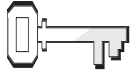


Gallant Gideon



References

Judges 6, 7;
Patriarchs and Prophets,
pp. 546-554



Memory Verse

"I can do everything
through him who
gives me strength"
(Philippians 4:13, NIV).

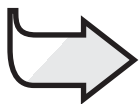


Objectives

The children will:
Know they can
depend on God to be
aware of their needs
and to hear their prayers.

Feel confident that
they don't have to rely
on their own strength.

Respond by believing
God will answer and by
following His directions.



The Message

God can use me
when I trust Him.

Monthly Theme

We learn what is important in life.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

God allows the Midianites to oppress the children of Israel because His people have done evil in His sight. The angel of the Lord appears to Gideon while he is hiding from the Midianites and threshing wheat in a winepress. The angel says, "The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor." When Gideon accuses God of forsaking Israel, the angel shocks him with the news that God will use him to deliver His people. Gideon asks for a sign. At last Gideon believes, builds an altar, and worships God. Gideon follows God's instructions, demonstrating that what man cannot do alone is very possible with God's plan and power. Gideon leads 300 men of the Israelite community to do God's will, to follow God's directions, and to free Israel from the Midianite oppression.

This is a lesson about community.

The Israelite community had turned to idols, and God let their enemies conquer them to get their attention. God chose someone from the community who was willing to follow His guidance to lead the Israelites back to Him and to overcome their enemies. God still uses people within the community of faith to lead His people.

Teacher Enrichment

"The leader whom God chose to overthrow the Midianites occupied no prominent position in Israel. He was not a ruler, a priest, or a Levite. He thought himself the least in his father's house. But God saw in him a man of courage and integrity. He was distrustful of himself and willing to follow the guidance of the Lord. God does not always choose for His work men of the greatest talents, but He selects those whom He can best use. . . . The Lord can work most effectually through those who are most sensible of their own insufficiency, and who will rely upon Him as their leader and source of strength" (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 553).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Tug-of-War</i> B. <i>Reaching the Mark</i> C. <i>How Bright Is Your Light?</i>	rope masking tape lamps/flashlights
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	none <i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> offering container list of church and/or community leaders, pictures of leaders
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	altar, cotton, washcloths, flashlights, sound effects: trumpet, breaking pottery cones of brown paper, paper cups or jars, small cards, Bibles Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Jesus Can</i>	empty tin can, marker, paper, pencils
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Lighting the Way</i>	brown, red, orange, yellow paper; cups, scissors, tape

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- rope

A. Tug-of-War

Form two teams. Put the larger, stronger children in one team, and the smaller children in the other team. Ask: **Whom do you think will win?** Allow time for their reactions. **On your marks, get set . . . Oh! I almost forgot! There are too many of you on this team.** Point to the team with the smaller children. **We will let [the first child] do it alone. Everyone else on this team may sit down.** Have the tug-of-war.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why did [name] lose the tug of war? What would [name] have needed to win? Things looked just as impossible for the people in our Bible story today. But, they were willing to trust God. When people trust God, He is able to use them to do the impossible. Let’s say today’s message together:**



GOD CAN USE ME WHEN I TRUST HIM.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- masking tape

B. Reaching the Mark

In advance, put a piece of tape on the wall out of reach of the tallest child. Say: **We are going to see who can jump up and touch the tape.** Have the children take turns trying to jump up to touch it. Encourage them to stretch and try harder. Have one of the smallest and lightest children go last. As they jump, grab them and lift them up to touch the tape.

Debriefing

Ask: **How did you feel when you were trying and trying and you just could not reach the tape?** (frustrated) **What did you think when you saw me lifting [name] up to reach the mark?** (unfair) Ask the child you lifted up: **How did you feel when I lifted you so you could reach the mark?** (pleased) **In our story today we’ll find out that God asked Gideon to do something that seemed impossible. Gideon trusted God, and God gave him the strength to do it. Today’s message is:**



GOD CAN USE ME WHEN I TRUST HIM.

Say that with me.

C. How Bright Is Your Light?

If possible, darken the room. Let the children light the different lamps/candles (bicycle lamp, birthday candle, large candle, table lamp). After they have lit each one ask: **What would you use this for?** Turn off the lights and blow out the candles. While

the room is in darkness, have someone drop something, then turn on the lights suddenly.

Debriefing

Ask: **Which lamp/flashlight/candle gave the most light? What light would you prefer to have if you were out at night?** (brightest, strongest) **What did you do when you heard the noise and the lights came on suddenly?** (startled, jumped) **Have you ever been fast asleep and suddenly someone turned a bright light on? How did you feel?** (confused) **In our story today we are going to hear about someone who played a trick using lights and noise to defeat their enemies. He only had a small army, but he trusted God. Our message is:**

You Need:

- variety of lamps/torches/flashlights/candles



GOD CAN USE ME WHEN I TRUST HIM.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Songs

- "Jesus Bids Us Shine" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 133)
- "The Family of God" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 139)
- "Come Into His Presence" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 14)
- "This Is My Prayer" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 106)
- "Trust in the Lord" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 111)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Ask: **What does the story tell us about how we should react to challenges in our community?**



Offering

Say: **When we give our offerings, we help people reach out to their communities and tell others about Jesus.**

You Need:

- offering container



Prayer

Place pictures illustrating one group of leaders where all may see. Ask: **What are some of the challenges facing these leaders? What difference does it make when they trust God?** Allow discussion time. Emphasize that God has positive solutions even in seemingly impossible situations. Encourage each child to pray for a specific leader.

You Need:

- list of leaders on a large sheet of paper
- pictures illustrating one group of leaders

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- altar
- cotton or something to represent a fleece
- two washcloths
- flashlights
- sound effects: trumpet/breaking pottery

Experiencing the Story

Characters: Gideon, angel, soldiers

Encourage the children to act out the story as you read or tell it. It may be helpful to have another adult lead the children.

Setting the scene:

Say: **Forty years after Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera, Israel forgot God and began worshiping idols again. This made God very sad.**

For seven years Midianites and Amalekites caused problems for the Israelites by stealing their food and destroying their homes. Many of the Israelites lived in caves just to survive. God looked around for a leader—someone who would trust Him. He found Gideon.

Read or tell the story.

Gideon was hiding from the Midianites while he was grinding wheat. *[Mime grinding wheat and looking around fearfully.]* The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.” *[Angel talks to Gideon.]*

Gideon was startled. He was no mighty warrior. His family was the smallest in the tribe of Manasseh. He certainly was not feeling very brave. *[Gideon looks startled and unsure.]*

“I will be with you,” God told Gideon. “We will destroy the enemy together.”

But Gideon was not sure about this. He asked the angel to wait while he made a meal. *[Cook meal.]* He put the meal on a rock, and it was destroyed by fire.

Gideon asked God for two more signs before he was certain that God was with him.

Taking a fleece in his hands, he asked God, “If you are going to help Israel defeat Midian, let this fleece be wet tomorrow morning and the ground under it dry.” *[Lay out damp cotton or polyester fiberfill on a dry washcloth.]*

The next morning it was just as Gideon had asked. No dew had touched the ground, but the fleece was soaked.

Gideon tested God again. “This time let the fleece be dry and the ground wet,” he asked. The next morning his request was granted. *[Lay dry cotton or polyester fiberfill on a damp washcloth.]*

Gideon called an army to fight Midian, and 32,000 men joined him. Now God tested Gideon. *[Soldiers gather around Gideon.]*

“There are too many men,” God said. “Send some home.”

Gideon knew that the Midianites and Amalekites had an enormous army. But he obeyed God and sent 22,000 men home. *[Soldiers go off. These can double as Midianites.]*

God tested Gideon again. “Take your men to the river to drink. Look for the ones who drink standing up. Send all the rest home.” *[Have the children lie down and pretend to drink or lap water up in their hands.]*

Only 300 men passed the second test. God finally had a small enough army.

That night Gideon divided his army into three companies. *[Divide the children into three groups. The soldiers who went “home” can lie on the floor and double as the Midianite army.]* Armed only with trumpets, torches, and clay jars, they hid on three sides of the Midianite camp. All at once they blew their trumpets, lit their

torches, smashed their jars, and shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" *[Gideon's soldiers stand in place and shout.]*

God did the rest. Awakened by the shouting in the middle of the night, the Midianites and Amalekites rushed from their tents and began to fight each other!

God had led Gideon and his army of 300. They had defeated their enemies without a fight! God had won the victory for them.

Debriefing

Ask: **Why was Gideon hiding?** (He was afraid of the Amalekites and Midianites.) **What was he doing?** (Threshing grain.)

Who appeared to Gideon while he was hiding? (an angel) **What did the angel say?** (He called Gideon a mighty warrior.) **Why did God choose Gideon to lead the Israelites?** (He was willing to follow God.) **Why did God tell Gideon to send some of his army home?** (They would not have given God the glory.)

God gave Gideon strength because Gideon trusted God and followed His instructions. God can use us too, if we trust Him. Let's say our message together.



GOD CAN USE ME WHEN I TRUST HIM.

Memory Verse

Have enough cones, cups, and copies of the memory verse to have one for every five children.

Place the memory verse words in the paper cup or the jar. Then place the cone over the cup or jar.

Say: **This cone reminds us of the torches that Gideon and his men carried. Let's remove the cover and take out a word.**

As the children take out different

You Need:

- cones of brown paper
- paper cups or jars
- memory verse words on small cards
- Bibles

words, help them put the verse in the right order. Let them use their Bibles. Repeat the memory verse when it is complete. Repeat the activity until they know the verse.

The memory verse is: **"I can do everything through him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13, NIV).**

Bible Study

Form five small groups. Pair readers with nonreaders. (Adults assist where needed.) Give each group a reference.

Say: **God was able to use Gideon to free his community because Gideon was willing to listen and do what God told him to do. Look up the text and find out who else was willing to follow God.**

Genesis 45:4, 5	(Joseph)
Acts 16:29-31	(Paul and Silas)
Esther 4:14, 16	(Esther)
Exodus 14:15, 16	(Moses)
1 Samuel 17:45	(David)

Allow time for the groups to report. Ask what the children know about these people.

Debriefing

Ask: **What is the most important thing that God looks at when He chooses a leader?** Allow discussion time. **Let's look at 1 Samuel 16:7.** Read the text aloud.

Our memory verse tells us what happens when we are willing to let God take control. Allow time for class to repeat Philippians 4:13 ("I can do everything through him who gives me strength.")

God makes all things possible when people trust in Him. Let's say our message together:



GOD CAN USE ME WHEN I TRUST HIM.

You Need:

- Bibles

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- large empty tin can
- marker
- paper
- pencils

Jesus Can

In advance, put a label around the tin can with the words "JESUS CAN."

Say: **At the beginning of our story, things looked impossible for Gideon and the Israelites. Gideon was afraid. He found it hard to believe that God would use him for such a big job.**

Like Gideon, we are sometimes afraid. Today we have a JESUS CAN to remind us that we can depend on Jesus' strength, not our own. Write or draw a picture of anything you are afraid of; then place it in the "Jesus Can."

Debriefing

Ask: **What are some of the things we are afraid of?**

What happens when we are afraid? (We sometimes do not have the courage to do what we know is right.)

Is there anything that God cannot take care of? (no) **God can take care of everything. All we have to do is ask Him. Let's ask Him to take away our fears.** Pray with the children.

Let's remind ourselves of today's message:



GOD CAN USE ME WHEN I TRUST HIM.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Lighting the Way

Have the children make a torch by rolling the brown paper into a cone. Cut flame shapes from the red/yellow/orange paper. Insert them in the top of the cone. Cover the “flames” with the paper cup.

Form pairs or small groups. Say:
Share with your partner ways that you can trust God in the week ahead. As you are speaking, remove the cup from over your flames to let your light shine. When we trust God, we are like a light to people around us.

Debriefing

Ask: **What is a way we can show that we trust God?** (Do what is right.)
How are we like the torch when

we show others that we trust God?

(We show them God’s way.)

Take your torch home and share it with someone as you tell them about Gideon and how God led him.

Let’s hold our torches high and say our message together:



GOD CAN USE ME WHEN I TRUST HIM.

Closing

If possible, darken the room. Gather the children in a circle. Turn on a torch or flashlight. Say: **When we turn on the light, we can see what is happening. When we trust God, we are like a flashlight or torch. Let us pray and ask God to help us trust Him more this week.**

You Need:

- brown paper
- red/orange/yellow paper
- plastic or paper cups
- scissors
- tape

You Need:

- flashlight

Gallant Gideon

References

Judges 6, 7;
Patriarchs and
Prophets,
pp. 546-554

Memory Verse

"I can do every-
thing through
him who gives
me strength"
(Philippians 4:13,
NIV).

The Message

God can use me
when I trust Him.

Have you ever been afraid and not too sure what to do? Or been awakened suddenly and heard strange noises? When Gideon learned to trust God rather than be afraid, exciting things began to happen.

Forty years after Deborah and Barak defeated Sisera, Israel forgot God and began worshipping idols again. This made God very sad. For seven years Midianites and Amalekites caused problems for the Israelites. They stole their food and destroyed their homes. Many of the Israelites lived in caves just to survive.

God looked around for a leader—someone who would trust Him. He found Gideon.

Gideon was hiding from the Midianites while he was grinding wheat. Suddenly the angel of the Lord appeared and said: "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior."

Gideon was startled. He was no mighty warrior. His family was the smallest in the tribe of Manasseh. He certainly was not feeling very brave.

"I will be with you," God told Gideon. "We will destroy the enemy together."

Gideon was not sure. He asked the angel to wait while he made a meal. He

put the meal on a rock, and it was burned up by fire.

Gideon asked God for two more signs. He wanted to be certain that God was with him. He held a fleece in his hands and

spoke quietly. "If you are going to help Israel defeat Midian, let this fleece be wet tomorrow morning and the ground under it be dry."

The next morning it was just as Gideon had asked. No dew had touched the ground, but the fleece was soaked.

Gideon tested God again. "This time let the fleece be dry and the ground wet," he asked. The next morning his request was granted.

Gideon called an army to fight Midian, and 32,000 men joined him. Now God tested Gideon.

"There are too many men," God said. "Send some home."

Gideon knew that the Midianites and Amalekites had a huge army. But he obeyed God and sent 22,000 men home. (Judges 7:3)

God tested Gideon again. "Take your men to the river to drink. Look for the ones who drink standing up. Send all the rest home."

Only 300 men passed the second test. God finally had a small enough army.

That night, Gideon divided his army into three companies. Armed only with clay jars, trumpets, and torches, they hid on three sides of the Midianite camp. All at once they blew their trumpets, smashed their jars, lit their torches, and shouted, "For the Lord and for Gideon!"

God did the rest. Awakened by the shouting, the Midianites and Amalekites rushed from their tents. And they began to fight each other! They were confused. Many ran away. And as they ran, Gideon's soldiers chased them.

God wants to help us with our most difficult problems. It is easy for Him to destroy our enemies. It is easy for us to obey Him—easy as long as we remain faithful and remember Him before everything we do.

God won the victory for the Israelites. And God will win the victory for you too.



Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, go for a walk around your neighborhood with your family. Count the number of different kinds of lights that you see.
- Find a quiet place and read your lesson together.
- Take turns being blindfolded and letting someone lead you. Afterward, talk about what it means to trust someone.
- Pray that God will teach you to trust Him more.

Sunday

- Make a torch by rolling a piece of paper to form a cone. Cut out 11 flame shapes and write one word of the memory verse on each flame. Put the flames in the torch and repeat the memory verse. Teach the verse to your family during worship.
- Ask three people to tell you about a time they had to trust in God.
- Help your Mom make the evening meal. Think about how Gideon felt while making a meal for the angel.
- Thank God that you can always trust Him.

Monday

- During family worship, read part of Gideon's story in Judges 6:1-40.
- Wet a washcloth. Put a few cotton balls on top. Leave it for an hour. Do the cotton balls remain dry?
- Repeat the experiment in reverse. Wet the cotton balls and put them on a dry washcloth. Does the washcloth remain dry?
- During family worship talk about things that frighten you. Pray together that God will help you trust Him when you are afraid.

Tuesday

- With your family read and discuss the second part of Gideon's story in Judges 7:2-8.
- Drink a cup of water. Fill a basin with water

and try drinking from your hand. Which is easier?

- Make up a song, rap, or poem about choosing the soldiers.
- Pray that you will always be ready to help people in your community.

Wednesday

- Try to listen to some trumpet music during worship today. Find out how trumpets have been used in war. (Hint: look in an encyclopedia.)
- During family worship read and discuss the last part of 2 Corinthians 12:10 together. If you are not sure what it means, find some thread. Try to break it. Now try to break 10 lengths of thread at the same time. Talk about how you can be weak and yet strong.
- Pray for strength to do God's will.

Thursday

- Review your memory verse and say it for your family during worship.
- If possible make the room dark for family worship. Explain that you want to try an experiment. Turn off the lights and make a loud noise, then turn on the lights. Ask everyone how they felt. How does this compare with how the Midianites felt when Gideon and his men attacked them?
- Count the number of lights you have in your home. Which one gives the most light?
- Pray that God will bless the leaders in your community.

Friday

- Review the story of Gideon and act it out with your family for worship tonight.
- Share the song/poem/rap you wrote on Tuesday.
- Say the memory verse together.
- Pray for each member of your family.