

A STRONG MAN

Bible Basis: Judges 16:1–31

Bible Verse: “[Samson] said, ‘God, please make me strong just one more time.’” —Judges 16:28, NIV

Bible Point: Samson asked God to help him. You can ask God for help, too.

Resource: *The Story for Little Ones*, Chapter 8: “A Strong Man”

STEP 1: COME TOGETHER

Have children stand up.

Say, **“Try to do what I tell you to do. Turn to the front of the classroom.”** (Wait for them to do it.)

Say, **“Turn to the clock on the wall.”** (Wait for them to do it.)

Tell the children to “turn to” a few more things in the classroom.

Have the children sit down. Then ask:

- **What did you do when I asked you to “turn to” something?** (*You faced it; gave it your attention.*)
- **What do you think it means to “turn to” God?** (*You give him your attention; listen to what he says; respect him.*)

Say, **“Today we are going to read about a man who had a time when he disobeyed God. But before he died, he chose to turn to God.”**

STEP 2: HEAR THE STORY

Read Chapter 8, “The Strong Man,” from *The Story for Little Ones*.

Follow the directions to present the following Bible story.

Have children spread out so they have room to do actions. As you read the story, have children copy you as you do the motions.

There are two kinds of strong. One strong is to be strong in God. (*Show arm muscles.*) **When we are strong in God, we are strong in wanting to make good choices and follow God. The other strong has to do with being able to lift heavy things—your body is strong.** (*Gently punch one hand into the other hand.*)

Samson was strong in God. (*Hold up muscle arms.*) **He was also strong in body.** (*Gently punch one hand into the other hand.*) **Samson was a leader for God's people. But then he stopped listening to God.** (*Cover your ears.*) **He started listening to a woman.** (*Cup hands to your ears.*) **He thought** (*point to head*) **she was pretty. He thought** (*point to head*) **she was more important than God.**

The woman's name was Delilah. She wanted a lot of money. She could make a lot of money if she could tell others why Samson was so strong. That was Samson's secret. (*Put a finger to your lips and say, "Shhh!"*)

Delilah asked Samson, "What makes you so strong?"

Samson said, "Tie me up with seven new leather straps, and I won't be strong."

So she did. But that wasn't the secret of Samson's strength. (*Shake head "no."*)

Delilah asked, "What makes you so strong?"

Samson told her, "Tie me up with rope that has never been used."

So she did. But that wasn't the secret of Samson's strength. (*Shake head "no."*)

Then he said, "Weave my hair into cloth on a loom. Then I won't be strong."

So she did. But that wasn't the secret of Samson's strength. (*Shake head "no."*)

Finally, Samson got tired of Delilah asking, and he told her the truth. "If you cut my hair, I won't be strong." (*Make a scissor motion.*)

So she did. And he became weak. (*Go limp like a rag doll.*)

Delilah got her money, and bad guys took Samson to prison. He was there for a long time. Slowly his hair began to grow back. One day they took Samson to a place where a lot of bad guys were. The bad guys made fun of him.

Samson knew he had been wrong to make Delilah more important than God. He turned to God. He asked God to help him. He asked for his strength back, both his strength in God (*hold up muscle arms*) **and his strength in his body** (*gently punch one hand into the other hand*).

God gave Samson back his strength. Samson pushed over the pillars that held up the building. He stopped many bad people. When Samson turned to God, God helped him. You can also turn to God and ask him for help.

Ask:

- **Why was Samson so strong?** (*Samson was strong because he had never cut his hair.*)
- **Why did God help Samson after Samson disobeyed?** (*God helped Samson because Samson turned back to God.*)

Say, "At first, Samson disobeyed God. He turned away from God. But God loves us very much, and he forgives us. Even when you disobey, you can turn back to God. He always loves you and forgives you. He is always your friend, and you can turn to him and ask for help. Let's pray."

Pray with the children and thank God that you can always ask him for help.

STEP 3: EXPLORE MORE

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

OPTION 1: STRONG AND WEAK

***Allergy Alert!** Before you serve food, be sure to find out if any of the children in your class have food allergies!

*** Choking Hazard Alert!** Do not give popped popcorn or whole grapes to children under age three, as they could be choking hazards.

Stuff you need: popcorn kernels, popped popcorn, raisins, grapes (quartered), water, ice cubes, cups, napkins

Say, "**Samson was a strong man.**" Have children look at the popcorn kernels, and then let them eat popped popcorn. Discuss how one is stronger than the other.

Give children raisins and grapes. Let them decide which is stronger.

Give each child a cup of water with an ice cube in it. Talk about how the ice cube is stronger than the water.

Ask:

- **What makes something strong?** *(People can be physically strong or strong in God.)*
- **What can you do if you are strong in God?** *(People who are strong in God can do anything God wants them to do.)*

Close by saying, "**God helps those who turn to him. He is strong. Like Samson, you can ask God for help.**"

Say, "**It's interesting how something can be either strong or weak. We've seen that is true with water, grapes, and popcorn, and we've also seen that it is true with people! Let's try to be strong in God!**"

OPTION 2: I Can Ask God for Help

Teach the children these motions to the phrase, "I can ask God for help." Practice a few times.

I can (*Point to yourself.*)

Ask God (*Point up.*)

For help! (*Clap.*)

Tell the children the following situations, and help them respond with the words and motions, "I can ask God for help."

When I have to wake up, but I'm tired, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When someone is mean to me, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When I don't get to be first in line, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When a friend won't share, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When I get hurt, (*I can ask God for help!*)

When I have to pick up my toys, (*I can ask God for help!*)

Say, **"No matter what is going on in your life, you can always ask God for help!"**

OPTION 3: HELPING STICKS

Stuff you need: Helping Sticks Activity Sheet, permanent marker, ribbon or rubber bands, wide craft sticks (about 4 per child), crayons, markers, small stickers

Say, **"We learned today that Samson asked God to help him, and we can ask God for help, too! We can also help others. We are going to make some Helping Sticks today so we remember to help people this week. Whom can you help this week?"**

Give each child a group of about four sticks. With permanent marker, write the name of a person the child can help this week on each stick. If the child isn't a big talker, you can write down words like "Mom," "Dad," "brother," and "sister." Then the child can decorate the sticks with crayons, markers, or small stickers. (Do not give children the permanent marker; if you choose to give them markers, provide washable ones.) Tie the bundle of sticks together with the ribbon or rubber band.

Say, **"Take your Helping Sticks home with you this week. Each day you can choose one and an adult can help you read the name and decide how to help that person."**

Give a Helping Sticks handout to each of the parents as they pick up their children.

OPTION 4: A STRONG MAN

Stuff you need: A Strong Man Activity Sheet, crayons

Give each child a coloring sheet and crayons. Say, **"God gave Samson strength to do many brave things. The Bible tells us he even fought a lion—and won! We are going to color a picture of a lion so we remember God gave Samson strength, and he gives us strength!"**

OPTION 5: Samson's Hair

Stuff you need: paper cups, markers, fast-germinating grass seeds, potting soil, measuring cups or scoops to scoop the soil, plastic wrap, rubber bands, water in watering can. Attach a label sticker to each cup, instructing parents to remove the plastic wrap when they see sprouts beginning to grow, or instruct parents as they pick up their children.

Preparation: Gather the supplies, including plastic bins or plastic drop cloths or tablecloths; have children plant over these items to keep your floor clean.

1. Pass out a paper cup to each student.
2. Help children draw a face on the front of their cup to represent Samson.
3. Write their name on the back.
4. Fill the cup with potting soil.
5. Sprinkle grass seeds in cup and lightly water them.
6. Cover with plastic wrap and secure with a rubber band.
7. Take the cup home and watch Samson's hair grow.

STEP 4: GOING HOME

Before sending children home, give each a copy of *The Story Preschool Trading Card 8*.

Say, **"The front of this card will remind you that God helps those who turn to him. Show your parents the back, and tell them that you can depend on God, too."** Have them practice saying this before they leave.

As you are waiting for parents to pick up their children, use *The Story for Little Ones* or *The Story Preschool Trading Cards* to review past stories and Bible points.

Make sure each child takes home a copy of the Trading Card, Activity Sheet(s)/Crafts, and the Parents' Page.