



UNIT 9 | SESSION 5

ELI'S SONS DISOBEYED GOD

1 SAMUEL 4–6

CHRIST CONNECTION: God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people forever.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: God gives life forever. Romans 6:23

BABIES GOSPEL GEMS

- The ark of God reminded the people that God was with them.
- The Philistines took away the ark of God.
- God sent Jesus to be with His people forever.

BIBLE STORY FOR TODDLERS:

Eli's sons did not love or obey God. One day, they took the ark of God to a battle Israel was having with the Philistines. The ark of God was a beautiful box from the tabernacle that reminded the people God was with them. The Israelites did not win the battle, and the Philistines took the ark. The Philistines put it next to a statue they worshiped in their temple. The next morning, the Philistines found the statue facedown in front of the ark. They set the statue back up. The next day, the statue was facedown again and broken. The Philistines put the ark of God on a cart pulled by two cows. They also sent gold gifts. The ark of God went back to God's people.



BABIES ACTIVITIES

LEARNING Activities

Engage babies in the following activities during the session. In each activity, provide handheld Bibles for babies to handle. Open a Bible to 1 Samuel 4. Show the Bible story picture as you say the gospel gems in a soothing voice. Read the key passage phrase card. Pray for the babies.

1 SING A SONG

Sing to the tune “If You’re Happy and You Know It”:

“When the people took the ark, God showed His power!
When the people took the ark, God showed His power!
Their statue broke apart when they put it near the ark.
When the people took the ark, God showed His power!”

SAY “ The Philistines took away the ark of God. They put it with the statue of the god they worshiped, but God showed He is more powerful than anyone. God sent Jesus to be with His people forever. ”

2 MAKE GOD ART

Before the session, print GOD on heavyweight paper with painter’s tape for each baby. Place the sheet in a gallon-size ziplock bag with a few squirts of yellow or gold paint. Consider double-bagging to prevent leaks. Seal the bags with duct tape. Encourage babies to squeeze the bags to distribute the paint. Cut open the bag, remove the art, and set it aside to dry. Once dry, remove the tape. Talk about the Bible story.

SAY “ The ark of God reminded the people that God was with them in the tabernacle. God sent Jesus to be with His people forever. ”

3 STACK BOXES

Provide lightweight boxes with lids or nesting cubes for babies to play with and stack. Place boxes with lids, one inside the other. Open the boxes and let the babies look inside. Explain the ark of God was a beautiful box with special things in it. Talk about the Bible story.

SAY “ The ark of God reminded the people that God was with them. At just the right time, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people forever. ”

Check diapers, serve bottles if needed, and release babies to parents according to your church’s security guidelines. Give parents today’s big picture card. Repeat the Christ connection, gospel gems, and Bible-learning activities for babies who stay a second hour.



TODDLER ACTIVITIES

LEARNING Activities

Engage toddlers in the following activities. In each activity, show the Bible story picture as you review the Bible story. Provide small Bibles for toddlers to handle.

1 CIRCLE TIME

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 4. Show the Bible story picture as you tell the provided toddlers' Bible story. Read the key passage phrase card and guide toddlers to say it. Pray for the toddlers.

2 SQUISH STATUES

Encourage toddlers to make different statues out of play dough. As toddlers work, ask if those statues can hear, see, or help people. Explain that statues cannot walk, talk, or move at all. Guide them to squish the statues. Tell the Bible story.

SAY “ The ark of God reminded the people that God was with them. When Eli’s sons brought the ark to battle, the Philistines took the ark of God. God sent Jesus to be with His people forever. ”

3 KNOCK DOWN STATUES

Wrap a pool noodle (cut 2–3 feet tall) or foam roller in yellow or gold wrapping paper. Stand up the “statue,” and line up the toddlers a few feet away. Guide toddlers to gently toss an inflated beach ball to knock down the statue. Ensure that no toddlers are near the beach ball as it is tossed or the noodle or foam roller as it falls. Tell the Bible story.

SAY “ The Philistines took away the ark of God and put it in their temple. When they woke up the next morning, the statue they worshiped was facedown and broken! The Philistines learned that God is more powerful than anything. God sent Jesus to be with His people forever. ”

4 FIND THE ARK

Hide a large yellow box in plain sight in the room. Invite toddlers to look for the “ark” with you. Play several rounds as interest holds. Tell the Bible story.

SAY “ The ark of God was a beautiful box from the tabernacle that reminded the people God was with them. When God’s people lost a battle, the Philistines took away the ark of God. Later, the ark was returned. God sent Jesus to be with His people forever. ”

5 MAKE ANIMAL NOISES

Explain that you are going to call out various animals as the toddlers make the sounds those animals make. Play several rounds. Be sure to call out cows last. Retell the Bible story.

SAY “ The Philistines took away the ark of God. God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God. In the end, the Philistines sent the ark back to God’s people on a cart pulled by cows. God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people forever. ”

ELI'S SONS DISOBEYED GOD

1 SAMUEL 4 – 6

CHRIST CONNECTION: God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people forever.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: God gives life forever. Romans 6:23

1 TRANSITION ACTIVITY: CAPTURE THE ARK

Place yellow cardboard or foam blocks or bricks to serve as the ark on the table behind you. If unavailable, consider wrapping the blocks or bricks in yellow paper. Choose one toddler to capture the “ark” while the other toddlers try to keep it from being taken. Invite toddlers to take turns trying to capture the ark without being tagged. Retell the story.

SAY “ When God’s people were in the wilderness, the ark of God reminded the people that God was with them. Eli’s sons took the ark to battle, and the Philistines took away the ark of God. God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God, so they sent it back. Later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to be with His people forever. ”

2 SING A SONG

Sing to the tune of “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush”:

“The Philistines took the ark of God, ark of God, ark of God.

The Philistines took the ark of God. God is the only God!”

3 PUSH AND PULL A CART

Provide a child-size wagon for toddlers to take turns pulling items around the room. Tell the Bible story.

SAY “ The ark of God reminded the people that God was with them. The Philistines took away the ark of God and then sent it back on a cart pulled by cows. God sent Jesus to be with His people forever. ”

4 PLAY OUT THE BIBLE STORY

Use the “ark” from previous activities and provide Bible times clothes for the children to play out the Bible story. Retell the Bible story as they play.

SAY “ The ark of God reminded the people that God was with them. The Philistines took away the ark of God and put it in their temple. God showed that He is all-powerful. God sent Jesus to be with His people forever. ”

Check diapers, serve a snack if needed, and release toddlers to parents according to your church’s security procedures. Give parents today’s big picture card to reinforce today’s Bible story, Christ connection, or gospel gems throughout the week.