

THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY CHILDREN'S MEETING LESSON

DATE: November 4, 2018

SUBJECT: HUMAN RELATIONSHIPS: Friends (3 of 4)—How to Choose the Right Friends

SCRIPTURE: Judges 13-16; Psalms 1; 1 Corinthians 15:33b; 2 Timothy 2:22b

AIM: We should be very careful whom we choose to be our friends. Our friends will affect the way we are, both positively and negatively.

SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES: 1 Corinthians 15:33 (Do not be deceived: Evil companionships corrupt good morals.); Proverbs 13:20 (He who walks with wise men will be wise, But the companion of fools will be troubled.); 2 Timothy 2:22b (...pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.); Psalms 1:1a (Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked,...)

SUGGESTED SONGS: 1612 (Companions); 48 (The wise man and the foolish man); 186 (Do you know what you're made for?); 9307 *Bible Story Songs Daniel Song #7* (Oh, yes, I can! I can choose my friends so carefully!), 9316 *BSS Daniel Song #16* (What do you do?), 192 (We are different); 9213 *BSS David Song #17* (For the Lord sees not as man sees)

CRAFT IDEAS: Use cardstock to make a 3-D scene of Samson and two pillars (paper towel or toilet paper rolls). *See attached template.*

APPROACH: Ask the children what kind of characteristics they like in a friend. What do they think makes a good friend? Write what they say on the board. Honest? Popular? Smart? Funny? Good-looking?

CONTENT: The Bible warns us that “**Evil companionships corrupt good morals**” (1 Corin. 15:33b). That means if we have bad friends, we will eventually become like them. Therefore, as children of God, our closest friends should be those who believe in God and fear God.

We have heard in an earlier lesson about the friendship of David and Jonathan. Today we would like to see an example from the Bible of what happens when we do *not* choose proper friends.

Samson was a judge before the children of Israel had a king. He also was a Nazarite (one who makes a vow to separate himself by not drinking wine and not cutting his hair, among other things). Before Samson was born, the Angel of Jehovah had appeared to Samson's mother and said that his hair should not be cut and that Samson would save Israel from the hand of the Philistines. The Philistines were enemies that ruled over Israel at the time. When Samson grew up, however, he did not keep himself away from the Philistines. Rather, he made friends with some Philistines, and he even married a Philistine woman instead of one of God's people.

Samson was very strong, but he was not wise. His parents told him to choose from among God's people. But Samson did not listen to his parents and instead kept having very close relationships with the Philistines and spending his time with them. One of these Philistines was a person named Delilah. She was a person who did not love God or His people. The leaders of the Philistines offered Delilah a lot of money to find out the secret of Samson's strength. Delilah asked Samson several times why he was so strong. Samson at first did not tell her his secret. Daily Delilah bothered him. Eventually, his love for this close friend blinded him from seeing her wicked plot. One day Samson told Delilah the secret to his strength, “No razor has *ever* come upon my head, for I have been a Nazarite to God from my mother's womb. If I were shaved, my strength would leave me, and I would become weak and be like all men” (Judges 16:17).

When Samson was asleep, Delilah had a man come and shave Samson's head. When he awoke, the Philistines grabbed Samson. He had lost his strength because the Lord had left him. The evil Philistines took

out Samson's two eyes and tied him up with chains and put him in prison. What a terrible thing for Samson! Samson had chosen the wrong person to be his close friend. He was now weak, blind and in prison. In prison, the Philistines made him work.

Soon, Samson's hair began to grow again. One day, the Philistines brought Samson out of prison and made him stand between two pillars of a house. This house was filled with men and women of Philistia. There were about 3,000 on the roof of this house looking down upon Samson. Samson prayed to the Lord, "O Lord Jehovah, remember me, I pray; and strengthen me, I pray, this one time only,..." (Judges 16:28a). God heard Samson's prayer and made him strong again. With his two hands, Samson caused the pillars on which the house rested to come down with all the people in it. The house came down and many Philistines, who were enemies of God, died that day. Sadly, Samson also died.

Samson's disregard for his mother's and father's advice led to Samson's downfall. When he chose various Philistines to be his closest friends, he probably did not think anything bad would happen to him. But little by little, his friend Delilah's thinking wore away Samson's own proper thinking which his parents had instilled in him. Eventually, he must not have thought that it was a big deal to tell Delilah his secret.

SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM: *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not try to cover all the applications. It is sufficient to cover just **one or two applications** which are appropriate for the age group of the children you are serving.*

- **If we want to be proper persons and have proper habits, we must have proper friends.** Our closest friends should be those who love the Lord and behave properly. At school, our friends might not yet know the Lord, but we can choose friends who obey the rules and obey their teachers. We should be friends with those who study and help others, and do their homework. We should avoid those who fight and cause problems, talk in the classroom, fool around, cheat, or say curse words. If your friends are evil and they lie, steal, cheat, fight, and curse, you will also eventually do the same. In our neighborhoods, choose friends who play safely and obey their parents and older persons who are responsible for them. Avoid any kids that lie to their parents, and do things that their parents told them not to do. Those that do bad things will eventually get you into trouble too.
- **We should listen to our parents and those who love the Lord regarding our choice of friends.** Maybe we think someone is "cool", good-looking, funny and popular with other kids, but after our parents meet them, our parents don't think that person is a good friend. While it may be hard for us because we like that person, it is wise to obey our parents. Samson chose Delilah and other Philistine friends, whose people were against God, instead of listening to the advice of his parents. Our parents are older and wiser and know better who could be our proper friends.
- **We should not deceive ourselves; none of us is that strong.** If we keep evil companions we will quickly lose our good habits. We will no longer behave like the Lord's children. Maybe we may think – "Oh, I would *never* do that" or "I would *never* say bad words like my friend does." But if we are with a person long enough, we will become just like them. Better to just stay away from those who are disrespectful to grown-ups, who lie, cheat and steal, who make fun of other people, who do not believe in God and curse the name of Jesus, etc. (Psalm 1:1). Always pick friends that have good character. Our closest friends should fear God, believe in God, and love God (2 Timothy 2:22b).

Adapted from *Bringing Children from Adam to Christ-Human Relationships*, Vol. 3, Lesson 10, and the Church in New York City Children's Meeting lessons, 10/26/97; 11/4/01; 11/4/07
Craft idea acknowledgment: <https://craftingthewordofgod.files.wordpress.com/2017/08/samson-caught.pdf>



Samson



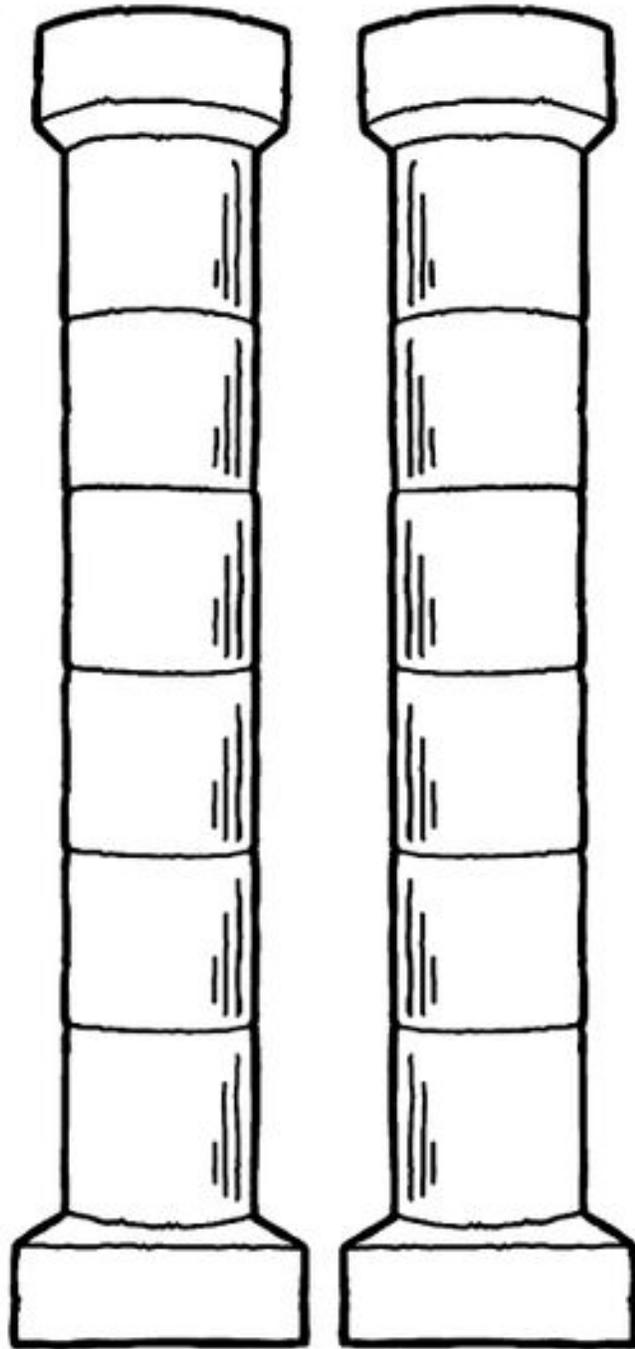
Craft Directions

1. Copy the patterns on this page and page 61 on white cardstock paper.
2. Color patterns. Then cut out the patterns on pages 60 and 61.
3. Fold picture on page 61 along the sides where indicated. On the outside of the folds, glue the two pillars to the sides of the folds (one on each side).
4. Glue Samson to one of the pillars.
5. Open the folds so you can see the crushed structure.

Finished Product



Samson



Pillars