



LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Can Work through Unlikely People

SCRIPTURE: [Judges 4–5](#)

WORD OF WONDER: [From Joshua 1:9](#)

As a “girl dad” four times over, I’m always intrigued by the biblical stories that highlight women of faith. Now, don’t get me wrong—I love football, red meat, and Gladiator just as much as the next guy. But I do have a soft spot for the heroines of Scripture.

There was nothing soft, however, about Deborah. Check out [Judges 4–5](#). This woman was a lean, mean, judgin’ machine! As the only female judge in the book of Judges, she thrived in a male-dominated society and proved she was just as capable—and often more so!—than the men of her era. And after her resounding victory over Canaanite king Jabin’s army, it was Jael, another woman, who dealt the final blow to Jabin’s fleeing general with a tent peg!

Deborah and Jael were unlikely heroines because women had far less social clout in this time. But choosing those who might seem unsuitable is God’s *modus operandi*. He loves working through unlikely people.

Aren’t you glad for that? Because it’s so easy to dismiss ourselves as unfit for service in God’s kingdom.

I’m not gifted enough.

My sins and shortcomings are too great.

I’m just so ... regular.

If you’ve ever felt like that (and we all have), you’re qualified to serve the Lord! He displays His power most prominently through weak human vessels ([2 Corinthians 12:9](#)). He puts His perfect wisdom on display in situations that seem impossible to us ([1 Corinthians 1:25](#)).

If you’re feeling pretty unlikely this week ... get ready. Because God will work through you!

—Josh Cooley

Children’s Minister and Author

Contributor to Wonder Ink

10:45 Service

LESSON 1 FOR LEADERS

DEBORAH AND BARAK

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Deborah was a judge and prophet who led Israel after Ehud. Barak was a commander summoned by Deborah to fight Jabin, a Canaanite king, and his general Sisera. Jael was the wife of Heber the Kenite. Kenites were nomadic people descended from Moses' brother-in-law Hobab.

WHAT?

Jabin oppressed the Israelites after God's people continued to do evil in God's eyes. They cried out to God, who raised up Deborah and Barak to confront Sisera, Jabin's commander. God worked through Jael, a Kenite, to defeat Sisera, breaking Jabin's hold on the Israelites and bringing peace.

WHERE?

Mount Tabor was located well north of Jerusalem and west of the southern tip of the Sea of Galilee. It overlooked an important crossroads in the Jezreel Valley, so many people coveted control of the area. Jael lived near Kedesh, south of the Sea of Galilee.

WHEN?

The time Judges describes comes after the Israelites entered the Promised Land and before their first king. During this time, "everyone did as they saw fit" ([Judges 21:25, NIV](#)). God would raise up leaders (judges) to deliver His people, who would soon return to evil after each leader died.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

[Judges 4–5](#) highlights how God works through unlikely people to fulfill His promises. God faithfully does this throughout His big story. Jesus' own genealogy is full of wayward, broken people. But this imperfect line leads to a baby in a manger who is the Messiah.



Curiosity

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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Curiosity Activity: Likely or Unlikely

Use this activity to introduce kids to the concept of something being likely or unlikely. Gather the kids around you and explain each situation below.

Today we'll learn that God can work through unlikely people. Unlikely means something that isn't expected, or when something happens you didn't think would happen. We are going to play a game to see whether someone is a likely or unlikely person to help. I'm going to ask a question, and you say what place, person, or result is most likely.

If you wanted to find a book to read, which place would you go?

A park

- A library
- A restaurant

Allow kids to answer. **Right!** You are more likely to go to a library to find a book to read. The word *likely* means that something is probably going to happen. It's more *likely* that you would find a new toy to buy at a toy store. It's *unlikely* that you would go to school to buy a new toy. Let's try another one.

What is likely to happen if you eat ice cream outside on a really hot day?

The ice cream will stay cold.

- The ice cream will melt.

Allow kids to answer. Your ice cream will *likely* melt if you try to eat it on a hot day. It's *unlikely* that your ice cream would stay cold on a hot day.

Who is likely to be a person who takes care of you?

A parent or grandparent

- A zookeeper
- A baby

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10:45 Service

Allow kids to answer. **Right! Parents or grandparents are most *likely* to take care of you! I don't think I would want a baby to take care of me! It's *unlikely* that a baby would know how to take care of a kid.**

Who is likely to help you when you are sick?

- A dog
- A doctor
- A dancer

Allow kids to answer. **Right! A doctor is most *likely* to help you when you are sick! It's *unlikely* that you would want a dog to help you when you are sick!**

In God's big story today, we're going to hear about how God chose some *unlikely* people to play a part in His victory—God works through people you wouldn't expect!



Belief

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words: **God, please help us listen to what You have to say to us today. We invite You to open our hearts and minds as we learn from Your Word. May the unlikely people You chose in today's story remind us of what You can do and how You care. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible

Ask: What is this called? The Bible

Ask: Why is the Bible important? Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.

Tell the Bible Story

The Beginner's Bible, pages 136-139

Deborah Leads the Way

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

What was Deborah's job? *(a prophetess and judge for God's people)*

Have you ever had an unlikely person help you?

Was Barak brave at first, or did he hesitate? *(He hesitated.)*

Can you think of a time you weren't brave?

Was King Jabin a powerful or weak king? *(powerful)*

Can you think of a time that God helped you be brave?

What did God make Sisera's army do? *(become scared and worried)*

- **How might God work through you to help someone?**

Even though Deborah and Barak seemed like unlikely people to help God, God chose them to help achieve victory for God's people. God can work through unlikely people.

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

**Be strong and brave. Do not be afraid. God
will be with you wherever you go.**

— Joshua 1:9

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **When are times that we might feel afraid and need to remember that God will be with us?**
- **How does God help us be strong and brave?**



Faith

LESSON 1 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

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Craft: Craft Stick Puppets

SUPPLIES: coloring utensils, craft sticks (2 per kid), tape or glue, kid-safe scissors (optional), cardstock (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Craft Stick Puppets](#) (1 set per kid)

Before kids arrive, print a set of [Craft Stick Puppets](#) for each kid and cut out the puppets (or allow kids to cut them). To make the puppets sturdy, you can print them on cardstock.

In today's story, we learned how God chose unlikely people to defeat His enemies and win a victory. God is strong and powerful. He is victorious! That means He wins. He can work through anyone to win—even people who don't seem like the strongest or most powerful! Who did God work through in today's story?

Allow the kids to answer. A woman named Deborah and a man named Barak. God also chose a woman named Jael. We're going to make some Deborah and Barak craft stick puppets and use them to tell the story! You will color the puppets, then glue or tape them onto the craft sticks, and then you can use them to retell the story.

Allow the kids to use coloring utensils to color the puppets. Then help the kids glue or tape the puppets onto the craft sticks to make craft stick puppets. After they finish, encourage the kids to use their puppets to retell the story. **You can take your Deborah and Barak puppets home to help you remember that**



10:45 Service

God can work through unlikely people!

LESSON 1 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

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Closing Game: Four Corners

SUPPLIES: tape

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [God's Big Story Pictures](#) (from God's Big Story section)

If you haven't already, print the [God's Big Story Pictures](#). Tape one of the pictures up in each corner of the room (or write the names on papers and hang them on the corners): Barak, Deborah, Sisera, King Jabin.

We're going to play a game using our pictures from our part of God's big story today. Can you remember the names of each of these people? Hold up each picture and ask kids to shout out the name of the person pictured. **God chose Deborah and Barak to defeat their enemies: Sisera and King Jabin and their army. Let's play a game to help us remember the people in the story.**

Explain the rules to the kids. One person will stand in the middle of the room and will cover his eyes and count backwards from 10, loudly and slowly. Everyone else should move to one of the four corners; they will need to move very quietly so the person in the middle can't hear them. When the person in the middle finishes counting down, he will call out the name of one of the four people from the story— Barak, Deborah, Sisera, or King Jabin. Anyone who is standing in the corner with the picture that was called out will be eliminated from the game and sit down in the middle of the room. The game continues until only person is left. Then that person gets to stand in the middle and call out names for the next round.

Pick one person to start as the caller in the middle of the room. Play multiple rounds as time allows.

Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray together, thanking God for working through us as unlikely people.

God, thank You for working through unlikely people in incredible ways. Help us to always be willing to do what You ask, to help in ways You want us to help, and to say the things You want us to say. We love You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May you always remember to do what God asks you to do—to help in ways God asks you to help and to speak in ways God wants you to speak. Remember that God can work through unlikely people to do great things!