, or even past year. Anything, big or small, that is good is from God. When a kid shares, encourage everyone to thank God together.

- **Only God Can Judge.. Right??**

Ask the kids what a judge is/does. Why are judges necessary? Today we're going to talk about a different kind of judge. The judges in the bible were more like military commanders who led God's people to victory and would bring judgement on those who worshipped other gods.

Sing Together

Story - from Judges

God used Moses to lead the people across the Red Sea out of slavery. After Moses died, God used Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan River out of the wilderness, and into the land He had promised them. After Joshua died, the people asked, “*Who will lead us against our enemies now?*” They failed to realize that Moses and Joshua were only servants of God - but it was God who had been rescuing and leading them all along.

You see, Israel was a new nation and had no king at that time. They didn’t have a human leader to stand in front of them and make decisions for them. So, everyone started to do what each person thought was right in their own minds. Unfortunately, most often the things they chose to do were not right at all. After God had rescued Israel from slavery and brought them through the wilderness to a good land where they could rest, they began to look at the rulers and the gods of other nations and worship their gods. They forgot about the rescue the true God had given them. So they rebelled against God.

Because of this, God allowed them to be given over to the nations they started to worship. If they were going to serve those other gods, then let them see just what it’s like being servants to them. Other nations would come in and capture Israel and make them servants. The people would eventually remember the rescuing God of Israel and cry out to Him. God would hear their cries and respond. He would raise up a servant within Israel to come bring judgement on the other nations and even on Israel for their rebellion, but God would also use them to rescue His people. These were men and women who became known as ‘Judges’.

Through them, the people would experience rest for a few years... until they started the cycle all over again and would rebel against God by worshipping another nation’s gods once more.

This pattern continued for years: God would rescue them, bring rest, then they would rebel by worshipping other gods. So God would let them reap the consequences. Then they would cry out and God would rescue them again. Rescue. Rest. Rebel. Reap... Repeat.

This cycle would continue for generations until one day God allowed them to finally have a human king. Unfortunately, they would also find out that having a king like the other nations was no better than having a god like the other nations. Israel was supposed to be different. They were supposed to only have the true God as their King. And any time we put anyone or anything else on God’s throne, we are in rebellion and will not find rest. Thankfully, one day God would come as the ultimate Rescuer, Jesus, and his work would bring us true rest - so long as we see that He is our true King.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- It seems like Israel was always someone's servant - either God's servants, or servants to other nations. Which master do you think was better to them? The other nations and their gods, or the true God?
- Do you ever feel like you go through the same cycle of Israel? God rescues, brings you rest, then you rebel, so you reap the consequences? Which part of the cycle do you feel you are currently in?
- What do we need to break that cycle? How can we be rescued once and for all and enter into true rest?
- True and full rest isn't here yet, even though Jesus has brought rescue already. That's because we live in a broken world where rebellion still exists. But one day when Jesus returns, our rest will be full and complete and we will live with God as His people forever!

Breakout Time

- **Prayer:**
God, help us to trust in Jesus as our Rescuer and find rest in You. Give us Your Spirit's power to help follow You and not rebel. In Jesus' name, amen.
- **Craft:**
Use the coloring sheet attached for younger kids.
For older kids, you may choose to have them cut out a circle and an arrow out of paper. Use a copper fastener to attach the arrow to the paper. The paper should have Rest, Rebellion, Reap, Rescue written around the circle. The arrow will be able to spin around and show which part of the cycle of sin we find ourselves.
- **BLESS Activity:** **For kids to do during the week**
Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask Spirit to help us Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak, and Sabbath (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God's Story.

This week, focus on the **Sabbath** rhythm. Find ways to rest in God's goodness this week with your family.

JUDGES:
A Story of God's PATIENCE



Disobey



God Forgives



In Trouble



Cry Out to God