

# Lesson One: Knowing God Personally (Preschool/Elementary)

## Lesson Theme:

God loves me and wants to be my friend! If I am God's friend, I will not forget Him or put other things before Him.

## Theme Verse:

"The Israelites sinned against the LORD by forgetting him and worshiping idols..." Judges 3:7 CEV

\* If you have extra time, have the students come up with motions for the theme verse from today.

## Bible Story – Othniel from the Book of Judges

### Ice-Breaker Activities

#### **ACTIVITY #1: MEMORY MATCH GAME**

- Download one of the free online resources – "The Judges Trading Cards" from BibleFunForKids.com. There are two options available, and each download comes in both color and black & white.

<http://www.biblefunforkids.com/2016/09/judges-trading-cards.html?m=1>

#### What You Need:

- A few printed copies of one of the options for "The Judges Trading Cards" above. These should be printed on heavy duty paper so that they will be durable and you will not be able to see through the paper.
- Scissors (to cut out each card)
- Flat surfaces for groups of students to play the Memory Match Game

### What To Do:

- Explain to the students that we will be studying some of the Judges from the Bible during our class time this week.
- Introduce the Memory Match Game
  - **Object of the Game** – Be the player with the most matches once all of the cards have been turned over.
  - **Setup** – Shuffle the cards and lay them face down, on a flat surface. Be sure to have two identical cards of each judge.
  - **Playing the Game**
    - Youngest player goes first.
    - Players take turns turning over 2 cards at a time.
    - The cards must be turned over completely so that all players can see them. A player makes a “match” if the two cards turned over are identical.
    - When a “match” is made, the player keeps the pair of cards. The player’s turn continues until they do not make a “match.”
    - If the two cards turned over are not identical, cards are turned back over in the same place, and the player’s turn ends.
    - Players should try to remember all the cards that have been turned over so that they can find a “match” when it is their turn.
  - **Winning** – When all the pairs have been found, the player with the most pairs is declared the winner!

### **ACTIVITY #2: “THE JUDGES TRADING CARDS” COLORING PAGE**

- If you want, print out two copies of the B/W version of “The Judges Trading Cards” for each student.
- This could be a coloring page for them during class.
- They could also make their own set of cards to play the Memory Match Game at a later time.

## Bible Story – God Provides His Chosen People with a Leader—Othniel

In our class time this week, we are going to be studying about a very special group of people that God called his “chosen” people. These people were also known as the Israelites. Because God loved them so much, He promised to give them a very special place to live. He called it the “Promised Land” because it was land that He promised to give to them. The Israelites were very much loved by God, but in our story today, we find out that the Israelite people had forgotten God! They were living their lives in disobedience to God!

God had miraculously delivered the Israelites out of slavery in the land of Egypt. God sent 10 plagues upon the Egyptians to convince Pharaoh to let them go. Finally, Pharaoh told them they could leave, but then he changed his mind and chased after the Israelites. He trapped them by the Red Sea. They had no place to go and no place to hide.

### **Does anyone know what happened next?**

Allow the students to convey the story of the parting of the Red Sea and destruction of the Egyptian army.

### **Once the Israelites were across the Red Sea, what happened to them?**

Answers will vary. You may have to remind them of these events:

- Crossing the Red Sea
- Egyptian army destroyed
- God provided them with food and water
- God gave them the 10 Commandments
- Worshiping the golden calf
- Making of the tabernacle and instruments of worship
- Wandering around in the desert of Sinai for 40 years
- They eventually entered the Promised Land of God

Try to compliment the students for the things they remember, but do not feel as though you have to retell all the details of this story!

Our story about the judges of Israel takes place about 70 years after the crossing of the Red Sea. Most likely, the Israelites now living in the Promised Land are the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren of the people who crossed the Red Sea.

**Do your parents or grandparents ever tell you stories about the past?**

I'm sure that these grandparents were very similar to yours and mine—they loved to tell stories! I'm sure that they told them stories about what had happened in their family so many years ago, but the problem was that...

**...the Israelites had forgotten about God!**

In the Book of Judges—chapter 3—the Bible tells us:

*“The Israelites sinned against the LORD by forgetting him and worshiping idols... This made the LORD angry, so he let Israel be defeated by [the king] of northern Syria who ruled Israel for eight years and made everyone pay taxes.” (Judges 3:7-8 CEV)*

**Why did God punish His “chosen” people? What did they do?**

According to this passage:

- They sinned against—or disobeyed—God.
- They forgot God.
- They worshiped idols instead of God.

After punishing His “chosen” people for disobeying Him, God listened to them and sent them a deliver—a leader that they referred to as a judge. The Bible says:

*“The Israelites begged the Lord for help, and he chose Othniel to rescue them... The Spirit of the Lord took control of Othniel, and he led Israel in a war against [the king of Syria]. The Lord gave Othniel victory, and Israel was at peace until Othniel died about 40 years later.” (Judges 3:9-11 CEV)*

**What was the name of the first judge?**

**Can you say his name with me? (Othniel)**

## Bible Story Review – The Cycle of Sin

**Why did God become angry with His “chosen” people—Israel?**

They disobeyed God—“forgetting” Him and worshiping idols.

**What did God do to punish the Israelites?**

He allowed the king of northern Syria to defeat them. They were ruled by Syria for 8 years. Syria also made them pay taxes!

**What did the Israelites do that convinced God to rescue them?**

They cried out to God. They begged Him to intervene. This is called repentance—turning away from sin toward God.

**Who did God send to deliver Israel from Syria? What happened next?**

Othniel – He was the first judge of Israel. Israel lived in peace for about 40 years.

**We ALL have the tendency to sin. We ALL need to repent—turn**

**away from our sin and turn toward God. Do you need to do this?**

## Activities & Crafts

### **CRAFT #1: CYCLE OF SIN WHEEL**

- The Bible Story Review section introduces the concept in Judges known as “The Cycle of Sin.” Use this activity to reinforce this idea.
  - Depending upon the age of your group, your students may have a clear understanding about what sin is and their need for a Savior because their sin has separated them from God.
  - This sin cycle is prevalent throughout the book of Judges. Over and over again, we find this cycle repeated; and each time, the sinfulness of the nation becomes worse.
- This craft project will help the students remember the steps of this “Cycle of Sin.”

#### What You Need:

- Print out the “Cycle of Sin Wheel” Activity Sheet from the Lesson 1 – Activity Pack.
- Crayons, markers, colored pencils, etc. for coloring the wheel.
- Brads (aka split pins)

#### What To Do:

- Decorate the first page of the wheel and then cut it out.
- Decorate the second page of the wheel. Try to encourage the students to draw something that reminds them of each cycle of sin. Then cut out the second wheel.
- NOTE: The second wheel (7.5” diameter) is slightly smaller than the first wheel (8” diameter), so be sure to line up the center of each wheel before proceeding to the next step.
- Place the first wheel on top of the second wheel and push the brad through the middle at the mark.
- Now you should be able to “walk through” the cycle of sin over and over and over again!

## CRAFT #2: REMEMBERING GOD AND HIS WORD

- The Bible tells us that the Israelites “forgot” God and did what was evil in his sight. In fact, the Bible says, “I treasure your word above all else; it keeps me from sinning against you” (Psalm 119:11 CEV)

### What You Need:

- Print out the “Treasure God’s Word” Activity Sheet from the Lesson 1 – Activity Pack. *This requires some very tedious cuts and exact folding. You may consider pre-cutting these templates.*
- Scissors
- Invisible Tape
- Small strips of paper (approximately 2” x 5.5”)
- Writing utensils

### What To Do:

- Distribute a copy to each student. Have each student follow the instructions on that page to create their own treasure chest.
- Be sure that each student writes their name on the inside of the lid before they begin assembling their chest.
- Have today’s theme verse written on a marker/poster board so that everyone will be able to see it easily. **Consider using the “Scrolls of the Law” Activity from Lesson 2 – Activity Sheets Packet.**
- Provide the students with slips of paper to be able to write out today’s theme verse and then put it inside their treasure chest.
- **Additional Activity:** Have the students add verses to their treasure chest throughout the week (e.g. theme verses from other lessons, verses from the evening preaching time, etc.)

**NOTE:** There may be more simplistic treasure chest crafts online. A two-dimensional version or painting an egg carton to look like a treasure chest would be a couple of alternatives.