



UNIT 9 | SESSION 5

## ELI'S SONS DISOBEYED GOD

1 SAMUEL 4–6

### KEY PASSAGE:

Romans 6:23

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the fair payment for sin? The fair payment for sin is death.

### CHRIST CONNECTION:

The ark of God reminded the Israelites 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."



**PREPARE**

PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



**PREPARE**

PREPARE YOUR HEART TO TEACH; PLAN THE SESSION



**WELCOME**

GREET KIDS and OPEN THE SESSION



**LEARN**

TEACH KIDS THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL



**LOVE**

LEAD KIDS TO LOVE THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL



**LIVE**

LEAD KIDS TO LIVE OUT THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

## LEADER Bible Study

The ark of the covenant was a physical reminder of God’s tangible presence with His people. Rather than treat the ark with reverence, they treated the ark as a sort of good luck charm. In our Bible story today, we see what happened when the ark was taken from the people of Israel.

Except in times of war or when the people of Israel were on the move, the ark was kept in the holy of holies in the tabernacle. Once a year, a priest would approach the ark and sprinkle blood on the mercy seat on the ark’s top for the forgiveness of the people’s sins. The ark and what it represented was temporal and pointed forward to the substantial reality of God who would come and live among His people.

When we realize that Jesus lived a perfect life and then died in our place, we see that Jesus is better than the ark because He is always with us. We are filled with thankfulness.

Jesus is better than the bulls and goats whose blood was sprinkled on the ark because His sacrifice is once, for all time (Heb. 10:10). This should move us to worship.

Finally, we should be humbled and filled with confidence when we realize that Jesus, who lived perfectly in human flesh, died and then was resurrected and ascended into

heaven where He, in His glorified human body, prays for us.

This should give you confidence in this life that no matter what we face, God’s Holy Spirit is with us. The Son is interceding for us. Because Jesus stands between the Father and us, we can “approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us at the proper time” (Heb. 4:16). We can go before God daily because of Jesus.

### TERMS TO KNOW

**Ark of the covenant:** wooden box covered in gold that contained the stone tablets on which the Ten Commandments were written, a jar of manna, and Aaron’s rod that budded



## WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

**SAY** “ Can you tell me about a time you disobeyed a parent, teacher, or coach this week? Disobedience is sin and we all struggle with sin. Today, we’re going to hear a story about two men who disobeyed God and faced the consequences of their sin. ”

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “It Doesn’t Belong” on the activity page.

**SAY** “ The picture had several things that didn’t belong. Today, we’re going to learn about two men who took something important and moved it somewhere it didn’t belong. ”

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### OPTION 1: BUILD AN ARK OF GOD



Describe the ark of the covenant or ark of God to the kids as a wooden box covered in gold. Inside were the two stone tablets with the Ten Commandments. Long poles extended along the four corners for men to carry it from place to place.

Form small groups of three or four kids. Provide each group with pretzel sticks as wood pieces, graham crackers to form the ark, icing as glue, and craft sticks to spread the icing. Challenge the teams to build a replica of the ark of the covenant. Consider showing a picture of the ark from a Bible dictionary or online.

**SAY** “ The ark of the covenant was important to the Israelites. It was a reminder of God’s holiness, power, and presence. Today we’re going to hear about a time two men thought they could use the ark as a kind of good luck charm. ”

#### OPTION 2: BATTLE

Form two teams of kids. Give team 1 a shoebox. Give every kid a half-length of pool noodle. Explain that teams will battle each other. Team 1 is responsible for protecting the shoebox. Team 2 will try to capture the shoebox. Kids will use the pool noodles to tap one another. Kids who are bopped with a pool noodle must step away from the game for 30 seconds.

Give team 1 time to set up their shoebox and arrange themselves to protect it. Then allow team 2 to try to capture it. If team 2 captures the shoebox, they win. If they do not capture the shoebox after several minutes, declare team 1 the winner.

**SAY** “ What a battle! I’m glad I wasn’t in the middle of the fight. In today’s Bible story, the Israelites battled the Philistines. The Israelites brought the ark of the covenant. Let’s find out why they did that. ”





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story

#### 1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to 1 Samuel 4–6. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “Eli’s Sons Disobeyed God.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

#### ELI’S SONS DISOBEYED GOD

“ The Israelites had been enemies of the Philistines for many years. **One day, the Philistines defeated Israel in a battle.** The leaders of Israel asked, “Why did God let us lose to the Philistines?”

**The Israelites decided to battle again. This time, however, they would take the ark of the covenant with them.** The ark of the covenant was a wooden box covered in gold that reminded them God was with them. **Maybe the ark would help them win.**

**Eli’s sons, wicked men who did not respect God, 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! **But when the Philistines came out to fight against the Israelites, the Philistines won again! They killed** thousands of Israelites, including **Eli’s sons, and they captured the ark of God.**

One of the Israelites ran to tell Eli what had happened. **When Eli heard the news, he fell backward in his chair, broke his neck, and died.**

**The Philistines** took the ark of the covenant to their temple where they **worshiped a false god named Dagon** (DAY gahn). **They put the ark next to a statue of Dagon. The next morning, the Philistines found Dagon’s statue facedown in front of the ark.** They set the statue back up. **The next day, the statue was facedown again. This time, its head and hands were broken off.**

**God punished the Philistines living in the city where they kept the ark.** The people got sick, and they wanted to get rid of the ark. But when the Philistines 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 too.

**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 Philistines 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. 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.” ”

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Use a visual aid:** Create a model of what the ark of the covenant might have looked like using foam or cardboard, or find a good drawing of the ark to display as you tell the story.

**Act it out:** Tell the story as if you were a witness to the events of the story. You could even dress up in biblical costume.

## 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** “ The Israelites and Philistines had been enemies for a long time. God had used Samson to save the Israelites from the Philistines before. Now the Israelites were fighting the Philistines again. But the Israelites were losing.

God’s promises to the Israelites through Moses were conditional promises. Do you remember them? God promised to fight for His people and give them prosperity and peace if they obeyed God’s law and honored Him.

Our story today took place during the cycle of the judges. The Israelites consistently chose sin and idolatry instead of worshiping God. In fact, look at how the Israelites treated the ark. They didn’t say, ‘We need to repent of sin and ask God to fight for us.’ Instead they said, ‘Let’s carry the ark into battle so it will save us.’ They were treating the ark as an idol! The ark was a symbol of God’s power and holiness, but it wasn’t God. No one can put God inside of a box. As a consequence, God allowed the Philistines to defeat the Israelites.

The Philistines did not worship the one true God. They worshiped a false god called Dagon. In those days, whenever one nation defeated another, it was common to carry any idols from the defeated nation and put them in the temple to whichever false god the winning nation worshiped. It was sort of like saying ‘now your god serves our god because our god must be stronger.’ But when the Philistines brought the ark into the temple of Dagon, the statue of Dagon fell facedown in front of the ark! Then the Philistines got sick. They had defeated the Israelites, but they hadn’t defeated God. When the Philistines realized that the one true God couldn’t be controlled by holding the ark, they were eager to give it back to the Israelites. ”

## 3 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** “ The ark of God reminded the Israelites 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.’ ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

## 4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 9, Session 5” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Is it ever OK to disobey?
2. Why do you think God asks us to obey Him?