

# INVESTIGATING GOD'S WORD...

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JUDGES, RUTH | YEAR THREE | WINTER QUARTER



SUNDAY SCHOOL CURRICULUM  
FOR MIDDLE ELEMENTARY CHILDREN

SS03W-E

# LESSON SEQUENCE

## WINTER QUARTER

The Lesson Sequence gives the teacher an overview of the entire quarter. The central goal of the *Investigating God's Word...* curriculum is to enable children the opportunity to read and study the entire Bible—from Genesis to Revelation—by the time they “graduate” from 6th grade.

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LESSON ONE	Judges 1:1–2:10
LESSON TWO	Judges 2:11–3:31
LESSON THREE	Judges 4–5
LESSON FOUR	Judges 6
LESSON FIVE	Judges 7–8
LESSON SIX	Judges 9–10
LESSON SEVEN	Judges 11–12
LESSON EIGHT	Judges 13–14
LESSON NINE	Judges 15–16
LESSON TEN	Judges 17–18
LESSON ELEVEN	Judges 19–21
LESSON TWELVE	Ruth 1–2
LESSON THIRTEEN	Ruth 3–4

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SPRING QUARTER I Samuel 1–15

**SUGGESTED  
SCHEDULE****WELCOME**

*Proverbs 13:13*  
2–3 mins.

**DRILL TIME**

*Book of Joshua*  
5 mins.

**W.O.W!**

*Generation*  
5 mins.

**HISTORICAL  
CONTEXT**

*Timeline*  
2–3 mins.

**BIBLE  
INVESTIGATION**

*Judges 1:1–2:10*  
20–30 mins.

**LESSON-AT-HOME**

*Psalms 78:4*  
2–3 mins.

**OVERVIEW**

The Book of Judges picks up where the Book of Joshua left off. The Book of Joshua began with the death of Moses. The Book of Judges begins with the death of Joshua. Yet again, Israel is in need of Godly leadership. Will they follow the LORD?

Judges 1 chronicles the possession of the land of Canaan. The LORD has instructed all of the tribes to take their land and drive out the remaining Canaanites. He has even promised them that He will be with them to give them the power to do it. The tribes of Judah and Simeon are the first to obey, making quick work of God's enemies. Unfortunately, many of the rest of the tribes do not drive out the Canaanites, leaving them as either their slaves or worse—as their neighbors.

Judges 2 opens with a scathing rebuke from the LORD. He accuses Israel of breaking covenant with Him by making covenants with the people of Canaan. The consequence will be that these pagan nations would always be a snare to God's people. Then comes the very sad verse 10: "...another generation grew up, who neither knew the LORD nor what He had done for Israel..." The generation after Joshua and the elders had failed to teach their children to follow the LORD.

**PREPARATION**

Read and meditate on Judges 1-2 this week. You may want to re-read the end of Joshua 24 as well.

**TEACHING ENCOURAGEMENT**

The Book of Judges begins with very bad signs—pagan folks living amongst God's people, and a new generation growing up not knowing the LORD. These sorts of times have occurred throughout the ages, as Christians fail to be truly set apart to God and to teach their children to do the same. But be encouraged! The very fact that you are using this curriculum with a group of children means you are not falling into this trap! We teach the entirety of God's Word to our covenant children so that they have the opportunity to grow up knowing Jesus. Praise the LORD that He has given you the desire to teach and train the next generation!

THE WELCOME SERVES AS BOTH AN OPPORTUNITY TO GREET THE CHILDREN AS WELL AS AN EFFORT TO HELP THEM GET FOCUSED. EACH WEEK, YOU WILL BEGIN WITH QUESTIONS OR AN ACTIVITY THAT WILL ENGAGE THE CHILDREN AND HELP THEM THINK ABOUT GOD AND HIS WORD.

DRILL TIME GIVES THE CHILDREN THE OPPORTUNITY TO RECALL AND REHEARSE WHAT THEY HAVE BEEN TAUGHT IN THE PAST— AT HOME, SCHOOL AND/OR CHURCH.

THIS ELEMENT ALLOWS THE INVESTIGATING GOD'S WORD... CURRICULUM TO COVER MUCH MORE BIBLICAL "GROUND," SINCE TIME IS NOT EXPENDED REPEATING THE SAME BIBLE STORIES OVER AND OVER AGAIN FROM YEAR TO YEAR.



## WELCOME

**Greet the students. Welcome visitors. To prepare the students for class today, read Proverbs 13:13.**

<sup>13</sup> Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.

**Say:** *Think about this proverb—this wise saying from the LORD. To “despise” instruction is to ignore it and even hate it. To “revere” a command is to obey it and even love it! So you have two choices when you hear God’s commands—you can hate them or love them. What is the only way to gain a great reward? By loving God’s Word! Let’s respect God’s Word today.*



## DRILL TIME

Now, let’s move on to DRILL TIME—our weekly opportunity to review what we have learned in the past. Are you ready?

**Today’s questions:** *Who led Israel into the Promised Land after Moses died? What was the name of the city that God made its walls fall down? How were the Gibeonites able to deceive Joshua and the elders? What tribe of Israel did not get any land because they were God’s priests? Before he died, what did Joshua tell the people he and his family would do?*

**Call on volunteers or select students to make attempts.**

**Answers:**

1. Joshua.
2. Jericho.
3. Because Joshua and the elders did not seek the LORD.
4. The Levites.
5. As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.

**Say:** *That’s just a short review of the Book of Joshua. The LORD was with Joshua and made him into a great leader of His people. But who would lead the Israelites after he dies? We will find out in a moment.... Now for the Word of the Week!*

THE **W.O.W!** IS THE WORD OF THE WEEK. THIS ELEMENT IS INCLUDED TO HELP THE CHILDREN BUILD THEIR THEOLOGICAL AND BIBLICAL VOCABULARIES. THESE WORDS ARE VITAL TO THE CHRISTIAN'S UNDERSTANDING OF GOD AND HIS WORLD.



## W.O.W!

Our *W.O.W!* (Word of the Week) this week is **GENERATION**. Has anyone heard that word before? One place we find this word in the Bible is in Psalm 24:6. **Read it to the children.**

### Psalm 24:6 (ESV)

<sup>6</sup> Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

A *GENERATION* is a group of people who are all about the same age, and live at the same time in history. For example, your parents and I are probably all a part of the same *GENERATION*. All of you are part of another *GENERATION*. So, you and I are members of different *GENERATIONS*.

The word *GENERATION* is found throughout the Bible. God looks at each *GENERATION* to see if that particular *GENERATION* will follow Him. Do you think that you are a part of a *GENERATION* who will follow God?

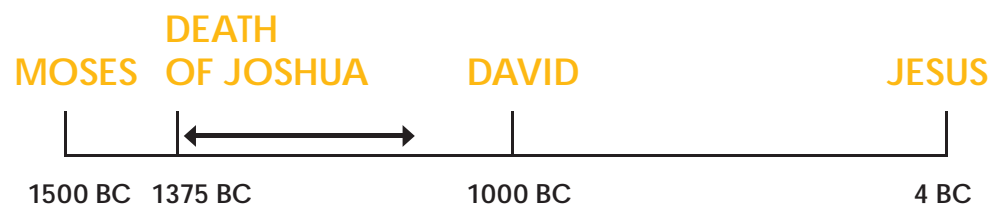
Watch for our Word of the Week in our reading today, and see if a *GENERATION* is following the LORD.



## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

**As you begin your study of Judges today, draw this timeline on the board. Always remember that the students need to understand God's Word in its historical context.**

### This Week's Timeline



EACH WEEK, THE BIBLE LESSON WILL BE PLACED IN **HISTORICAL CONTEXT** BY USE OF A TIMELINE. IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT THE CHILDREN LEARN HOW THE STORY OF REDEMPITIVE HISTORY FITS TOGETHER. BIBLE STORIES MUST NOT BE VIEWED AS DETACHED SCENES—THEY ARE TO BE SHOWN AS A PART OF A MUCH BIGGER PICTURE. THE TIMELINE IS A USEFUL TOOL TOWARD THAT END.



## BIBLE INVESTIGATION

THE BIBLE INVESTIGATION TIME IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF THE WEEK'S LESSON. IT PLUNGES THE STUDENT DIRECTLY INTO GOD'S WORD, NOT SIMPLY A PARAPHRASE OF A BIBLE STORY.

ALL SCRIPTURE TEXT INCLUDED IN THE CURRICULUM IS FROM THE ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION (ESV).

THE BIBLE READING IS TAKEN IN SHORT SECTIONS, SEPARATED BY TIMES OF DISCUSSION, QUESTIONS, AND APPLICATION POINTS. THIS FORMAT ALLOWS AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO STOP, THINK ABOUT AND DISCUSS WHAT IS BEING READ.

**Introduction:** *The Book of Judges comes right after the Book of Joshua in our Bibles. In the Book of Joshua, the people of God fight for and take the land that God has given them—the land of Canaan. Now that the land has been taken, it has to be truly possessed by the Israelites. This is where we pick up in Judges 1.*

*Let's begin reading together. **Read Judges 1:1.***

<sup>1</sup>After the death of Joshua, the people of Israel inquired of the LORD, "Who shall go up first for us against the Canaanites, to fight against them?"

**Discussion:** *The Book of Exodus began with the death of Joseph. The Book of Joshua began with the death of Moses. The Book of Judges now begins with the death of Joshua. What happens when the great leaders of God's people die? God's people must find new leaders, right? That's what is happening here at the beginning of Judges—the Israelites need someone to lead them.*

**Application:** *Who is the true leader of God's people, who will never die? [God is!] Yes, and God has given us Jesus Christ as our forever leader. Isn't that great!*

*Let's see what happens to Israel. **Read verses 2-4.***

<sup>2</sup>The LORD said, "Judah shall go up; behold, I have given the land into his hand." <sup>3</sup>And Judah said to Simeon his brother, "Come up with me into the territory allotted to me, that we may fight against the Canaanites. And I likewise will go with you into the territory allotted to you." So Simeon went with him. <sup>4</sup>Then Judah went up and the LORD gave the Canaanites and the Perizzites into their hand, and they defeated 10,000 of them at Bezek.

**Discussion:** *God is still leading Israel. He tells the tribe of Judah to go and possess their land. Who has given them their land? [God has!] The tribe of Judah received help from the tribe of Simeon, but it was the LORD who defeated the Canaanites, wasn't it? God was still at work in Israel.*

*Let's read more. **Read verses 8-11.***

<sup>8</sup>And the men of Judah fought against Jerusalem and captured it and struck it with the edge of the sword and set the city on fire. <sup>9</sup>And afterward the men of Judah went down to fight against the Canaanites who lived in the hill country, in the Negeb, and in the lowland.



THE **GREY SIDEBAR** FOUND ON ALL PAGES IS FOR THE TEACHER TO WRITE NOTES AS HE OR SHE PREPARES THE LESSON.

OTHER TEACHING TIPS OR IMPORTANT EXEGETICAL INFORMATION WILL ALSO APPEAR ON THE SIDEBAR.

<sup>10</sup>And Judah went against the Canaanites who lived in Hebron (now the name of Hebron was formerly Kiriath-arba), and they defeated Sheshai and Ahiman and Talmai. <sup>11</sup>From there they went against the inhabitants of Debir. The name of Debir was formerly Kiriath-sepher.

**Discussion:** *The tribe of Judah continues to drive out all of their enemies and possess the land. How are they able to do it? [Because God is giving them the land.]*

*Let's continue. Read verses 17-19.*

<sup>17</sup>And Judah went with Simeon his brother, and they defeated the Canaanites who inhabited Zephath and devoted it to destruction. So the name of the city was called Hormah. <sup>18</sup>Judah also captured Gaza with its territory, and Ashkelon with its territory, and Ekron with its territory. <sup>19</sup>And the LORD was with Judah, and he took possession of the hill country, but he could not drive out the inhabitants of the plain because they had chariots of iron.

**Discussion:** *Who was with the men of Judah? [The LORD.] Only because the LORD was with them could they take possession of their land. But, we have one bad sign. What is it? [They could not remove the people from the plains because they had iron chariots.] Is God stronger than iron chariots? [Yes!]*

*Let's read more. Read verses 20.*

<sup>20</sup>And Hebron was given to Caleb, as Moses had said. And he drove out from it the three sons of Anak.

**Discussion:** *Caleb was one of the two spies (Joshua was the other) who trusted God when it came to entering the Promised Land. God blessed Caleb with his own land because he was faithful!*

*Now for some bad news. Read verse 21.*

<sup>21</sup>But the people of Benjamin did not drive out the Jebusites who lived in Jerusalem, so the Jebusites have lived with the people of Benjamin in Jerusalem to this day.

**Discussion:** *God commanded the Israelites to drive out ALL of the people of Canaan. The tribe of Benjamin failed to follow God's commands! They did not drive out the Jebusites. They allowed them to live in Jerusalem. This is bad news, boys and girls.*

APPLICATION POINTS ARE WOVEN INTO THE FABRIC OF THE DISCUSSION, RATHER THAN BEING LEFT TO THE END OF THE LESSON.



**Application:** *When God gives you a command, He also gives you the strength to obey it. The Benjamites could have driven out God’s enemies, but they didn’t. They did not use the strength of the LORD to obey Him.*

*What about Joseph’s family? Read verses 22-26.*

<sup>22</sup>The house of Joseph also went up against Bethel, and the LORD was with them. <sup>23</sup>And the house of Joseph scouted out Bethel. (Now the name of the city was formerly Luz.) <sup>24</sup>And the spies saw a man coming out of the city, and they said to him, “Please show us the way into the city, and we will deal kindly with you.” <sup>25</sup>And he showed them the way into the city. And they struck the city with the edge of the sword, but they let the man and all his family go. <sup>26</sup>And the man went to the land of the Hittites and built a city and called its name Luz. That is its name to this day.

**Discussion:** *This is good news! The two tribes of Joseph obeyed God and drove out the people of Bethel. How did they have the strength to do this? [Because the LORD was with them.]*

*Oh no, more bad news. Read verses 27-30.*

<sup>27</sup>Manasseh did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shean and its villages, or Taanach and its villages, or the inhabitants of Dor and its villages, or the inhabitants of Ibleam and its villages, or the inhabitants of Megiddo and its villages, for the Canaanites persisted in dwelling in that land. <sup>28</sup>When Israel grew strong, they put the Canaanites to forced labor, but did not drive them out completely. <sup>29</sup>And Ephraim did not drive out the Canaanites who lived in Gezer, so the Canaanites lived in Gezer among them. <sup>30</sup>Zebulun did not drive out the inhabitants of Kitron, or the inhabitants of Nahalol, so the Canaanites lived among them, but became subject to forced labor.

**Discussion:** *The tribes of Manasseh, Ephraim and Zebulun disobeyed the LORD and did not drive out the Canaanites. They made them slaves, but God did not tell them to do that, did He?*

*Let’s continue. Read verses 31-35.*

<sup>31</sup>Asher did not drive out the inhabitants of Acco, or the inhabitants of Sidon or of Ahlab or of Achzib or of Helbah or of Aphik or of Rehob, <sup>32</sup>so the Asherites lived among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the land, for they did not drive them out. <sup>33</sup>Naphtali did not drive out the inhabitants of Beth-shemesh, or the inhabitants of Beth-anath, and of Beth-anath became subject to forced labor for them.





<sup>34</sup>The Amorites pressed the people of Dan back into the hill country, for they did not allow them to come down to the plain. <sup>35</sup>The Amorites persisted in dwelling in Mount Heres, in Aijalon, and in Shaalbim, but the hand of the house of Joseph rested heavily on them, and they became subject to forced labor.

**Discussion:** *Did the tribes of Asher or Naphtali drive the enemies of God out of the Promised Land? [No.] Do you understand that this meant that they had to live around these people that did not follow God? God wanted His people to only be neighbors with His people. Instead, many of these tribes became neighbors with people who worshipped idols. Do you think this is good? [No!]*

**Application:** *It is very important to surround ourselves with people who follow God. You need people to influence you in the right ways, not the wrong ways.*

*Let's move quickly to Judges 2. **Read Judges 2:1-5.***

<sup>1</sup>Now the angel of the LORD went up from Gilgal to Bochim. And he said, "I brought you up from Egypt and brought you into the land that I swore to give to your fathers. I said, 'I will never break my covenant with you, <sup>2</sup>and you shall make no covenant with the inhabitants of this land; you shall break down their altars.' But you have not obeyed my voice. What is this you have done? <sup>3</sup>So now I say, I will not drive them out before you, but they shall become thorns in your sides, and their gods shall be a snare to you." <sup>4</sup>As soon as the angel of the LORD spoke these words to all the people of Israel, the people lifted up their voices and wept. <sup>5</sup>And they called the name of that place Bochim. And they sacrificed there to the LORD.

**Discussion:** *Did you hear that? Because God's people did not keep the covenant and drive His enemies out, they would always be a snare—a trap—to the Israelites. This isn't good!*

*Let's finish our reading for today. **Read verses 7-10.***

<sup>7</sup>And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great work that the LORD had done for Israel. <sup>8</sup>And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of 110 years. <sup>9</sup>And they buried him within the boundaries of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of the mountain of Gaash. <sup>10</sup>And all that generation also were gathered to their

THE LESSON-AT-HOME SECTION IS THE CLOSING TIME EACH WEEK. BOOKMARKS ARE GIVEN TO THE STUDENTS THAT INCLUDE THE SCRIPTURE MEMORY VERSE AND A LESSON REVIEW. THE LESSON REVIEW CONTAINS WORDS AND PHRASES THAT CAN SPARK MEMORIES AS WELL AS CONVERSATION WITH PARENTS.



fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel.

**Conclusion:** *There's our W.O.W! After Joshua and that whole GENERATION died, what happened? [Another GENERATION grew up who did not know God.] Joshua had led the people to know God and follow God. All Joshua's GENERATION had seen amazing things from God. God had given them this land! But, their children grew up NOT knowing God. What happened? We'll talk about that next time.*



## LESSON-AT-HOME

**Distribute the “Lesson-At-Home” bookmarks. Read the Scripture Memory verse (Psalm 78:4) together.**

**Psalm 78:4 (ESV)**

<sup>4</sup> We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the LORD...

**Say:** *Do you hear our Word of the Week? It seems as though a GENERATION of adults did not tell the next GENERATION of children about the LORD in the Book of Judges. The Psalmist here tells us to make sure to tell all GENERATIONS about God and His power and might. Will you tell the next GENERATION or will you hide Jesus from them?*

**Review the verse a couple of times.**

**Direct the students' attentions to the bottom half of the bookmark. It includes reminder points of today's lesson that can be discussed with their parents and reviewed during the week.**

**Close in prayer and dismiss the students.**