



God Chooses Deborah as a Leader

Goal: To be a helper like Deborah.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Judges 4:1-10

Deborah is one of the judges in the Bible. Judges were charismatic leaders, not judges in the modern sense. However, they may have had some military and legal roles. Deborah is the only female judge listed in the Bible and the only judge called a prophet. Deborah is an important figure in the defeat of the Canaanites by the Israelites, a victory described in both Judges 4 and in “Deborah’s Song” in Judges 5, one of the oldest parts of the Bible. Deborah may have written the song herself shortly after the original events, sometime around 1125 BC. The name *Deborah* means “bee” in Hebrew. Barak is the commander of the Israelite militia. The name *Barak* means “lightning.” Barak and Deborah face the 900 chariots of the Canaanites. These are camped on the strategic plain of Esdraelon, a wedge-shaped valley across Canaan’s northern hills. The Canaanites include archers armed with long-range bows, iron spears and shields, iron helmets, and coats of mail. Deborah instructs Barak to muster military support from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali. Barak gathers ten units from these tribes (not 10,000 as the passage suggests). They will face the Canaanites with bronze and copper daggers in their hands, along with swords, slings, and short-range bows and arrows.

. . . In Your Children’s Experiences

Beginning with this week’s story, you are going to be helping the children learn about women and men who were called by God to be leaders for God’s people. There are several ways you can help children connect with Deborah and her role as a leader in the community and her work as both a mediating judge and counsel to the military leader, Barak. Older children will be familiar with the term *judge*. Invite them to share some of the things that a judge does. This will provide a nice introduction to the story you will be telling about Deborah. All ages will be able to identify with Deborah’s work in supporting Barak.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As you tell children the stories of God’s leaders—prophets, a judge, rulers, apostles—children will be able to see how these women and men constitute a family tree of faith. As they meet them, they will learn about the gifts they possessed as leaders of God’s people. Deborah’s story will help them remember how God is grateful when we live and work as peacemakers. Children will be able to give examples from their own lives of times when they have helped people settle an argument or supported someone when they had a hard job to do.

O God, give me a wise heart so that—like Deborah—I will offer wise counsel and leadership in Christ’s name. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies

bit.ly/GGGMusicMelodies

Stories, Colors & More

(SCM) i-iv, 8, 8a, 20, 21

basic supplies

(see p. vii)

internet-connected device

blanket or mats

candle

Guided Play

choice 1: puzzles

choice 2: copy of

Grace Notes (GN) 1

for each child, brown

construction paper,

green crayons

choice 3: antibacterial

hand wipes

Exploring

choice 2: two sheets of brown construction paper for each pair of children

choice 3: copies of **GN 2**

choice 4: copies of **GN 3**

Some children may be sensitive to cleaning products. Allow those children to help pick up.

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Use **SCM i-ii**, “Your Visual Schedule,” to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii-iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG** **T**) and ways to adapt for children with special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and your children.

You do not need to do everything suggested!

Before the session, make stick puppet figures from **SCM 8a** for “Hearing the Story.”

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 2 requires more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.”

Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time.

Introduce yourself to the parents/caregivers. Explain to them that the children will hear a story about Deborah, a judge who helped God’s people.

Invite the children to choose a guided play activity to start:

- 1. Be a Helper**—“Accidentally” spill several puzzles onto a table or the floor. Ask the children to be helpers and pick up the puzzle pieces. Thank the children for being helpful and invite them to put the puzzles back together.
- 2. Making Palm Leaves**—Cut out the palm leaf from **GN 1** for each child. Tape several sheets of brown construction paper or a strip of craft paper to a wall to make the trunk of a palm tree. Place it somewhere you can sit “under” it for “Hearing the Story.” Point out the trunk of the tree to the children and tell them that they are going to make palm leaves for your tree. Make palm leaves available. Invite them to color the leaves green. If the children are able, invite them to cut along the dotted lines to make the fronds of the palm leaf. Attach the palm leaves to the top of the trunk of your tree with tape.
- 3. Cleaning Up**—Invite the children to wipe off toys, tables, and chairs with antibacterial hand wipes. Young children enjoy doing tasks that they see adults doing. You may invite the children to sing along with you. Use the tune to “Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush” and make up lines such as, “This is the way we wash the table, wash the table, wash the table, so early in the morning.”



- LG** *Teach the children about the power of teamwork. When they learn to support others, cooperate, and problem solve as a group, they become better leaders. Helping and serving others helps kids see firsthand that they have the power to make a difference.*

Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into story time, call them to the story corner, singing “Dance and Sing”—**SCM 21**. Repeat words and phrases as it seems appropriate.

Helper Song

LG

Using the tune “If You’re Happy and You Know It,” teach the children the following song:

If you’re a helper and you know it,
nod your head. (*nod, nod*)
If you’re a helper and you know it,
nod your head. (*nod, nod*)
If you’re a helper and you know it,
what you do will surely show it.
If you’re a helper and you know it,
nod your head. (*nod, nod*)

Writing each child’s name is important. Children like to see their name written. It gives them a sense of identity and inclusion.

Helping at Home

LG

Make a list of how each child is a helper at home. Ask each child how he or she is a helper at home. Write down their name and their response next to their name where everyone can see it. After each child answers, respond with praise for their deeds or with a follow-up question about how they do a task. If children start repeating the same task, you may want to prompt them with other ideas, such as, “What do you do outside to be a helper?” or “What do you do at dinner time to be a helper?”



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.



If you have an odd number of children, pair up with a child.

Hearing the Story

L

Turn on the candle, saying, "God, your Word is our light." Repeat the phrase, prompting the children to say "light" with you.

Open the Bible to Judges 4 so the children know the story comes from the Bible.

Read **SCM 8** under the palm tree, if you made one during "Welcoming and Guided Play." Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, "Amen."

After you have read the story, read it again using the stick puppet figures of Deborah, the palm tree, and Barak from **SCM 8a**. Invite the children to say, "Yay!" when they hear the Deborah's name; raise their arms like palm branches when they hear "palm tree;" and make a saluting gesture (*side of right hand to forehead and out*) when they hear the name Barak.

Turn off the candle.

EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. What Would Deborah Say?

LG M MS

Remind the children that Deborah helped people with good advice. Read the following scenarios and ask the children what they think Deborah would say or do to help. After each scenario, invite the children to pantomime the action.

- ▼ Juan has his arms full and cannot open the door.
- ▼ Sophia dropped a box of crayons.
- ▼ Callie dropped her pencil and didn't know it. She kept walking across the room.
- ▼ Your mom or dad is looking sad.
- ▼ A baby is sleeping in the room.
- ▼ A new person comes in the room and doesn't know anyone.

2. Deborah and Barak Help Each Other

MS

Move furniture out of the way so that you have space for all the children to move unencumbered across the room. Line everyone up along one side of the room. Gather the children into pairs. Tell them that they are going to pretend to be Deborah and Barak helping each other along a path across the room. Tap one person of each pair on the head and designate them as Deborah. Tap the other person of each pair on the shoulder and designate them as Barak.



Give the Deborahs two sheets of brown construction paper. Have the Deborahs place one sheet on the ground in front of their Barak. Tell the Baraks to step on the sheet. Explain that they cannot move until their Deborah places a piece of paper in front of them to move to. Instruct the Deborahs to place the second sheet on the floor in front of their Barak. Now the sheet that the Baraks were standing on is free. Tell the Deborahs to move the sheet from behind their Barak in front of them so they can take another step forward.

Have the children continue in this pattern until they reach the other side of the room. Cheer for the Deborahs helping their Baraks. Then instruct the children to return to the other side of the room with the Baraks helping the Deborahs.

3. Helping Chart

LG

Hand out copies of **GN 2** to each child. Invite the children to choose four activities that show how they are a helper and color those pictures. After they have colored, help them cut apart the squares as needed. Invite them to glue the four pictures they have chosen to a piece of paper, to form a square. Explain that this could be a Helping Chart that reminds them of things they could do to help. Invite each child to share what activities they have chosen as ways that they are a helper.

4. Coloring Page

FM

Hand out **GN 3** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Deborah and Barak by a palm tree. Engage the children in conversation as they color using the following questions:

- ▼ I wonder, "How was Deborah a helper?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How did Deborah help God?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How did God help Deborah?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How did Deborah help Barak?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How did God help Barak?"
- ▼ I wonder, "How did Barak help God?"

Ⓢ *Transitions can be difficult. This may be a good time for some quick physical activities, such as standing on tiptoe, crouching down, and waving arms in a circle.*

Use "wonder" questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wonder questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children together, singing “God Takes Care of Me”—**SCM 20**. Repeat words and phrases it as seems appropriate. Tell the children that the first line of the song says, “When Moses traveled far from home,” but today we will sing, “When **DEBORAH** traveled far from home . . .” because God took care of Deborah too!

Ask each child how they have been a helper today.

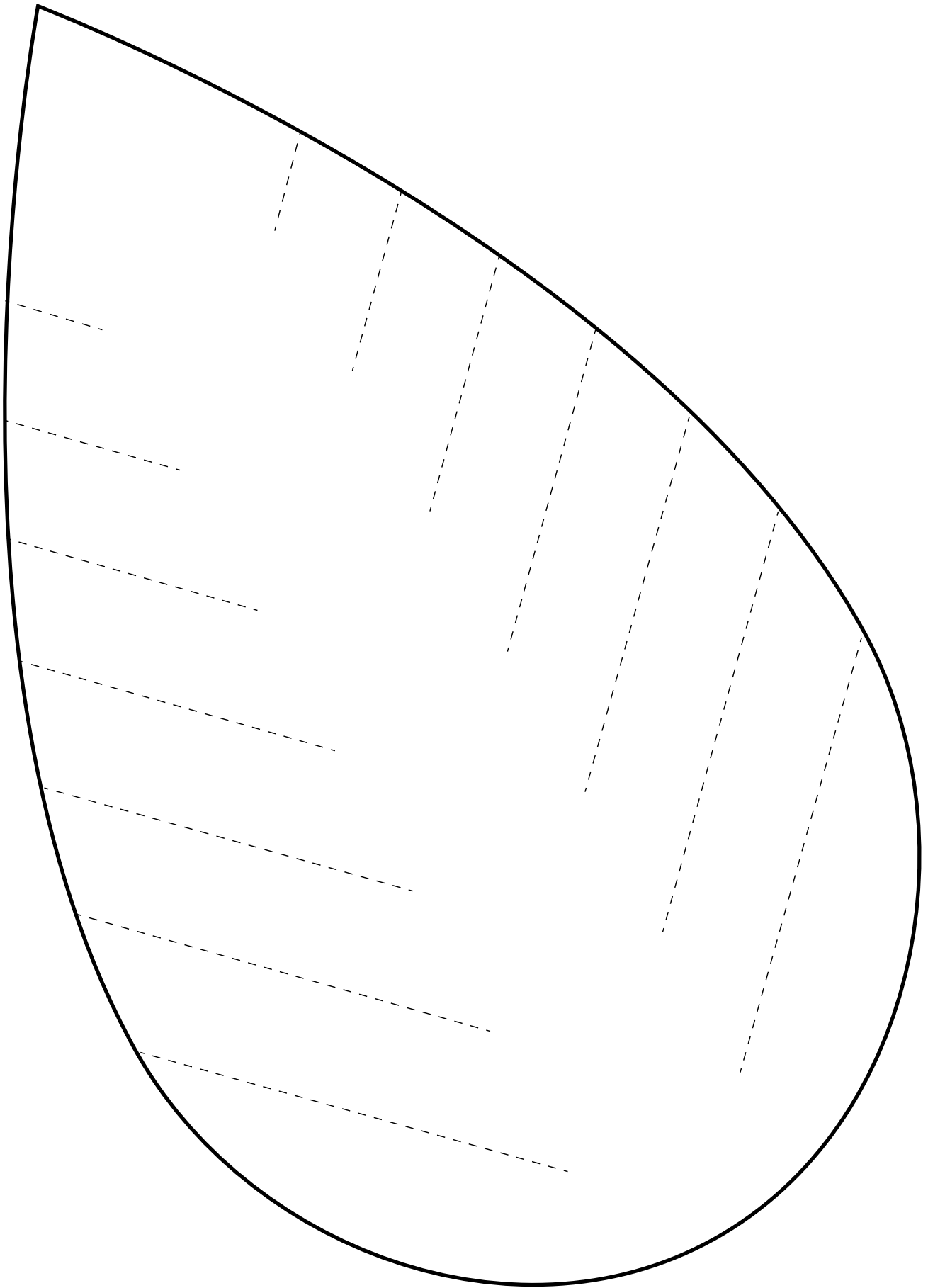
Call the children to snack time. Invite the children to repeat each line of the following prayer, clapping on the **BOLD** words.

We **thank** you, God.
We **love** you, God.
For **food** and **friends** and **family**, too,
We **thank** you, God.
We **love** you, God.
Amen! Amen! **Amen!**

As the children leave, send them with these words: “(Name), go in God’s grace and be God’s helper.”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so that you can provide them with the link to www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads, where they can download coloring pages, *Grace Sightings*, audio stories, and songs (see p. vii).





God Chooses Deborah as a Leader



Deborah gives Barak a message from God.

