

Lesson Plans that Work
Year A – Season After Pentecost, Proper 28
Lesson Plans for Older Children
Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One

Scripture: Judges 4:1-7

The Season After Pentecost is the longest season of the church year, spanning almost half the calendar year. The weeks after Pentecost are called Ordinary Time coming from the word “ordinal” which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The liturgical color of the season is green. It is often thought of as a season of growth both in our personal faith and in the life of the church. Common themes to focus on throughout the season are:

- Our relationship with God.
- Our relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another through our prayers, the sacraments and life in the body of Christ.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- The Church and its work for God’s mission.

Notation for this Scripture

We have spent a good deal of time during Pentecost working our way through the journey of the Israelites. We have talked about Moses' death and how Joshua took over the role of leader. We are now in the book of Judges, the people of Israel have reached the Promised Land and Joshua has died. Even though they have reached the Promised Land, it does not mean that it is there land yet and they have been fighting with the Canaanites for the land that God promised them. However, once Joshua died, they have been without one central leader and throughout the book of Judges, we see the people of Israel struggle with continuing to remain faithful to God without their leader.

There is a pattern throughout Judges that we see in today's lesson. It goes something like this: the next generation of Israelites strays from God, God punishes them through oppression of foreign people, the people realize their ways and turn to God to repent and beg God to save them, and in the end, God delivers the people through a judge.

The judges in the book of Judges are not the judges that we think of today. They are leaders who have been raised up by God to deliver the people of Israel from their oppressors. They have spiritual and military power and help the people of Israel fight their battles to free them and gain the land God had promised them.

Today, we hear about Deborah.

Theme: Being a Leader

Before: You will need copies of the scripture for each child.

Being a Leader: Paper, markers, pens, pencils. You may want to write the words Prophet, Wife, Counselor, Warrior, Judge on to the board or onto large pieces of paper so you are ready for the brainstorm session.

Beginning: Welcome the children into the room and have them sit in your gathering area. Ask how their week was and what kinds of leaders they know.

Opening Prayer: Gracious God, we thank you for bringing us together today to hear a story about your prophet and judge Deborah who lead your people to safety and freedom. Be with us as we learn and better understand what it takes to be a leader in your name. Amen.

The Story: Judges 4:1-7

In the Bible we hear stories of many people. These people are just like us, they eat and sleep, go to school and work. God has a plan for each of them, and in hearing the stories we learn that God's plan is for each of us too.

Read Judges 4:1-7.

Note: There are some challenging names in this passage. You can hear their pronunciations and see them phonetically spelled by going to:

<http://netministries.org/Bbasics/bwords.htm>

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder what it was like for the Israelites to go ask for help?
- I wonder what it was like to be Deborah standing up for the Israelites?
- I wonder what kind of leader Deborah was?

Deborah and Being a Leader

Today we hear about Deborah in the Book of Judges. Deborah was the only female judge we hear about in the Bible. Judges in Jesus' time were different than our judges now. Judges in the Bible are leaders who have been raised up by God to deliver the people of Israel from their oppressors. They have spiritual and military power and help the people of Israel fight their battles to free them and gain the land God had promised them.

We don't know much about Deborah, but we do know that she was a prophet, wife, counselor, warrior and judge. She was a solid leader that people looked up to and she was such a strong leader that even other military leaders relied on her as they fought their battles.

Let's look at all the roles she had. *Go through each one and have the children say what they think it means to be each one and why those roles are important.*

What do you think it means to be a:

- Prophet
- Wife
- Counselor
- Warrior
- Judge

That is a picture of Deborah. It's now your turn. Think of a leader that you admire, someone that makes you think in different ways, or is there for you, or who has those qualities we listed above.

Create a portrait of that leader and how they are leading you to follow God.

Getting Closure: Invite the children to clean up their space. Invite them to gather together and share what they created.

Closing Prayer: God of Love, who guides us through our lives using leaders and strong people like Deborah, lead us as we leave this place today so we may clearly see where we should go and see where you need us to serve. Amen.

Close by saying the Lord's Prayer together.

Judges 4:1-7

The Israelites again did what was evil in the sight of the LORD, after Ehud died. So the LORD sold them into the hand of King Jabin of Canaan, who reigned in Hazor; the commander of his army was Sisera, who lived in Harosheth-ha-goiim. Then the Israelites cried out to the LORD for help; for he had nine hundred chariots of iron, and had oppressed the Israelites cruelly twenty years.

At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel. She used to sit under the palm of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites came up to her for judgment. She sent and summoned Barak son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "The LORD, the God of Israel, commands you, 'Go, take position at Mount Tabor, bringing ten thousand from the tribe of Naphtali and the tribe of Zebulun. I will draw out Sisera, the general of Jabin's army, to meet you by the Wadi Kishon with his chariots and his troops; and I will give him into your hand.'"

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