



God Chooses Deborah as a Leader

(based on Judges 4:1-10)

The people of Israel were miserable. Twenty years ago, they had fought King Jabin (JAY-bin) of Canaan and lost. Ever since, the king had made life difficult for them.

Jabin had a big army with nine hundred iron chariots. He used the army to bully the people and hurt them. The Israelites prayed to God for help.

In those days, there lived a wise woman called Deborah. She was a prophet and a leader. She was as busy as a bee. Every day, she sat under a palm tree and helped people with their problems. Anyone who was arguing could go to Deborah. She listened to both sides and decided how to stop the argument. Sometimes her decisions stung, but she was always fair.

One day, God gave Deborah a message for a man named Barak (BEHR-ak). God wanted Barak to gather an army and take them to fight the king of Canaan. Jabin and his army had made the people's lives miserable for twenty whole years. It was time for it to stop.

Deborah buzzed with excitement when she heard God's message and sent for Barak immediately.

"God has a job for you," explained Deborah. "You must gather an army and get ready to fight Jabin."

Barak was afraid. He knew that Jabin had nine hundred iron chariots and lots of soldiers. For twenty long years, no one had been able to beat Jabin's army.

"I will go," said Barak. "But only if you come with me."

Deborah agreed to go with Barak and lead the army. She buzzed around the camp before the battle. She was a good leader and wanted to encourage the soldiers as they got ready to fight. When the time came to fight, Deborah told Barak and the army that they would win the battle. That is precisely what happened. Jabin was defeated.

From that day on, Jabin left the people of God alone. Deborah went back to her palm tree and continued her job as a leader and prophet. Finally, after twenty long years, peace had come to the land.



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Use one or more activities from each section to explore grace and gratitude with your children this week.

Recognizing God's Grace

- Read and enjoy the story with your children—imagine and wonder.
- Can you think of famous leaders who are women? Help your children learn stories about modern-day leaders such as:
 - Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate;
 - Mother Teresa, known for her charitable work on behalf of people who are poor or sick;
 - Ruth Bader Ginsburg is an Associate Justice of the Supreme Court;
 - Michelle Obama, former First Lady, and an advocate for poverty awareness, education, nutrition, and physical activity;
 - Jan Edmiston and Denise Anderson, Co-Moderators of the 222nd General Assembly.
- Read *My Great-Aunt Arizona* by Gloria Houston to learn about a woman who showed leadership.



Responding to God's Grace

- Find pictures of women who are leaders. Some leaders even wear special attire to demonstrate their rank. Talk with your children about the many ways women lead.
- Talk with your children about what it takes to be a good leader.
- Play a game of Follow the Leader. Let everyone have a chance to be the leader.

Celebrating in Gratitude

- Help your children be aware of women serving in leadership roles in the church. Christian education workers, ruling elders, deacons, and pastors are examples where many women shine.
- Write a letter to a woman who is in a position of leadership. Tell her that you're praying for her, and thank her for her leadership.
- Pray this week:

God, thank you for sending women to be leaders. Help me to learn from their example so I can serve you better. Amen.