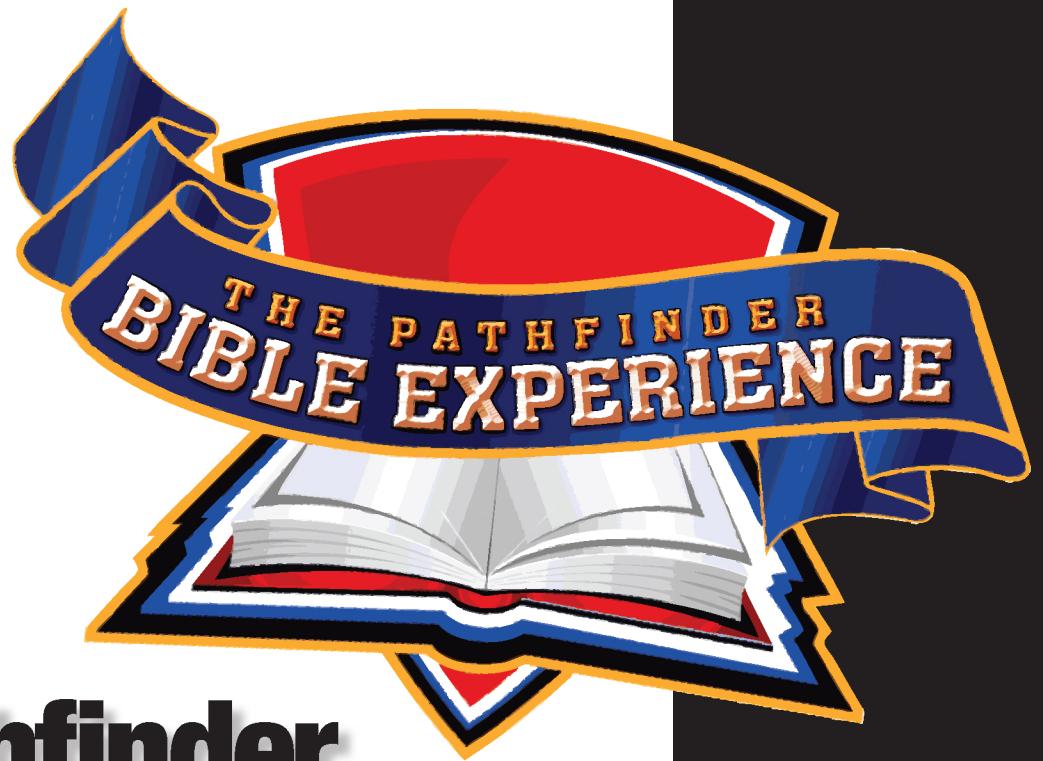


2023/2024 Edition



The Pathfinder Bible Experience Application Guide

A team Bible knowledge challenge for
Joshua & Judges

By Pastor Hadid J. Cortez, MDiv



**North
American
Division
Pathfinder
Ministries**

Created by the North American Division Youth Ministries Department.

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The Pathfinder Bible Experience

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Introduction for Leaders

Pathfinders from across North America are committing to memory verses, chapters and books of the Bible as part of *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* (PBE). PBE is a wonderful starting point for Bible study and a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. But memorization is just the beginning.

The Pathfinder Bible Experience was developed to help Pathfinders and young people meditate and reflect on what the Bible says and how it applies to their lives. It features ideas for application to help Pathfinders use what they study and apply it to their daily experience at home, school and church.

There are two objectives for this guide: 1) Pathfinders can learn more about the passages they are studying as part of PBE, examine their lives and grow stronger spiritually; and 2) Pathfinders can use these guides to become involved in outreach by leading out in small group Bible studies with their friends and peers in Pathfinders or at school. The goal is to see young people grow spiritually both in their personal walk with Jesus and as they minister to others.

This resource has the potential to revolutionize Pathfinders' lives. Help them take advantage of it. Use it. Go beyond the reading and memorizing—go deeper. Get into the application and be ready to experience what a difference God can make in them and through them. Show Pathfinders that they don't just need to memorize Scripture—they can also live it.

W. Gene Clapp

North American Division Pathfinder Bible Experience Coordinator

Armando Miranda

North American Division Youth/Young Adult Ministries Associate Director

For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

—ROMANS 15:4 (NKJV)

Purpose

The purpose of *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* is to promote and encourage in-depth Bible study and memorization by Pathfinders, so their understanding of scripture will increase and their relationship to Christ will grow.

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

— JOHN 17:17 (NKJV)

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophets' own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

— 2 PETER 1:20-21 (NIV)

It is not safe for us to turn from the Holy Scriptures with only a casual reading of their sacred pages... Rein the mind up to the high task that has been set before it, and study with determined interest, that you may understand divine truth. Those who do this will be surprised to find what the mind can attain. The mind must be restrained and not allowed to wander. It should be trained to dwell upon the Scriptures and upon noble, elevating themes. Portions of Scripture, even whole chapters, may be committed to memory to be repeated when Satan comes in with his temptations.

— ELLEN G. WHITE
MIND, CHARACTER, AND PERSONALITY,
VOL. 1, PAGE 95

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

— PSALMS 119:105 (NKJV)

How to Use this Resource

King David didn't have a Bible and he never sat on a hillside reading a devotional book. He probably couldn't even read—and yet he knew God as well as anyone who ever walked the face of planet earth. In fact, most people you read about in the Bible were illiterate so they memorized large portions of scripture as they listened to it being recited by their parents and read by priests and scribes in the local synagogues and sanctuary. David learned to love the Bible through listening and memorizing it for himself. Throughout Psalms David talks about how much he loves the sanctuary and God's law—he even says he meditated on it day and night.

The most important passage of scripture in ancient Jewish culture is the Shema:

Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and
with all your soul and with all your strength.

These commandments that I give you today are to be
on your hearts.

Impress them on your children.

Talk about them when you sit at home

and when you walk along the road,

when you lie down and when you get up.

When Pathfinders participate in *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* they are following in the footsteps of the ancient Israelites and Jesus Himself. Memorizing scripture locks it in their minds where no one can take it from them, but if all they do is memorize it, it does little good—they must allow it to guide them as they walk through life every day.

This guide will help Pathfinders in this journey of understanding scripture and living it. The chapter guides are not comprehensive. They do not cover every detail of each chapter—that would take a few hundred pages. Each chapter guide chooses a few key points to help Pathfinders start thinking differently about scripture—to get beyond memorization and on to internalization.

This booklet includes guides for each chapter featured in the 2017-2018 *Pathfinder Bible Experience*. Once Pathfinders have finished studying a chapter, you can share the corresponding chapter guide with them. Allow Pathfinders to answer questions verbally or by writing their answers in a journal and then discussing them with the group.

May Jesus Christ Himself bless you richly as you embark on this journey to making God's Word a living and vital part of who you are.

Introduction for Pathfinders

Pathfinders from across North America are committing to memory verses, chapters and books of the Bible as part of *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* (PBE). PBE is a wonderful starting point for Bible study and a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ. But memorization is just the beginning.

The Pathfinder Bible Experience Guide was developed to help Pathfinders and young people meditate and reflect on what the Bible says and how it applies to life today. It features ideas for application to help you use what you study as part of *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* and apply it to your daily experience at home, school and church.

There are two objectives for this application guide: 1) you can learn more about the passages you are studying as part of PBE, examine your life and grow stronger spiritually; and 2) you can use these guides to become involved in outreach by leading out in small group Bible studies with friends and peers in Pathfinders or at school. The goal is for you to grow spiritually both in your personal walk with Jesus and as you minister to others.

This resource has the potential to revolutionize your life. Go beyond the reading and memorizing—go deeper. Get into the application and be ready to experience what a difference God can make in you and through you. You don't just need to memorize Scripture—you can also live it.

About the Pathfinder Bible Experience

The *Pathfinder Bible Experience* is a team based challenge that tests the group's knowledge of sections of scripture. Each year a new block of scripture is assigned and excited Pathfinders commit to immersing themselves in those passages of God's Word.

Then in February, after months of study, they gather together with other teams in their area to test their knowledge against a set of questions drawn from the scriptures they have been covering.

If they answer a high enough percentage of the questions correctly, they advance to a conference level event, then union level, and finally a division level event, typically held in April.

Each team competes against a standard, and all who perform to the designated percentage advance. Meeting together adds a sense of excitement and an additional level of adrenaline that spurs participants on to higher levels of recall. Yet any and all can advance, based solely on their efforts.

Scripture

Translations

- English: New King James (Thomas Nelson Pathfinder Edition recommended)
- Spanish: Reina Valera 1995 (RVR1995)
- French: Version Louis Segond en Français

Scripture Coverage

The NAD *Pathfinder Bible Experience* team will assign a book, books or sections of books of the Bible, totaling between 40 and 50 chapters per year. *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* also includes the relevant introductory text in the *SDA Bible Commentary* for the scriptures covered.

Questions

The questions for each level of *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* will be distributed by the NAD *Pathfinder Bible Experience* Coordinator to the appropriate individuals at each participating conference and union.

All questions are prepared by persons appointed by the NAD Pathfinder Director. Questions are developed from the Pathfinder Edition of the New King James Version of the Bible and the latest edition of the *SDA Bible Commentary* book introductions for the associated scriptural passages. Less than 10% of the questions will come from the commentary.

Questions are written to stand alone and be able to be answered individually. Most require single word or short phrase answers. *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* does not use multiple choice questions. There should be limited use of true and false questions. Questions should always include the scriptural reference.

The NAD *Pathfinder Bible Experience* Coordinator will coordinate the translation of all the questions into Spanish and French.

All questions will be in harmony with the beliefs of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

— JOHN 17:17 (NKJV)

Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophets' own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

— 2 PETER 1:20-21 (NIV)

It is not safe for us to turn from the Holy Scriptures with only a casual reading of their sacred pages... Rein the mind up to the high task that has been set before it, and study with determined interest, that you may understand divine truth. Those who do this will be surprised to find what the mind can attain. The mind must be restrained and not allowed to wander. It should be trained to dwell upon the Scriptures and upon noble, elevating themes. Portions of Scripture, even whole chapters, may be committed to memory to be repeated when Satan comes in with his temptations.

— ELLEN G. WHITE

MIND, CHARACTER, AND PERSONALITY,
VOL. 1, PAGE 95

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

— PSALMS 119:105 (NKJV)

Team Requirements

Teams are made up of two to six Pathfinders from a single club. Clubs may have multiple teams participate, so long as each team has at least four unique Pathfinders on each team. In certain instances where a club has a small number of eligible Pathfinder team members, they may join with another Pathfinder club in a similar situation, within the Conference, and form a participating PBE team.

Teams should be as complete as possible. For example a club would not be allowed to field three teams of four participants, but they could field two teams of six participants from that club.

Each team is comprised of the following:

- Two to six currently enrolled, and inducted Pathfinders. May include TLT's.
 - A TEAM CAPTAIN
 - Up to five additional team members
- An alternate
- A non-playing COACH

Each team will be made up of the same members who began the PBE testing at the Area/District Level. If a club has multiple teams and at one of the levels of testing a club team does not advance, no member of the non-advancing team may be added to or replace any team member of the team that does advance. No team member from any source may be added to or replace anyone on the team roster after the first level of official testing, except in rare or extreme circumstances. The Conference PBE Director must be consulted and will be the final arbiter in those situations.

Team Member Eligibility

Pathfinders are eligible to participate on a PBE Team as long as they are a duly inducted Pathfinder member for that club. This includes Junior, Teen and TLT Pathfinders. However, the Pathfinder is no longer eligible if they turn 19 on or after January 1 of the testing year..

Team Captain

During play, it is the duty of the TEAM CAPTAIN to listen to the consultation of the team and then determine what answer will be written by the team member with the answer sheet.

It is also the duty of the TEAM CAPTAIN to determine if the team wishes to challenge the decision of their GRADER after an answer is scored.

Alternate

Each team is encouraged to have an alternate participant ready to fill in if a regular team member is unable to attend an event, or becomes ill during an event. The alternate may also switch out with a regular team member at the intermission of the game. A switch is only allowed once per team, per game.

Coach

A club staff member, pastor, or committed parent acts as the team's COACH. Their role is to coordinate training and to motivate the team. Additional adults are welcome to assist with training, but there should be one official or "chief" coach per club in charge of coordinating the PBE efforts of the club.

Uniform Requirements

All team members must be in full dress uniform as described by the latest version of the *NAD Pathfinder Staff Manual* in order to participate at any level event. This uniform normally includes: dress uniform shirt with proper insignia, dress uniform pants or skirt, authorized socks or stockings, authorized shoes, Pathfinder belt, Pathfinder scarf and slide, and Pathfinder Sash.

Board Approval

As with all Pathfinder events, the church board, or a board-appointed body, must vote participation approval as well as acknowledgement of the specific event dates for inclusion on the local church calendar.

Preparation

Decide to Participate

Participation in *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* should not be made lightly or at the last minute. For you to achieve the purpose of the event, the Pathfinders need to have made a serious commitment to Bible study. To be fair to them, this means an early start and thorough preparations.

In September you need to be encouraging participation and promoting the event. Study should begin soon thereafter.

Club staff are encouraged to use the selected scripture as a thematic focus for meeting worships, outreach events and other activities as this will help reinforce the content, as well as connect non-participating Pathfinders with those who are studying for *The Pathfinder Bible Experience*.

Practice Questions

During the fall of the year, have various individuals prepare practice questions covering the sections of scripture for the year and the related book introductions from *The SDA Bible Commentary*. Ask your pastor, teachers, Sabbath School leaders, parents and regular church members. You might even arrange to share practice questions with other clubs in your area or conference.

Questions must stand alone and be able to be answered individually. Most should require single word or short phrase answers. *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* does not use multiple choice questions. There should be limited use of true and false questions.

Questions should always include the scriptural reference.

Reading and Memorization

Each team member should read the full text multiple times.

Many find it helpful to break the text into several blocks and have participants focus on smaller sections so that you have two specialists on each third of the material, but make sure that each one covers all of it as well.

Scripture

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.

— 1 CORINTHIANS 10:31 (NKJV)

Sample Question

Q: From Acts 8:9, what was the name of the sorcerer who boasted that he was someone great?

A: Simon.

Audio Bible Sources

Check these websites to find audio NKJV bibles.

adventistbookcenter.com
christianbook.com
amazon.com
biblebible.com
learnoutloud.com

The age of Pathfinders allows them to be masters of memorization. While it takes lots of work, it is an extremely effective method of preparation for the challenge.

Audio Learning

The NKJV is available from several companies on tape, CD, and as a digital download. Listening to the readings can dramatically improve a participant's recall abilities later. They can be played in a vehicle while traveling to a campout, or as a worship, or even on headphones while doing chores at home or community service projects with the club.

The club could also make their own recordings of the book and share them amongst the team members.

Dramatized versions are also available. These make it even more interesting and the Pathfinders can then see the verses in their minds when the questions are asked.

Practice Events

During December and January, provide several opportunities for the Pathfinders to practice against other teams from within the club or special practice teams made up of church members.

Have the Pathfinders take turns acting as scribe and writing out the answers. You may find that some are more skilled at this than others.

You may wish to get other Pathfinder Clubs together to hold practice events to encourage everyone to reach the highest level. This way you can share practice test questions as well as get a feel for what the real event will be like.

Meeting Frequency

If the team is to truly succeed they will need to meet together more often than for a few minutes during each weekly Pathfinder meeting. Most top teams will need to meet several hours a week in the fall to study together, and two or three times a week during January and early February. They will need to continue to meet a couple of times a week if they want to continue in first place at more advanced levels.

Other Creative Ideas

- Encourage the team—in fact, the entire club—to read the assigned scriptures during private and family worship.
- Enlist the help of the Sabbath School departments to play games and have activities that will cover the assigned scriptures.
- Have a mock event with the entire church.

Team Selection

At some point in late fall, the COACH, in consultation with the club staff and the interested Pathfinders, will need to establish specific team(s) that will participate.

The Program

Registration

In early January the club should send their registration form to the local conference.

Your conference may determine a different way to register, or they may send you the form in the mail or as an e-mail attachment in late December or early January.

Levels

Play takes place at four levels: area, conference, union, and division. After participation in the local area event, all teams holding a first place finish advance to the next level. After participation in the conference event, all teams holding a first place finish advance to the union level, and so on. That means that a team could participate in up to four different levels at four different locations.

Area Level

Conferences across the division use several different names and methods of dividing their territory into smaller geographic regions. Some call them regions, some federations, some sections, but most call them areas, so that is the term we use. Area level events bring together teams from within a portion of a conference. Obviously you want at least two teams and preferably more in an area event. Ideally an area event would include two to ten teams, but it is possible to have more.

Within the conference, there could be as few as two areas or many areas. Each team registers with the conference. The conference coordinates the running of area level events based on the number and location of teams registered to participate.

The conference or a coordinator arranges a venue for each area level event. Ideally the location would rotate over the years to the various churches in the area represented by the participating teams. This encourages church participation and adds some home team spirit.

Single team in an area

In some cases, there might only be one team participating from an area in a conference. If this is the case, then multiple areas should be combined so there are at least two teams in the event.

In extreme cases you might have to join with teams from an entirely different conference or union to compete at this level.

Forms

All forms are available online at pathfindersonline.org click on PBE

How to Progress

1. A team participates in an area level event. If they earn a first place standing they advance to the conference level event.
2. At the conference level event, all teams earning a first place standing advance to the union level event.
3. At the union level event, all teams earning a first place standing advance to the division level event.
4. At the division level event, all teams earning a first place standing will be acknowledged appropriately!

Not all teams who earn a first place standing choose to go to the next level due to other obligations or to the expense of travel.

Conference Level

All teams with first place scores are eligible for participation in the conference level event.

A large enough facility, such as a large church, church school or academy that is centrally located would be chosen to host the number of first place teams that would be participating in this level. First place teams from the area do not need to register for the conference but they do need to confirm that they will be participating.

Single team in a conference

In some cases, there might be only one team in an entire conference. In this case the team will need to make arrangements to participate in a neighboring conference so that there are at least two teams in the event.

In extreme cases you might have to join with teams from an entirely different union to compete at this level.

Union Level

All first place teams from the conference event are eligible to participate in the union level event.

A large enough facility, such as a large church, academy or college that is centrally located would be chosen within the union to host the event.

At this level each conference will need to register their first place teams with *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* Union Coordinator so proper arrangements can be made.

There may be anywhere from one to several conferences participating.

If there is no union youth director to lead out in the program, then one of the conference directors or a conference coordinator may coordinate this level so the various conferences may participate at this level and all first place teams will be able to move on to the division level.

Single team in a union

In some cases, there might be only one team in an entire union. In this case the team will need to make arrangements to participate in a neighboring union so that there are at least two teams in the event.

Division Level

All first place teams from the union event are then eligible to participate in the division level event. Those attending the division *Pathfinder Bible Experience* have placed first in all three prior levels: area, conference, and union. You cannot skip a level; you must participate at all levels. Each conference will need to register their first place teams from the union event with *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* Division Coordinator.

A large enough facility, such as a large church, academy or college would be chosen to host the event.

Official Dates for Testing

Area The first Sabbath in February

Conference The first Sabbath of March

Union The last Sabbath in March

Division The third Sabbath in April

The local conference and union may alter the date forward or backward a week according to their unique scheduling needs.

The Event

This section outlines the organizational needs and tasks of coordinators at all levels of *The Pathfinder Bible Experience*.

Coordination

See *The Program; Levels* on page 8 for details.

Question Distribution

Participating conferences will receive a copy of the questions in time for their area and conference levels. Participating unions will receive a copy of the questions in time for their level. Each level will have a new set of questions that would increase in difficulty as the levels increase.

Event Flow, Play & Details

Times listed are approximate. Remember, the more teams participating, the more time will be required.

Event Preparation by the Event Staff - 1:00 PM

1. Arrive at the site far enough ahead of the starting time to have set up complete before the teams arrive.
2. Confirm that the building is open, lights are on, temperature is set, and rest rooms are accessible.
3. Set up the equipment.
4. Set up the tables and chairs for the QUIZ MASTER, CLERK and the three APPEAL JUDGES.
5. Set up seating for the participating teams. Six members plus a GRADER.
6. Set up chairs near the teams for their COURIER. One COURIER for every four teams.

Event Preparation by the Team - times vary according to distance

1. Be dressed in full dress uniform.
2. Arrive at the site on time.

Staff Briefing - 2:00 PM

- The PBE COORDINATOR meets with the event staff to review policies and answer questions and has prayer with them.

Team Check-in - 2:15 PM

- As the team checks in they are assigned a circle of chairs.
- They are given their answer cards and their pen.
- They are introduced to the GRADER
- Team members turn over all electronic devices, Bibles, and notes in their possession to club staff or attending parents.

Welcome - 2:30 PM

- The QUIZ MASTER welcomes the group and introduces the staff and the participating teams.

Equipment & Supplies Needed

Each location hosting *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* event will need to have certain equipment and supplies on hand.

- A large projection screen
- An LCD projector
- A computer loaded with Microsoft PowerPoint, and a power cord
- A PowerPoint presentation of the proper level questions and answers
- A projector stand
- A table for the computer
- Cables to connect the computer to the projector
- A table for the APPEAL JUDGES
- Three chairs for the APPEAL JUDGES
- A podium and microphone for the QUIZ MASTER
- A table for the CLERK (the QUIZ MASTER may also sit at the table rather than stand at a podium)
- Two chairs, one for the CLERK and one for the QUIZ MASTER
- A stop watch or other method of keeping accurate track of seconds of time for the CLERK
- 100 sheets of pre-numbered paper or card stock per team on which the team members will write their answers
- A marker per team for writing answers
- A score card and pen for each team GRADER

Scribe

The scribe is whoever is writing the answer to the question. Because there will be team members who are most knowledgeable over specific segments of the Bible Study Book, the pen/pencil and answer sheet may be passed to that person on the team to write the answer. It is not required that the scribe be only one designated person on the team.

Response Timing

Following the second reading of the question, the teams will be given a specified amount of time, depending on the point value of the question, without regard to whether the time is for discussion or writing. A 10 second warning will be given prior to expiration of time. At the end of the specified time, time will be called and the scribe will hand their completed answer sheet to the grader to determine points awarded. No additional time will be granted.

Discussion/Response times are as follows:

- 1 pt = 25 seconds
- 2 pts = 30 seconds
- 3 pts = 35 seconds
- 4 pts = 40 seconds
- 5 pts = 45 seconds
- 6 pts = 50 seconds
- 7 pts = 55 seconds
- 8 pts = 60 seconds

Opening Exercises - 2:35 PM

- Prayer
- Pledge and Law
- Pathfinder Song

Song Service (Optional) - 2:40 PM

- Two or three songs

Instructions - 2:45 PM

- The QUIZ MASTER reviews the rules of play listed under Quiz Part 1. The rules should be projected on the screen while the QUIZ MASTER reviews them.
- They also review the grounds for disqualification and expulsion as listed in the manual and remind them that no one on the team may have any electronic device on their person during the event.
- Remind the audience and the teams that Christian decorum is expected of all present.

Quiz Part 1 - 2:50 PM

- Half of the questions will be asked during part 1.
- The first question is projected on the screen and the QUIZ MASTER reads it twice. If the question is worth more than one point the QUIZ MASTER will announce the point value before reading the question. For example, "For two points, name Adam's first two sons."
- When the QUIZ MASTER has read the question twice, the CLERK starts the stop watch and runs it for the designated time for that question. During this time the team discusses, determines and writes the answer. The CAPTAIN makes the final decision and tells the SCRIBE what to write.
- At 10 seconds from expiration of time the CLERK will call "10 seconds." The SCRIBE must write the answer on the pre-numbered paper for that question.
- At expiration of time the clerk will say "show your answer", by which time The SCRIBE will have handed the grader the team answer sheet.
- Answers may be written before time is called.
- After an appropriate pause of about 3 seconds the QUIZ MASTER will change the slide and read the answer twice.
- At this time the GRADER will determine if the team correctly answered the question and writes the question score on the score card and keeps a running total of the team's complete score. If the team did not provide an answer when "time" was called, they do not receive points for that question.
- If the team feels that the GRADER scored them incorrectly, they say to the GRADER, "Challenge." The GRADER then takes the answer card and gives it to a COURIER, who walks the card to the APPEAL PANEL. The APPEAL PANEL JUDGES consider the answer and determine the final point value of the answer, writing the score on the card. Their decision is final. No additional appeal is allowed. The COURIER then returns the card to the GRADER who adjusts the score per the APPEAL PANEL instructions.

Regular play continues while appeals are being made.
GRADERS may not refuse a challenge.

The APPEAL PANEL may deny a team the right to appeal if the team is felt to be challenging every wrong answer they submit. However the APPEAL PANEL should be very cautious in their decision to deny a team further appeals, just as the team should be reasonable in the frequency of their challenges.

- At the end of the half the QUIZ MASTER announces intermission.
- The GRADER writes in the total score for the half on the scorecard.

Intermission - 3:35 PM

- 5 minutes
- During this time the GRADER double checks the running totals.
- During intermission, a team may choose to replace one of their team members with their designated alternate.

Quiz Part 2 - 3:40 PM

- The second half of the questions are asked.
- Play proceeds in the same manner as outlined in Quiz Part 1.
- At the end of play, the GRADER writes the second half total on the score card and also the total for both halves.
- The GRADER double checks the second half total and the final total.
- The GRADER then takes the score card to the CLERK.

Devotional (Optional) - 4:25 PM

- A 10 minute devotional based on the section of scripture that is being covered.
- This also gives the CLERK time to finalize the awards.

Offering (Optional) - 4:35 PM

- The collection of an offering is at the discretion of the PBE COORDINATOR. If one is collected, the funds should be used to defray the expenses of the program or to provide travel support to the teams moving on to the next level.

Presentation of Awards - 4:40 PM

- The PBE COORDINATOR or the QUIZ MASTER will present the awards earned during the event. Every team receives an award, as all are winners as the children of God.
- To lessen the competitive spirit, exact points are not given or stated publicly during the program. Only the place standings are announced.
- Standings are announced by calling the clubs in alphabetical order and stating their standing. It is PBE policy that specific scores are never announced or released.
- Each team receives a certificate of participation.
- Each individual participant receives a PBE pin with the year and level.

Closing Prayer - 4:50 PM

Variations of NKJV

There are at least two different manuscripts for the New King James Version of the Bible. The variations are minor and infrequent, but they do exist. Teams are encourage to bring along the actual Bible with which they studied.

Pathfinders should be encouraged to use the latest edition of the Pathfinder Bible.

Language Variations

It is recognized that some participating teams may include members with different first languages. A team may answer an individual question in whatever language they are most comfortable, but the entire answer for that question must be in the same language. If multiple languages are used, the answer will not be accepted. The language of the submitted answer will determine the official Bible translation used to judge the answer.

Forms

All forms are available online at pathfindersonline.org click on PBE

PBE Pins

Pathfinder Bible Experience pins, year and level bars are available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 402.486.8800.

Note: The PBE pins may only be purchased by conference or union leadership.

Standings

90 questions will be asked at each level of play. Points are awarded for correct answers. Rankings are established by grading on the curve.

Ranking is as follows:

- A score of 90% or above, as compared to the top score earned at the event, earns the team a first place standing.
- A score of 80-89%, as compared to the top score earned at that event, earns the team a second place standing.
- A score of 79% , as compared to the top score earned at that event, or below earns the team a third place standing.

Optional Ideas

- Arrange to have a photographer present to take historical and promotional pictures that can be used in the conference or union paper or website. You may need to have everyone sign a photo release, though in most cases like this you are not required to as it is a public event and the photos will be used for editorial rather than commercial purposes.
- Have canned or live music playing in the event area as the teams and audience arrive. However, sometimes this contributes to ever increasing noise levels.
- Have programs printed that list the details of the event, the rules and the teams participating. You could also list the next level event, date, and location.
- Provide blank answer sheets to audience members so that they can test their own knowledge of the scriptures.

Disqualification

Individual Disqualification

A team member will be disqualified if they are not wearing the complete dress uniform or if they are not qualified to be a team member.

COACHES are to see that each team member is in proper uniform.

Team Disqualification

Because the same questions are used in all areas, conferences, and unions, teams are prohibited from communicating with other teams in regards to any official question being used and at any level of *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* program that year.

If this kind of contact takes place and is discovered the team would be disqualified from any further participation and would forfeit all standings from prior participation that year.

Each team member must sign an *Integrity Pledge* at each level affirming amongst other things, that they have not had usage of official questions except during the event itself. The *Integrity Pledge* is available online.

Point Disqualification & Team Expulsion

Any points earned during play, while being coached, commented to, or prodded by an audience member through any channel or method will be revoked.

A second instance during the same day of play will result in the team being expelled from play, and makes them ineligible to participate in any higher levels that year.

Personnel & Their Duties

Personnel are appointed by the PBE COORDINATOR for the level at which they will be working. For example, the CONFERENCE PBE COORDINATOR would appoint the QUIZ MASTER, CLERK, GRADERS, JUDGES and COURIERS for the conference level event.

Quiz Master

The QUIZ MASTER acts as host and MC for the event, and reads the questions. They read each question twice. It is recommended that the PBE COORDINATOR not be the QUIZ MASTER so that they may deal with issues that may arise during play.

They can be the YOUTH DIRECTOR, CONFERENCE PATHFINDER DIRECTOR, a PASTOR, an AREA COORDINATOR or even a LOCAL PATHFINDER DIRECTOR.

Clerk

The CLERK, with the use of a stopwatch or other technology, regulates the time period while the team determines the answer that would be recorded. The time begins after the question is read twice by the QUIZ MASTER.

The CLERK will call the end of time loud enough for all the participating teams to hear.

The CLERK receives the completed score cards from each GRADER and tabulates final team standings.

The CLERK is appointed by the PBE COORDINATOR at each level. They should be an adult with no specific club affiliation.

Grader

Each team needs an adult GRADER. They must be from a different club than the one they are grading. The GRADER should be in class A uniform.

The GRADER's job is to determine if the answer given by the team is correct or not. Once they have made the determination they record the score.

The GRADER keeps track of the team's answer score and cumulative score on the team's score sheet.

At intermission and at the end of the round they will double check the running total for accuracy.

It is also the GRADER's duty to watch for inappropriate communication between team members and anyone in the audience. Any points earned during play, while being coached, commented to, or prodded by an audience member through any channel or method will be revoked by the GRADER, and reported to the PBE COORDINATOR.

A second instance of coaching, etc. during the same day of play will result the

PBE Coordinator

The person responsible for *The Pathfinder Bible Experience* at each level is the PBE COORDINATOR.

At the area level this would normally be the AREA COORDINATOR or their designee. *

At the conference level this would normally be the CONFERENCE YOUTH DIRECTOR, CONFERENCE PATHFINDER DIRECTOR or their designee.*

At the union level this would normally be the UNION YOUTH DIRECTOR, UNION PATHFINDER DIRECTOR, UNION PATHFINDER COORDINATOR, their designee or a person appointed to that role by the CONFERENCE YOUTH DIRECTORS in that union.

At the division level this would normally be the a person designated by the DIVISION YOUTH DIRECTOR.

The PBE COORDINATORS responsibilities are:

- to oversee organization of at least one level of the program, from registration through completion. A conference level coordinator will most likely oversee all area levels as well as the conference level.
- to arrange for the needed personnel in a timely manner
- to arrange for the meeting venue
- in the case of conference and union level coordinators, to act as contact with the DIVISION PBE COORDINATOR

*If a club wishes to participate in the PBE program, but their conference does not wish to participate, the club PBE COACH should contact the DIVISION PBE COORDINATOR directly for further instructions.

in the team being disqualified from that level and any future level that year.

Specific issues of grading

Accurate spelling is not required, but the answer must be recognizable.

All answers for questions must be given to the GRADER before the answers are given by the QUIZ MASTER so they can be checked off one by one.

The Pathfinder Bible Experience questions are not multiple choice. Therefore, additional answers given beyond the number requested are not accepted. The team must cross off any answer they do not want in the list or the first answers will be the accepted ones.

Direct quotes from the Bible and fill-in-the-blanks must be exact words in the exact order.

Appeal Panel Judge

Three adults serve as APPEAL PANEL JUDGES. APPEAL PANEL JUDGES determine the team's score for a grade they have challenged on a specific question.

APPEAL PANEL JUDGES should be individuals with biblical knowledge and a keen sense of fair play and justice. Pastors, church elders or Bible teachers would be excellent candidates for these positions.

The panel also meets one hour before the event to review the questions and confirm that they are as clear as possible. If there is any change made in a question, it must be modified on the JUDGES printed question list AND the electronic file the QUIZ MASTER uses.

If two languages are used, then there must be at least two judges per language for a total of four judges. There could be up to three judges per language.

If three languages are used, then again there must be at least two judges per language for a total of six judges. There could be up to three judges per language.

Specific issues on judging

Direct quotes from the Bible with fill-in-the-blank answers must be exact words in the exact order.

The judges are to uphold the answers given by the QUIZ MASTER for each question. If the answer is different than the one given by the QUIZ MASTER, it can only be accepted if it is found to be correct in the printed version of the *New King James Version*, *Reina Valera 1995*, *Version Louis Segond en Français* and the *SDA Bible Commentary* book introductions.

Courier

In case of a challenge, a COURIER walks the contested answer sheet to the APPEAL PANEL JUDGES. The PBE COORDINATOR will provide a COURIER for every four teams or fraction thereof. COURIERS can be non-playing Pathfinders or Adventurers. Once the APPEAL PANEL JUDGES have made a decision, the COURIER will return the contested answer sheet back to the team GRADER for grade updating.

Song Leader

A SONG LEADER, pianist, guitarist, or praise team to lead a short song service at the beginning of the event.

Devotional Speaker

Someone to give a 10 minute devotional based on the section of scripture that is being covered.

Forms of Recognition

Pins

Each participant will receive a PBE pin with the year and level. Pins, year and level bars are available from AdventSource at www.adventsource.org or 402.486.8800.

Note: The PBE pins may only be purchased by conference and union leadership.

Certificates

Each team participating receives a certificate indicating the level of play (area, conference, union, or division) and their standing (first, second, or third) in the event.

These certificates can be printed up before the event, except of course for their standing.

Certificate Seal

The certificate has a foil seal that is attached at the end of the event to indicate the standing of the team at the finish of the level event.

Authenticating Signature

Each certificate is signed by the PBE COORDINATOR for the level in which they are participating.

At the area level, this would typically be an AREA COORDINATOR, YOUTH DIRECTOR or CONFERENCE PATHFINDER DIRECTOR. At the conference level it would typically be the YOUTH DIRECTOR or CONFERENCE PATHFINDER DIRECTOR. The union it could be either the person in charge of Pathfinders for the union, the UNION PBE COORDINATOR or the UNION PRESIDENT. At the division it would be the DIVISION PBE COORDINATOR, the DIVISION YOUTH DIRECTOR, or the DIVISION PRESIDENT.

Additional Notes

Travel & Lodging Expenses

Travel to and from the event location is the responsibility of the club unless other arrangements are made by your conference. There is apt to be economic value for teams to travel together to union and division level events.

Meals

Meals for the team are the responsibility of the local club. Sometimes the event host church, club or school will arrange a fellowship meal following the event.

At the union and division level, leadership is encouraged to prepare at least the evening meal if not lunch as well.

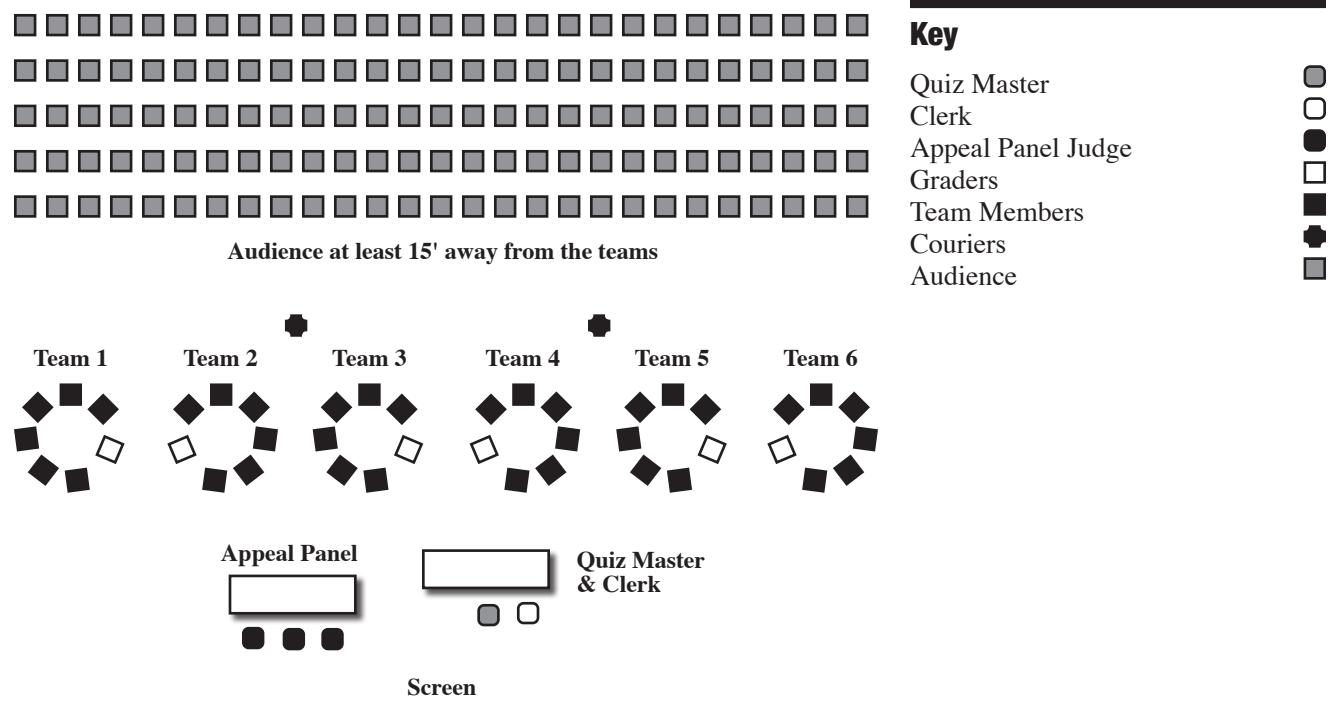
Drivers & Insurance

All drivers are to be approved by your local church board also and each vehicle used to transport Pathfinders is to be insured according to your local conference guidelines.

Make It Fun

As you lead your Pathfinders into *The Pathfinder Bible Experience*, be sure to keep it fun and enjoyable. The study of scripture is serious business, but if you become overbearing and ill tempered in the process, you will negate much of the blessing of the event.

Typical Room Set Up



Application Guide for Joshua & Judges

Warm Up

Some fun questions to get your group started!

Engaging the Passage

Dive into the chapter and notice details you never noticed before.

Applying the Passage

Questions that help Pathfinders apply the passage to their everyday lives.

Prayer

Close with prayer for all the Pathfinders and their families.

Application Guide: Joshua 1

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Think of a time when you had to take over someone else's responsibilities. How did that make you feel? What would have made that process easier?
- Have you ever had to do something you were not sure you were capable of doing? How did you find motivation to do your part? Did you seek help from someone else?

Engaging the Passage

Picture It: Put yourself in Joshua's shoes. Moses, your lifelong teacher and mentor, has just died. He led the Israelites for 80 years. He led them out of Egypt. He parted the Red Sea. He was with them through many battles with other nations. Now it is your responsibility to take over his position and lead the Israelites into the promised land, where you will have to fight against many peoples and nations in order to settle down.

Would you be worried that you can't live up to Moses as a leader? Would you doubt your own ability to lead God's people? Would you be afraid to enter the land? Would you feel like this is too much responsibility for one person? What could someone say to you to ease your nervousness?

Thankfully, God tells you two things that will help you lead the people successfully. The first is that God has given you an instruction manual in His laws on how to govern and lead His people, and He promises that if you are faithful to keep the law, then you will prosper. The second is that God assures you that just as He was with Moses, He will be with you. He will never abandon you. With this in mind, He tells you to be strong and courageous. How would hearing this directly from God make you feel? Would you still feel afraid or nervous? What reminder could serve to encourage you to trust God?

When Joshua obeyed God and readied the people of Israel to go into the Promised Land, they were very supportive and obeyed Joshua. Why do you think they had so much confidence in Joshua? The last time the Israelites were at the border of the promised land, they were too afraid to enter. What happened between then and now? If you were Joshua, how would this statement of unwavering support make you feel?

Applying the Passage

- Think of something in your life that is causing you anxious thoughts or fear. Just like Joshua, we have the assurance that God is always with us. Ask God to help you be strong and courageous in whatever is causing you fear.
- Can you think of anyone right now that is in a leadership position that might need strength and courage? Think of ways you can remind them that God is with them.

Prayer Time

- Pray for your spiritual walk with the Lord, so you can trust in Him even in moments of fear.
- Pray for the leaders in your community so they can stay true to God's word and be reminded of His presence.

Application Guide: Joshua 2

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever had to ask for help from an unlikely source? How much trust did you put in them to help you?
- Discuss the following question: Do I need to be a Christian in order to receive God's blessings? Why or why not?

Engaging the Passage

Background: The nations that lived in the Promised Land during Joshua's time were not like the countries of today. These were mostly big cities that fought each other constantly for territory. Because of this, they were always suspicious of each other and on the lookout for enemy scouts.

The last time the Israelites came to the Promised Land (40 years earlier), they sent out spies to scout out the lands and people. However, most of the spies came back with a bad report, saying that Israel could not fight against the people of the region. See if you notice a difference in the report of the two spies in this chapter.

Picture it: In movies, being a spy seems super cool and exciting, but in reality it can be very stressful and life-threatening. If these spies were captured, they would have surely been executed. If you were one of these two spies scouting out Jericho, where would you hide? Would you have trusted one of the local residents for protection from the government?

Now put yourself in Rahab's shoes. By protecting foreign spies, she also risked being killed if found out. What do you think drove Rahab to betray her own city by protecting the people who were preparing to destroy it? Would you have put as much trust as she did in two strangers you just met? Where do you think Rahab gained so much faith in God? If you were her, could you believe that God would spare your life as one of the enemies?

Applying the Passage

- The spies were faced with an opportunity to use their influence to help someone in need. They did not hesitate to use it for good! Next time you receive an opportunity to help others, make sure you don't miss it.
- Now, think of the help the spies received from Rahab. Do you think it was hard for them to accept it? Often we are reluctant to accept help from others because we are ashamed or afraid. If you are going through a situation where other people are willing to help you, challenge yourself to accept that help.

Prayer Time

- Let's pray today for God to remove from our heart and our minds any type of prejudice we might have towards people that don't live life the way we do.
- When the spies returned, they told Joshua that the Lord had given them the land. Today we can ask God in prayer to help us trust in His word and remind us that He is on our side.
- Outreach Ideas: Rahab did not personally see any of the wonders that God did for Israel until later, but she still believed because of what she had heard. For us, the testimony of what God has done in our lives can be a powerful tool to reach others for Christ. The next time you interact with someone who is not a Christian, share a story demonstrating what God has done in your life.

Application Guide: Joshua 3

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever had to overcome an obstacle to achieve something? What was it? How did you overcome it?
- Think of your goals in life and identify the obstacles that stand in your way of achieving those goals. How can you overcome those obstacles?

Engaging the Passage

Background: The Jordan River represented the border between the wilderness and the Promised Land. Crossing it was a point of no return for the Israelites. The challenge was that there was no easy place to cross.

Joshua was faced with the dilemma of transporting an entire nation of people safely across the river (along with their animals and possessions) with no bridges. If you were Joshua, how would you suggest transporting so many people? Would you tell them to swim across? Would you try to build a bridge before crossing? Keep in mind that both of those options might take a long time, and enemy nations might take advantage and attack you.

Now let's switch to the perspective of the Israelites who were following Joshua. You promised to follow him, but maybe you still are uncertain whether he will be able to lead you to victory, as Moses did. How would seeing the Jordan River dry up affect your confidence in your mission? What story would this crossing remind you of? How would this event change your perception of Joshua as a leader, if at all?

Applying the Passage

- Just as God dried up the waters of the Jordan, God can perform miracles to help you achieve the goals he has laid out for you, no matter how impossible they may seem. Ask God to show you the way He wants you to follow, and trust in His guidance.
- God opened up the river for the Israelites because they trusted and obeyed Him rather than attempt to cross it their own way. Whenever you are planning a big project, or even your future, first put it into God's hands, and see if He shows you a better way.

Prayer Time

- It's easy to trust God when He asks us to do nothing out of the ordinary. Today our prayer will be for God to give us a listening heart to know when He is calling us and an open mind to obey Him whatever His calling might be.
- Ask God to help you overcome the obstacles in your life, just like He did with the Israelites.

Application Guide: Joshua 4

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- What are some of the ways in which we remember special occasions, such as birthdays, national holidays, graduations, etc...? What do you think makes them special?
- Do you have an object that reminds you of a special occasion or achievement? Maybe an award, a ribbon, or a souvenir? What comes to your mind when you look at it? Share your thoughts with others in a group discussion.

Engaging the Passage

Background: In ancient times, altars were structures that held offerings to gods, and many nations used them in their religious ceremonies. However, in the Bible, altars also represented places where people had a personal encounter with God. Today, we don't have altars, but we do have monuments that help us remember important events. Have you ever visited a monument? How did the monument lead you to think about what it was commemorating?

God told Joshua and the Israelites to build an altar so they would remember the crossing of the Jordan for generations to come. Why do you think it was so important to God that the Israelites remember this event? If you were Joshua or one of the Israelites, would you consider that this event was worth the trouble of building a stone monument? Would you really need an altar to remember this incredible event?

Now put yourselves in the shoes of someone who lived in Israel way in the future. You probably grew up hearing about the miraculous crossing of the Jordan river, and you also know about the altar that was constructed to remember this event. How would seeing this altar in person affect your belief in this story and in God?

Applying the Passage

- Think of something significant that God has done in your life, then think of something you can do to remember this event. Reflect on creative ways in which we can let others know what God has done in our lives that don't involve directly telling them.

Prayer Time

- Pray for the Lord to help you always remember the times He was present in the most important moments of your life.
- Pray and thank God for His goodness in your life.
- Outreach Ideas: Ask someone older in your family or church what great things God did in their community. Find a way to share the stories in church, and encourage your community to create something as a reminder of God's power.

Application Guide: Joshua 5

Warm-up – Choose one of the Following:

- Has God ever put you in such a vulnerable position that you had to completely depend on him? What was that situation like? Did it deepen your trust in God?
- In arguments between Christians and non-Christians, whose side do you think God is on? Why?

Engaging the Passage

Background: Circumcision for the Israelites was not merely a hygienic procedure, it was also a sign of the promise that they had made with God. Think of it like a wedding ring: It's a physical sign of an internal commitment. What do you do to signify that you follow God?

Now that the Israelites had crossed the river into the promised land, they could finally begin their conquest after 40 years of waiting. If you had to plan the conquest of a large territory, how would you prepare yourself and your troops for war? Would you start by training your soldiers in combat? Would you start strategizing? Would you begin attacking immediately or wait a little longer?

When God commanded Joshua to circumcise every male, it meant that the entire Israelite camp would be unable to fight for at least two weeks. This left them very vulnerable to attack from the enemy nations. Does this seem like good timing on God's part? Why didn't God command this before they crossed over into enemy territory? How would you feel if you were an Israelite during this time? What do you think God was trying to teach them during this time? Why do you think it was important to God that the people perform this sign?

Now put yourself in Joshua's shoes at the end of the chapter. You are near the largest fortified city in the area, and you don't know how you're going to defeat these people. While you're contemplating this dilemma, a strange man with a sword appears out of nowhere. What would be your first reaction? The man told Joshua that he was the commander of the Lord's Army. Would you have believed him? How would you have recognized an Angel of the Lord? Why do you think Joshua was so convinced that this stranger was telling the truth?

Applying the Passage

- Think of a situation you are going through right now that requires complete trust in God. Just like the Israelites, you might be going through a time in your life when obeying God means having to be vulnerable with someone. Remember that God is always with you.
- Is there an area in your life where you have neglected obedience to God? Think of ways you can change that today. Remember, it is never too late to turn around and get back on track with God.
- It is safe to assume that God was with the Israelites. Yet when Joshua asks Him if He was on their side or on the enemy's, God's answer was 'neither'. Ultimately, it's not about God being on our side, but about us being on God's side. Think of someone you might not get along too well with. This passage reminds us that God is with them too.

Prayer Time

- Let's pray for God to teach us to be vulnerable enough to trust in Him no matter the circumstances.
- Ask God to help you recognize His voice whenever He calls you.

Application Guide: Joshua 6

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- What's the weirdest thing you've been asked to do? Did you do it? Why or why not?
- Think of a time when someone kept a promise they made to you. Did you ever doubt they would come through? Why or Why not?

Engaging the passage

A lot happens in this chapter, so let's get into it. God gave Joshua very specific instructions on how the people were going to march once a day around the city for six days, then how they were supposed to bring down the walls on the seventh day by doing extra laps and shouting. How important do you think it was for the Israelites to follow every instruction? Do you think it would have made a difference if they had shouted before the seventh day, or marched only six times around the city on the seventh day? Do you think that we should be detailed in the way we follow God's orders today?

Now put yourself in the shoes of one of those Israelites marching around the city. The moment has finally arrived to conquer the land that God has promised your people. But rather than attack, you are ordered to simply march around the city for a week. How would you feel? Is this how you would have pictured the conquest of the Promised Land? How would you have made sense of this order?

Instead of using violence, or starving out the city with a long siege, all the Israelites had to do was march around the city for a week. Why do you think God used this method instead of violent conquest? Was it to minimize Israelite casualties, or was there something God was trying to communicate?

Let's now switch over to Rahab's perspective. For an entire week you watched the Israelites circle your city, knowing that at any moment the city would be conquered. Even though the spies promised that your house would be spared, would you still be afraid? Would you enter into doubt? After you saw the entire city get destroyed except for your house, what would your reaction be? What would this prove about the God of the Israelites?

Applying the passage

- Write down a list of at least 5 promises the Lord has already fulfilled in your life. Then write one promise you want to see fulfilled next in your life .
- Rahab demonstrated her trust in God by keeping her scarlet rope hanging out of her window. What are some ways that you can demonstrate your trust in God's promises?
- By marching around Jericho for seven days, the Israelites had to be patient in letting God answer their prayers. What are some of God's blessing that we need to show patience for?

Prayer Time

- Ask God to help us trust in Him even when what He asks us to do makes no sense.
- Pray for help in trusting God's promises.
- Ask God to help you stay away from the things that will be destroyed when He returns and to preserve your heart for Him.

Application Guide: Joshua 7

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever done anything wrong that you thought no one would ever find out? Did you get caught? How?
- Have you ever begun a project that you thought would be easy, but then found out that it was much harder than you thought? Share with the group.

Engaging the Passage

After the siege and sacking of Jericho, the Israelites were eager for their next victory. Their next target was the city of Ai, a smaller city that had no walls like in Jericho. If you were Joshua, coming off the victory at Jericho, how optimistic would you feel in trying to conquer this smaller city? Now contrast that optimism with the disappointment when your army is defeated and several of your people die. How would you feel after such a loss? What would you try next? Would you try again, or would you give up and move on? Do you think you would turn to God like Joshua?

God tells Joshua that He did not favor them against Ai, because someone in their camp had sinned and broken the covenant. In the last chapter Joshua orders the Israelites not to take any of the valuable items from Jericho for themselves, but instead, bring it into the treasury (6:18-19). However, it seems that the temptation was too great for one of the men, Achan. He may have thought that no one would notice if he disobeyed and kept some of the loot for himself – surely no one would miss it, and the treasury would still be filled up. If you were in his position, do you think you would have been tempted to keep some valuables for yourself? Would you have been concerned about serious consequences?

Ultimately, Achan confessed his sin only after he saw that his sin was affecting the entire nation, not just himself. Do you think if he hadn't seen the consequences of his sin he would have still confessed? What do you think drove him to admit to his wrongdoing? Guilt? Fear of more consequences?

Ultimately, Achan and his family were punished because of what he did. Why do you think his family was also punished? Do you think they might have done something wrong? If we know that someone close to us is committing a sin, do we have any responsibility toward God?

Applying the Passage

- What are some things in your life that may be hindering God's plan for you? What are some steps you can take towards eliminating these elements from your life?
- Achan's sin was essentially stealing from God. What are some ways that we may be stealing from God?
- Hiding our sins and mistakes often leads to other people getting hurt. Make it your goal to be honest with God, and admit when you've done something wrong. It will ultimately bring you more peace.

Prayer Time

- Ask God to reveal to you attitudes and actions that are preventing you from receiving the full blessing of the Lord.
- Ask for forgiveness from God for any hidden sins that you have in your life.
- Ask God to give you the strength to be honest with Him and the people around you, even when it is hard to admit the truth.

Application Guide: Joshua 8

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Think back to a chore, an assignment or project that you had to start over because you messed up the first time. What did you do differently the second time you tried it? What did you learn from that experience?
- When you fail at doing something, are you afraid of trying it again? Why or why not? Give an example.

Engaging the Passage

Put yourself in Joshua's position. Last time you tried to conquer Ai your plan failed and several people died, and you may feel personally responsible for their deaths. Now God tells you to try again to conquer the same city. Would you be scared to try again? What would you change from your last attempt? What would you do to make sure that the plan didn't fail for the same reasons?

Joshua developed a bait-and-switch strategy to conquer the city of Ai. How would you feel as an Israelite soldier listening to Joshua's indications? Would you have complete confidence in the plan? Would knowing God said that He would deliver Ai into your hands give you more confidence? Why or why not?

One notable aspect of the conquest of Ai is that it was completely different from the previous conquest of Jericho. Instead of marching around the city and letting God do all the destructive work, the conquest of Ai involved intricate planning and coordination, and it called for the involvement of the entire Israelite army. However, God was still with them, and He received the glory for the victory. Why do you think God called for different tactics to destroy the city of Ai? Couldn't He have just done the same as He did with the destruction of Jericho? Do you think God always uses the same tactics to accomplish His will, or does He sometimes change it up?

Applying the Passage

- Think back to a mistake you've made in your life, and think of how you can use that experience to improve and learn going forward.
- Despite the fact that Joshua and the Israelites successfully executed the plan, they gave all glory to God. What is an accomplishment in your life for which you need to give God the credit?
- Think of life goals that you believe God has placed in your heart, and develop a plan that you can follow to achieve those goals.

Prayer Time

- Pray for God to give you the courage to persevere, even when you fail or mess up.
- Place your goals and plans into God's hands and ask Him to help you accomplish your goals according to His will.
- Thank and praise God for the accomplishments that you have been able to achieve so far in your life.

Application Guide: Joshua 9

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever told a lie to get yourself out of trouble? Were you ever found out? What happened after you told the lie?
- What is the biggest lie someone has ever told you? Did you know it was a lie when they told it to you? How did you feel when you found out you had been lied to?

Engaging the Passage

Before we criticize the Gibeonites for their actions, let's put ourselves in their shoes. They knew that the Israelites had come to conquer the land and that the Israelite God was very powerful. He had already wiped out entire kingdom-cities, and they did not want the Israelites to destroy them too. Think of what you would have done if you were the leader of Gibeon to protect your family and your city from total destruction. How afraid would you have been of the Israelites? Do you think a diplomatic solution would have worked?

We also need to understand the position of the Israelites. How do you feel when you see someone asking for support? Do you feel even a little bit of pity for them? This is how the Israelites felt when they met the Gibeonites, seeing them dirty and with moldy bread. In addition, the Gibeonites used flattery to sway the Israelites, telling them that their victories had made them famous. If you were in the Israelites' position, do you think you would have been fooled?

This story is a good example of how God works with us even when we make mistakes. Even though the Israelites were deceived into making a treaty with Gibeon, they ultimately got some benefit, as the Gibeonites became their woodcutters and water-carriers. Even though we may make mistakes and deviate from God's plan, He ultimately is still willing to continue working with us.

Applying the Passage

- The passage emphasizes the fact that Joshua and the Israelites did not consult God before making the treaty, and so they were deceived. Has there ever been a time when you made a mistake because you did not consult someone who knew better than you? In our lives, God wants to be a part of every decision that we make, so when we are in the process of deciding something, we should ask God to show us the right decision.
- The Israelites were fooled by the Gibeonites and by the things they showed them. If the Israelites had done a bit more investigation into these people, or had been more patient and asked more questions, they could have seen that the Gibeonites were lying to them. What steps can we take to make sure that we aren't deceived by false information?

Prayer Time

- Are there any decisions that you have to make in your life? No matter how big or small these decisions may be, ask God to help you make the right decision.
- Ask God to give you discernment so that you will not be deceived by false information.

Application Guide: Joshua 10

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever needed extra time to get a project done? What did you do? How were you able to finish the project?
- What is the most impossible, amazing thing that you have seen happen? Please share with the group.

Engaging the Passage

Background: In the last chapter, we read how the Israelites made an alliance with Gibeon, which was an important city in the region. The other kingdoms were even more afraid now, because Gibeon was a powerful ally to the Israelites, so they were desperate to weaken Israel by cutting off this new alliance. So they teamed up together to destroy Gibeon.

Picture it: Facing overwhelming odds, Gibeon asked Israel for help. How would you have responded? Remember, these people had just lied and manipulated you into a treaty, and now they ask for your help? Why do you think Joshua agreed to help them in battle?

Clearly, God approved of Israel's decision to rescue their new allies, since He performed one of the most incredible miracles of the Old Testament: He made the sun stand still. If you were an Israelite soldier and experienced God stopping time, how would you feel? If you were on the enemy's side and saw the God of Israel make the sun stand still, how would this affect your confidence?

The second half of the chapter chronicles Israel's victories against many of the kings and nations in the Promised Land. This conquest most likely took place over a few years rather than a few days, but this was all a part of the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel. God has also made promises to us that might take a long time to come to complete. Can you think of any such promises in scripture?

Applying the Passage

- The Israelites were confident that God was with them, because they witnessed God's miraculous victories at Jericho, Ai and Gilgal (at the beginning of this chapter). This confidence led them to conquer the major cities mentioned in this chapter. Think of the victories that God has given you in your life that have motivated you to persevere in reaching your personal and spiritual goals.
- Many times in our life we go through situations that require a lot from us, and we may doubt whether we are able to accomplish the things we set out to do. It is important to remember that if we have God's blessing, He will perform miracles to help us in any situation, just as He did when He stopped the sun in this chapter.

Prayer Time

- If there is anything in your life that you feel you can't work through, ask God to help you persevere and to intervene just as He did with Joshua at Gilgal.
- Ask God for His guidance and the confidence needed to accomplish your goals.

Outreach Ideas

The miracle of the sun standing still came about because Israel came to the aid of an ally under attack. Just as God was with Israel when they went to rescue their allies, God will be with us when we stand up for and defend those around us. Think of someone you know who is experiencing hardship, then think of ways you can support them.

Application Guide: Joshua 11-12:7

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Can you recall instances in your life where you've experienced God's faithfulness in fulfilling His promises? Share with others.
- Reflect on an accomplishment that required a substantial amount of time and effort—perhaps the conclusion of a school year, a music recital or the completion of a project. Describe the emotions and sensations you experienced when you reached the point of completing all the work and achieving your goal.

Engaging the Passage

The coalition of kings mentioned in this chapter was possibly much bigger and more technologically advanced than the one encountered last chapter. The Bible makes it clear that the Israelites were outnumbered and lacked the proper military technology. Is there any time in your life when you have felt overwhelmed by problems and troubles in your life? How were you able to face those problems?

Throughout the book of Joshua, God reassures Joshua that He will be with the Israelites, and He will deliver the enemy into their hand. In moments where we feel overwhelmed, or when we think we're not enough, does it help to know that there is someone stronger and more powerful who will help you? Do you know anyone who might be feeling this way? How can offer help and support for them?

The conquest of Canaan was the fulfillment of the promises that God had made to the previous generation. Although most of these people did not live to see the fulfillment of God's promise, they passed it down to their children to prepare them for this moment. Is there a promise that God has given us that we can prepare others to receive?

Applying the Passage

- The Israelites defeated so many nations while recognizing God's role in their victories. We should take initiative and be responsible, but we must also acknowledge and seek God's power over our decisions and actions. How do we do both?
- The Israelites fought a lot of battles in this passage. How can their endurance in the face of challenges inspire you to persevere through difficulties in your own life?
- Joshua and the Israelites experienced God's provision in earlier battles. How can you reflect on moments when God has provided for you in the past? How does that shape your trust in His ongoing provision?

Prayer Time

- Thank God for the accomplishments that you have been able to achieve in your life, and acknowledge the role He has played in your achievements.
- Pray and ask God for the perseverance and patience needed to follow His plan for your life.

Application Guide: Joshua 14 & 15:13-19

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- What is the longest amount of time you would be willing to wait for someone to keep their promise to you? How long would it take you to lose faith in them?
- Have you ever been in a position where you had to oppose what most people were saying? How did others react? What was the outcome?

Engaging with the Passage

Background: Caleb was one of the original spies that Moses sent out to survey the Promised Land, but he and Joshua were the only ones who had faith to believe that Israel could conquer the land. For his faith, God promised Caleb that he and his descendants would inherit a portion of land in Canaan.

God made a promise to Caleb because he was faithful when everybody doubted God's plan. Caleb was not rewarded immediately, but saw his reward many years later. Even though we may not see the rewards of our faithfulness and good deeds immediately, we may one day reap the benefits. Would you be willing to be faithful to God even though you may not be rewarded for it?

Caleb had to wait 45 years to see God's promise fulfilled in his life. Do you think you could have waited that long? How long are you willing to wait for God to fulfill His promises in your life?

Applying the Passage

- Caleb had to wait many years before receiving his inheritance. How can his patience and endurance inspire you to remain steadfast while waiting for God's promises to be fulfilled in your life?
- What past experiences with God's faithfulness can you recall and draw strength from when facing present challenges?
- Can you think of any promises that God has made that seem delayed? How can we maintain belief in these promises even when God's timing seems delayed?

Prayer Time

- Are there areas in your life where you need to step out of your comfort zone in order to follow God? Ask God to provide you with the strength and courage to be able to take that next step.
- Ask God to give you patience as you wait for his promises to be fulfilled in your life.

Outreach Idea

So many good deeds and acts of faithfulness go unnoticed, think of someone that you know who regularly does good, but may not be noticed for it. Think of ways that you can show appreciation for the good they do.

Application Guide: Joshua 20

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Where is the place that you feel most safe? Why? Share with others.
- Do you think people should be punished for things that they do accidentally? How would you provide justice for both victim and culprit when an accident is involved?

Engaging the Passage

Picture it: Imagine you're an Israelite living in Joshua's time, and you caused an accident. Maybe you were riding a horse that went crazy and accidentally killed someone. Now their family wants revenge on you. What would you do? Would you plead for mercy, or would you run away? Where would you go?

God commanded, "you shall not kill," but He also acknowledges that accidents happen, and if you accidentally kill someone, you are innocent. So, God provides mercy for those who accidentally break the law. What does this tell us about how we should treat people who accidentally hurt us? What are some ways we can extend mercy to them while still being fair?

One interesting detail in this chapter is that when the local high priest died where the accident happened, the person who caused the accident could come back home. In this way, it's as if the high priest's death serves as a substitution for the death of the person who accidentally killed someone. Does this remind you of anyone else in the Bible who died in someone else's place?

Applying the Passage

- Cities of Refuge provide a balance between justice and mercy. What does this tell you about God's character? How can you find that balance in your own life?
- When we do something wrong, who do we turn to for understanding and refuge? Make a list of at least three people in your life that you can turn to for refuge. Also, strive to be the type of person that people can approach when they need comfort and refuge.

Prayer Time

- Even though we don't have cities of refuge now, Psalm 46 tells us that God is our refuge and our strength. When you do something wrong and feel ashamed or guilty, remember that you can come to God; He will not condemn you but will show you forgiveness and mercy.
- Think of someone you know who might be going through a tough time; someone who might need comfort. Pray for them and think of ways that you can show compassion towards them.

Outreach Ideas

Through Cities of Refuge, the Israelites were able to extend protection for the innocent and vulnerable. In what ways can you promote justice and protection for vulnerable individuals in your community?

Application Guide: Joshua 21

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever received a token of appreciation for having helped someone on a project or because you did a task for them? How did that show of appreciation make you feel?
- Do you think it's hard to be a spiritual leader? Why or why not?

Engaging the Passage

God gave every tribe their own land to settle, except for the Levites who had to spread to every tribe. The Levites had a special place in Israelite society. They were the spiritual leaders of the people. You may think of them like the pastors or elders of the Israelites. Why do you think God did not give them their own piece of land? If you had been a Levite, would you have felt left out?

During the days of Moses, the Levites showed a faithfulness to God in a very divisive time. For this reason, they were given their special function. Have you ever felt different from others because of your faithfulness to God? In what ways are you special by following and obeying God? How can we have confidence in the fact that we are different from others?

Applying the Passage

- Reflect on times when God has shown His faithfulness in providing for your needs. How can you cultivate an attitude of gratitude for His provision?
- Part of the mission of the Levites was to maintain unity between the other tribes of Israel. How can we encourage and maintain unity in our own spiritual community?

Prayer Time

- Pray for the spiritual leaders in your community that God may continue to provide for them as they work for Him.
- Thank God for providing for everything we have in our lives.
- Ask God to provide whatever it is that you truly need to fulfill his plan for your life.

Application Guide: Joshua 22

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever done something with good intentions, only to have it misunderstood by others? Share with the group.
- Have you ever formed judgments about someone's behavior without asking them about their intentions?

Engaging the Passage

We often associate altars with sacrifice and worship, but in Joshua's time altars also signified witness or remembrance of an event. Moses had told the people to only make altars for sacrifice where God specifically told them (Deut. 12:11). This is why the other tribes almost went to war when they saw this new altar built. They thought it was a sacrificial altar, when it was actually an altar of witness. What do you think could have been done to avoid this mix-up? How can we avoid miscommunication with other people in our daily lives?

The tribes of Reuben and Gad built the altar to signify that they were still a part of Israel. Now imagine how they must have felt when they saw the other tribes accuse them of idolatry! Have you ever been misunderstood? How did you feel? What can we do to let other believers know that we are a part of them?

Although the tribes almost went to war with each other, the conflict was resolved peacefully. What principles can we learn from the story and apply to conflicts in our own lives?

Applying the Passage

- The three tribes set up an altar to signify their commitment to worship the Lord. What can you do to demonstrate your own commitment to following God? Come up with at least 3 ideas.
- Another function of the altar was to signify the unity between the eastern tribes and the rest of Israel. How can you help keep unity within the groups that you are a part of?
- The conflict between the Eastern and western tribes was resolved relatively quickly and peacefully, how can we learn to resolve conflicts using the principles of Joshua 22?

Prayer Time

- Ask for God's guidance in promoting unity and effective communication in your relationships and faith community.
- Think of any relationships you have that might be troubled because of misunderstanding, and ask God to help you reconcile peacefully.
- Pray for God to give you patience and understanding when resolving conflicts with other people.

Application Guide: Joshua 23

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever had to say goodbye to a friend who was moving away? Or because you were moving away? What did you say? What did you do before they left?
- Is there an object that reminds you of someone else? Share with the group.

Engaging the Passage

Picture It: Imagine you're Joshua at the end of his life. You are concerned for the future of your people, and you want them to remember to always be obedient to God. What would you say to the leaders? How would you encourage them to continue being faithful to God? How can you strengthen your spiritual foundation to remain faithful to God's commands?

The main theme of this chapter is obedience. Joshua reminds the leaders that obedience to God has gotten them this far, and he promises that God will continue to take care of the people if they remain faithful. What reasons can you find in your own life to be obedient to God's commands? How can we encourage those around us to be obedient to God?

Along with the promise of God's favor if they remain faithful, there is the warning of trouble if they forsake God. What type of troubles can we face if we disobey or reject God? Have you ever had to face the consequences of disobedience? What were they?

Applying the Passage

- Joshua warned the Israelites of the temptations that surrounded them. What are the specific temptations or influences in your environment that could lead you away from God's path? How can you avoid them?
- Reflect on the times when God showed his faithfulness to you, and use these instances as reminders to strengthen your own commitment to God.

Prayer Time

- Ask for God's help in defeating temptation in your life.
- Thank God for the times when He demonstrated His faithfulness to you.
- Ask God to help you remain faithful to Him at every stage of your life.

Application Guide: Joshua 24

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- How do you typically approach the process of making significant decisions in your life? Share and compare with others.
- Do you think it's important to know history? Why or why not? Discuss with others.

Engaging the Passage

Throughout Joshua's term as leader of Israel, they remained mostly faithful to God. Nevertheless, Joshua thought it necessary to renew the covenant between Israel and God. Why do you think he had the leader renew the covenant? How can we renew our commitment to God?

In this passage, God recounts the entire history between Him and His people all the way back to Abraham. If you were one of the leaders of Israel listening to this history, what emotions would you feel? Why do you think it was important to remember all this? Does our history with God matter in our spiritual life? How?

Applying the Passage

- The Israelites had many other Gods that they could have chosen to serve. What are some of the things or ideas around us that we might be tempted to follow or dedicate our lives to?
- Joshua 24 shows Israel renewing their commitment to follow God. Are there areas of your life that you need to recommit to God?
- Israel decided to follow God over all other options because of their experience with God. What are your experiences with God that encourage you to follow Him? How can remembering these moments strengthen your trust in Him and deepen your commitment?

Prayer Time

- Through prayer, recommit your life to God and renew your desire to praise and worship Him.
- Ask God to help you follow Him each day.
- Ask God to help you remember the things He has done for you, so that your faith may be strengthened.

Outreach Idea

Find opportunities in your church where you can share your own spiritual journey and history with the Lord. Your testimony could encourage others to deepen their commitment to God, and it can help you remember what God has done for you in your life.

Application Guide: Judges 1

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever left a project unfinished? Why didn't you finish it?
- Can you think of a time when you were told to do something, but you didn't do everything they asked you to?

Engaging the Passage

When the Israelites got to the promised Land, God told them to drive out all the people that were already there. In Joshua, we read how the Israelites were able to conquer and destroy these nations, but in this first chapter of Judges we see that the conquest was not complete in some regions.

One of the reasons the Israelites were not able to completely drive out some people is because the enemy had better technology. It's very likely that the Israelites fought mostly with bronze weapons, but in verse 19, it says that some of the people had "chariots of iron" (Iron is stronger than bronze, and at the time, a newer, more sophisticated technology that not everyone knew how to create). However, we know that God had helped Israel in the past when they fought against stronger enemies. Why do you think the people chose not to fight against the people that had iron chariots? Do you think you would have been afraid? Do you think Israel could have been victorious if they had fought against them? What could they have done to have more faith in God?

Another reason Israel did not completely drive out the Canaanites is that they wanted tribute money. Instead of killing all the Canaanites as God had instructed, Israel forced the defeated survivors to pay tribute to them. Do you think these tribes were still obeying God? What do you think the consequences might be of letting their enemies remain in the promised land? Do you think God wants us to be completely obedient or partially obedient?

Applying the Passage

Are there any areas of your life where you are being only partially obedient to God? What steps can you take towards following God's commands more closely?

Was Israel unable to complete their task because they were afraid of the enemy? Is there anything in your life that you are afraid of doing because it makes you uncomfortable? Remember, God is the one who fights our battles for us, and He is with us always.

Prayer Time

- Ask God to help you remember His faithfulness to you.
- Identify areas of your life where you may not be completely faithful to God, and ask Him to help you be more consistent in your obedience to Him.

Application Guide: Judges 2

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Do you notice any difference in your behavior when you are around authority figures (such as parents or teachers)? Why or Why not?
- Has there been a time when you had to suffer the consequences of your disobedience? What happened?

Engaging the Passage

This chapter establishes the pattern of sin and reconciliation that we will see repeated throughout the rest of the book. This pattern began when a generation “that did not know the Lord” decided to worship other gods. This was a violation of the covenant between God and His people, and since Israel didn’t keep their end of the bargain, God withdrew His protection. What events from the previous chapter influenced Israel’s decisions here? What does this tell us about the importance of being faithful to God?

God never abandoned His people! He raised up judges to rescue the Israelites from bad situations, and to keep Israel accountable to God. Does God still place people in our lives to keep us accountable? Give a few examples of people who might be “judges” in your life.

Towards the end of the chapter, God declares that He would use foreign nations to “test” Israel. What does this tell you about hardships and difficulties in your personal life?

Applying the Passage

- Can you think of any repeat sin in your life? Are there any situations that make you more susceptible to sin? What can you do to disrupt the cycle and avoid sinning against God?
- Make a list of people in your life who can fulfill the role of “judges” in your life – people who can guide you in making tough decisions and look out for your overall well-being. Ask one of them to be your accountability partner to support you in keeping your commitment to God.
- What are some things that could compete for your allegiance to God? Money? Job ? What steps can you take to make sure that God is always your #1 priority?

Prayer Time

- Ask God to help you identify cycles or patterns of sin in your life.
- Pray for God to help you make Him the #1 priority in your life.
- Pray for God to help you turn the hardships in your life into learning opportunities so that you may be strengthened spiritually.

Application Guide: Judges 3

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Who are three people you consider to be great leaders? What do they have in common? Compare with others in your group.
- Have you ever found yourself repeating a certain action, despite knowing the negative consequences? Why did you do it again?

Engaging the Passage

Background: This chapter features three judges and three different enemies. Othniel fought the Mesopotamians that threatened Israel from the northeast. Ehud killed the king of Moab who lived directly southeast of Israel. And Shamgar fought the Philistines that attacked Israel from the west. This demonstrates that Israel was threatened by enemies on all sides, and without God's protection it was very easy for them to fall prey to other nations. In how many areas of your life do you face difficulties and threats? What does this tell you about God's protection?

This chapter illustrates how often Israel would betray God and worship other deities, which resulted in them being conquered by other nations. Nevertheless, God always sent a new judge to save His people when they cried out for help. Would you be willing to help someone even if that person had hurt and betrayed you several times? What does this tell you about God's patience with us, especially when we sin against Him?

This chapter also gives us a glimpse of what some judges were asked to do: lead the people back to God, make war against enemy nations, and overthrow kings. If it were up to you to find someone to serve as judge during this time, what characteristics would you look for? How would you know if someone were fit to be an Israelite judge?

Applying the Passage

- The judges were faithful to God, even when the rest of Israel had turned away from Him. How can we remain faithful to God, even when most people around us don't follow him?
- The Israelites only followed God when they had a judge, then would fall away when the judges died. Is your faithfulness to God dependent on another person? Maybe your parents, teachers or pastor? How can you maintain your faithfulness to God even in situations when you're not encouraged by others?

Prayer Time

- Pray for God to help you remain faithful in every situation.
- Pray for God to guide your spiritual leaders, as He did the ancient judges.
- Pray for God to give you the courage to do whatever is necessary to follow Him.

Application Guide: Judges 4

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- When you're afraid to complete a task, what strategies or things give you the courage to do it?
- Can you share a memorable experience when you unexpectedly received help or encouragement from someone you wouldn't have thought to ask?

Engaging the Passage

Deborah is a special judge in Israel's history. She was a woman and a prophetess. (Moses and Samuel are the only other people we know who were both judges and prophets.) What does this tell us about her relationship with God? Can you think of any people you know who have multiple gifts or talents?

Barak was afraid to go into battle on his own, so Deborah accompanied him to assure him that God was on their side. If you were Barak, do you think Deborah's presence would have been enough for you to go into battle against a more powerful enemy? Would you have done something different? How does knowing that God is on our side help us have more confidence in facing difficulties in our lives?

Even though Barak and Deborah led the army to victory, she foretold that someone else would be the hero that day. The victory and glory went to Jael for defeating the Canaanite general, Sisera. If you were in Barak's position, would you be mad that you didn't get the credit? Should we be willing to do God's work even if we don't get recognized for it?

Background: Sisera trusted Jael because she was a Kenite. The Kenites were Canaanites that had joined the Israelites because they had ties to Moses's father-in-law. The Kenites were therefore friendly with Canaan, so Sisera thought he was safe at Jael's house. This blind trust allowed her to overpower him. From this, what can we learn about the balance between loyalty to God and loyalty to our cultural norms? How can we determine the appropriate priority between the two in our lives?

Applying the Passage

- Reflect on times when you felt hesitant like Barak did. How did you overcome your doubts and trust God's guidance? How can you overcome your doubts next time it happens?
- Is there anyone in your life that gives you support and encouragement to follow and serve God? Find a way to thank this person (a card, letter, a small gift).
- Make a list of people or institutions that you are loyal to. Arrange them in order of importance, then reflect on how your loyalties might impact your spiritual life.

Prayer Time

- Pray and ask God to give you the confidence you need to do the things He asks of you.
- Pray for humility when working with others, so that you may never see yourself as more important.
- Pray for God to help you become a support for others around you.

Outreach Idea

Just as Deborah was able to help Barak do what God had asked of him, we can also help others follow God's will by encouraging and supporting them. Think of someone who might be lacking confidence in their spiritual life and think of ways you can support or encourage them.

Application Guide: Judges 5

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- When someone does you a big favor, and you want to show your appreciation for them, how do you thank them?
- What is your favorite hymn or praise song? Why? Share with others.

Engaging the Passage

Picture It: Have you ever accomplished something that seemed impossible before you did it? How did you feel when you did it? Excited? Happy? This is the way Deborah and the rest of Israel felt when they God helped them defeat the Canaanites.

How do you act when you are extremely excited or happy about something? Do you leap for joy? Do you scream? Do you cry? After their victory, Deborah was so overjoyed, she composed a song to praise God for His help in the battle. How can you best express your thankfulness to God and other people?

Deborah's spontaneous song expressed gratitude to God, and it memorialized God's victory to future generations. The Israelites taught the song to their children who would then teach it to the next generation. In this way, songs are very powerful tools to help us remember what God has done for us. What can you do to help you remember what God has done for you in your life? Do you think it's important to sing songs in church? Why or why not?

Applying the Passage

- Make a list of people in your life you want to show appreciation to for their support and help. Do something to show your appreciation and gratitude for them. (Suggestions: write a thank you card, offer to help them with some task, make them a gift...)
- Write out a prayer of gratitude to God. You can even put it to music to create your own personal hymn.

Prayer Time

- Thank and praise God for the accomplishments He has helped you achieve.
- Give thanks to God for the people He has placed around you that love and support you.
- Ask God to give you the courage to always obey him 100%, even when it is difficult.

Outreach Ideas

Find ways to share with others a personal experience where you felt led to act with courage and obedience despite challenges.

Application Guide: Judges 6

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Has anybody ever made you feel that you were too dumb, weak or small to do something?
- Write Down at least five characteristics of a good leader, and compare your list with others.

Engaging the Passage

Put yourself in Gideon's shoes: You are the youngest sibling in your family. Your family belongs to the weakest clan of the weakest tribe in Israel. On top of that, Israel is so oppressed, you need to hide the fact that you grow your own food. What do you think Gideon's aspirations were in life? Do you think he ever thought he was capable of doing something big and great? Why do you think God chose someone so unremarkable to lead His people? What does God's selection of Gideon teach us about how we should perceive individuals whom society might consider weak or seemingly insignificant?

Gideon questioned whether God was with Israel because he hadn't witnessed miracles like the ones he heard about in stories of the past. Have you ever experienced doubt because you haven't personally witnessed miracles as incredible as those described in the Bible?

In order to reassure Gideon that God would be with him, the angel gave Gideon a couple of signs (consuming the food on the rock, and the fleece). Does God still give us signs today? Do you think God is willing to show signs of His existence and favor today? Can you think of any signs in your life that helped you believe that God exists and that He is with you?

Before helping Israel, God told them to destroy all the pagan altars. Why do you think God required this before He would intervene? How does this story help us understand the conditions or actions we should consider when we ask God to intervene in our lives?

Applying the Passage

- God chose Gideon because of his humility and willingness to depend solely on Him. How can we cultivate these characteristics in our own lives?
- What evidence do we have of God's existence that we can recall if we start to doubt? Come up with at least three.
- What behaviors, attitudes and things do you need to get rid of so that God can fully work in your life?

Prayer Time

- Pray and ask God to help you develop a humble heart, so that you may learn to trust only in Him.
- Ask God to help you identify signs that He is with us.
- Ask God to help you identify what you need to purge from your life, and ask Him to help you get rid of these things.

Application Guide: Judges 7

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- What is the greatest underdog story you can think of? It can be from history, sports or something you have personally experienced.
- What are important factors in a battle between two armies? Come up with as many as you can.

Engaging the Passage

Picture it: In this chapter, God reduces the Israelite army from 32,000 to 300 men. How would you react if you were Gideon? Would you feel that you could still do it? What qualities and characteristics do you believe would define an individual who would stand alongside Gideon, ready to face a significantly larger army?

The first soldiers God sent away were those who were afraid. But Gideon was also afraid. What do you think the difference is between Gideon's fear and the fear of those who decided to go back home? If you were given this choice, do you think you would have stayed with Gideon?

The second group of potential soldiers were those who laid down to lap water instead of kneeling and drinking out of their hands. How would you have preferred to drink water in enemy territory? Why do you think chose those who laid down to drink? What does this tell us about the attitude that God wants us to have today?

Even though Gideon had already received two signs that God was with him, he still doubted and asked for another, and God gave it to him. How would you react if someone consistently questioned your abilities despite your demonstrations of competence? What does this passage reveal about God's patience with human beings? How often do you doubt God's power in your life?

Midian outnumbered the Israelite army more than 300 to 1, yet the Israelites won the battle, thanks to God's help. What do you think were the most important factors in Israel's victory? How will this story help give you confidence when you are faced with very difficult situations?

Applying the Passage

- Reflect on a situation in your life where you felt weak or inadequate. How can Gideon's story encourage you to rely on God's strength in similar circumstances?
- Gideon's victory emphasizes God's role in human achievement. How can you cultivate humility in your accomplishments and acknowledge God's power?
- Can you think of examples today when God calls us to do things that seem to defy logic? How can Gideon's obedience motivate you to follow God's guidance even when it makes no sense?

Prayer Time

- Ask God to help you cultivate a humble heart like Gideon and his men.
- Pray for God to help you always obey Him, even though what He asks makes no sense to you.
- Thank God and give Him glory for the achievements you have accomplished.

Application Guide: Judges 8

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever let success go to your head? How did you feel at that moment? What were the consequences?
- Have you ever done something small that you thought no one would notice, but it ended up causing bigger problems later on?

Engaging the Passage

As Gideon chased the Midianite kings, the cities of Succoth and Peniel refused to help him. Why do you think they chose not to help him? Did they have reasons to believe that the kings and the 15,000 army would prevail? Should they have had more reason to believe that God was on Gideon's side? If you were a leader of one of these cities, do you think you would have given food to Gideon's 300 men?

Picture it: Imagine you are Gideon in this chapter. You have just won an impossible battle and are about to kill the people responsible for killing your family and people. What do you think were the biggest temptations that Gideon faced at this moment? Do you think he gave into them, even just a little? What do you think God would have liked Gideon to do right after his victory?

Do you think Gideon was the same as when God called him? If not, what do you think changed? Even though he resisted the chance to be king, Gideon asked for the ephod. Why do you think he did this? How did the ephod lead the Israelites down a sinful path?

Applying the Passage

- The cities mentioned in this chapter did not recognize the miracle that God had performed for them. Are there any blessings and miracles that you might not have noticed in your life? How can you better recognize God's signs and miracles in your life?
- Like Gideon, our success and victories can often go to our heads and make us prideful. What can we do to avoid too much pride in our accomplishments?

Prayer Time

- Pray and ask God to help you recognize His goodness in your life.
- Ask God to help you remain humble, even when you have great success and everything is going well.
- Pray that you may be able to resist even the smallest temptations.

Outreach Idea

Ask someone at your church how you can support people who need help doing God's work (missionaries, outreach ministries).

Application Guide: Judges 9

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever felt manipulated by someone? How did you feel towards that person when you found out they manipulated you?
- What are your greatest ambitions in life? What is your plan to achieve those goals? Share with others.

Engaging the Passage

Background: At the end of Judges 8, we learned that the people wanted to make Gideon a king, but he refused. It was not God's plan for Israel to have a king, and He had already discouraged them from having one in Deuteronomy. In this chapter we one of Gideon's sons was unable to resist the temptation of power, and his ambition has disastrous results.

Gideon is considered a great leader in the book of Judges, but his son Abimelech is known as one of the worst characters. Why do you think Abimelech turned out to be so prideful and cruel? What do you think Gideon could have done to help his son follow his own example? What are the main differences between Gideon's leadership and Abimelech's leadership? What warning does it give about ungodly ambition?

More Background: Abimelech kills all his siblings except for Jotham, who then tells a parable about a bramble bush that is asked to be king over the trees. The bramble bush says that if it can't provide shade for the trees, then it will spit fire to burn up the cedars of Lebanon. Jotham's prophetic story came true when the people elected Abimelech king, and they found out that he was not a good king, and ultimately Shechem and Abimelech were destroyed..

The book of Judges follows a pattern where God lets Israel reap the consequences of becoming conquered by other nations. In this story, Abimelech and Shechem's evil deeds lead to their own destruction without the need for a foreign conqueror. Have you ever made a mistake that ultimately ended up causing harm to yourself? What implications does this have for the way you think about God's judgment and mercy?

Applying the Passage

- Make a list of your biggest ambitions for your life., Do you think they line up with what God wants you to do? Express your life's goals to someone you trust, and ask them to give you guidance on how to achieve those ambitions. More importantly, put your ambitions into God's hands, and let Him direct you along the path.
- Do you think God directly punishes us when we do something wrong? Or does He let the consequences of our mistakes punish us?
- Compare Gideon's leadership with Abimelech's leadership. Whose style of leadership would you rather imitate? How do you think you can become an effective leader?

Prayer Time

- Ask God to help you make His goals for you become your goals for your life, and ask Him to help you achieve those goals according to His will.
- Ask God to make you a leader more like Gideon, and less like Abimelech.

Application Guide: Judges 10

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- How do you know when someone is truly sorry for something they did wrong? Discuss and compare answers with others.
- How many times do you think it's possible to forgive someone for making the same mistake over and over again?

Engaging the Passage

Background: Throughout the book of Judges we see a cycle of disobedience. When the Israelites worship other gods, God allows them to be conquered by enemy nations. After years of oppression by the enemy, the Israelites call to God to rescue them, and He raises a ruling judge to rescue them. Israel then remains faithful until that judge dies, then the cycle of sin begins again. In this chapter, God doesn't immediately save Israel. Why do you think God waited to help Israel again? How many times would it take you to stop trusting someone who had betrayed you multiple times?

The passage says that God spoke to the Israelites, but it does not tell us how God spoke to them. Was it through a prophet? Did a big voice from heaven speak to them? How do you imagine the scene? If you heard the voice of God speak directly to you, what would your reaction be? If He told you to do something, would you do it? How does God speak to us today?

Israel appealed once more to God, and He was moved to help them again. What do you think the Israelites did that made God act? If you were an Israelite, what would you have done or said to convince God to help you again? If you were God, what could have convinced you to help Israel again? What things do we need to change in our lives in order for God to be able to answer our prayers?

Applying the Passage

- Do you ever worry that God might eventually get tired of forgiving your mistakes? How does the message of this chapter provide reassurance when you worry about this?
- Is there anyone in your life that you have a hard time forgiving for something? Speak with someone you trust like a parent or pastor and ask them what steps you can take to practice God-like forgiveness.

Prayer Time

- Thank God for His unending patience with us, that even when we do not learn from our mistakes, He is willing to forgive us.
- Ask God to help you identify the cycles of sin in your life, as well as the ability to break those cycles.

Application Guide: Judges 11

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Do you think studying history is important? Why or why not?
- Have you ever regretted making a promise to someone? Why?

Engaging the Passage

Picture it: Put yourself in Jephthah's shoes. Imagine that you were cast out by your family because you were an illegitimate child and you had to fend for yourself your entire life. Years later, the same people who threw you out now want you to lead them into battle against an enemy. How would you respond? Would you help them and promise to be their leader? Or would you refuse because of how they treated you?

Background: Every judge was appointed by God in some way, but Jephthah was chosen by the people to be their judge. Nevertheless, God was with him. Of course, that doesn't mean everything he did was good, as we see towards the end of the chapter. Do you think God is still with us, even when we take matters into our own hands?

The king of Ammon declared war against Israel because he said the Israelites stole his land long ago. Jephthah presented the true version of historical events to justify Israel's possession of the Land. Jephthah knew who he was and who his people were: They were God's people. How does an understanding of our history contribute to affirming our identity as children of God?

Jephthah promised God that if He helped them in their victory, he would sacrifice the first thing he saw when he returned home. Knowing what ultimately happened, do you think this promise was well thought-out, or was it thoughtlessly impulsive? How would you have phrased it better? What does this teach us about the way in which we make promises? The Law of Moses prohibited human sacrifice. Do you think God was pleased with Jephthah's offering? Do you think God ever wants us to act against His law even when it's for "good" reasons?

Applying the Passage

- Is there a part of your past that makes you feel that God might not be able to use you? How can the story of Jephthah encourage you to believe in God's capacity to salvage your own history?
- Based upon your reading of this chapter, make a list of guidelines for making promises in your life. How can you avoid making promises like the one Jephthah made to God?
- Analyze the story of Jephthah and identify the things that he did right and the things that he did wrong. Do you think God still works through flawed people?

Prayer Time

- Create a list of any aspects from your background or past that you think might hold you back in the future. Then, take a moment to pray and ask God for the strength and guidance to overcome these obstacles.
- Ask God to help you make careful decisions instead of impulsive ones.

Application Guide: Judges 12

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever regretted not being part of something? How did you feel once you realized you would have preferred being a part of it?
- Has anyone ever made you feel inferior because of some superficial factor like height, skin color, gender, etc.?

Engaging the Passage

From the text, we can see that the people of Ephraim were prejudiced against the people of Gilead, which made them jealous when Jephthah defeated the Ammonites. It's this prejudice that causes much death. What should the Ephraimites have learned from Jephthah's victory? What would have been a better response from them? How can the conflict between Jephthah and the Ephraimites serve as a warning about the dangers of pride?

We must also remember that the victory was because of God, not because of Jephthah. Do you think we can become jealous of others because of how God uses them? Why? Are there people that God uses whom you can look up to? Share examples with your group.

The nation of Israel was supposed to be united through their faith in God, but they let their prejudices and jealousy tear them apart. What are some trivial things that can cause division in your church? How can we set aside petty differences and be united in our faith in Christ?

Applying the Passage

- How can you ensure that misunderstandings don't lead to unnecessary conflict in your interactions with others? What communication skills can help avoid such conflicts?
- Think of ways you may have been prejudiced against others. What steps can you take to get rid of these prejudices and be more loving to others?
- Make a list of things that may cause division in your community. How can you create unity?

Prayer Time

- Ask God to help you foster a more understanding and loving attitude towards others.
- Ask God to help you overcome your prejudices.
- Ask God to help you encourage unity in your community.

Outreach Idea

There is still great division in the world because of prejudice. Look for ways in which you can fight against prejudice in your community, and ask people how you can support them.

Application Guide: Judges 13

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- What do you think angels look like? Draw a picture or describe it to someone and compare.
- Think of what you would do if an angel came down to speak with you. How would you react? Would you ask the angel any questions?

Engaging the Passage

Picture it: Imagine yourself in the shoes of Manoah and his wife, who were living in a time when they felt that God had abandoned them. They were not able to have children and had been praying for a baby for a long time. Suddenly, an angel appeared and told them that they were going to have a child, who would grow up to free their people from their enemies. Would you believe him? What would you feel? Excitement? Fear? What questions would you ask this angel?

Now imagine that you offer this angel, who looks like a man, some food, and instead of accepting it, he tells you to make a sacrifice to God. As you are doing it, he suddenly rises up with the flames into heaven. You realize then that this was not a man, but an angel from God. How would you react? How would you feel about what he had just told you? Would you be more motivated to follow what his instructions?

Background: Samson is the only judge in the book of Judges who announced by God before birth, and also, the only one who had specific restrictions placed on him. Why do you think his upbringing and parents were so important to God? Was his super-strength a result of all the rules he and his parents had to follow? How does obedience to God affect God's plan for our lives?

Reflection: Does the story of Samson's birth remind you of another famous birth in the Bible?

Applying the Passage

- Reflect on the role of parents or mentors in shaping your life. What types of challenges do you think they faced in raising you? How can you show your appreciation for their sacrifices and efforts?
- While God may not reveal himself to you as He did to Manoah and his wife, what are some ways that God can reveal His plans to us? How can we be better prepared to listen to His voice?

Prayer Time

- Thank God for your parents and mentors who have been a positive influence in your life.
- Ask God to help you hear His voice more often.
- Pray for God to reveal to you His plans for your life.

Application Guide: Judges 14

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Imagine if you had super-strength. What types of things would you be excited to do?
- Do you think if humans had superpowers, the world would be better or worse? Why? Discuss with others.

Engaging the Passage

Instead of finding a wife who shared his faith and values, Samson fell in love with a woman who was part of Israel's enemy, the Philistines. How do you think Samson even knew this girl, if she was an enemy of Israel? Do you think his decision to marry was well thought out or impulsive? What do you think is the most important thing spouses need to agree upon? Do you think God cares who you marry, as long as both people love each other?

Samson disobeyed two very important rules: 1) Do not marry a Caananite 2) Do not touch anything that is dead. Samson knew God had called him to a special purpose. Why do you think Samson was so disobedient and reckless? Do you ever disobey God, despite knowing what He wants you to do?

In this chapter, we get to know Samson, along with his strengths and weaknesses. Analyze the story and find at least three strengths and three weaknesses in Samson's character. What seems to be the main cause of his bad decisions? Keep this list in mind as you read the following chapters.

Although Samson made some very bad decisions, God was still able to use him by giving him the strength to kill the Philistines in the end. Do you think God can still use you, even if you stray away from His plan? Can you think of another example when God was able to rescue people, even though it seemed like people did not act according to His plan.

Applying the Passage

- Develop a method for making big decisions that could alter the course of your life. How do you tell whether one choice is good or bad? Whose advice would you seek? Would you involve God in your decision-making? How? For this task, you can ask someone more experienced how they make big decisions.
- Samson did not realize the weaknesses in his own character, and because of this he made many mistakes. Reflect on your own life and try to identify your weaknesses. What steps can you take to protect yourself from situations where you're more likely to make moral mistakes?

Prayer Time

- Ask God to help you set up healthy boundaries for yourself to avoid falling into temptation.
- Ask God for wisdom in making choices, and ask Him to guide you when you make big life decisions.
- Ask God to help you remain faithful to His commandments.

Application Guide: Judges 15

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- How do you react when you are angry? Are you more likely to cry? To yell? Have you ever hurt someone because you were angry?
- Discuss with others the differences between justice and revenge.

Engaging the passage

Picture it: Put yourself in Samson's shoes. The person you just married has been given to another person, and not just any person – it's your best friend! What emotions would you feel? How would you react? Do you seek revenge or let it go? Do you think Samson was justified in destroying the Philistine crops and killing so many of them because of what they did to him?

In this chapter, we also see that Israel handed over Samson, their own judge, to their enemy to be killed. Why do you think they did this? Do their actions indicate that they wanted to be liberated or that they were resigned to being oppressed by the Philistines? If you were Samson, how would you feel if your own people tied you up and sent you to your enemies?

Picture it: Samson is tied and handed over to his enemies by his own people. He knows that he is surrounded and understands that tough spot he is in. The Bible says that Samson was filled with the Spirit of the Lord and he overcame and killed 1,000 Philistines with a jaw bone of a donkey. How do you think "the Spirit of the Lord" coming over someone looks like?

Applying the Passage

- Have you ever acted in anger and later regretted it? How can you handle anger in healthier ways to avoid negative consequences? How can you find creative and positive solutions instead of reacting impulsively?
- Instead of seeking revenge when someone wrongs us, what alternative response can lead to a healthier outcome for everyone involved?
- Which of Samson's choices in this chapter do you think God approved of? How can you tell? How can you tell whether your own choices are God-approved?

Prayer Time

- Pray for God to help you keep a level head when you become angry, so you don't end up making any regrettable decisions.
- Ask God for the strength needed to do what is good.

Application Guide: Judges 16

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- What’s the worst decision you have made in your life? If you’re comfortable, share with others.
- Do you consider yourself a trusting person, or are you more reserved? Reflect on your answer and why that may be so.

Engaging the Passage

Background: Before Samson was born, God gave specific rules that he had to follow his entire life: 1) Abstain from eating grapes and drinking wine 2) never touch a corpse 3) Never cut your hair. By the time he was an adult, Samson had broken the first two rules several times, but he had never cut his hair.

Observe: At the beginning of this chapter, Samson willingly goes to an enemy city to see a prostitute. Notice how this passage establishes Samson’s weakness for women, as well as his arrogant attitude in the face of danger. What might be some of your character weaknesses? Do you ever willingly put yourself in dangerous situations or situations where you might be tempted?

The Bible says that Samson was filled with the Spirit of the Lord and he overcame and killed 1,000 Philistines with a jaw bone of a donkey. How do you think “the Spirit of the Lord” coming over someone looks like?”

Picture it: Put yourself in Samson’s shoes. Delilah has asked you three times already to reveal your weakness, and you have lied to her each time. But every time you tell her your “weakness,” the Philistines come to arrest you using that very weakness. Would you trust Delilah with your actual secret? Why do you think Samson told Delilah his true weakness? Do you think Samson’s strength actually came from his long hair?

Samson is tied and handed over to his enemies by his own people. He knows that he is surrounded and understands that tough spot he is in. The Bible says that the Lord departed from Samson. Why do you think God’s Spirit left him at this moment, and not at any of the other times he disobeyed God? Do you think Samson realized the errors of his life once he was enslaved and mocked? Later, in the temple, Samson prayed, and God returned his strength for one final act. Why do you think God gave Samson back his strength in the end? How can the story of Samson help us when we feel like we are far away from God?

Applying the Passage

- Because Samson thought he was too smart and too strong to be captured, he constantly put himself in dangerous situations. What is the best way for us to avoid the danger of temptation in our lives? Discuss with others.
- Samson's relationship with Delilah was unhealthy. What qualities do you think are important in good relationships? How can you ensure that your relationships are positive and supportive?
- Samson was able to learn from his mistakes before he died. Reflect on the biggest mistakes in your life and how you can learn from them to improve your present and future life.

Prayer Time

- Pray for God to help you avoid unnecessary temptations and dangers.
- Ask God to help you control your sinful desires.
- Pray and thank God for the fact that He never leaves us even when we betray Him.

Application Guide: Judges 17

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Can you think of an activity or behavior that one person in your family began, and eventually, it became something that everyone started doing?
- How do you worship God at home? Share and compare with others.

Engaging the Passage

Background: Most of the ancient cultures that surrounded the Israelites had many gods, who were represented as a human being modified with some divine attribute. In this chapter the influence of Canaanite idolatry is seen when Micah worships God in the same way that the Canaanites worshiped their gods. Do you think today's society paints have false interpretations of God? Can you think of at least 3 examples?

Micah, his mother and the Levite never saw a problem with creating an image to represent God. Which commandment were they breaking? How was he supposed to worship God? Reflect on what might be some modern forms of idolatry and write down at least 5. How can we avoid falling into idolatry in our lives?

The people in this chapter thought they were doing nothing wrong, but they were actually breaking the second commandment (You shall not make any graven image). Why is this law important? How could they have known that making an image of God was wrong? How do we know whether what we're doing is right or wrong according to God?

Applying the Passage

- Reflect on how you approach your faith. Are there areas where you're more focused on rituals than on truly connecting with your beliefs? How can you deepen your spiritual connection?
- Compare your Christian values with the values of the culture you live in. What elements from your culture go against the values of the Bible? Come up with at least four values.

Prayer Time

- Ask God to help you continually distinguish between good and bad, and to never mix the two.
- Ask God to help you build a faith founded on personal connection, not rituals.
- Pray for your family and your loved ones, that they may remain faithful to God.

Action Point

Ask your parents to start a daily family worship, and come up with a plan to make it dynamic and interesting. If your family already has worship, come up with new ideas to make it exciting and fresh.

Application Guide: Judges 18

Warm-up – Choose one of the following:

- Have you ever felt pressured to do something just because others were doing it? Share with the group.
- What do you think it means to take the Lord's name in vain? Discuss with others.

Engaging the Passage

The Levite in this chapter pronounces a blessing from God on the spies. Was this Levite an actual spokesperson for God? Why or why not? How should the Danites have sought God's direction? How can you tell if someone is telling you God's will or not? What can you do to figure out God's will for your life?

Imagine you were one of the Danites coming into Micah's house for the first time and seeing his idols. What would you have done? What would you have said? What does God want us to do when we see idols around us? What steps can you take to ensure your worship remains true to God's commands?

This example of idolatry started with only three people, but very quickly thousands of people started worshipping this idol. Do you think your sins and mistakes can lead other people to commit the same sins and mistakes? Have you ever found yourself participating in something wrong because you were influenced by someone else's actions or decisions?

Applying the Passage

- The Danites built their settlement on the shaky foundations of lying and stealing. How can you ensure that your choices and actions are built on solid principles?
- How can you make sure that you are not led astray by the example of others in your spiritual life? How can you become a better role model for those who look up to you?

Prayer Time

- Pray and ask God for wisdom and insight so that you may not be led astray by other people.
- Ask God to show you how to worship Him as He wants to be worshiped.



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