Lesson

Engaging Introduction

-Children, today we're going to learn about a story from the Bible that shows us what happens when people turn away from God's guidance. Have any of you ever been in a disagreement or seen others who couldn't get along? Maybe you've been on the playground and watched a dodgeball game get a little too heated because someone didn't play by the rules. It can feel chaotic, right? Today, we're diving into Judges Chapter 20, a story about a time when God's people, the Israelites, faced a huge problem because they weren't listening to Him as they should have been. In fact, the problem was so big that it led to a huge battle!

This story will help us see why it's important to follow God's guidance and how making the wrong choices can lead to lots of trouble. Even though this story is about a battle, we will focus on understanding what God wants us to learn about fairness, truth, and unity. As we go through the lesson, think about the choices the people made and what could have happened if they had decided differently. And remember, this story might have some tough parts, but it's in the Bible to teach us something important about how we should live today.

I’m excited for us to explore this chapter together and see how it applies to our lives in homes, schools, and with friends on the playground. Let's start with the main points of the story!

Main Teaching Points

-Point 1: The Problem Arises

The first thing to know about Judges Chapter 20 is that it starts with a big problem. The Israelites were God's chosen people, but not all of them were doing the right thing. One of the 12 tribes of Israel, the tribe of Benjamin, had people who committed a very bad act in one of their cities. This act was so terrible that the other tribes of Israel decided something had to be done about it. Imagine if you were in school and someone was really mean or did something unfair. What would happen? Maybe a teacher would have to step in to make things right. In our story, the rest of the Israelites became the "teachers" in this situation, and they gathered together to decide what to do to correct this wrong.

-Point 2: Seeking Guidance

When the Israelites needed to take action, they first decided to come together at a place called Mizpah. Here, imagine that the Israelites are having a big family meeting, like when you sit down with family to talk about important events. They gathered a large group—all the other tribes came except for the tribe of Benjamin. This meeting was essential because they wanted to hear from God on what to do next. They decided to consult God first because they knew that making big decisions without Him could lead to even greater problems. They asked God whether they should go to battle against the Benjamites. This was like raising your hand to ask a teacher or parent what is the right thing to do.

-Point 3: God's Response and Obedience

God did respond to the Israelites. He told them to go ahead and fight the Benjamites. It shows us that God wants us to seek His guidance whenever we face tough choices. Just like when you study

for a test and your teacher gives you pointers on what to focus on, God pointed the Israelites towards the right action. However, even though God was with them, the first two battles didn’t go well for the Israelites. Instead of giving up, though, they came back to God after each battle to pray and ask for more guidance. They didn't understand why things weren't working out, but they kept following God's instructions. This shows us persistence, which is important—don't give up just because the going gets tough.

-Point 4: Victory and the Power of Unity

On the third attempt, the Israelites finally won the battle, and it was a hard-fought victory. They kept asking for God's help and did not rely on their strength alone. It’s like when you practice really hard at a sport or instrument and finally see improvements. Working together and listening for God's guidance was key for their success. This part of the story teaches us the value of unity, working together, and not giving up, even when things look impossible. Just as a team must work together to win a game, the tribes of Israel needed to be unified to stop the wrongs occurring in their land.

-Point 5: Lessons About Choices and Consequences

Finally, we learn that our choices have consequences. The tribe of Benjamin made some really poor decisions, leading to a big conflict. This is like when you choose not to do your homework and then face consequences of not getting to have fun during recess, maybe having to make up the work. The story shows us that when we make bad choices or ignore those around us, it can lead to problems. On the flip side, it also shows us the importance of doing the right thing and following God's path to make things right.

Personal Application for Elementary Students

Now, let's think about how Judges Chapter 20 applies to our daily lives. At its core, the chapter is all about choices, consequences, and relying on God's guidance. Even as kids, you face choices every day. Maybe it's deciding whether to be kind to someone who isn’t always nice, or choosing to do your homework instead of playing video games. Remember, we're learning that every choice we make impacts not only us but also the people around us.

So, here's the big lesson: Always try to make the right choice by thinking about what God would want. Just like the Israelites came together to seek God’s help, you can pray or think about what is the right thing to do in any situation. You can also ask your parents or teachers for advice. They're there to help guide you, much like God guided the Israelites.

And don't forget about the importance of unity! Whether it’s working with classmates on a group project or playing in a team sport, sticking together and supporting each other is key. Even when things seem difficult, remember that by working as a team, just like the Israelites did, you can accomplish so much.

So, whenever you're faced with a challenge or a decision, think about what you’ve learned today from Judges 20. Ask yourself, how can I make a choice that’s fair, that’s right, and that brings me closer to living as God wants?

Interactive Discussion Questions with explanation and teaching guidance

1. Why did the Israelites come together in Judges 20?

Guide your students to understand the concept of unity and problem-solving. Explain that, just like

a class meeting might be called to solve a problem at school, the Israelites came together to figure out the best way to handle the wrongdoing among them.

2. Why is it important to ask for guidance from God or adults when facing tough decisions?

Lead students to conclude that just as grown-ups have more experience, God knows what is best for us. Discuss how asking for advice can help us make better choices. You might compare this to looking at instructions before building a LEGO set to ensure it’s put together correctly.

3. What happened when the Israelites didn’t win right away and what does this teach us about persistence?

Encourage students to talk about times when they had to keep trying and didn't succeed right away. Reinforce the lesson of not giving up and relating this perseverance to sports, practicing a musical instrument, or even getting better at reading.

4. How can we practice being united, like the Israelites, in our daily lives?

Focus on the importance of teamwork and supporting each other in various situations—like group assignments, playing games fairly, or even within family tasks. Have students share times when they successfully worked as part of a team.

Through these questions, help students see that the lessons from Judges 20 are not just ancient stories but relevant principles they can live by today. Encourage them to think deeply about these applications, and be sure to acknowledge each response, fostering an environment of open, guided discussion.