

LESSON 53

The God of Israel Cannot Be Captured

1 SAMUEL 4 – 6



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD'S PRESENCE IS NOT A GOOD LUCK CHARM
THAT CAN BE MANIPULATED FOR OUR BENEFIT

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN**
Read 1 Samuel 5:1–7 from the Scriptures or read story 53, “The God of Israel Cannot Be Captured,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN**
What Does Judgment Look Like
SUPPLIES:
✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
✓ prizes for the winners (option: award all students or those who put forth effort)
- 4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN**
- 5. OBJECT LESSON 2 20 MIN**
Compare the Battles
SUPPLIES:
✓ pencils or pens
✓ copies of worksheet (one for each student)
- 6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN**
- 7. ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN**
The Ark and Dagon
SUPPLIES:
✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper
- 8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN**
- 9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN**
The Ark Was Just a Box
SUPPLIES:
✓ air-pop popcorn popper (You can use a traditional popcorn maker if you have a hotplate, but the air-pop machine works best.)
✓ popcorn
✓ large bowl
✓ paper cups for distributing the popcorn and for water to drink
✓ napkins
✓ water

TOTAL 90 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Power lies not in objects, but only in God—After the Philistines defeat Israel in a battle, the elders of Israel wonder why this defeat happened. Unfortunately, they fail to ask God. Had they asked God, through his prophet they would have learned that they lost the battle because they are not following God.

When Israel brings the ark to the battleground, they show that they do not understand the ways of God. They do not think about their lack of faithfulness, their disobedience, or their lack of repentance. Their trust is in the objects and rituals of their religion not in God. They think a decorated wooden box can save them. Instead they lose the battle and the ark of God is captured.

God demonstrates his mercy in the midst of Israel's defeat—Although the ark is captured, God doesn't allow it to be destroyed. In fact, wherever the Philistines take it, God brings judgment on their people and their false gods. In spite of Israel's sins, God remains faithful to his people and judges the Philistines.

God brings the ark home—During the seven months the ark is with the Philistines, they develop a holy fear of God. God gives the Philistine priests wisdom about how to return the ark and lift the curse from their people. In some ways, the Philistines seem to fear God more than the Israelites do! When they set the cows loose pulling the ark on a cart, God leads the cows directly back to the people of Israel. The ark may have been taken from Israel for a while, but it was never out of God's control.

A LITTLE BIT MORE

The Ark of the Covenant

The ark of the covenant (also called the ark of the testimony or the ark of God) was a wooden box covered with gold. On the cover, two cherubim faced each other so that their wing tips touched. The ark was one of the furnishings made for the tabernacle in Exodus 25. The ark was a visible sign of the presence of God in Israel—the Lord Almighty was “enthroned between the cherubim” (1 Samuel 4:4). The ark is also referred to as the “footstool of God” (1 Chronicles 28:2). God had Moses and Joshua lead the nation with the ark of God in the front, and the people came to understand that whenever the Lord's presence leads, he will bring victory. It was not the ark but the presence and blessing of God that brought victory for Israel.

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read 1 Samuel 7:1–11.

Samuel's offering of a lamb (1 Samuel 7:9) was a picture of Jesus, the Lamb of God, who died on the cross to save us from our sins. While Samuel was sacrificing the lamb, the Philistines were marching against Israel to attack. But because Israel confessed their sins and offered up a lamb, God remembered his promises to Israel and turned against the Philistines and defeated them.

Every time we see a lamb sacrificed for sinners in the Bible, it should remind us of God's plan to send Jesus to die on the cross in our place.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read 1 Samuel 5:1–7 from the Scriptures or read story 53, "The God of Israel Cannot Be Captured," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

What Does Judgment Look Like

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- ✓ prizes for the winners (option: award all students or those who put forth effort)

The object of this lesson is to help the children to see that the bad things that happened to Israel are a result of their disobedience to the Lord.

Divide the class into two teams and have the children open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 4—6. Each team will have ten seconds to call out a consequence of Israel’s disobedience. Give them one minute to look through the passage and then flip a coin to see who goes first. Have an official timekeeper and someone to write answers on the whiteboard. They can make a column for each team.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **Why did God allow so much judgment to come to Israel?**
(God wanted to draw Israel back to obedience while they were worshiping idols and mocking God by using the ark like it was a god.)
- **Did God’s judgment work?**
(Yes, read 1 Samuel 7:3–11 for the answer.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 20 MIN

Compare the Battles

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ pencils or pens
- ✓ copies of worksheet (one for each student)

Read the passages out loud and work through the first three questions as a class. Have the students record their answers on their worksheets. Then have the students write their answers to the last two questions on their own, followed by a class discussion.

Read about three battles:

- a. The capture of the ark of God (1 Samuel 4:3–11)
- b. Gideon’s victory over Midian (Judges 7:9–25)
- c. Joshua’s victory over Jericho (Joshua 6:1–21)

Answer the following questions:

- 1. Who called the people to battle?
- 2. What was their strategy to win?
- 3. What was the outcome?

4. How is the battle in 1 Samuel similar to the other two? (The Israelites copied some of the details from past successful battles.)
5. How is the battle of 1 Samuel different? (The Israelites made a big mistake when they failed to honor God before battle. Hophni and Phinehas, the priests with the ark, were wicked men. God was not about to bless this charade. Israel could not manipulate God by moving the ark. The ark of God is not a good-luck charm.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

The Ark and Dagon

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of the Ark next to broken Dagon idol.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day's scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

The Ark Was Just a Box

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ air-pop popcorn popper (You can use a traditional popcorn maker if you have a hotplate, but the air-pop machine works best.)
- ✓ popcorn
- ✓ large bowl
- ✓ paper cups for distributing the popcorn and for water to drink
- ✓ napkins
- ✓ water

Tell the class that you have an amazing machine that makes a tasty snack. Explain to them that it is called an air-pop popcorn maker. All you have to do is plug it in and turn it on.

Plug in the machine and turn it on. Hold the bowl under the chute expecting to get popcorn (even though you didn't put any kernels in the machine). After trying to persuade the machine to produce, express disappointment that your idea didn't work. Ask the children what you are missing. (They should reply you need to put popcorn inside.)

Use this to help them understand what Israel was missing. They took the ark of God into battle, but they didn't ask God to come with the ark. The ark of God without the presence of God would not help them defeat the Philistines.

Later, with God, they easily defeated their enemy. Now put popcorn into the machine and pop it for a snack for your class.

LESSON 53—OBJECT LESSON 2 WORKSHEET

Read about three battles:

- a. The capture of the ark of God (1 Samuel 4:3–11)
- b. Gideon’s victory over Midian (Judges 7:9–25)
- c. Joshua’s victory over Jericho (Joshua 6:1–21)

Answer the following questions:

1. Who called the people to battle? _____

2. What was their strategy to win? _____

3. What was the outcome? _____

4. How is the battle of 1 Samuel similar to the other two? _____

5. How is the battle of 1 Samuel different? _____
