

FREEDOM FROM THE PHILISTINES

1 SAMUEL 7



KEY PASSAGE: Philippians 4:19

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

CHRIST CONNECTION: Samuel called the people to turn away from false gods and to worship God, and God gave them victory over their enemies. God calls us to turn away from sin and to trust in Jesus who gives us victory over our enemies of sin and death.

STORY POINT: Samuel cried out to the Lord to save the Israelites.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

First Samuel 7 reveals the Israelites' victory over the Philistines after God's people turned to the Lord and away from their pagan gods and idols. Samuel interceded for the people as they began to long for the Lord after having pursued the ways of the world for so long. The Lord granted His people victory over their enemies in a way that foreshadowed how He has established an eternal victory for those in Christ.

What did Samuel lead the people to do in their helpless state? How is Jesus an even better intercessor than Samuel was?

After so many chapters of disobedience and helplessness, it is refreshing to read that the Israelites finally longed for the Lord. Realizing the emptiness of idol worship, the people stood before Samuel and sought next steps from their leader. His instructions to the people were not dissimilar to the words we need to hear today: return to the Lord with all your heart, get rid of your false gods, set your heart back on the Lord, and worship only Him. In doing so, Samuel explained, they would again see God's deliverance.

The Israelites did as Samuel instructed, and they fasted and confessed their sins. They pleaded with Samuel to continue interceding for them so that they would experience the victory of God's promise. Samuel offered a sacrifice to the Lord on His people's behalf, and it pleased the Lord.

Although Samuel was an upright man called to prophesy and judge God's people, he was not the Messiah. Instead, Samuel's life points us to the only One able to secure a permanent victory over sin and death through a once-and-for-all sacrifice for God's people. Those who are in Christ do not need an earthly judge to mediate between God and man; instead, they can place their hope in the finished work of Jesus.

Share with boys and girls your story of how the Lord has helped you thus far (1 Samuel 7:12). Lead them to see how Christ has transformed your heart and granted you an eternal victory by faith in His name.



PREPARE

THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



WELCOME

10-15 MINUTES

Greet kids and open the session



LEARN

25-30 MINUTES

Teach kids the story of the gospel



LOVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to love the God of the gospel



LIVE

15-20 MINUTES

Lead kids to live out the mission of the gospel



PREPARE

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "What Doesn't Belong?" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ balls, 2

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ various objects such as a mug, a flower, a raisin, a battery, etc.
- ☐ paper bags, 1 per object



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- ☐ world map



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ stones, 1 per kid
- ☐ acrylic paint
- ☐ decoupage sealer
- ☐ paint brushes

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "Quiz Time!" activity page



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video
- ☐ Story Point Poster

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "Freedom from the Philistines" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 9, Session 4" Questions from Kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Doug and Evelyn in Tanzania" printable

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "My God (Philippians 4:19)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)
- ☐ dry erase board and marker
- ☐ eraser



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Have you ever been trying to get somewhere but noticed you were going in the wrong direction? What did you do?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “What Doesn’t Belong?” activity page.

SAY “Today, we will see how God’s people followed the false gods of the nations around them.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: TURN AROUND



Form kids into two teams and lead each team to sit in a circle. Provide each team with a ball and direct them to pass their ball around the circle. Tell kids that when you shout “turn around,” they must begin passing their ball in the opposite direction, until one team is the first to make it completely around the circle from where the ball first began. Award that team a point. Repeat several rounds and declare the team with the most points as the winner.

SAY “Today, we will see how Samuel called Israel to turn away from worshiping the foreign gods of other nations. Samuel told the people to repent. We’ve already learned that repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus. Let’s get ready to hear if the people repented and how God calls us to repentance as well.”

☐ OPTION 2: MAKE IT KNOWN

Before the session, gather different objects such as a mug, a flower, a raisin, a battery, etc. Place each object in individual paper bags. Then invite a volunteer to reach inside the bag, touch the object, and describe it to the group. For example, she might describe a mug by saying “it has a handle, you can drink from it, and it can hold coffee.” Challenge kids to guess the object described. Then repeat with the other items.

SAY “Each volunteer made known to you what was in the bag through their descriptions of it. They gave details that helped to identify the object. In a similar sense, when we confess our sin to God, we are describing how we have disobeyed God and admitting we failed to meet His perfect standards. God already knows our sin. Confession isn’t revealing new information to God; confession is describing what we have done as wrong so that we can turn away from it. Today, we will learn how Israel confessed their sin and how **SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES.**”





INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hi, kids! My name is [your name], and I’m happy you’re here. Today, we are going to see how God’s people tried doing things their way and realized they missed God. They realized that following the ways of the nations only led to misery. Did you know the Bible helps us know how God wants us to live? God gave us His Word so we can follow His Son, Jesus, and find true joy and eternal life. If you have your Bible, please hold it up high. [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.]

In our story, we’ll see that **SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES**. [Display the Story Point Poster.] God’s people needed to be rescued from their enemies, and Samuel led the Israelites to turn back to God. Let’s ask God to help us remember the importance of turning back to Him when we have sinned. Let’s pray: ‘Dear heavenly Father, thank You for Your forgiveness. Help us learn how we need to confess our sin, like the Israelites, when we have turned away from You. In Jesus’ name, amen.’ ”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

Display the Big Picture Question Poster.

SAY “Before we hear our story, let’s review our big picture question. **How does God care for His creation?** What was the answer? [Allow responses.] **God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.** Let’s say the answer again. [Repeat the big picture answer.]

Even when God’s people sinned against them, He still loved them and had a plan for them. God’s plan was ultimately to bring the Savior—Jesus—into the world through Israel so that people could be forgiven of their sins once and for all. ”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the Giant Timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “Can anyone point to the timeline and tell us where we are today? [Invite a volunteer to point to today’s story.] That’s right, we are still in the book of 1 Samuel as we learn about how God brought His people freedom from the Philistines.

We’ve learned how God was faithful to His people during the time of the judges. He provided for Ruth, called Samuel, and gave the ark of the covenant back to His people. Today, we will learn more about Samuel and how God used him as a judge over Israel. ”



LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 7. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Freedom from the Philistines.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

FREEDOM FROM THE PHILISTINES

“Twenty years after the ark was returned from the Philistines, the Israelites began to cry out for God.

Samuel told them, “If you are returning to worship the LORD, then you must stop worshiping the false gods from the nations around us. If you dedicate yourselves to worshiping only the LORD, then He will rescue you from the Philistines.” The people obeyed and removed the statues and poles that were used to worship the false gods, and they only worshiped the Lord.

Then Samuel said, “Gather all the people, and I will pray to the LORD on your behalf.” They fasted that day and confessed their sins to God.

When the Philistines heard that all of Israel had gathered in one place, they decided to attack. The Israelites were afraid and said to Samuel, “Don’t stop crying out to the LORD our God for us. Ask him to save us from the Philistines!”

Samuel made a burnt offering to the Lord and cried out to Him, and the Lord answered him. As the Philistines approached to fight Israel, the Lord thundered loudly against them and made them confused. Israel defeated the Philistines, chasing them away as they retreated.

Samuel set up a large stone to remember what happened that day. He said, “The LORD has helped us to this point.”

Israel took back the land and cities that the Philistines had taken from them, and the Philistines did not invade Israel again. Samuel led the Israelites as their judge, and the Lord’s hand was against the Philistines all of Samuel’s life.

Christ Connection: Samuel called the people to turn away from false gods and to worship God, and God gave them victory over their enemies. God calls us to turn away from sin and to trust in Jesus who gives us victory over our enemies of sin and death. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Active listening: Invite kids to make “prayer hands” when they hear the word “confessed.”

Use facial expressions: As you teach, use facial expressions to emphasize key points in the story.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ The Israelites had turned away from worshiping God wholeheartedly and had begun worshiping idols from the surrounding nations. God had allowed the Philistines to conquer the Israelites’ lands. But the Israelites began to cry out for God. What did Samuel tell them to do? Look at 1 Samuel 7:3. **[Choose a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 7:3 aloud.]** Samuel told them they must turn from false gods and worship the one true God with all their hearts. God doesn’t just want a part of our hearts; He wants all of our hearts! God alone deserves to have us worship Him with all of our hearts and love Him above everything else.

As Samuel gathered all the people and prayed on their behalf, what did the people do in response to Samuel’s prayer? Look at 1 Samuel 7:6. **[Choose a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 7:6 aloud.]** The people confessed their sin against the Lord. Confession is a right response when we see the terribleness of our sin. God calls people to confess their sin and believe in Jesus for salvation. He also calls Christians to continue to confess their sin so they can continue to live in Jesus’ power over their sin. We admit and make known our sin so that we can fight against sin in our lives.

While the Israelites were gathered, the Philistines decided to attack. The people were afraid and begged Samuel to cry out to God. **SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES.** Samuel also made a burnt offering to the Lord, and God gave Israel victory. What did Samuel do after Israel’s victory? Look at 1 Samuel 7:12. **[Choose a volunteer to read 1 Samuel 7:12 aloud.]** Then Samuel set up an Ebenezer as a reminder to the people that God had provided for them. The word Ebenezer means ‘stone of help.’ Samuel wanted God’s people to have a permanent reminder of how God had helped them when they turned back to Him.

Samuel called the people to turn away from false gods and to worship God, and God gave them victory over their enemies. God calls us to turn away from sin and to trust in Jesus who gives us victory over our enemies of sin and death. ”

3 GOSPEL DISCUSSION

SAY “ Have you ever admitted to God that you’re a sinner? God doesn’t want us to deceive ourselves and never confess our sin. When we confess our sin and trust in Jesus, God will forgive our sin. Jesus lived a perfect life in our place and died in our place so we can have victory over sin. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Create an environment where kids are welcome to ask questions about what it means to follow Jesus.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 9, Session 4” Questions from Kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Did Jesus take all our sins when He died on the cross?
2. How can we receive power to turn away from sin once we are saved by faith in Jesus?



LEARN

THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Display the “Doug and Evelyn in Tanzania” printable.

SAY “ Doug and other preachers would go to different places in Tanzania and share the gospel. By 1984, Doug Knapp and African evangelists started more than 160 churches and baptized at least 11,400 people since 1978. Baptism is a next step after a person has repented of their sin and trusted in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

Doug also selected and trained five Tanzanian pastors to preach and start new churches. But Doug noticed the pastors had difficulty getting to each new church. By God’s grace, Doug was able to provide the five pastors with motorcycles, and the pastors reached many more people with the good news about Jesus. ”

Pray, thanking God for how He provides for His people. Praise God for the many people who were saved through the Knapps’ ministry efforts. Ask God to help more people around the world repent of sin and trust in Jesus.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the Key Passage Poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Philippians 4:19 together.

SAY “ God supplied the Israelites with victory over the Philistines when they returned to worship Him. God gives us victory over our sin through faith in Jesus. ”

Write the key passage on a dry erase board and lead the kids to read it aloud. Erase two words and have them read it again. Repeat this until no words remain.

Lead kids to sing “My God (Philippians 4:19).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “ Dear God, thank You for Jesus and how He died for our sin. We know we are sinners in need of forgiveness. Help us confess our sin so that we can live in victory. In Jesus’ name, amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 7. Explain that Samuel was Israel's last judge and a prophet. Tell kids that Samuel's roles as judge and prophet point to Jesus, who is the perfect Judge and Prophet.

Consider comparing the map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate Mizpah [H4] in and around modern-day Palestine.) Choose a volunteer to read aloud 1 Samuel 7:9 or ask the kids to follow along as you read the verse aloud.

SAY “ Samuel worshiped God by sacrificing a young lamb and gave it as a burnt offering. In the Old Testament, God commanded His people to give different types of offerings. A burnt offering was when an animal was sacrificed to demonstrate how people's sin deserved death.

The Old Testament sacrifices point to Jesus Christ as the Lamb of God who gave His life for our sin. We cannot take away sin in our own efforts. God calls us to turn away from sin and to trust in Jesus who gives us victory over our enemies of sin and death. ”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “ What does it mean to worship God with all your heart? ”

Explain that worshiping God with all our heart means we make God most important, seeking to love and honor Him in all we say and do so that He receives the glory. Remind kids that God will not give His praise to anything else. Tell kids that God is deserving of all praise and worship because He is the one true God who created us, sustains us, and saves us. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 86:12.)

SAY “ What idols might we need to turn away from? ”

Answers will vary. Recall how idols are anything more important to us than God. Tell kids we can often identify an idol by paying attention to how we spend our time, how we react when something doesn't go our way or is taken from us, or what we tend to think about most. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Lev. 19:4.)

SAY “ **SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES.** Do we need to cry out for God to save us? Why? ”

Tell kids that all people need God to save them from their sin. Explain that only when we acknowledge our sin, repent of it, and turn to Jesus will we be saved. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 10:9-10.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: RAISE YOUR EBENEZER

Before the session, gather a stone for each kid, acrylic paint, decoupage sealer, paper, pens, scissors, and paint brushes. Provide each kid with a stone and place the supplies on a table. Invite kids to cut a strip of paper, and on the paper, write one way God has helped them. Lead kids to use decoupage sealer to adhere the paper to the stone. Then invite kids to paint their stones.

SAY “ We learned how Samuel built an Ebenezer to the Lord as a reminder of how God had helped them in their trouble. Psalm 34:15 says, ‘The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous, and his ears are open to their cry for help.’ When we place our faith in Jesus, we are made righteous. God will always be faithful to help His children. I hope that your stones will be a reminder of God’s faithfulness to help His people. ”

☐ OPTION 2: FLYING PRAYERS



Provide each kid with a piece of paper and a pen. Tell kids to write down a prayer request on the piece of paper. Let them know one other person in the room will see their prayer. After kids have written their prayers, direct them to fold their paper into a paper airplane. Then direct half of the kids to go to one side of the room, while the other half go to the opposite side of the room. Allow kids to toss their airplane to a kid opposite them. Challenge kids to pray for the person whose airplane they received, both now and throughout the week.

SAY “ **SAMUEL CRIED OUT TO THE LORD TO SAVE THE ISRAELITES.** He prayed to God on behalf of the people. We can pray for others as well. God is delighted when our hearts are moved to pray for one another. God hears our prayers, and we can trust He will answer them in His timing and in ways that are best. ”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, praising God for His faithfulness to hear our prayers and save us from our sin through His Son, Jesus. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Quiz Time” on the activity page.

