



THE ARK WAS CAPTURED



1 SAMUEL 4-6

Instructions

The curriculum we use for elementary aged children goes through the Bible chronologically. Currently we are finishing up the book of Deuteronomy. So that your child can continue their journey through the Bible we will be putting together VERY basic Bible lessons for you to do at home. Below you will find a summary of this week's Bible passage. All you have to do is read it with your kids. Then you will see two different sets of discussion questions. One for older kids (3rd-4th grade range) and one for younger kids (Kinder-2nd grade range). Read the discussion questions with your kids. Remember, discussion is not one sided, it's different people talking together. Give your kids the opportunity to think and speak. I pray the Lord speaks to you and your family as you dive into His word together.

Tell the Bible Story

The Israelites fought many battles against the Philistines. One day the Philistines defeated Israel. The leaders of Israel said, "Why did God let us lose to the Philistines?" The Israelites decided to take the ark of the covenant—a wooden box covered in gold that reminded them God was with them—and carry it to the battlefield. Maybe the ark would help them win.

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 Philistines came out to fight against the Israelites, and the Philistines won again! They killed thousands of Israelites, including Eli's sons, and they even captured the ark of God! One of the men in the battle 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 God to a 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 entered the temple and saw that Dagon's statue was facedown in front of the ark. They set the statue back up where it belonged. The next day, the statue was facedown again. This time, its head and hands were broken off.

God punished the people living in the city where the Philistines kept the ark. The people got sick, and they 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 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. They 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."

Discussion & Bible Skills - Older

Guide your kids to open their Bibles to 1 Samuel 4. Remind kids that like Deborah, Samson, and Gideon; Samuel was a judge over Israel. Samuel lived during a time when Israel was often fighting with the Philistines. Read aloud 1 Samuel 4:3.

Ask the following questions. Lead your kids and discuss:

1. What was wrong with the Israelites' battle strategy?

Emphasize that the ark was a reminder of God's presence, but God did not live in it—you can't put God into a box! We can ask God for things we want or need, but we cannot make God do what we want.

2. Do you always consult God when you want something to happen a certain way? Why or why not?

Lead your kids to recognize that God is in control of all things. He does everything for His glory and our good. If something happens in a way we do not desire or expect, we can still trust God even when we don't understand. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 14:13.)

3. How is God with us today?

Remind your kids that God gave us His Son, Jesus—God in the flesh. One of Jesus' names is Immanuel, which means "God with us." When Jesus went back to heaven, He sent the Holy Spirit to live inside believers.

SAY:

When the Israelites lost the battle against the Philistines, they decided to take the ark of God to the battlefield. They treated the ark like a good luck charm. But the Philistines captured the ark of God, and they carried it to the city of Ashdod. God brought down the Philistines' false god, and He punished the people living in the city. God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God. Finally, the Philistines returned the ark back to the Israelites.

Discussion & Bible Skills - Younger

Help your kids find 1 Samuel 4–6. Ask which division 1 Samuel is in (Old Testament History), and briefly review that we use Bible divisions to help us organize the Bible so we can understand what God is telling us through His Word.

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. What did the people of Israel do to try and win the battle against the Philistines?

Took the ark into battle, 1 Sam. 4:3-4

2. Who won the battle?

The Philistines, 1 Sam. 4:10-11

3. What happened to the Philistines while they had the ark?

Their idol fell and broke. Their people got sick; 1 Sam. 5:3-10



4. Why did Israel lose the battles they fought?

Guide your kids to discuss that most of the Israelites weren't interested in loving or obeying God. God chose not to fight for them because He wanted them to turn back to Him from their sin. They wanted to use the ark to force God to fight for them. They expected the ark to protect them, instead of trusting in God and obeying Him.

5. What action did God take many years after the story to even more clearly show His presence with His people?

Guide your kids to discuss that Jesus is the visible image of God. He is God's Son and perfectly shows us what God is like. When we know Jesus and have faith in Him, God forgives us and gives us new life. The Holy Spirit fills us with God's power and stays with us to help us love and obey God.

6. What are some ways we show that we do not trust God? How can we grow to trust Him more?

Discuss the fact that sin in our lives usually proves there are ways we are not trusting God. We worship or trust in other things, which leads us to sin. We can grow in our faith by reading His Word, going to church, asking Him for help, and confessing our sin.



SAY:

God showed the Philistines that He is the one true God. Jesus is God the Son, and He came to rescue us.