

General Church Education



The Death of a Hero

Judges 15, 16

Lesson 26

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 4: The Lord Is the Hero

For ages 9-10

The Death of a Hero

Judges 15, 16

Teacher Background

Samson's victories over the Philistines symbolize the triumph of good and truth over evil and falsity. His power is a symbol of the Lord's power working for us. His power lay in his lifeless hair. Hair stands for natural truth in the letter of the Word as it appears and works outwardly in the world. Truth as it governs our outer behavior is relatively lifeless. Spiritual vitality comes from our inner loves and motives. The story of Samson and Delilah focuses on bonds or ties. The tension is between Samson remaining a Nazirite and him giving in to Delilah, who wants to tie him to herself and destroy his power. The force behind Delilah is the Philistine lords, who picture the power of evil. The "Delilah" that evil spirits use to seduce and gain mastery over us is *selfish delight*. Unless we learn what is good, and what is not, we don't experience evil as something evil, but as something delightful. These delights bind us to the evil. And when we give in to the delights of evil, they can lull our minds to sleep and take away the protection of our outer life of truth based on the Word. But the story does not end with Samson's imprisonment. The path out of bondage lay with Samson grinding wheat, growing back his hair, and ultimately being willing to lay down his natural life to overcome his enemies. Through this he gained not death, but resurrection to spiritual life.

Adapted from a sermon by Rev. Grant Odhner

Key Ideas

- Samson performed many feats of great strength.
- Our strength to do what's right comes from the Lord.
- We may forget about the Lord and be attracted to things that are not right, but we can always return to Him.

From the Writings

"All freedom is a matter of love, even to the point that love and freedom are the same thing. Since love is our life, freedom is also essential to our life. Every pleasure we experience comes from our love; there is no other source of pleasure. Acting for the sake of the pleasure of our love is acting in freedom, because pleasure leads us along, the way a river bears its burdens quite naturally along its current." *Divine Providence* 73.2

"People who are immersed in self-love and love of the world are quite incapable of believing that they are under the influence of such filthy and unclean loves as in fact they are. Indeed a certain pleasure and delight exists which coaxes, encourages, and allures, and causes them to love that life, to prefer it to every other kind of life, and so to imagine that there is nothing bad about it at all. For whatever encourages anyone's love and resulting life is considered to be good. For this reason also the rational agrees to and produces confirmatory falsities which lead to blindness so great that people see nothing at all of what heavenly love is." *Arcana Coelestia* 2045

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Vocabulary

afflict—to cause pain or suffering

mock—make fun of someone

fetters—chains or shackles put on the feet

By his mighty deeds, Samson became a great enemy of the Philistines. He used his extraordinary strength and also cleverness to trick and defeat them time after time.

Samson was angry that his father-in-law took his wife away from him. So he thought of a clever plan. He would destroy the Philistines' crops to make them go hungry. He caught three hundred foxes. He turned them tail-to-tail in pairs, and tied a torch between each pair of tails. He lit the torches, and let the foxes run into the Philistines' fields. The foxes set fields of grain, vineyards and olive trees on fire and destroyed all of the crops.

The angry Philistines then burned his wife and her father. So Samson attacked them "with a great slaughter".

Read Judges 15:1-8.

Another time, Samson killed a thousand Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey. And once he used his great strength to escape from the Philistines. The Philistines heard Samson was in Gaza, so they set men around the house where he slept that night, intending to catch him in the morning. But

Samson foiled their plan.

He stole out at midnight, pulled up the huge city gates (which were closed at night), the posts on which they swung and the crossbar that held them together. He marched forty miles to Hebron carrying the gates on his shoulders.

Read Judges 16:2,3.

Samson Deceives Delilah Three Times

Samson's great strength made him a dangerous enemy of the Philistines. The



lords of the Philistines determined to find out where his strength came from so they could catch him. They offered money to Delilah, a Philistine woman Samson loved, to see if she could discover a way to make Samson lose his strength.



Delilah begged Samson to reveal his secret. Three times Samson deceived Delilah about where his strength lay. But each time, he came a little closer to telling her the truth. First he told her he would become weak if he was tied up with seven fresh bowstrings, not yet dried. She told the lords of the Philistines, and they brought her the bowstrings. Delilah bound Samson with the bowstrings, and then the Philistines attacked.

Read Judges 16:6-9 to find out what happened.

Delilah mocked Samson and accused him of lying. So Samson told her he would lose his strength if he was tied up with new ropes that had never been used, and once again Delilah bound him.

Read Judges 16:10-12.

On Delilah's third try to find out his secret he came closer to the truth. He said he would lose his strength if the seven locks of his *hair* were bound into a loom. So Delilah wove his hair tightly into the web of a loom. The heavy loom had strong posts set in the ground.

Read Judges 16:13-15.

Samson Reveals His Secret

Do you remember how Samson's wife pestered him until he told her the answer to the riddle at his wedding feast? Delilah wore Samson down in the same way. She pestered him until he finally admitted the secret of his great strength. His strength would vanish if his hair were shaved off. Seeing that Samson had finally told the truth, Delilah betrayed his secret to the lords of the Philistines.

Samson Captured

Delilah lulled Samson to sleep and called for a man to shave off his hair. When she woke him, Samson's great strength had gone. The Philistines easily captured him and put out his eyes. They took him to the city of Gaza and bound him with bronze fetters. They put him in prison where he had to turn a millstone to grind wheat. It was hard, tiring work.

Read Judges 16:16-22.

Samson's Strength Renewed

The Philistines held a celebration to thank their god, Dagon, for delivering Samson into their hands. Dagon was an idol with the body of a fish and the head and hands of a man. The Philistines sent for Samson to come to the feast so they could make fun of him. But while he was in prison, Samson's hair had started to grow back, and his strength had begun to return.

During the celebration Samson asked a boy to guide him to the pillars that supported the temple. He called on the Lord to give him strength and pushed against the pillars with all his might! The temple collapsed, killing Samson and about three thousand Philistines at the same time. So, in his death Samson killed more Philistines than he had killed during his life.

Read Judges 16:23-31.

The Lord's Word Is the Source of Our Strength

Have you ever wanted to do something that was not wise? It is hard to do what is right when something looks like fun, and we want so much to do it. Samson knew he should not be with Delilah, a Philistine enemy. But he went to see her again and again, and eventually allowed her to pester him into revealing his secret. His love for her eventually blinded him and made him a prisoner.

If we are not guided by the Lord's Word and His commandments, we can want things that look fun and enjoyable but that are not really good and will hurt us. We will be weak, like Samson without his hair, because the Lord's strength will not be with us. Just as Samson had to fight against the enemies of Israel, we have to fight against the "enemies" in our hearts and minds. The Word of the Lord gives us strength to fight and overcome these spiritual enemies.

Discussion Questions

- What was the secret of Samson's strength against his enemies?
- What is the secret of our strength to do what is right?
- The Philistines are like a person who reads the Word but doesn't care about leading a good life. When might someone act this way?
- What kinds of things might pester us into turning away from the Lord?
- Explain how Samson, who was so physically strong, could be so weak in other ways.
- Compare Delilah's power with Samson's power.
- We can be strong in many ways. What are some of the ways people can be strong?
- What can angels do that shows their power over evil spirits? Where does their power come from?
- Have you experienced someone trying to persuade you to do something you didn't think was a good idea? What happened?

Activity Overview | The Death of a Hero

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

I will lift up my eyes to the hills

From whence comes my help?

My help is from the Lord,

Who made heaven and earth. Psalm 121:1,2

Projects

Choose one or two activities.

- Samson Destroys the Philistines' Temple
- Folding Book Samson Review
- Picture to Color—Samson Destroys the Temple of the Philistines (Judges 16)

Additional Activity Ideas

- For an additional coloring picture of Samson and the Foxes, go to <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/coloring-page-samson-and-the-foxes-judges15.pdf>.
- An activity reviewing happy and sad events in Samson's life is available online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-the-life-of-samson-story-line-judges13.pdf>.
- An activity comparing the Lord's life with Samson's life is available online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-compare-the-life-of-the-lord-and-samson.pdf>.
- Directions for making a Samson Bas Relief Project are online at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-samson-bas-relief-project-judges16.pdf>.

Activity 1 | Samson Destroys the Philistines' Temple

When the Philistines cut Samson's hair, he lost his great strength. The Philistines easily captured him, and put him in prison. They put out his eyes and made him grind grain. In prison Samson's hair started to grow again. And as it did, his strength returned. When the Philistines called Samson to their feast, he asked a boy to lead him to the pillars supporting the temple. Then Samson used his renewed strength to push down the pillars and destroy the temple of Baal.

Make a moving picture that shows Samson pushing the pillars and destroying the temple of Baal.



Materials Needed

Samson in the Temple

The Temple Falls

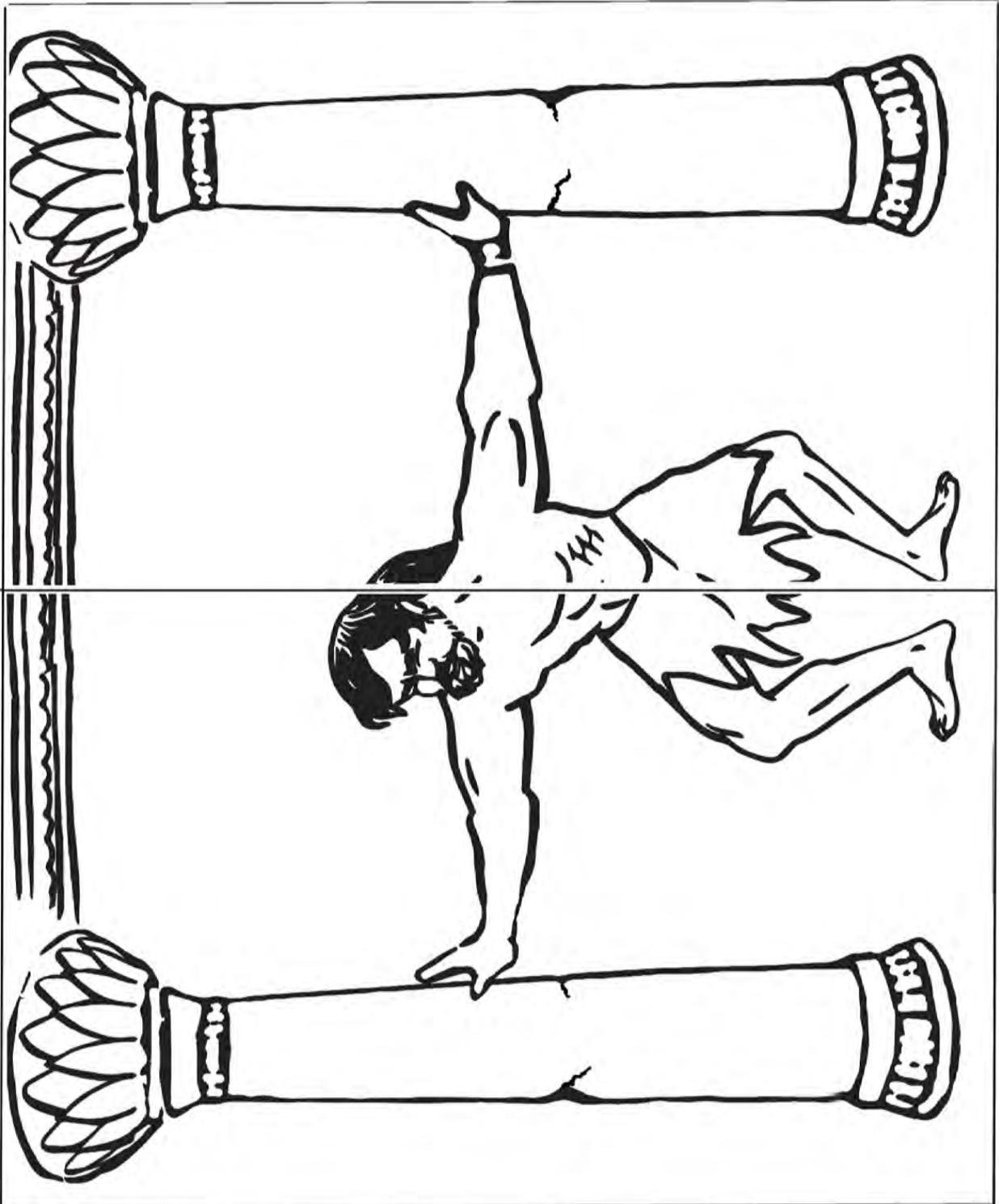
scissors

markers or colored pencils

stapler

Directions

1. Color *Samson in the Temple* and *The Temple Falls* with markers or colored pencils.
2. Cut *Samson in the Temple* in half along the straight line that goes through Samson's body.
3. Fold *The Temple Falls* in half so the picture shows on the outside of the fold in the middle of the picture. (See photo.)
4. Fold the sides in half to the center again, making three fold lines through the picture.
5. *The Temple Falls* should now be folded so the picture is hidden.
6. Line the cut edges of Samson with the edges of *The Temple Falls*. Staple the pictures together, back to back. Now tell the story of Samson destroying the Philistines' temple by pulling the pillars Samson is touching apart to reveal the temple Samson destroyed.





Activity 2 | Folding Book Samson Review

Color pictures of events from Samson's life and put them in the right order by creating a folding book.

Materials Needed

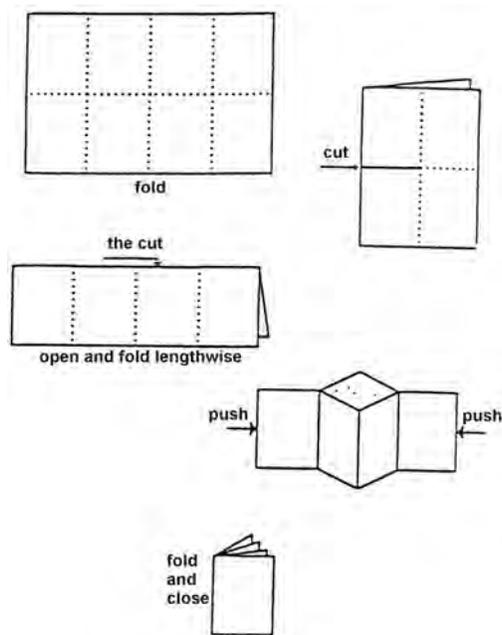
colored pencils or markers

scissors

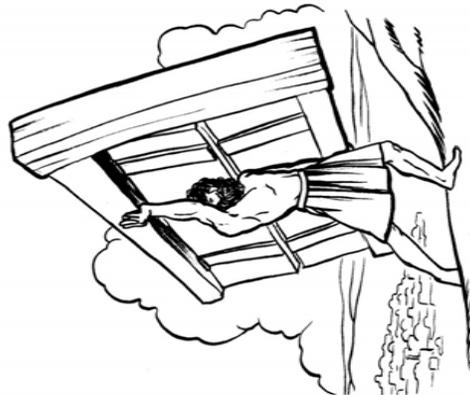
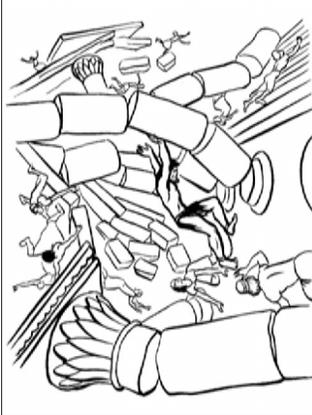
Folding Book Samson Review Template

Directions

1. Use markers or colored pencils to decorate the pictures of events from Samson's life.
2. Use scissors to cut the borders off the template.
3. Cut along the dotted line in the middle of the page to create a slit in the paper.
4. Fold the pages into a book as shown below:



5. For video directions on assembling the Samson Folding Book Review see bitly.com/OnePageBook. This link is case and space sensitive. It will work in the top browser bar of your computer screen.



A book by

The Life of
Samson
Hero for the Lord



