

# Explore It

## FOR LEADERS



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### TEMPLE-TOPPLING SAMSON

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Judges 13:1,3-5,24-25; 14:10-19; 16:4-6,16-21

**Aim:** To think about strength and how we use it

In today's session we meet a Bible character gifted with immense strength from God. The only problem was that he didn't always use this strength wisely. He had amazing physical strength, but it would be fair to say that he often showed a weakness of character.

Each child will need:

- Pens/pencils, paper, and other resources to respond creatively – see Action It
- Explore It Ideas handout

You will need:

- Either the Strength Bible verses or the Strength Bible references handout – see Action It

### Start It

**Say:** Our Bible character today used riddles to annoy his enemies. Unlike the character in our story, I'm not trying to annoy you, but I thought it would be fun if we tried to solve some riddles together.

Choose from the selection of riddles below and see how many the children can solve.

- What is yours but is mostly used by others? Your name.
- What word begins with E and ends with E, but only has one letter? Envelope
- If you drop me, I'm sure to crack, but smile at me and I'll smile back. What am I? A mirror
- What has hands and a face, but can't hold anything or smile? A clock
- I'm as light as a feather, yet the strongest person can't hold me for five minutes. What am I? Your breath.

### Sing It

**Say:** If anything, our Bible character for today was too strong. Rather than relying on God's strength, he became confident in his own. Our memory verse for this month reminds us that our strength comes from God.

#### Memory verse

**'Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.'**

— (Joshua 1:9 NIV)

'Motions (Joshua 1:9)' by Saddleback Kids (1:55)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=asjSnNgDTrw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asjSnNgDTrw)

# Tell It

**Say:** Today we get to meet another one of the judges appointed by God to lead his people. Unfortunately, the Israelites still hadn't learned how to follow God. In Judges 13:1 (ICB) we read:

**'Again the people of Israel did what the Lord said was wrong. So he let the Philistines rule over them for 40 years.'**

**Ask:** Why do you think God let the Philistines defeat the Israelites?

**Say:** We can discover more about our Bible character for today by turning to Judges 13, where we meet Manoah and his wife.

**Read:**

**'The angel of the Lord appeared to Manoah's wife. He said, "You have not been able to have children. But you will become pregnant and have a son! Don't drink wine or beer. Don't eat anything that is unclean. You will become pregnant and have a son. You must never cut his hair because he will be a Nazirite\*. He will be given to God from birth. He will begin the work of saving Israel from the power of the Philistines.'"**

— (Judges 13:3-5 ICB)

\* A Nazirite was a person set aside to serve God. Not cutting his hair was a way of showing this to other people.

**Ask:** We purposefully haven't mentioned the name of our Bible character for today yet. Who do you think it is?

**Read:**

**'So the woman gave birth to a boy. She named him Samson. Samson grew, and the Lord blessed him. The Spirit of the Lord began to work in Samson.'**

— (Judges 13:24-25 ICB)

**Say:** Samson was special to God and was set apart to do amazing things. Through God's power, Samson was very strong. The problem was that even though Samson was physically strong, he didn't show much strength of character.

**Ask:** What do you think the phrase 'strength of character' means?

**Say:** Samson liked to get his own way and often used his strength to make unreasonable demands. When he wanted to marry a Philistine woman, his parents pointed out that it wasn't a good idea to be joined with the enemy, but Samson insisted. Let's turn to the book of Judges to find out what happened.

**Read:**

**'Samson's father went down to see the Philistine woman. The custom was for the bridegroom to give a feast. So Samson gave a feast. When the people saw him, they sent 30 men to be with him.'**

**'Then Samson said to the 30 men, "Let me tell you a riddle. This feast will last for seven days. Try to find the answer during that time. If you can, I will give you 30 linen shirts. I will also give you 30 changes of clothes. But if you can't tell me the answer, you must pay me. You must give me 30 linen shirts and 30 changes of clothes.'"**

**'So they said, "Tell us your riddle. We want to hear it.'"**

**'Samson said, "Out of the eater comes something to eat. Out of the strong comes something sweet.'"**

**'The 30 men tried for three days to figure it out. But they could not find the answer.'**

**'On the fourth day, they came to Samson's wife. They said, "Did you invite us here to make us poor? Trick your husband into telling us the answer to the riddle. If you don't, we will burn you and everyone in your father's house!"'**

**'So Samson's wife went to him and began crying. She said, "You hate me! You don't really love me! You told my people a riddle, but you won't tell me the answer.'"**

**'Samson said, "I haven't even told my father or mother. Why should I tell you?"'**

**'Samson's wife cried for the rest of the seven days of the feast. So he finally gave her the answer on the seventh day. [The answer was a lion and honey – see vv5-9.] He told her because she kept bothering him. Then she told her people the answer to the riddle.'**

— (Judges 14:10-17 ICB)

#### **Ask:**

→ How did Samson's wife make him reveal the answer to the riddle?

→ Do you think Samson showed strength or weakness in this situation? Explain your answer.

💬 **Say:** We don't have time to go into the whole story now, but Samson repeatedly showed that he was unable to do the right thing. He gave in if people pestered him and would fly into an angry rage when he wanted to get revenge.

**Ask:** Would you like to have Samson as a friend? Explain your answer.

💬 **Say:** Despite Samson's obvious flaws, God still tried to use him to defeat the Philistines eventually. Samson was a tribal leader for Israel, he judged Israel, for 20 years – and then he met Delilah!

#### **Video**

*Samson and Delilah* by Saddleback Kids (5:00)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcTgzQAeuZo](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WcTgzQAeuZo)

**Ask:** Why did Samson give away the secret of his strength?

💬 **Say:** Samson was easily defeated by Delilah's nagging. Although she tricked him repeatedly, he showed a weakness in his character and gave in to her demands.

💬 **Say:** Samson forgot that his strength came from the Lord, and ultimately it was his downfall.

## *Action It*

Depending on your group you can either show the references or display the full verses. Place the following Strength Bible verses or references around the room, ideally before your session begins.

Using the Bible references and ideas discussed in the session, ask the children to create their own representation of what it means to be strong. They could create a word picture, painting, poem, song or anything else that helps them to understand how the Bible represents strength.

For example, they could create an acrostic poem for the words: STRENGTH, STRONG, or SAMSON. They could draw the outline of the word STRONG and then surround or fill it with words and phrases that represent biblical strength. The aim is for the children to be creative, but these ideas should get them started.

#### **Strength Bible verses**

**'Be strong and brave. Don't be afraid of them. Don't be frightened. The Lord your God will go with you. He will not leave you or forget you.'**

— (Deuteronomy 31:6 ICB)

**'But the people who trust the Lord will become strong again.**

**They will be able to rise up as an eagle in the sky.**

**They will run without needing rest.**

**They will walk without becoming tired.'**

— (Isaiah 40:31 ICB)

**'I can do all things through Christ because he gives me strength.'**

— (Philippians 4:13 ICB)

**'The Lord gives me strength and makes me sing.**

**He has saved me.**

**He is my God,**

**and I will praise him.**

**He is the God of my ancestors,  
and I will honour him.'**

— (Exodus 15:2 *ICB*)

**'So don't worry, because I am with you.  
Don't be afraid, because I am your God.  
I will make you strong and will help you.  
I will support you with my right hand that saves you.'**

— (Isaiah 41:10 *ICB*)

**'Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his great power.'**

— (Ephesians 6:10 *ICB*)

**'Depend on the Lord and his strength.  
Always go to him for help.'**

— (1 Chronicles 16:11 *ICB*)

**'God did not give us a spirit that makes us afraid. He gave us a spirit of power and love  
and self-control.'**

— (2 Timothy 1:7 *ICB*)

## Pray It

**💬 Say:** Samson was physically strong, but he didn't always use his strength in the best way. Sometimes we can find it difficult to talk about our strengths, though Samson didn't have this problem! God wants to use our strengths every single day to make a difference in his world.

## Discuss

Discuss together the strengths of each of the children. They may not be able to identify their own strengths, so encourage them to share ideas with each other.

Discuss how God could use each of their strengths to make a difference in their family and community. After the discussion, spend time thanking God for the children's strengths and ask God to use each one of them to make a difference in the world.

## Explore It

Remember to send home the *Explore It Ideas* for children and families.

# Explore It

## IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home

SEPTEMBER  
SESSION 03

### TEMPLE-TOPPLING SAMSON

📖 Judges 13:1,3-5,24-25; 14:10-19; 16:4-6,16-21

🎯 Aim: To think about strength and how we use it

## FOR ME



### Discover

International Peace Day is celebrated across the world on Thursday 21 September this year. See if you can discover what it is all about.

Samson didn't always use his strength wisely, but how could you use your strengths to bring peace to others?

## TOGETHER



### Encourage

Sometimes we can find it difficult to see our strengths and need a little encouragement from others. Think about each person at home. What are their strengths?

Take the time to encourage everyone at home by reminding them of their strengths and how God wants to use them to make a difference in the world.



### Song for the week

'Motions (Joshua 1:9)' by Saddleback Kids (1:55)

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=asjSnNgDTrw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asjSnNgDTrw)



### Memory verse

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### KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

*Kids Alive!* The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!

