

Old Testament

Jephthah helps God's people

Judges 11:1-29; 32-33

Younger Verse

Accept one another. Romans 15:7

Older Verse

Accept one another, just as Christ accepted you to bring praise to God. Romans 15:7

Teachers: This new unit is designed to help your children understand some of the stories in the Old Testament. Each lesson will have both Old Testament and New Testament passages.

PLEASE remember always to include the New Testament verses—this helps each child see how God's ultimate plan was fulfilled in Christ!

Welcome Time

Have you ever played a game where the team captains choose who was on the team? It really hurts to be picked last. It feels like no one wants you. Today's lesson is about a man and how he overcame rejection in his life.

Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

Teachers:
There is a part of the story that we did not include. It would be very disturbing to children. Please be careful about reading verses 30-31, and 34-40.

We have been talking about special people called judges who helped God's people through hard times. We have learned about Deborah and Gideon. There were other judges too. The ninth judge was named Jephthah (pronounced Jeff-tha). He was a mighty warrior, but he didn't start out that way. Let's learn about his story.

Jephthah lived with his father and his stepmother. He had stepsisters and stepbrothers too. They lived in Israel and were part of God's special people.

When the children grew up, they came to Jephthah and told him to go away. They pushed their own stepbrother out of the house. It was a sad time for Jephthah. He felt so alone and rejected.

Jephthah traveled to another land and met a group of explorers or adventurers that liked to have fun. He became their leader. These friends must have helped him see that he was special. He also learned that God loved him and that he was important to God.

Jephthah must have become known around the land for his leadership and skills. News of him must have returned to his old hometown of Israel.

Sometime later, Israel was threatened by the Ammonites, a very mean evil group of warriors. They knew that they needed help in defeating these people. The people sent a message to Jephthah for help. They asked him to be their leader and help them fight the

Lesson Goals

See that God loves all people

Learn why it is important to care for all people and not reject anyone

Ammonites. Jephthah asked them why they were calling him now while they were in trouble. He reminded them that they had asked him to leave earlier in his life.

They knew that they had done wrong. They told Jephthah that they would make him their leader if he came back.

Jephthah was not sure if they were telling the truth. He asked them again, "If I come back and win the battle, will you really make me your leader?" The people told him that they would keep their promise.

Jephthah told God all of these things and knew that he was to fight the battle.

Jephthah did a very smart thing. He tried to prevent the battle. He sent a message to the king of the Ammonites. He asked the king why he was trying to attack their country.

The king sent a note back saying that many years ago God's people traveled through their country and took the land away from them.

Jephthah knew that things were not exactly as the king had said. He wrote a note back sharing what really happened. He told the king that God's people asked permission to travel through their land on their journey. The kings at that time would not listen and refused their request. They gathered an army and fought God's people. Then God helped His people win the battle and so they took over the land.

Jephthah told the king that they had no right to take back the land because God had given it to them. Then he told the king that God would decide the argument that day.

God's Spirit came upon Jephthah and helped him win the battle. God's people destroyed 20 towns and won the victory.

As promised, Jephthah continued to be the leader of the country after that. He was their leader for 6 more years.

Jephthah went through many hard times. It must have be so lonely for him while he was away from his country. Instead of being bitter or resentful, he forgave his stepbrothers and leaned on God for help.

Just like Jephthah's family did wrong, we have done wrong also. The Bible tells us that all people have sinned and it has separated us from God. God loved us and wanted to make a way for us to be clean. God sent His only Son, Jesus, to pay the price for all our sins. Jesus died on a cross to take our punishment for all our wrongs. God promises us that if we believe in Jesus and know that He came back to life 3 days later, He will take us to Heaven one day. God wants us tell Him we are sorry for our wrongs and start doing right. Jesus will stay with us and help us make good decisions if we talk to Him and follow His ways. If you want to know how to do this, talk to us about it.

Learning Activities

Try activities to help the kids see the importance of accepting all people.

Memory Verse Activities

Jephthah knew that God accepted and loved him. He was able to forgive his family and even love them! Write the verse on paper and ask the kids to put it in the locker or cubby at school. Challenge them to live it out this week.

Prayer Time

Pray for each person and tell them how much they are loved by you and God!

Snack Time/CleanUp

Enjoy snacks together!

Planning for Lesson 39

Samson

Judges 13-16:30

Preschool Lesson
For
Jephthah

Use paper sack puppets to help tell the story.

Jephthah (pronounced Jeff-tha) lived with his father and his stepmother. He had stepsisters and stepbrothers too. They lived in Israel and were part of God's special people.

When the children grew up, they came to Jephthah and told him to go away. They pushed their own stepbrother out of the house. It was a sad time for Jephthah. He felt so alone. (Have the puppet slump over and walk away.)

Jephthah traveled to another land and met a group of explorers or adventurers that liked to have fun. He became their leader. These friends must have helped him see that he was special. He also learned that God loved him and that he was important to God. (The puppet can perk up and act happy.)

Jephthah must have become known around the land for his leadership and skills. News of him must have returned to his old hometown of Israel.

Sometime later, Israel was threatened by a very mean evil group of warriors. They knew that they needed help in defeating these people. God's people sent a message to Jephthah for help. They asked him to be their leader and help them fight the mean warriors. Jephthah asked them why they were calling him now while they were in trouble. He reminded them that they had asked him to leave earlier in his life.

They knew that they had done wrong. They told Jephthah that they would make him their leader if he came back.

Jephthah told God all of these things and knew that he was to fight the battle.

Jephthah did a very smart thing. He tried to prevent the battle. He sent a message to the king of the Ammonites. He asked the king why he was trying to attack their country. (Scribble a note on a piece of paper.)

The king sent a note back saying that many years ago God's people traveled through their country and took the land away from them.

Jephthah knew that things were not exactly as the king had said. He wrote a note back sharing what really happened. He told the king that God's people asked permission to travel through their land on their journey. The kings at that time would not listen and refused their request. They gathered an army and fought God's people. Then God helped His people win the battle and so they took over the land.

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Jephthah went through many hard times. It must have be so lonely for him while he was away from his country. Instead of being bitter or resentful, he forgave his stepbrothers and leaned on God for help.

When we are scared or confused, we can ask God for help. He helped Jephthah know the right thing to do. God will help us when we pray to Him. Let's talk to God now!

Hands-On Activities
For
Jephthah

If you have some, wear Army fatigues to tell the story.

Jephthah had to travel to another country. Make a Nap sack by making a circle out of fabric or paper towel. Put a small item or snack in the middle. Draw the circle together and tie with a string.

Jephthah had a really unusual name. Some of us have unusual names too. Sometimes others make fun of us or may call us names. Instead of getting upset, remember that God loves you and knows you by your very special name.

Hebrews 11:32-34 mentions Jephthah's name. Take time to look up the verse and see how God helped him win the victory for His people!

Make a film reel movie of Jephthah's life. See the attached page.

Try this object lesson. Bring hard candy that has a sweet center. (Examples are the strawberry candy, Charms blow pops, Tootsie pops). Share how the outside is hard and the inside is sweet and good. Explain that the hard candy is a picture of our pressures and hard times. Share that the soft sweet inside is Jesus. Explain that we can handle pressures easier when we have the sweetness of Jesus inside us.

Bring an invitation to a party. Share how fun it is to be invited to a party. Share how sad it feels not to receive an invitation. Explain what it means to be accepted and loved. Tell the kids how much God loves them and accepts them. He has an invitation for them—to follow Him!
