

The BIBLE Story

Israel's Unfaithfulness

Judges 1–3

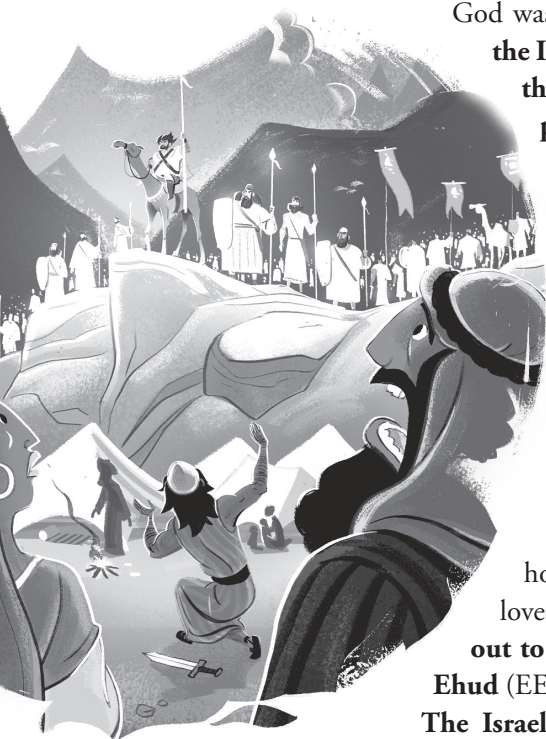
Joshua had died. Without a strong leader, the Israelites disobeyed God. Nothing good ever happened when the Israelites disobeyed God. God wanted the people to love and obey Him, so he gave them a leader called a *judge*.

Othniel (AHTH nih el) was the first judge.

God was with Othniel, and **Othniel led the Israelites into battle. God helped the Israelites win. The land was peaceful for many years, then Othniel died.** With no leader, the Israelites forgot about God again. They worshiped false gods instead. God was unhappy. He let the king of Moab attack the Israelites and defeat them so they would turn back to Him. The Israelites had to serve the king of Moab for 18 years.

The Israelites remembered how good it had been when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to Him, “Save us!” So God chose **Ehud** (EE huhd) to save them.

The Israelites sent Ehud to the king of Moab with a gift of money. Ehud made himself a sword. He hid it under his clothes. Then Ehud went to the king of Moab. Ehud said, “I have a secret message for you.” The king told all his attendants to go away so he was alone with Ehud.



When the king stood up, Ehud reached under his clothes and pulled out his sword. **Ehud killed the king.** Then he ran away, locking the doors of the room behind him.

When Ehud got away, he blew a ram's horn and became the leader of the Israelites. They fought the Moabites and won. They had peace in the land for 80 years.

Ehud died, and the Israelites forgot God again. When they remembered how good they had it when they loved and obeyed God, they cried out to Him, "Save us!" God sent a third judge, Shamgar (SHAM gahr), to save them.

Christ Connection: After God's people sinned, the judges helped God's people obey God again. But the judges could not change the people's hearts and make them love God. God had a plan. He sent His Son, Jesus, to change His people's hearts and save them from sin forever.

Bible Storytelling Tips

• **Paper plate**

faces: Give each child a paper plate before you tell the Bible story. Lead children to draw a sad face on one side of the plate and a happy face on the other. Ask children to hold up the appropriate face to show how the people felt as you tell the Bible story. Pause and give prompts as needed.

• **Pretend to blow a**

horn: Encourage the children to pretend to blow a ram's horn when each judge is mentioned.