

Here come de Judge

A series of 6 short plays based on the book of Judges and designed originally for classroom use with students of lower ability of about 13 years of age.(Keystage 3)

The plays could equally well be used with Keystage 2 pupils or church groups.

1. Left handed Ehud

INTRODUCTION: The people of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord and King Eglon one of their enemies fought and defeated them. The people of Israel served him for eighteen years.

1: I'm really fed up of living like this. I hate Eglon and I hate living here.

2: Yes why don't we do something about it?

1: Who can stand up to Eglon?

2: Well, what about Ehud People say God is really with him

1: Old left handed Ehud. Do you think so?

2: Well let's ask him. Would you go to Eglon, Ehud and see if you can do something about the conditions we are living in? Take him a tribute, something nice to impress him.

Ehud: Sure I can do that. I'll take him something but not what you're expecting.

Narrator: That night Ehud sat up making himself a long sword with two edges which he hid under his clothing. The next day he went to King Eglon with his tribute; Eglon (a very fat man) Oh I see you have a tribute for me. A very special present. I hope it's something nice to eat.

Ehud: Yes and I have a very special message for you, too, King Eglon

Eglon: Oh yes. What is it?

Ehud: It's a secret. Please send away all your servants.

Eglon: Very well. Off you go (servants disappear)

Ehud: I have a message from God for you. Come closer. (takes out his sword and with his left hand stabs him right through)

Narrator: Ehud stabbed him so that the sword went up to the handle and Eglon was so fat that the fat closed over the blade and handle and it wouldn't come out. Ehud left the room and closed the door*

Servant: Hey what's this. The door's locked. Where's the king?

Servant 2. : I don't know. Perhaps he's on the toilet.

Narrator: The servants waited and waited but at last they had to go in (They go in and find the king dead on the floor)

Narrator: Ehud escaped and when he got back to the Israelites he sounded a trumpet.

Ehud: Follow me. The Lord has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand.

Narrator: So they followed Ehud and killed all the Moabite enemies and the land had rest for 80 years.

2. Deb Decides

Narrator: When the people of Israel disobeyed God and stopped living by his rules he let them be conquered by King Jabin and his powerful army. So once again they were ruled by a foreign power and King Jabin was real mean to them.

Narrator 2: There was a woman called Deborah who lived at that time and her job was to listen to people's problems and decide what they must do. She told them what God wanted.

Deb: (sitting under a palm tree) Will you go and get Barak for me I have a message from God for him.

Servant: All right, Deborah. (goes to Barak) Deborah the prophet wants a word with you. She's over there under the palm tree.

Barak: (to Deborah) I understand you want a word with me.

Deb: Yes that's right. . The Lord God of Israel has given you this command. He says you are to take ten thousand men and go to mount Tabor where you will fight Jabin's great army.

Barak: You've got to be joking! Do you know what that army is like? They have got iron chariots and they have got a really good commander-you know -what's his name?

Deb: Sisera. Yes I know all that but God has says you'll win.

Barak: Look- I'll go if you'll go.

Deb: Don't be silly.

Barak: No if you don't go I won't go.

Deb: All right I'll go. *But you're going to look pretty silly I don't mind telling you when the commander of the army, Sisera, gets handed over to a woman,*

Narrator 1: When Sisera heard that Barak had gone to mount Tabor with his ten thousand men he went to meet him with his 900 iron chariots.

Narrator 2: But when Barak attacked them God threw them into confusion and they all ran away. Even Sisera the commander of the army ran away and ran to the tent belonging to a friend of his king.

Jael: Hello. What are you doing here? My you are in a mess

Sisera: Is your husband in. I'm so tired. I've been running for miles. Barak and his army have just destroyed us.

Jael: No my husband is out at the moment but come in anyway. Don't be afraid. Look you can hide behind this curtain.

Sisera: Thanks a lot. Could I have a drink of water, I'm really thirsty.

Jael: Water! I won't hear of it. Here have some milk.

Sisera: Thanks a lot. Look you couldn't stand by the entrance to the tent could you? If anyone comes by don't tell them I'm here.

Narrator: Sisera was so tired he fell asleep. Jael took a tent peg and a hammer and drove the peg right through the side of his head.

Narrator 2: And that was the end of him!

3. Jephthah makes a big mistake

Narrator 1: The people of Israel kept making the big mistake of going away from the Lord God even though he had blessed them in the past. They sure had short memories.

Narrator 2: And whenever they did, they landed in trouble and needed help to get out of it.

Narrator 3: This time they had trouble with a bunch of people called the Ammonites. They needed a leader again to help them in their time of trouble. Here he is.

Jep: Hi! I'm Jephthah but you can call me Jep for short.

Narrator 1: Now Jep was not the sort of guy who you would think would make a particularly good leader for God's people.

Narrator 2: He had been thrown out of his home when he was a kid because his brothers didn't like him,

Narr 3 And after that he'd been a sort of gang leader.

Narr 1: But the people of Israel sort of thought that he was the type of tough guy they needed. So they gave him the job.

Man: You've got the job.

Jep: Right. I'll send this king of the Ammonites a message for a kick off. Messenger!

Messenger: Yes, Jep.

Jep: Let's have a bit of respect. Remember I'm your leader now.

Mess: Yes sir,

Jep: I want you to take a message to the king of the Ammonites. Ask him what he's got against me that he's so keen on attacking us.

Mess: Right sir. (Runs off. Comes back out of breath)

Jep: What did he say?

Mess: He says he's mad because we took away his land when we came from Egypt and he wants it back.

Jep: Tell him that's all history. It was hundreds of years ago. Tell him I haven't done him any harm so why is he making war on me?

Mess: Yes, sir. (Runs off -comes back even more out of breath)

Jep: Well what did he say?

Mess: He says: Get lost.

Narrator 1 : Well that didn't please Jep much and he made a promise to God that night:

Jep: Lord if you help me conquer the Ammonites I promise you that whoever comes out of my house when I come back home will be yours and I'll sacrifice him.

Narrator 2: Which was a pretty silly thing to say really. Seeing as he must have known that God didn't go in for that kind of thing.

Narr. 3: Well he did beat the Ammonites and he returned home victorious.

Girl 1: I've heard that your father has won a great battle for our people.

Girl 2: Yes he's beaten the Ammonites and their king who were giving us such trouble

Girls When is he coming home.

Girl 2 He's coming today and I'm going to dress up and go and meet him.

Girl 1: Shouldn't the men of the town go and welcome him back?

Girl 2 :Well it's only right that his own family gives him a hero's welcome. And he hasn't got any sons. I've no brothers or sisters. I'm all the family he's got.

Girl 1 : Well let's get you ready then. You can dress up and dance out to meet him.

Narrator 2: So it was that the first person Jep saw when he came back home was his only child, his daughter.

Narrator 3: And you can imagine his mood changed from joy to misery.

Narr 1: He tore his clothes to show how upset he was.

Girl 2: Whatever is the matter father? You ought to be happy and

you look miserable.

Jep: I made a promise to God that I would sacrifice the first person to come out of my house if he helped me to beat the Ammonites. But I didn't expect it to be you.

Girl 2 : Well you promised him and he did help you so you must keep your promise even if it means I must die.

Jep: Oh, daughter, this is terrible.

Girl 2: Just let me spend some time in the hills with my friends weeping because I've never been married. Then I will help you carry out your promise. Narr 1: So after 2 months she returned and her father, Jep carried out his promise to the Lord.

Narr 2: And every year after that the girls of Israel used to spend 4 days weeping and thinking of the pointless death of Jep's daughter,

- **4. He Man Samson**

- Narrator 1: A gang of men called the Philistines took over the people of Israel for forty years.

Narrator 2: God sent another leader to the people at this time who was a real strange kind of guy- He was called Samson.

Narrator 1: Here he is! (Samson enters) (He mimes during the next narration)

N 2 :Ladies and gentlemen we present Samson. He man.

N1: Now Samson was a real muscle man. He could really sort the Philistines out.

N 2: He had had a strange kind of upbringing though. He wasn't allowed to drink alcohol or eat certain kinds of food and he never cut his hair.

N1: That was supposed to show that he was dedicated to God.

N 2: Now over to our reporter in Timnah.

Reporter (at news desk): Reports are just coming in of a major fire in

fields belonging to the Philistines. It seems that all the fields have been set on fire by a pack of foxes with flaming torches tied to their tails. The man said to be responsible for this odd deed is here in our Timnah studio. Now, sir, I believe your name is Samson?

- Samson: That is correct.
- Rep: Is this true that you have set fire to all the fields of the Philistines in this strange way?

Samson: Certainly.

Rep: Why, if I might ask?

Samson: Well it's a long story. I'm married to a Philistine girl though my parents were against it. But my father in law has just given her away to my best man. I was so mad I thought I'd get my own back.

Rep: Yes I see what you mean. I guess though that the Philistines aren't going to be too happy with you after this.

N 2 And they weren't

N1 And so they looked for a chance to get back at Samson and especially to find out the secret of his strength. They knew as long as he was around it spelt trouble for them- with a capital T

N1 : It wasn't long before their chance came along. Samson fell for another woman by the name of Delilah. When the Philistines heard about this they reckoned this could be useful-so they sent some men to see her

Man 1: Is your name Delilah?

Del: Yes, why?

—

Man 2: We've come with a little offer to put to you.

Man 1: One you're going to like.

Man 2: If you like money that is.

Del: Did you say money?

Man 1: Yes -how does eleven hundred pieces of silver sound like to you?

Delilah: Pretty good. What have I got to do?

Man 2: Find out what makes Samson so strong so we can get him tied up and be rid of him.

Narr 2: So that night....

Delilah : Samson...you're very strong aren't you?

Samson: Yes that's right, Delilah.

Delilah: What makes you so strong? How could any one ever tie you up...

err,.....if they wanted to that is?

Samson: Err..... well if I was tied up with seven fresh pieces of string meant to go in bows that would do it. I'd be as weak as anyone else then.

Narr 1: Samson was suspicious and he wasn't trusting Delilah too much. After all he hadn't been too lucky with women. So what he said wasn't exactly true.

Narr 2: That night...

Man 1 : Here's the bowstrings you ordered. Now tie him up.

(Samson is asleep. Delilah winds the strings round him)

Man 2: Right let's try it out.

Delilah: Samson ! Wake up! The Philistines are after you!

Narr 2: But were they in for a surprise. Samson woke up, flexed his muscles and broke the strings as if they were cotton.

Narr. 2 : But Delilah didn't give up easily.

Narr 1; Some days later she tried again

Delilah: Samson you lied to me about your strength. Where does it really come from?

Samson: Well if I was tied with new ropes I'd become weak -as weak as anyone else.

Delilah: Really?

Narr 1: So they tried again. This time the Philistines hid in the room next door.

Narr : Whilst Delilah set to work with the rope. (She ties him up)

Delilah: Samson! Wake up! The Philistines re after you!

Narr 2 : But the same thing happened again (Samson wakes and snaps the rope)

Narrator 1: Now Delilah was a trier and was not going to be put off.

Narrator2: Not with all that money waiting for her, anyway.

Narr 1: She tried again but Samson still tricked her.

Narr 2: But she figured if she nagged him day after day he'd finally give in. Narr 1: And he did.

Samson: All right* I'll tell you* Just to get some peace round here. I've been brought up in a very special way, especially dedicated to God and that's why my hair has never been cut. That's where my strength lies

Narr 1: That night Samson went to sleep resting on Delilah's lap and as soon as he was dreaming the Philistines appeared from the next room (Men enter and shave Samson's head)

Delilah: Samson, the Philistines are here! They're; after you!

Samson: What? Where am I? Why do I feel so weak?

Man 1: Got you!

Man 2: This time it's really worked!

Narr 2. And Samson was taken away blinded and tied in chains.

Narr 1: Not to mention thrown into prison.

Narr 2: But his hair did begin to grow again...

Narr 1: The Philistines were so glad to have got Samson where they wanted him that they arranged a big festival to their god Dagon at which Samson was to be the main entertainment.

Narr 2: Whether he liked it or not..

Narr 1: On the day of the festival they had Samson brought out in front of everybody and a young lad led him to the front of the temple.

Man 1: Here's good old Samson. Not so strong now are you?

Man 2: Hi baldy. I thought you were a muscle man? What happened?

Samson (talking to the boy) Put my hands on the pillar of the

temple, will you?

Narr 1: And then he began to pray.

Samson: Lord God, remember me, I pray you. Give me back my strength -just this once so that I can be even with these Philistines for blinding me. Let me die with these Philistines

Narr 2: Then Samson pushed against each pillar with all his might and the whole place crashed around their ears killing all the Philistines and Samson with them .

- **5. Gideon has a smashing time**
- Narrator 1: Once again the people of Israel sinned against the Lord so he

let the people of Midian rule them for seven years.

Narrator 2: The Midianites were stronger than the people of Israel so they hid in caves and in safe places in the hills to keep out of their way

Narrator 3: The people of Israel really had a tough time. They were attacked by the Midianites and other tribes, their cattle and donkeys were taken and their land was ruined.

Narrator 1 : One day a prophet came and told them why this was all happening.

Prophet: God has a message for you and it's my job to tell you what it is.

Man: Well go on, We want to know why we're having such a hard time. Prophet: That's obvious. It's because you're ignoring God. He brought you to this land in the first place but you're not grateful. In fact you're even worshiping other gods. It's no wonder he's not pleased.

Narrator 2: About that time God was choosing a leader who would

help the Israelites. The son of a man called Joash was busy making flour from some wheat he had. He was hiding away doing this because he knew if the Midianites saw him they would take his wheat away.

Narrator 1: His name was Gideon

Narrator 2: The last thing Gideon was expecting to see was an angel sent from God...

Angel: The Lord is with you, brave and mighty man.

Gideon: (Shocked) What? Where did you come from. What do you mean-the -'Lord is with me'?

Angel: That's what I said.

Gideon: Well if he is how come were all in such trouble? I know God must have been with our people in the old days when he brought them out of Egypt but I reckon he's abandoned us now . The Midianites are in charge here.

Angel: The Lord has given you the job of rescuing Israel, He's sending you to the Midianites.

Gideon: But how can I rescue Israel? I'm not even important in my own family and they're the weakest family group in the whole tribe. We're nothing.

Angel: God says you will do it because he will help you. You will be able to crush the Midianites.

Gideon: I'm going to need some kind of proof you know. Anyway, don't go away. I'd like to give you some food before you go.

(Gideon goes off)

Narrator 1: So Gideon went into his house and cooked some goats meat and bread which he brought out to the Lord's angel.

Angel: Put the meat and bread on this rock and pour the soup over them (Gideon does it)

Narrator 2: And the angel reached out and touched the meat and bread with the end of a stick he was holding and fire came out of the rock and burnt up the lot.

Gideon: Oh God! I have seen your angel face to face. Don't kill me! Narrator 3: But God told Gideon not to be afraid and he gave him a job to do. He told him to destroy all of his father's idols he had built to worship other gods. So that night Gideon and a gang of ten servants did just that.

(Gideon and the ten men creeping into Gideon's father's house, smashing up the idols and building an altar to God.)

Narrator 1: The next morning there was big trouble.

1. What's happened here?

2: Someone has smashed up all the altars and idols of the goddess Asherah. 3: There'll be trouble when Joash finds out about this.

4: Who could have done it?

5: I've been doing some investigating and I've found out something very interesting.

1: Oh, what's that?

5: Well the person who did this was none other than Joash's own son, Gideon.

2: You're kidding, he'll be in trouble when his father finds out.

Joash: Finds out what?

2: Oh, hello, Joash. We were just saying this mess has been caused by your own son, Gideon.

3: You'd better bring him out here so we can kill him for causing the damage.

Joash: Well I don't know. I reckon if Baal is really a god like they say, he can stand up for himself. It is his altar that was torn down. Let's see what happens

Narrator: So that's what they did

Narrator 2: And we'll find out what happens to Gideon later.

– **6. Gideon is Outnumbered.**

– Narrator 1: The story so far.

Narrator 2: Gideon, son of Joash, has been chosen to lead God's people, the Israelites against their enemies, the Midianites.

Narrator 3: His first job had been to knock down his father's temple that he had built to worship idols of other gods.

Narrator 1: And Gideon was still wondering if God was really on his side. Narrator 2: He needed some way of knowing for sure that God was real and really on his side.

Gideon: Well God, you say that you have decided to use me to rescue Israel, Well I'm putting some wool on the ground, and if in the morning there is dew only on the wool but not on the ground then I will know that you are going to use me to rescue Israel.

Narrator 1: Well it was a pretty funny sort of nighttime prayer but...

Narrator 2: That is exactly what happened (Gideon gets up in the morning and wrings out the wool)

Narrator 3: But Gideon couldn't help feeling it might have been a fluke and so the next evening he prayed again.

Gideon: Don't be angry with me, Lord. I'd just like to make one more test with this wool. If you're really with me when I wake up could the ground be wet and the wool dry?

Narrator 1 : And that's exactly what happened.

Narrator 2: So Gideon decided to take the men he had got together and attack the Midianites.

Narrator 3: There was only one problem" God said he had too many men.

Narrator1: So some had to go.

(Rest of class take part of army)

Gideon: Right ...God says we have too many. If anyone is scared, turn back now. (Some go off)

Narrator 2: God still said there were too many.

Gideon: I've still got to sort you out. God still says there are too many. We've got to go down to the river. Now all of you are to have a drink. Decide either to drink like a dog or to scoop up water in your hands.

(Class comes forward one by one and drinks in one way or the other. Gideon puts them into two groups)

Gideon : Right all those who drank like a dog, you come with me. The rest go home. We're off to fight the Midianites.

Narrator 2: That night Gideon and his servant Purah went to spy out the Midianite camp.

Gideon:!! don't mind admitting, Purah, I'm still not sure we will win.

Purah: Well it does seem strange that God has cut down our army to just 300.

Gideon: Especially when you see how many Midianites there are. Look they're all over the valley

Purah: They're like a swarm of locusts.

Gideon: What's that noise? Somebody's talking

Purah: It's coming from that tent over there.

Man 1: I've just had a horrible dream.

Man. 2 What was it?

Man 1: I dreamt a loaf of barley bread rolled into our camp and hit a tent. The tent collapsed and lay flat on the ground.

Man 2 : Oh, no, this is terrible.

Man 1: What does it mean?

Man 2.: It's the sword of the Israelite Gideon, son of Joash It can't mean anything else! God has given him the victory over Midian and our whole army!

Gideon : Do you hear that, Purah, they're already panicking. We must attack tonight. There's no time to waste!

Narrator 1: Back at the camp Gideon gave his final instructions. Gideon: Right men. You are to be divided up into three groups. A hundred men in each. Everyone gets a trumpet and a jar with a light in it. When my group blows their- trumpets everyone else does. Smash your jars and shout “ A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!” Let's go!

- **If time permits the whole class can divide into groups and carry out the instructions- providing the classroom is reasonably sound proofed!**
- Narrator 2: When the Midlanites were woken up by all this noise and light-

Narrator 3: They panicked...

Narrator 1: And ran away

Narrator ^: And so God did as he had promised and gave Gideon and the Israelites victory over their enemies.