

3.1 Large Group Lesson | Elementary



October 13, 2019

Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels

The Judges: Deborah

BIG IDEA: God is sovereign and worthy of our praise.

BIBLE BASIS: Judges 4–5

KEY VERSE: “Lord you are great. You are really worthy of praise. No one can completely understand how great you are.” Psalm 145:3 (NirV)

 **SCHEDULE**
SMALL GROUP 
CONNECT

7–15 minutes

 **LARGE GROUP**
LESSON

30–40 minutes

REFLECT AND RESPOND
STATIONS

7–15 minutes

 **SMALL GROUP**
ACTIVITIES

15–25 minutes

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LEADER DEVOTIONAL

We live with what psychologists call the “illusion of control.” We think that with enough planning and enough preparation, we can determine the exact outcome of any situation.

It’s the athlete that always wears (and never washes) his lucky pair of socks, convinced that if he fails to do so, his team is doomed to failure. It’s the gambler who thinks he has a particular gift for choosing lottery tickets and is certain that one day his ability will pay off big. As a kid, my brothers and I would do what we called the “Midnight Dance,” (really more like the 8:00pm Dance) believing that if we danced our little hearts out, a snow day would inevitably follow. We all have things we think give us control in situations over which we have none.

Only God is exempt from the illusion of control, for it is no illusion. He is, to use a fancy Bible word, *sovereign* over His universe. There is nothing out of His reach. There is no person so far gone that He cannot get to them. There is no situation so hopeless that He cannot act. He not only wants the best for us, but can also do something about it.

The appropriate response to God’s sovereignty is praise. We praise Him not only with our words but also with our lives. We give Him not only glory but also trust. We worship Him not only for what He has done but also simply for who He is.

Casey Jordan
GO! Contributor



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LARGE GROUP SKILL BUILDING

Helping Kids Reflect and Respond to God

At the end of every GO! large group lesson is an opportunity for kids to reflect and respond to God through prayer, journaling, scripture reading, or art. It's what we refer to as the Reflect and Respond Stations. This time is especially important because it allows kids to interact with God on a deep and personal level through various age-appropriate spiritual disciplines. You've probably already noticed what an incredible experience this can be for kids, but did you know that you can help to make the experience even more rich and meaningful? It's true! Here are a few ways you can help:

Establish a quiet atmosphere: Creating a quiet atmosphere helps kids focus on God instead of the other kids around them. Before dismissing the kids, remind them that this is a time for them to talk to God, not their friends. Right before dismissing kids to move about the stations, give your final instructions in a whisper. Consider telling kids they can begin moving on the count of three. By the time you get to one, mouth the number silently and motion for the kids to get up.

Help out at a station: Most kids will eventually know exactly what to do and how to do it, but some kids (especially young and new kids) might need a little bit of direction. Pick a station and be available to help kids who need it. At the prayer and journaling station, quietly help kids who need assistance with spelling. Help organize the materials at the art station. Be available at the reading station to help kids find the selected Bible passage or to quietly read to kids who need assistance.

Provide prayer support: Sometimes it might become evident that a kid could use some prayer (especially at the prayer station). Make yourself available to quietly pray with kids. When you're not praying with a specific kid, pray silently that God would move in the hearts and minds of all the kids during this time.

Follow up afterwards: From time to time, ask the kids after the Reflect and Respond Stations if they heard anything special from the Holy Spirit or if they said anything special to God. Processing the experience out loud sometimes helps kids make the most of their time with God. It also gives you a window into the hearts and minds of the kids.



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UNIT DESCRIPTION

It's the distant future, the year 4,000 A.D., and the universe has run low on its most precious resource—fabulous hair. During the “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” series, small groups will be divided into two teams and will battle each other for the mythical wig of Walamazoo. In order to win these lovely locks, though, kids will have to exhibit team energy, show team spirit, and participate in a trivia competition. All the while kids will be embarking on a life-changing battle through the Book of Judges to discover the next part of God’s Big Bible Story.

SET-UP INSTRUCTIONS

- Divide your small groups into two teams. Each team can have multiple small groups representing it. Kids will work within their small group to earn points for their team. If you have an uneven number of groups on the teams, you may want to award the team with fewer groups more points for some of the competitions in order to make it fair.
- Lay down a strip of tape through the middle of the room. During the lesson, have the “Space Ninjas” sit on one side and have the “Pirate Squirrels” sit on the other.
- Place the bin or bag containing all of the point balls in the teaching area.
- Place the two team bins in the teaching area. Print out the team signs ahead of time and attach one sign to each bin. These bins will be used at the end to collect all of the points that were tossed out to each team.
- Print out a set of A, B, C, and D signs for each small group. Give the set of signs to the small group leaders to have with them during the large group time.
- Choose a fun, crazy looking wig for the Wig of Walamazoo. Place the wig in the teaching area. The wig will serve as the winning team’s prize.
- Choose a praise song that your kids are familiar with. Make arrangements to sing it at the end of the large group time (right before the Reflect and Respond Stations).
- Choose which of the Reflect and Respond Stations you would like to make available. Set out the appropriate materials for each of those stations.



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★ LARGE GROUP LESSON

CG: show “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” title graphic
Sound: Play upbeat music as kids move to large group area

Tech Note: When all of the kids have moved to the Large Group area and have taken a seat, begin playing the “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” intro video.

VDO: PLAY “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” intro video

PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

Large Group Leader: Hello everyone! Welcome to the most spec-tastic and fan-tacular series ever—wait! Let me try that again. Welcome to the most spectacular and fantastic series ever! “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels”! For the next 4 weeks, we’re going to be battling our way through the Book of Judges to learn about some of the Bible’s greatest heroes. Today’s battle is going to be super fun, but it’s more than that. This battle is going to help us dive deeper into the Big Bible Story. Before we get started, though, let me explain how the competition is going to work.

On this side of the room (*point to one side*) we have the Space Ninjas. Let me hear it from you! (*Space Ninjas cheer.*) And on this side we have the Pirate Squirrels. Let me hear you cheer! (*Pirate Squirrels cheer.*) The object of the competition is to be the team with the most points at the end of the hour. Each one of these (*hold up ball or other object representing points*) is worth one point. Your team will be collecting them throughout the lesson. There are three ways that you can earn points: Team Energy, Team Participation, and Team Competitions.

CG: Team Points graphic

At the end of the hour, we’ll count up the points. Whichever team has the most will win the coveted “Wig of Walamazoo!” (*Hold up the wig for kids to see.*)

The points are a wonderful group management tool. Use them to reward positive behavior. Toss out points when kids are cheering on their team, participating in something, or exhibiting other positive behaviors.

BIG BIBLE STORY REVIEW

Before we get to that, though, let’s look back at what we’ve learned in the Big Bible Story so far. I’m going to ask you some questions about past stories. If someone on your team can give me the right answer, your team will get a point. Are you ready? (*Kids respond.*)

Read the review questions from the “Big Bible Story Review” card which can be found in the Resource Folder. Allow one team at a time to answer the questions. Alternate back and forth between the teams. If a team answers a question incorrectly, allow the other team to answer. For each correct answer, toss the team one point.

CG: “The Big Bible Story” graphic



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THE BIG BIBLE STORY—DEBORAH

Moving into the Promised Land wasn't going to be easy! The land was already filled with people called the Canaanites—and they weren't too happy to see the Israelites show up. Under the leadership of Joshua, though, the Israelites trusted God and God helped them take over more and more of the Promised Land. But then something sad happened—Joshua died. I'll give some points to the team who looks and sounds the saddest. (*Kids wail and cry. Toss points to the saddest looking team.*) Now I'll give a point to the first team to get quiet. (*Toss a point.*)

After Joshua died, God sent the Israelites new leaders called "Judges." These weren't like the judges we think of; they didn't sit in courtrooms. Instead, these Judges were sent to help the Israelites follow God and make good choices. And when the Israelites followed God, they lived in peace. (*Hold up peace sign with fingers.*) Space Ninjas—give me a totally chillin' "peace dude." (*Space Ninjas respond. Toss points.*) After a bunch of years, though, the Israelites forgot all about the one true God and started worshipping other false gods. And when that happened, God let the Canaanites defeat the Israelites. Pirate Squirrels—show me your best death scene. (*Pirate squirrels respond. Toss points.*) But then the Israelites would cry out to God for help. I want for everyone to yell out, "God save us" in your most dramatic voice. (*Toss points to team with the most participation and energy.*)

One of the first Judges that God sent to help the Israelites was a wise and faithful woman named Deborah. Not only did God use Deborah to help the Israelites turn back to Him, He gave her a plan to defeat the Canaanites. Let's see what it was. I'll give some points to the first team who can find Judges 4:6-7 in their Bible.

CG: Judges 4:6-7

Gives points to the first team to show you the verses. Have the kid who found it read it aloud or read it aloud yourself. It says, "Deborah sent for Barak...Deborah said to Barak, "The Lord, the God of Israel, is giving you a command. He says, 'Go! Take 10,000 men from the tribes of Naphtali and Zebulun with you. Then lead the way to Mount Tabor. I will draw Sisera into a trap. He is the commander of Jabin's army. I will bring him, his chariots and his troops to the Kishon River. There I will hand him over to you.'"

CG: "The Big Bible Story" graphic

This was God's plan to defeat the Canaanite army. When Barak heard the plan, though, he was pretty freaked out. Let me show you why. I'll give a point to the first team that can bring me something made out of metal. (*Award points. Hold up metal object.*) The Canaanite army had 900 horse-drawn chariots covered with iron metal. The chariots were like Old Testament tanks and Barak knew they would be tough to defeat! But Deborah reminded Barak that God had supreme power and total control. Barak knew that God would be with him, so he gathered his men together and marched to battle. Stand up and march in cadence with me. (*Chant "hut 2, 3, 4" while marching. Periodically change the cadence to see if kids can keep up with you. Toss points.*) And halt!

Just as God had said, the Canaanite chariots came out to fight the Israelites. Space Ninjas—let me hear you yell "charge"! (*Toss points.*) The Canaanites charged at the Israelites. Pirate Squirrels—let me hear you yell "charge"! (*Toss points.*) The Israelites charged at the Canaanites. And just as the two sides clashed, God threw the Canaanites into total confusion. They became so frightened that they tried to scatter in every direction, but they were trapped by the river. The soldiers who tried to cross the river sank under the weight of their heavy armor and the ones who didn't try to cross were struck down by Israelite swords. It was a miracle! Because of God's power, not one single Canaanite chariot was left.

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CG: “Big Bible Story Questions” graphic

BIG BIBLE STORY QUESTIONS

At the end of the Bible story have the kids turn briefly to their small groups and discuss the following questions: **For Younger Kids:** **What was your favorite part of this story? How do you think the Israelites were able to defeat an army of chariots?** **For Older Kids:** **What do you think this story teaches us about God? What do you think would have happened if the Israelites didn’t have God’s power on their side?** After a few minutes, draw their attention back to the teaching area.

CG: show “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” title graphic

REVIEW BATTLE

Now that you’ve heard the story, I think it’s time to see how well you were listening. Are you all ready for the big review battle? Here’s how the battle works. I’m going to ask you all a series of multiple choice questions. If you think you know the answer, turn to your small group leader and tell them what it is. Your leader will then hold up the sign with the most popular answer from your group. Here we go...

Give the groups about 10 seconds to choose their answer and hold up the right sign before the answer is revealed. **For younger kids, you may elect to give them more time.** Once the answer is revealed, toss out one point to all of the groups with the right answer. (*Correct answer is in italics below.*)

Music: (Optional) Play upbeat music during game

CG: When the Israelites arrived in the Promised Land, God sent rulers to help them follow Him. What were the rulers called?

- A. Prophets
- B. Kings
- C. *Judges*
- D. Priests

CG: What would happen every time the Israelites stopped following God?

- A. They attacked the Canaanites.
- B. *They were attacked by the Canaanites.*
- C. They lived in peace.
- D. They lived in pizza.

CG: God sent a female judge to help the Israelites follow Him. What was her name?

- A. Deanna
- B. Deloris
- C. Delilah
- D. *Deborah*

CG: God gave Deborah a plan for defeating the Canaanite’s army of chariots. How many men did God want Barak to take into battle?



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- A. 100
- B. 1,000
- C. 10,000
- D. 100,000

CG: What happened after God used his power to confuse the Canaanite army?

- A. They were struck down by the Israelites.
- B. They struck down the Israelites.
- C. They retreated to safety.
- D. They called in reinforcements.

CG: “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” title graphic

At the end of the review battle have the kids place all of their points inside their team’s bucket or bag. Set it aside for later. At some point after the small group time, count up the points for each team and announce a winner. Choose a small group leader or kid from the winning team and place the “Wig of Walamazoo” on his head.

GOD IS SOVEREIGN...

Isn’t that story amazing?! Even though the Canaanites had nine hundred chariots covered in iron, God was able to lead His people to victory. I have a question, though. Would God have been able to defeat the Canaanites if they had nine *thousand* chariots? (*Kids respond.*) What if they had nine *million* chariots? (*Kids respond.*) What if they had nine *billion* chariots and a fire-breathing dragon with a bazooka and a bad attitude? (*Kids respond.*) Yes, yes, and yes! No amount of strength or power can overwhelm God because God is *sovereign*. Time out—fancy word alert! *Sovereign*—can you say that word with me? (*Repeat word with kids.*) Let me explain what that means.

CG: Sovereign: (*adj.*) having supreme power and total control

God is sovereign—He has the power to do anything; nothing is out of His control. Why do you think that’s important for us to know? (*Take answers from kids.*) Great answers! God isn’t just sovereign in the world, He’s sovereign in our lives too. Sometimes it’s easy to be scared or worried about things that are going on in your life, kind of like Barak did when Deborah called him to fight against the Canaanites. But God has supreme power and total control over your life (*point to kid*) and your life (*continue pointing*) and your life and my life too! He’s in control of all our lives. He loves us and wants to see us grow and flourish and nothing—absolutely *nothing*—can stop Him from making that happen!

...AND WORTHY OF OUR PRAISE

(*Move to Bible.*) So now that we know that God is sovereign in our lives, how should we respond to that? Well, maybe we should look at what Deborah did. (*Pick up Bible and open to Judges 5. Point to chapter.*) In the Bible, right after the story we just heard, there’s a whole chapter called “The Song of Deborah” where Deborah praises God for His power and control. Listen to just this one small part of her song: (*read Judges 5:3 from your Bible*) “Kings, hear this! Rulers, listen! I will sing to the Lord. I will sing. I will make music to the Lord. He is the God of Israel.” (*Close Bible.*) Deborah knew that God was great and worthy of praise. And you know what? That’s exactly what our Bible verse for today tells us. Let’s read it

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together. (Encourage kids to open their Bibles to Psalm 145:3. Be prepared to give younger kids more time and assistance in finding the verse. When ready, choose a kid to read it aloud or read it aloud yourself while the kids follow along.)

CG: “Lord you are great. You are really worthy of praise. No one can completely understand how great you are.” Psalm 145:3

God is great and worthy of our praise! In fact, I think that’s probably the best way for us to end our time together. Let’s sing a song of praise to God.

Choose one of your ministry’s favorite praise songs and sing it together. **Music: Play praise song of choice.** When finished close the Large Group time by praying for the kids in whatever way the Holy Spirit prompts you. Following the prayer, explain to the kids which of the Reflect and Respond Stations will be available. Remind them to move about the stations very quietly. Tell them they are free to respond to God in whatever way the Holy Spirit leads them, but if they need suggestions, some of the stations will give them ideas for how to pray, write, or draw. Give each child one “GO! Home” sheet and instruct them to take it with them to the stations. Place small group leaders at the different stations to quietly help the kids. The stations listed below are just the ones that have prompts that are specific to today’s lesson. For more instructions on how the Reflect and Respond Stations work as well as a full list of possible stations, see the “GO! Guide.”

CG: “Space Ninjas vs. Pirate Squirrels” title graphic
Music: (Optional) Play quiet instrumental music

REFLECT AND RESPOND STATIONS

Prayer Station prompt: Write a prayer that praises God for something amazing He’s done in your life.

Journal Station prompt: It’s time to get creative! Write a song or poem to God praising Him for His power and control in your life.

Bible Station prompt: Read it for yourself: Judges 4:1-15. Write to God what your favorite part of that story was. Tell Him why you liked it.

Art Station prompt: Draw a picture of yourself singing praises to God. Write down some words you would like to sing to God.