

## Deborah

### 1) Ritual

Our opening ritual recognizes what already is: God’s loving presence. In every circumstance we do well to remember, God goes before us and is already there.

### 2) Check-in

Highs and lows. Blessings and bruises. Tonight again, ask about their time away. Do the kids have any fun Halloween stories? Again, **give everyone a time to think first, at least one full minute**. Time it on your watch or phone. This gives the introverts time to compose their thoughts and makes the talkative kids provide a little space for others.

### 3) Review the Story

Please invite your kids to share their first impressions from today’s Bible story.

#### **GOD’S BOTTOM LINE PROMISE**

“Deborah, the prophetess, was leading Israel.” [Judges 4-5] God chooses you and all people to fulfill God’s mission.

#### **BACKGROUND [Exodus 16-17 – God provides for our ancestors on their way through the wilderness.]**

The story of Deborah is a twice-told tale, once in prose (Judges 4) and once in poetry (Judges 5). The story begins with a familiar cycle: Israel's rejects God (v. 1) resulting in their being oppressed by Jabin, king of Canaan (v. 2), who oppressed them for twenty years under Sisera, until the people cried out to God (v. 3). This is how the book of Judges understands Israel's history—when people obeyed God there was peace and progress, but when they disobeyed, Israel was subjected to war and tyranny.

Enter Deborah ("Bumblebee"), a prophet acting on the word of the Lord, who summons Barak ("Lightning") to lead an army against the Canaanites at Mount Tabor (vv. 4-7). Barak was afraid and refused to go until Deborah agrees to accompany him into battle (vv. 8-10).

The battle, itself, took a decisive turn for Israel when a torrential rainstorm caused the Kishon River to overflow, miring Sisera's nine hundred iron chariots in the mud as we learn from the poetic version in 5:21. As was the case at the Red Sea and in the fall of Jericho, it is *God* who defeats the enemy (4:15), a point that Deborah herself also makes clear (4:14), and delivers our ancestors from oppression into peace again.

The role of women is particularly important in this story. Deborah's courage and faith in persuading Barak, discerning the activity of God, and stirring others to accept their responsibilities were instrumental in the victory. Contrast Deborah’s faith with the distrust our ancestors displayed and would soon fall into again as the cycle inevitably repeats. [Adapted from *enterthebible.org*]

#### Videos

- *Read Scripture: Judges* (The Bible Project): This video gives an overview of the entire book of judges and the situation and behavior of our ancestors during the time of Deborah. <https://youtu.be/kOYy8iCfIJ4>
- *God’s People Deborah* (Crossroads Kids’ Club): This video is geared at elementary age but it is good intro into the person of Deborah. [https://youtu.be/-Hi5\\_S7Qu6g](https://youtu.be/-Hi5_S7Qu6g)
- *Deborah the Prophet* (Bible Trailers): This video pretty faithfully retells the major details of Deborah’s story recorded in the Bible, including its violent conclusion. <https://youtu.be/TWBI6JW8psc>

### 4) Start with Sharing—Your Story

Discuss the *Start with Sharing* questions.

**Bonus Ice-Breaker:** Talk about Halloween costumes. Have kids share pics from Halloween. Who are the heroes who people dressed as? What are their genders? Can girls dress and act as male heroes? Can boys dress and act as girl heroes? Why or why not?

### 5) Art—Deborah (See portrait on the back and front of today's story sheet.)

What are your first impressions of Deborah? Are you drawn to her? Scared of her? Something in between? What do you imagine she is feeling in these portraits? What does it mean that she's not smiling? Check out a story from recent news about the actor Brie Larson and her portrayal of Captain Marvel <<https://www.vox.com/2018/9/20/17883030/captain-marvel-brie-larson-smile-more>>. What connections do you see between her story, Deborah's story, and women leaders today in general? How does God want women to act? How does God want men to act? Is there a difference?

### 6) Activity—Stereotypical Men and Women

Give kids 5-7 minutes to draw. Invite them to perhaps exaggerate the attributes that society places great emphasis on. They can use symbols too, for example a heart ❤️ for emotional sensitivity or big muscles 💪 for strength, etc. Have kids talk about their pictures. Where do these images come from? How do they affect you? **Guides**, be honest about your own experience of gender. Were you denied or given certain treatment or opportunities because of your gender?

### 7) Further Discussion—Back to the Story

If you have time, read the Bible verse and discuss the question.

### 8) Pray and Bless

Take time if you can to ask for prayer requests and perhaps ways the group can pray for each other. This week invite kids to think about situations in their life where God is challenging and changing gender stereotypes. Pray over and bless your kids.



## The Story of Our People

### STORY SIX: DEBORAH

#### JUDGES 4-5



"Deborah, the prophetess, was leading Israel."  
[Judges 4:4]

God chooses you and all people to fulfill God's mission.

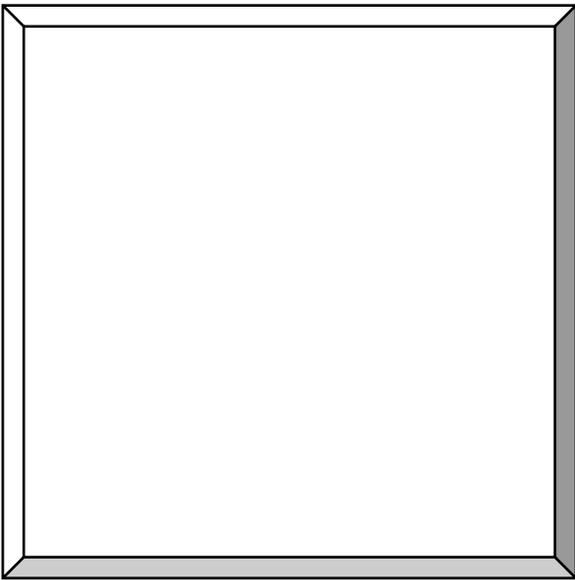
GOD'S BOTTOM LINE PROMISE

Write or draw about things you liked or learned from the story. What surprised you? What do you wonder about?

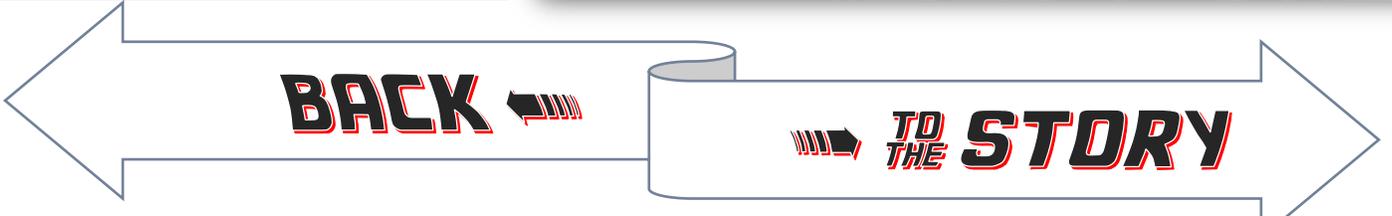
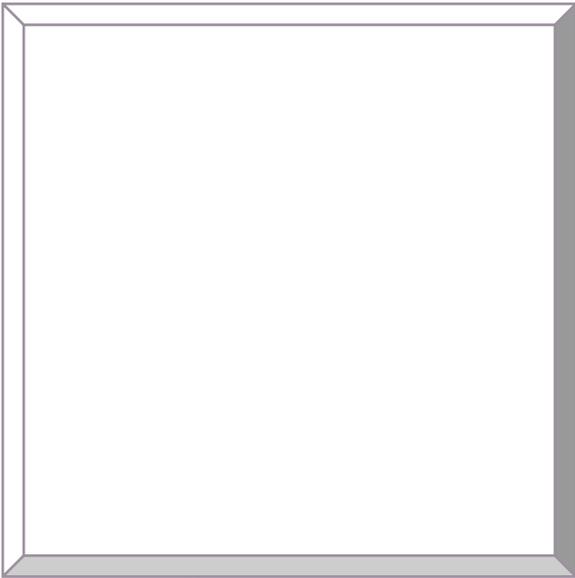
#### START WITH SHARING

- + In your life, who has come to rescue you in a tight spot?
- + Who is a woman you admire? How is she heroic to you?
- + Look at this portrait of Deborah. What reactions do you have to her and her story?
- + With Deborah's courage and companionship, what would God have you fight for?

Blessings and Bruises; How were you with God today?  
How was God with you today? Questions? Wonderings?  
Write or draw here.



Above and below, draw how our society portrays the stereotypical man and woman. Perhaps, find examples on the internet. How do these gender beliefs affect you?



*"Has not the LORD gone ahead of you?" [Judges 5:14]*

- What battles do you face right now? How do you need God to go ahead of you?

**You are a precious child of God! And we love you very much!**