



date _____

4.2



Peace washed over me. I knew God had heard my desperate cry ...

Inspire (for parents)

It was the final showdown. There he stood, my three-year-old son, with his face painted like Spider-Man and growling at me like a lion. But he wasn't playing make-believe. He meant it. And so did I.

"Caden, Mommy said go back to sleep," I told my adorable-but-strong-willed boy. "You've come out of bed three times now. That's unacceptable. It's nap time."

"I'm not tired!" he yelled back. He screamed and cried as I carried him back to his room. I yelled something nonsensical at him (not a proud moment) and then slammed the door with all of my might as I left him sobbing (another shameful moment).

I ran to the living room and plopped down on the couch. I burst into tears. Usually, I was as cool as a cucumber. In fact, in my circle of "mommy friends," I was the gal known for her reason, good humor, and self-control. Ha! If they could only see me now. "God, please help me," I said as hot tears rolled down my cheeks. "I feel so lost. I feel like a failure. Please, please, help me ... Please, Lord."

I was a crumpled-up mess on the sofa. A few minutes had passed when

suddenly Caden stopped crying. Silence. I wiped the tears off my face as I tiptoed to his room. I carefully opened his bedroom door and peeked through the crack. Caden was asleep. He looked like an angel.

I felt an overwhelming sense of relief. Peace washed over me. I knew God had heard my desperate cry for help, and I was so grateful. A few hours later, Caden woke up from his deep slumber. I embraced him and told him how much I loved him. He looked up at me with his big brown eyes. "I love you so much too, Mommy," he said.

☪ Jennifer Cho Salaff

Getting Started

Scripture: Judges 4–5 (Deborah)

Main Point: God Is Merciful

This resource is designed to allow your family to have time in God's Word **before your children attend church**. Because God's plan is for parents to be the spiritual nurturers of their children's faith, we know that as you grow spiritually, your children will grow spiritually as well.

Equip (for parents)

Though they enjoyed 80 years of peace, the Israelites once again turned from the Lord and worshipped false gods. Because of their disobedience, God gave the people of Israel over to the hands of Jabin, a cruel Canaanite king. Oppressed and desperate, the Israelites cried out to God for help. In His great mercy, God responded.

Deborah, a prophetess and faithful judge of the nation, led the Israelites during this time. She was a woman of God, one with whom God spoke and gave directions.

The Lord instructed Deborah to send for a man named Barak. Deborah told Barak about the specific instructions God gave to defeat King Jabin's army. When Deborah and Barak arrived at Mount Tabor, they saw that the Lord had sent an unseasonal rain upon the battlefield. But this was the dry season; Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, would not have brought his chariots into battle if there was any hint of wet weather. "The LORD routed Sisera and all his chariots ... Sisera abandoned his chariot and fled on foot" (Judges 4:15). The word translated "routed" here means confused or thrown into a panic. (This is similar to what God did to Pharaoh's charioteers who were pursuing the Israelites across the Red Sea.) The Canaanite army was in confusion and chaos. The strength of the Israelites grew until they finally destroyed King Jabin completely.

In the midst of their disobedience, God delivered His people. On the day of this victory, Deborah and Barak sang a song telling of God's redemption. The heart of this story is true for every generation that followed. We are shaped by the stories and events of the past. Our stories are impacted by the messages of those who have gone before us proclaiming the truth of God. ☪

REMEMBER VERSE

The LORD causes his miracles to be remembered. He is kind and tender.
Psalm 111:4 (NIRV)

Support (for parents & kids)

This week, > **JUST FOR FUN**, gather some pots and pans or toy instruments (anything your children can use to create "music"). Then read the account of Deborah (**Judges 4:4–7, 23–24** and **5:1–9**) together as a family. At the end of each section, think of questions for your children that reflect what they just read, such as, "What did Deborah tell Barak to do?" and "What kinds of things did Deborah praise God for?"

Explain to your children that after God helped the Israelites win an important battle, Deborah praised Him. Invite your children to begin making a "joyful noise to the Lord" by using their instruments as you read Deborah's song in chapter 5:1–9. At the end of each verse, encourage your children to join you in declaring, "Praise the Lord!"

Explain to your children that what they just heard is true and part of The Big God Story. Remind them they'll learn more about God's redemption and deliverance while they're at church this week. Come together to pray as a family, thanking God for the mercy He shows your family each day. ☪