

Unit 9, Session 3

The Ark Was Captured (1 Samuel 4-6)



Dear families,

The Philistines' capture of the ark of the covenant reveals the folly of seeking God's blessing over God Himself. The Israelites realized they were no match for the Philistines, so they pursued worldly wisdom instead of seeking God in prayer. Reducing the significance of the ark to a good luck charm set off a chain reaction of disastrous events. Yet, God provided His people a victory they did not deserve.

What was the significance of the ark? How does the Lord prove His might against false gods and among the nations of the world?

The ark served as a reminder of God's promise to dwell among His people. Inside it was some manna from heaven, Aaron's rod, and the tablets of the Ten Commandments. Each item demonstrated God's provision, as well as His covenant promise to remain with them through the ages. 1 Samuel 4:5 tells us that when the Israelites entered the camp with the ark, their shouts were loud enough to shake the ground. These shouts, however, were empty praise not fueled by a right view of the Lord or His righteous cause among the nations.

God responded to the Israelites' sin by allowing the Philistines to capture the ark that represented His presence and glory among God's people. Yet, God used what looked outwardly

like defeat to bring glory to His name by demonstrating His power over the enemy and His judgment of sin. This foreshadowed an even greater story of God claiming glory through what looked like defeat—when Jesus allowed Himself to be captured by people and crucified to satisfy God’s judgment on sin. Likewise, the surprising return of the ark by the unmistakable power of the Lord foreshadowed Christ’s resurrection to be with His people.

Lead the boys and girls in your care to see that the source of our hope lies not in our wishes of good fortune from the Lord, but rather in the salvation secured by Christ through faith in His name. Like the Israelites, we deserve judgment for our sin. By faith in Christ, however, we receive forgiveness and His righteousness. Pray for your kids to see the weight of their sins and the price Christ paid to secure them as His own forever.

Check out *The Gospel Project At Home* for resources designed to help you lead a family worship experience as well as suggestions for morning and evening prayer times and family activities.

FAMILY TALKING POINTS

CHRIST CONNECTION

This is the big idea of how this week’s Bible story points to Jesus.

- Babies & Toddlers: God sent us His Son, Jesus, to remind us that God is always with us.
- Younger Preschool: The ark was special, but later God gave people something even better: His Son, Jesus. Jesus reminds us that God is always with us.
- Older Preschool: The ark of God reminded the Israelites that God was with them. Many years later God gave His people something even better to remind them that He was with them. God sent His Son, Jesus. One of Jesus’ names is Immanuel, which means “God with us.”
- Kids: God is holy and punished the Israelites and Philistines for misusing the ark. All people sin and deserve God’s judgment, but Jesus took that judgment when He died on the cross. All who trust in Jesus are forgiven of sin and saved from judgment.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION & ANSWER

This is an important biblical truth that your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- Younger Preschool: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over all He made.
- Older Preschool: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over all He made.
- Kids: How does God care for His creation? God loves and rules over His creation according to His perfect plan.

KEY PASSAGE

This is a Bible verse that relates to what your child will encounter each week of this unit.

- Babies & Toddlers: God gives us all we need in Jesus. Philippians 4:19
- Younger Preschool: My God will supply all your needs in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19
- Older Preschool: My God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19
- Kids: My God will supply all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

**** Next week:** Freedom from the Philistines (1 Samuel 7)