

Gideon

Central theme: God can use me to help my parents love Him more.

Bible passages: *Judges 6*

Memory verse: *"The angel of the LORD appeared to [Gideon] and said, 'Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!'" Judges 6:12*

Lesson goals:

1. Understand that *Judges* is a book in the Old Testament that tells about normal people who God used to do amazing things.
2. Recognize that God chose Gideon because he was willing to say "yes" to God. Even though Gideon asked God for proof, God knew Gideon's heart was good.
3. Choose to do the right thing, even if their parents don't. God can use our lives to help our parents love God more.
4. Learn to trust God in all circumstances. God uses the little things in our lives to shape us for the big things.
5. Be willing to do things God's way, even when they don't make sense.

Learning Centers:

- Bible Story Center with video
- Memory Verse Maze w/ Trail Mix Snack
- Craft Center – Trumpet
- Gideon Games

Schedule:

- Typical rotation:
 - o Week 1: 1st/2nd Bible Center 3rd/4th Memory verse Maze 5th Craft
 - o Week 2: 1st/2nd Memory Verse Maze 3rd/4th Craft 5th Bible Center
 - o Week 3: 1st/2nd Craft 3rd/4th Bible Center 5th Memory verse Maze
 - o Week 4 : all Group Games

*** Things to do BEFORE the lesson:**

1. Review the central theme, Bible passages, memory verse, and lesson goals for the month:

Central theme: *God can use me to help my parents love Him more.*

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 4. *Learn to trust God in all circumstances. God uses the little things in our lives to shape us for the big things.*
 5. *Be willing to do things God's way, even when they don't make sense.*
2. Read the "comments about the lesson."
 3. Post the memory verse.
 4. Setup the TV/DVD player and have the DVD ready to be played.

*** Comments about the Lesson:**

1. Since this is a story telling time, make sure you animate as you tell the story to the children and get them to respond to questions as you stop and get their attention.
2. Make sure they are seated around you in a circle as if you were at a campfire.

*** Tell the Story: Gideon's story – Judges Chapter 6**

Say: The children of Israel had done bad things – they weren't doing what God wanted them to do, and just doing some really bad stuff, so God allowed them to be defeated by the Midianites for seven years. When the Midianites came they destroyed everything, including all the flocks of sheep and animals that the Israelites had. They took all of their video games and toys, and any fun things they had. (Okay, we know they didn't have video games, but if they did, they'd be gone after the Midianites were done.) They burned up everything, so there was nothing for them to live on. So they went into hiding. They hid in dens in caves and in mountains. They were hiding from the enemy. They were cowards. God sent a prophet to tell them he had delivered them from mighty enemies before and not to be afraid of the gods of the Amorites, but the children of Israel wouldn't listen.

*** Tell the Story: Gideon's story – Judges Chapter 6 (cont.)**

Ask: Do you think that we would do anything differently? Would we stand up to these warriors and fight them? (Elicit answers.)

Say: One day Gideon was pounding wheat by the winepress. He was doing it to hide it from the Midianites. (Spend a few minutes going into why you pound wheat (to make flour) but that you don't do it in a winepress. A winepress is where you squish grapes to make wine.) He was hiding from the enemy. Then an angel appeared to him and said something crazy: "God is with you, O mighty warrior!"

Ask: Do you think that Gideon felt like a mighty warrior while he was hiding from the enemy trying to make some food? He probably felt more like a coward than a warrior.

Say: But God wasn't looking at the cowardly man standing before him. He was looking at Gideon's potential, what he could be, if he only trusted God. God is like that. He doesn't just see us as what we are, he sees what we CAN BE for Him. Oh, if only we could look at ourselves, and each other that way!

Ask: Can you think of times that looked at someone who wasn't fighting back when they were being treated unkindly as a coward? Or did you realize later that maybe they were being smart and trusting God to protect them.? (Elicit answers.)

Say: Gideon was still feeling unsure of what the angel was telling him, so he said, "prove it". He wanted the angel to show a sign that he had been sent by God. Gideon then went and prepared a sacred meal of meat and bread and broth and returned to where the angel was. The angel told Gideon to put the meat and bread on a rock and pour the broth over it. Then the angel touched the rock with a stick and it burned up the meat and bread.

Ask: What do you think Gideon thought of that?! (Take a minute and elicit answers.)

Say: After that, he truly believed he had been talking to an angel of God. He kind of freaked out a little, but God calmed him down telling him not to panic and not to be scared. That night, God told Gideon to take his father's best bull out to the altar of the idol god Baal. (The Israelites had built an altar to honor a false god – not the true God). God told Gideon to tear down the altar and cut down the wooden statue beside it and replace with an altar honoring the true God. Gideon wasn't going to mess around anymore – he did exactly as God had instructed him to.

The next morning, Gideon's neighbors were really, really mad! Like not just "red in the face" mad or "stomping their feet" mad – they wanted to kill Gideon for taking down their altar to Baal! Fortunately though, Gideon's dad stood up to the crowd and said if Baal is a true god, let him fight his own battles and defend his own altar – you don't need to fight for him. The people decided to listen to Gideon's dad and left Gideon alone. But before this, Gideon's dad didn't really pay attention to God. He was building those terrible altars too! Gideon had shown his own dad how to trust God, didn't he?

At this point, Gideon knew God was calling him to save the Israelites, but he still didn't feel so confident, so he asked God to prove it again. So, he laid a jacket on the ground and told God that when he woke up, if the jacket was wet, but the ground around it was dry, then Gideon would believe. Well, wouldn't you know it – God did exactly that! The next morning, Gideon picked up his jacket and could have filled up a whole bowl with the water that was in the jacket, but none was on the ground. That's pretty crazy, isn't it? Can you imagine? It's like waking up one day and it snowed only on your house and nowhere else? Would you think that was normal? (Get some responses.)

*** Tell the Story: Gideon's story – Judges Chapter 6 (cont.)**

Say: So do you think that Gideon now believed God? (Elicit some shout outs of yes or no.)

You're right... he still wasn't feeling confident yet. So he said to God, "okay, I believe you, but can you show me just one more sign so I can be absolutely, positively, no-doubt-about-it sure?" Gideon laid the jacket on the ground once more and asked God to make the jacket stay dry this time while the ground around it gets wet. What do you think happened? The next morning, the ground was soaked, but the jacket was bone dry. Kind of like, now there was no snow on your house, but everywhere else had snow.

Gideon couldn't try to hide from his mission any longer, so that day, he gathered all his men together (about 22,000) of them, and got ready to save the Israelites from the Midianites. God looked at the number of men Gideon had and said, "hold on a minute – you have too many men". God told Gideon that He didn't want the men to think they had saved themselves – conquered the Midianites on their own. He wanted everyone to be sure to know that God had saved them. So, God told Gideon to send home anyone who was afraid of going to battle and fighting the Midianites. Most of Gideon's men went home, and there were only a couple of thousand remaining.

Ask: If you were in Gideon's army, would you have been afraid? (Elicit answers. Be willing to offer your own personal thoughts too.)

Say: Then God said to Gideon, you STILL have too many men. He told Gideon to take the men down to the stream and watch how they drink the water. If they lap at the water like a dog, set them to one side, and if they kneel to drink and use their hands to make a cup, put them on the other side. Only about 300 drank right out of the water like animals do, and God said to Gideon to use those men to fight the battle. All of the rest were sent home. God tells Gideon to get ready by getting clay pitchers (you know, like the kind that can break that your mom tells you not to touch?), and putting a torch inside of it and horns that they can use to make loud sounds. So now the battle begins. It was in the middle of the night and the men surrounded the camp of these thousands of Midianites! When Gideon gave the signal, they all blew the trumpet, broke the pitcher and held up the torch or lamp. Then they shouted "The sword of the Lord, and of Gideon". This caused so much confusion and fear in the camp that the Midianites turned on each other and killed each other. That was how God fights battles!

Gideon showed a lot of people how God could win battles for them if they only trusted them. And God used Gideon to show his father that he needed to trust God too. God is willing to use you to show others, even your parents, that they can trust God.

Ask: Are you willing to be strong like Gideon was at the end of the story, or are you going to hide in the hills like the Israelites did?

Say: Be a warrior for God!

*** Discussion:**

· Ask and discuss the following questions:

1. *Do you ever feel afraid? Why?*
2. *Do you even wonder if God knows that you are worried and afraid?*
3. *Why were the people (and Gideon) afraid of the Midianites?*
4. *How do think Gideon felt about his father making that altar to Baal?*
5. *Have you ever seen things that maybe you thought God didn't want your family to do? (Give an example like....maybe when your mom and dad yell at you for doing the wrong thing...God probably doesn't want that.)*
6. *Are there other things that we can do to help show God to people in our own family like Gideon did for the people he led in battle?*

* Make sure to answer any questions and provide time for the children to share their thoughts.

* Go over the memory verse with them again.

*** Video:**

*Show YouTube Video "Mighty Warrior Tales"

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PSmuzW9LDz8>

Search for Mighty Warrior Tales and choose the 3 minute Kidmo Gideon cartoon video.

*** Closing:**

Make sure to answer any questions and provide time for the children to share their thoughts.
Go over the memory verse with them again.

*** Pray:**

Ask for volunteers to pray as they feel led. Be ready to pray in case no one volunteers.

Thank you that we have Gideon as an example for us to see how someone can stand up for God and know that they will be taken care of. Even when we might be scared and not be sure what to do, with God we can make a difference.

***For older kids: Ask them to write a group prayer together. They should ask God to give us strength to get through our fears, knowing that God is always present and will always help.

*** Extras**

Be ready to use stuff from the "extras" box if you finish before the other centers.

*** Things to do BEFORE the lesson:**

1. Review the central theme, Bible passages, memory verse, and lesson goals for the month:

Central theme: *God can use me to help my parents love Him more.*

Bible passages: *Judges 6*

Memory verse: *"The angel of the LORD appeared to [Gideon] and said, 'Mighty hero, the LORD is with you!'" Judges 6:12*

Lesson goals:

1. *Understand that Judges is a book in the Old Testament that tells about normal people who God used to do amazing things.*
 2. *Recognize that God chose Gideon because he was willing to say "yes" to God. Even though Gideon asked God for proof, God knew Gideon's heart was good.*
 3. *Choose to do the right thing, even if their parents don't. God can use our lives to help our parents love God more.*
 4. *Learn to trust God in all circumstances. God uses the little things in our lives to shape us for the big things.*
 5. *Be willing to do things God's way, even when they don't make sense.*
2. Read the "comments about the lesson."
 3. Post the memory verse.
 4. Secure the following items: a tube for each child (such as from a paper towel, empty wrapping paper tube or toilet paper, a funnel or large styrofoam cup for each child, masking tape, colored permanent markers, tissue paper or newspaper, watered down white glue, a blow dryer or two.

*** Comments about the Lesson:**

1. We are going to be making trumpets like those that Gideon used to defeat the Midianites. Be sure you are able to show the kids what to do – maybe make an example ahead of time.
2. Have them use light amounts of glue so that they can dry quicker.
3. The colored permanent markers are better than the water based ones because they won't be affected by the liquid glue.
4. Be sure to talk about Gideon and his story while the kids are creating their craft.

*** Retelling the Story:**

Recap some of the highlights by referring to the story statements from the bible center. If they haven't had the bible center yet, give them a brief overview. Tell them that Gideon was a simple farmer in a time when there was a great and powerful tribe called the Midianites who were attacking them constantly. This was happening because the Israelites were not following what God wanted. Because of this, the people were always afraid. But God wanted them to trust him, so he used Gideon to lead the people into a mighty battle. In this battle, they had horns that they used to frighten the Midianites. (For those who haven't had the bible center, tell them that they'll hear more about what happens when they have their turn with the story.) But Gideon had a hard time believing God was going to help him. Is it hard for us to do what God wants us to do when we are scared? (Elicit answers.) What about our parents? Can we help by showing our families and friends what God wants for us all? Discuss how God can help us help our parents love God more.

*** Directions :**

Have the children grab a tube and a funnel (or cup) and attach them together with the masking tape so it looks like a trumpet. Have them tear small pieces of newspaper or tissue paper and then glue them onto the horn. Have them use the blow dryers to dry them faster. Once they're dried enough, have them use the permanent markers to color, write scripture on, etc. their trumpets. Encourage them to write the memory verse or "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon" on the trumpets.

*** Discussion:**

· Ask and discuss the following questions:

1. *Do you ever feel afraid? Why?*
2. *Do you even wonder if God knows that you are worried and afraid?*
3. *Why were the people (and Gideon) afraid of the Midianites?*
4. *How do think Gideon felt about his father making that altar to Baal?*
5. *Have you ever seen things that maybe you thought God didn't want your family to do? (Give an example like....maybe when your mom and dad yell at you for doing the wrong thing...God probably doesn't want that.)*
6. *Are there other things that we can do to help show God to people in our own family like Gideon did for the people he led in battle?*

* Make sure to answer any questions and provide time for the children to share their thoughts.

* Go over the memory verse with them again.

*** Closing:**

Make sure to answer any questions and provide time for the children to share their thoughts. Go over the memory verse with them again.

*** Pray:**

Ask for volunteers to pray as they feel led. Be ready to pray in case no one volunteers.

Thank you that we have Gideon as an example for us to see how someone can stand up for God and know that they will be taken care of. Even when we might be scared and not be sure what to do, with God we can make a difference.

***For older kids: Ask them to write a group prayer together. They should ask God to give us strength to get through our fears, knowing that God is always present and will always help.

*** Extras**

Be ready to use stuff from the "extras" box if you finish before the other centers.

Center Name: Memory Verse Maze with Trail Mix Snack

* Things to do BEFORE the lesson:

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 5. *Be willing to do things God's way, even when they don't make sense.*
2. Read the "comments about the lesson."
 3. Post the memory verse.
 4. Set up the yarn maze on the floor
 5. Set up the snack bowls for the children to fill their bags with.

* Comments about the Lesson:

1. The purpose of this center is for them to clearly learn the memory verse
2. Go over the verse again and again prior to starting the "trail"
3. We all know how excited the kids get when there is food involved. Please be sure to keep them focused on the lesson, especially so the other stations are not distracted.

*** Retelling the Story:**

Recap some of the highlights by referring to the story statements from the bible center. If they haven't had the bible center yet, give them a brief overview. Tell them that Gideon was a simple farmer in a time when there was a great and powerful tribe called the Midianites who were attacking them constantly. This was happening because the Israelites were not following what God wanted. Because of this, the people were always afraid. But God wanted them to trust him, so he used Gideon to lead the people into a mighty battle. In this battle, they had horns that they used to frighten the Midianites. (For those who haven't had the bible center, tell them that they'll hear more about what happens when they have their turn with the story.) But Gideon had a hard time believing God was going to help him. Is it hard for us to do what God wants us to do when we are scared? (Elicit answers.) What about our parents? Can we help by showing our families and friends what God wants for us all? Discuss how God can help us help our parents love God more.

*** Directions:**

In your area of the room, lay yarn (or rope or streamers) down on the floor in a way that makes a maze that the children have to walk on. You might need to tack it down in a few places. You can make the maze go under a table or include an obstacle such as a jump rope or a hula hoop – try to make it as interesting as possible. Make 7-8 areas on the maze "stopping points" where the children will have to recite the memory verse or answer a question. Have more memory verse stations than questions. At each of these stopping points, have a bowl of a trail mix ingredient ready for them to scoop into their bag. Continue down the trail until all of the children have gathered all of the trail mix items. Ideas for the trail mix items are M&M's, pretzels, cheerios, raisins, Chex, dried fruit. Explain to the children that God lays out a path for us to follow, and sometimes there are obstacles in the way, but with His help, we can overcome any of those obstacles.

* Questions for the stopping points.

1. What is the book of the bible our story and bible verse come from? (Judges)
2. What is the name of the tribe that was attacking the Israelites? (Midianites)
3. What is the musical instrument that was used to help scare the enemy tribe? (horn/trumpet)
4. How can God help us best? (Trust him, believe in him, etc.)

* If you have extra time, please play the Veggie Tales Gideon video...

*** Closing:**

Make sure to answer any questions and provide time for the children to share their thoughts. Go over the memory verse with them again.

*** Pray:**

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2. Read the "comments about the lesson."
 3. Post the memory verse.
 4. Read the instructions for the games below and decide which games to play

*** Comments about the Lesson:**

Rules for the games:

- Be sure the kids know that all will be participating – gently but clearly urge each child to play with the group
- You may not have time for all games, so choose the ones you would like to have them play and make sure you are prepared for them.
- You can either divide the children into different age groups and have them rotate from one game to the next OR
- You can have them all play together and go from one game to the next.

*** Musical Chairs:**

Have a radio ready with music as well as chairs for all but one child. Play until only one child remains. Relate the chairs disappearing to God reducing the size of Gideon's army before he went into battle.

* "Volleyball":

You could use the winner of musical chairs to be the Gideon in this game. Set up a volleyball court (with or without the net – you could make it more like dodgeball without the net). Divide the class into two teams: one team with one person and everyone else on the other team. Ask the class if there is any way that the solo person can win this game? Give one ball to the solo person and give several balls to the other team. They may all start serving at once. The first team to score 5 points wins. The team with the majority of players should win quickly.

Now change the setup of the game. The team with most of the players must now sit on the floor in a circle and all hold hands. They cannot unclasp their hands and they must remain sitting. Now give one ball to the team with the most players and the rest of the balls to the solo player. Again, the teams may serve as many balls as quickly as they want. The first team to score 5 points wins. The solo player should win this round.

- * Ask the kids how are these 2 teams like the Midianite army and Gideon's army?
- * What unfair advantage did the Midianite army have? (superior numbers)
- * What "unfair" advantage did Gideon's army have? (God was on their side).

*Rock, Paper, Scissors:

Use the same rules as rock, paper, scissors, but we will use symbols of weapons used in Bible times to win battles:

- Spear – make a fist with index finger pointing out to form the spear
- Sword – make a fist with index and middle finger pointing out and curving to form a sword
- Hand –to-hand combat – make a fist with no fingers pointing out.
- Sword beats hands, hands beat spears, spears beat swords

Pair the children off in twos and have them play several rounds. The teacher then enters the game with a new symbol (totally open palm representing the power of God). Don't explain this new symbol when you first enter the game – just play the game, give the power of God symbol on the 3rd hit and say "I won". When the children question you, tell them that the new symbol is prayer/power of God and that is the weapon you have chosen. Continue to play rounds, choosing prayer/power of God and therefore winning every time, no matter what other symbol is given. Hopefully, the children will follow suit and choose prayer/power of God every time as they are playing.

*Memory Verse Game

Make a "Memory Verse Cube" from a sturdy square cardboard box (or a large dice). Each of the 6 sides should be a different color and with a different question on it: where is this verse found in the Bible?; Tell us part of Gideon's story; Put the verse in your own words; Say the verse out loud; what does this verse tell you about God?; give us an example of what this verse means.

*** Closing:**

Make sure to answer any questions and provide time for the children to share their thoughts. Go over the memory verse with them again.

*** Pray:**

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Judges 6:12