

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: May 21, 2017 *revised*

SUBJECT: GOD'S CALLING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: God Called Samson—Born a Nazarite to Deliver Israel

SCRIPTURE: Judges 13:1—16:31; Numbers 6:1-8; Hebrews 11:32

AIM: God desires that we, His called ones, give ourselves to Him; if we voluntarily give ourselves to the Lord and live a life for Him, we can be useful to Him.

MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM: Judges 16:28a (And Samson called on Jehovah and said, O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray;); Proverbs 13:20 (He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be troubled.); 1 Corinthians 15:33 (Do not be deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals.); Ephesians 1:4 (Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,)

SONG SUGGESTIONS: 7 (I Am A Very Special Child); 37 (I Have Decided To Follow Jesus); 153 (Obey His Call); 6413 (Stand Up! Stand Up for Jesus! - *Stanza 1 only*); 143 (I Love Him Better Every Day); 146 (I Want The Lord To Have The First Place); 15 (Walking With Jesus); 9307 *BSS Daniel Song 7* (Oh, Yes, I Can! I Can Choose); 9316 *BSS Daniel Song 16* (What Do You Do When Your Friends); 1612 (Companions)

CRAFT IDEAS: (1) Make hanging mobile relating to the Nazarite vow—no wine, no cutting of the hair, etc.; (2) Print simple drawing of Samson on sturdy paper and mount between paper towel rolls for pillars.

CONTENT: The children of Israel again did evil in the sight of Jehovah, so He gave them into the hands of the Philistines for forty years. But God did not forget His people and still cared for them.

Samson's birth. At that time, there was a couple from the tribe of Dan, Manoah and his wife, who had no children. One day the Angel of Jehovah appeared to Manoah's wife and told her that she would have a son. She must drink no wine or strong drink, and eat nothing unclean. No razor was to come upon the child's head because he was to be a Nazarite to God (a Nazarite is someone who was voluntarily consecrated and set apart to Jehovah). The woman reported this to her husband who prayed to Jehovah to let the man come again to teach them what to do with the boy who was to be born. Jehovah answered Manoah's prayer; the Angel of God appeared again. Later, Jehovah fulfilled His word to Manoah and his wife, and a son was born to them. They named him Samson. The boy grew, and Jehovah blessed him and the Spirit of Jehovah began to move upon him in the camp of Dan. Samson's parents did not know it at the time, but God wanted to use Samson to deliver Israel from the Philistines. The Philistines were enemies of the people of God. They were idol-worshipping and cruel. The Philistines wanted to kill and get rid of the children of Israel.

Samson's strength. Samson was a very strong man. God had given Samson super-human strength. He was so strong that he could tear apart a lion with his bare hands as if it were a baby goat. When he was tied up by enemies, he could break through ropes so easily. More than once, Samson was able to kill many enemies even though he was vastly outnumbered. One time, he killed 1,000 Philistines with just the jawbone of a donkey. God was with Samson and made him very strong.

Samson's weakness and failure. Samson had a particular weakness, however. He did not make good choices in his close friends, and he did not listen to his parents to choose a wife from among God's people. Samson actually married a Philistine woman, which got him into a lot of trouble. Later, she died at the hands of her own people, the Philistines.

Some time later, Samson fell in love with a Philistine woman named Delilah. The lords of the Philistines asked her to entice Samson to find out the secret of his strength. Samson loved Delilah, but Delilah did not really love Samson. She agreed to find out the source of his strength and be paid a lot of silver money for it. She persistently bothered him over and over again to let her know the secret. After three failed attempts, he

told her his secret: “No razor has ever come on my head, for I have been a Nazarite to God from my mother’s womb. If I were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I should become weak and be like all men.” Then Delilah made Samson fall asleep, and she called the men to shave off his seven locks of hair. When the Philistines came this time he could not escape—his strength was gone. Jehovah had left him! The Philistines seized him, blinded him, bound in chains, to Gaza where he was put to grind in the prison. But the hair on his head began to grow back.

Samson is avenged in death: One day the lords of the Philistines gathered to offer a great sacrifice to Dagon, their god, to rejoice over Samson’s capture. They called for Samson to entertain them, and he performed before them. Then they made him stand between the pillars. But Samson asked the youth who was holding him by the hand to let him feel the pillars on which the house rested. Besides the lords of the Philistines there were about 3,000 men and women on the roof looking on. Then Samson called to Jehovah, and said, “O Lord Jehovah, remember me and strengthen me, I pray this one time only, O God, that I may be avenged of the Philistines at once for my two eyes.” He grasped the two middle pillars on which the house rested, and bowed himself down with all his might and the house fell down upon the lords and upon all who were inside. So the dead that he killed in his death were more than those that he killed in his life. Samson had judged Israel for twenty years.

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM: *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover for your group of children. Please do not try to cover all the suggested applications.*

- **We belong to the Lord and should voluntarily choose Him.** Many of us may have been consecrated to the Lord by our parents even before we were born, like Samson. Although this is precious, as we grow, we ourselves should personally and voluntarily give ourselves to the Lord.
- **We should choose our friends carefully.** When Samson was younger, he lived as a Nazarite, one who voluntarily gave himself to God. For example, he did not cut his hair and did not drink wine. But as he got older, he began to associate himself with people who did not love God, and even fell in love with Philistine women, suffering dire consequences. We should not be intimate friends with those who do not know the Lord. We should pray for our friends at school and our neighbors that they would also become one of God’s people. We should also avoid evil companionships that influence us to do negative things.
- **When we repent for our mistakes, we can regain our usefulness to the Lord.** Originally, Samson’s parents consecrated him to the Lord. Due to his mistakes, Samson lost his consecration. However, during his imprisonment, his hair grew back. This symbolizes his return to his consecration as a Nazarite. In the end he prayed to the Lord to strengthen him so he could be avenged of his two eyes. The Lord answered his prayer and in his death he killed more Philistines than when he was alive. He once again became useful to the Lord. In Hebrews chapter 11, a chapter on faith, Samson is named among God’s people. (Hebrews 11:32 And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David and Samuel and the prophets,). God used Samson to avenge the Philistines.

Adapted from the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 6/12/94; 6/4/00; 6/11/06; 6/10/12