

September 20, 2020 PreK

Bible Passage: The Ark Was Captured / 1 Samuel 4–6

Story Point: God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God.

Key Passage/Memory Verse: Jeremiah 10:6: “There is none like you, O Lord; you are great, and your name is great in might.”

Big Picture Question: Is anything greater than God? No, God is greater than everything.

Christ Connection: *The ark of God reminded the Israelites that God was with them. Many years later God gave His people something even better to remind them that He was with them. God sent His Son, Jesus. One of Jesus’ names is Immanuel, which means “God with us.”*

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* BIBLE STUDY TIPS FOR PARENTS:

The ark of God (also called “the ark of the covenant”) was an important symbol in the lives of God’s people. Not only was the ark the original container for the Ten Commandments, it symbolized God’s presence with His people.

In Exodus 25, God gave Moses instructions for creating the ark. It was made of acacia wood and overlaid with pure gold. God forbade anyone from touching the ark, so it was carried by two poles. God would speak to Moses from between two golden cherubim on top of the ark, which was called the mercy seat. (See Num. 7:89.)

During the time of the judges, the Philistines were a near-constant threat to Israel. Under Samuel’s leadership, the Israelites went out to fight the Philistines. But Israel was defeated because of their sin.

The elders of Israel realized that God had allowed their defeat. He hadn’t fought for them against the Philistines. So they did what seemed logical to them; they took the ark—the symbol of God’s presence—and carried it to the battlefield. But the ark was not a good luck charm. Not only was Israel defeated, the Philistines captured the ark and killed Eli’s sons. When Eli heard the news, he fell over and died.

Having won the victory, the Philistines concluded that their chief god, Dagon, was better than the God of Israel. They moved the ark to Dagon's temple, where God showed His power over Dagon. (See 1 Sam. 5:1-5.) As the ark moved between Philistine cities, God afflicted the people and made them sick. The message was clear: No one is like the Lord. God is greater than everything and everyone.

The Philistines returned the ark, Israel's reminder that God was with them. Years later, God gave His people something greater than a sign that He was with them; God gave them His Son, Jesus—God in the flesh. One of Jesus' names is *Immanuel*, which means "God with us."

*** BIBLE STORY:**

Turn your bibles to 1 Samuel 4 with the help of your preschooler.

INTRO: The Bible is God's Word. Everything we read in the Bible is true. Today's Bible story is from the Book of 1 Samuel. 1 Samuel is in the Old Testament. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

The ark of God was a beautiful box from the tabernacle that reminded the people that God was with them. The Israelites thought that if they took the ark into battle with them, they would win. That was not a good idea. In today's true story from the Old Testament part of the Bible, we will hear about the battle and what happened to the ark.

The Ark Was Captured

1 Samuel 4–6

The people of Israel and the Philistines did not get along. The Israelites **fought a battle** against the Philistines, and the Philistines won. The Israelites were confused. Why had God allowed them to lose? **The Israelites made a plan to take the ark of God to the battle. The ark of God was a beautiful box from the tabernacle that reminded the people that God was with them.** They thought the ark might help them win the battle.

Eli's sons, the priests, took the ark of the covenant to the Israelites' camp. **When the army of Israelites saw the ark, they shouted with joy. Surely they would win the battle now!** The Israelites fought the battle, **but the Philistines won** again! Many Israelites died—including Eli's two sons—**and the Philistines captured the ark of God!**

The Philistines took the ark of God to a temple where they worshiped Dagon (DAY gahn), a false god. They put the ark next to a statue of Dagon. The next morning, the Philistines went into the temple and saw that Dagon's statue was facedown in front of the ark. They set the statue back up. The next day, it was facedown again and its head and hands were broken off.

God punished the people living in the city where the ark of God was. God made them really sick. The people in that city wanted to get rid of the ark. **When they moved the ark to another city, everyone in that city got sick.** So they moved the ark to a third city. Then everyone in that city got sick as well.

The Philistines were afraid. They didn't want God to punish them anymore, so **they decided to return the ark** along with gifts of gold to show they were sorry for taking it. The people hitched two cows to a cart and put the ark on the cart. The cows moved the ark down the road until **the ark of God was back with the Israelites, where it belonged.**

Christ Connection: *The ark of God reminded the Israelites that God was with them. Many years later God gave His people something even better to remind them that He was with them. God sent His Son, Jesus. One of Jesus' names is Immanuel, which means "God with us."*

OUTRO: The ark of God reminded the people that God was with them, so the Israelites thought they should carry the ark into battle. They lost the battle, and the Philistines captured the ark, but **God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God.** They were ready to send the ark back where it belonged. Today, we do not need an ark to remind us that God is with us. God gave us His Son, Jesus. Jesus is *Immanuel*, which means "God with us."

*** GOSPEL PLAN:**

Please use the 4 headers, but feel free to use your own words to explain each.

God is King. Ask: "Who is in charge at home? Who is in charge over the whole world?" Explain that God made everything! He is King over everything, and He is in charge.

We Sinned. Ask: "Have you ever done something wrong?" Tell preschoolers that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin makes God sad.

God Sent Jesus. Explain that God must punish sin. He loves us and He sent His son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus came to take away the punishment of sin.

Jesus Loves. Ask: "Do you like presents?" Explain that Jesus gives us the best present. He never did anything wrong, but He was punished in our place. Jesus wants to take away our sin because He loves us.

*** KEY PASSAGE:**

Our memory verse is Jeremiah 10:6: "There is none like you, O Lord; you are great, and your name is great in might."

* PRAYER

* ACTIVITY:

ACTIVITY PAGE & COLORING PAGE:

Give each child an activity page and a crayon or marker. Show a child how to connect the dots to reveal the image of the ark of God.

Say • The ark of God was a beautiful box from the tabernacle that reminded the people that God was with them. The Israelites thought that if they took the ark into battle with them, they would win. That was not a good idea. In today's true story from the Old Testament part of the Bible, we will hear about the battle and what happened to the ark.

Sing "My God Is So Big"

Lead your preschooler in singing "My God Is So Big" with the appropriate motions. Show preschoolers the key passage in a Bible.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aDCTNhYqEko>

Say • God made the Philistine's statue of Dagon fall down in front of the ark, and God made the people sick in the Philistine cities where the ark of God was kept. **God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God.** There is no one like our God! ***Is anything greater than God? No, God is greater than everything.***

Knock down a match

Print and cut apart the "Ark Matching Cards." Tape each card to a block or plastic cup. Set up the blocks/cups side by side about six inches apart. Guide a child to roll the ball and knock over one block. Show the picture that was knocked over, and retell portions of the Bible story that apply. Look at the remaining blocks and locate the matching picture. Challenge a child to roll the ball and knock down the matching block. Continue talking about the Bible story as you continue to set up and knock down blocks. Talk about this session's Christ Connection when the blocks that picture Jesus are knocked down.

Christ Connection: *The ark of God reminded the Israelites that God was with them. Many years later God gave His people something even better to remind them that He was with them. God sent His Son, Jesus. One of Jesus' names is Immanuel, which means "God with us."*

Say • The Philistines' statue of their false god fell over when the Israelites' ark of God was nearby. **God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God.** They sent the ark back to the Israelites along with gifts of gold because the Philistines were afraid of God's power. Many years later, Jesus lived on earth as a man. God sent Jesus so we would no longer need a beautiful box to remind us God is with us.

REVIEW QUESTIONS:

- What happened to the ark of God when the Israelites took it into battle? (*The Philistines captured it.*)
- What were some things that happened to the Philistines when they had the ark? (*Their statue of Dagon fell facedown and broke. People got really sick in the cities where the ark was.*)
- How did the Philistines return the ark of God? (*They put it on a cart behind two cows and sent it back to the Israelites along with some gifts of gold.*)
- ***Is anything greater than God? No, God is greater than everything.***