

Purpose

- To learn about Gideon
- To learn about Sampson and his downfall, Delilah
- To learn the story about Ruth and Naomi

Background Information

GIDEON

The book of Judges tells us the story of a long line of judges of the people of Israel. Almost halfway down in the list of 12 judges, we find Gideon. Gideon was a cowardly farmer who became a courageous general. (Judges 6-8) When God approached Gideon, a thresher of wheat at his father wine press, Gideon rejected God's call to lead the people of Israel. Finally, Gideon heeded God's command and prepared a goat and unleavened bread as a sacrifice to God. Through a series of miracles and tests, God directed Gideon to lead 300 men and defeat the Midianites. Gideon continued to be a leader among the Israelites until his death at a very old age. We think of Gideon today in reference to Bibles that are given out to various groups of people. You'll find Gideon Bibles in motels and some of you may even get them at school. They are also given to people in the military.

SAMPSON

Sampson is the last of the judges of Israel. (Judges 13-16) Sampson was raised by God-fearing parents. Sampson's mother had been unable to have children, but an angel appeared and told her if she drank no wine or ate nothing unclean, she would have a son. The angel also instructed her to never cut the son's hair and he would be the one to deliver Israel out of the hands of the Philistines. Sampson's hair was never cut, and he became exceedingly strong. Many times Sampson used his strength to defeat the armies against the Israelites. But in comes the woman! Sampson met a very beautiful, evil woman named Delilah. He fell in love with her. The Philistines used Delilah to defeat Sampson. Sampson told Delilah the secret of his strength was in the fact that his hair had never been cut. She drugged him, cut his hair and turned him over to the Philistines. The Philistines chained Sampson and made him work in the prison. As Sampson's hair began to grow, his strength returned. The Philistines blinded him and made fun of him while he was chained to the pillars of their temple. God enabled Sampson to pull down the pillars, killing hundreds of the Philistines as well as Sampson. Lesson: Boys, don't let an evil woman pull you down.

RUTH

The book of Ruth is the only book in the Old Testament whose main character is a Gentile, not a Jew. The book of Ruth is a true story. It is also a love story. During a time of severe famine, Elimelech and his wife Naomi took their 2 sons and settled in the land of Moab (east of Israel). The Moabites worshipped false gods and were enemies of the Israelites. While in Moab, Elimelech died, leaving Naomi with 2 sons (Mahlon and Chilion) to raise. Both sons married women of Moab. One married Orpah and one married Ruth. In time both sons died leaving Naomi alone with her 2 daughters-in-law. Naomi wanted to go back home to Bethlehem, so she told both women to go home to their families. Naomi feared that the women would not be welcome in Bethlehem, since they were Moabites. Orpah decided to go home, but not Ruth. Ruth refused to stay in Moab, because of her love of Naomi, so both went to Bethlehem. The people of Bethlehem were not kind to Naomi and Ruth, so Naomi decided she would just die. Ruth refused to let her die and decided instead to go out into the fields where the farmers frequently left food for widows and orphans. Ruth went to collect this grain from the fields of Boaz. It was dangerous for a woman to be out in the fields like this alone. Boaz took a liking to Ruth and invited her to glean (collect food) in his fields at any time. He even instructed his men to leave extra food for her. Boaz was impressed with her kindness to Naomi. Boaz was related to Naomi and according to Israelite law, families had to marry and take care of the widows. Boaz wanted to marry Ruth, but he was not the first in line. Boaz tricked the cousin next in line into giving him permission to marry Ruth. Naomi was in favor of Ruth marrying Boaz, so she told Ruth to put on her best robe, spritz on some knock-em-dead perfume and go down to the threshing and lie down at sleeping Boaz's feet. Why not just go up to Boaz and say, "Listen, I love you, you love me, let's get married." So Ruth went down to the area where the grain was prepared for storage. She watched from the shadows until everyone was asleep. She quietly uncovered Boaz' feet, lay down and waited. Boaz woke up because his feet were cold. As he sat up to cover his feet, he found a woman there-and not just any woman, it was Ruth! Basically, she proposed to him and he accepted. The next morning, in front of the elders of the city, Boaz took Ruth under his care as his wife. From that marriage, a child was born who would be the grandfather of David, Israel's greatest king. Ultimately, from the same family line, Jesus was born. God honored Ruth's faith and courage by making her an ancestor of Jesus.

Procedure

-Do 10-1, 10-2, and 10-3 and bring to class. These will go in your folder for reference.

--Handout 10-4, 10-5, and 10-6 are to be done for fun.