

TEXT Judges 6:11-16,36-40; 7:1-23

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to tell the story of Gideon and to relate some of the characteristics which made him one of the people God could use.

MEMORY VERSE Wait on the LORD: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart. — Psalm 27:14

Gideon

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

WAIT ON — Rest right cheek in right palm as right elbow is being supported by left palm.

THE LORD — Make an L with thumb and first finger of the right hand. Touch thumb to left shoulder, bring across in front of body touching right waist.

BE OF GOOD COURAGE — With index fingers at corners of mouth, help your lips to smile.

AND HE — Point up.

SHALL STRENGTHEN — Flex bicep muscle.

THINE HEART — Using index fingers, outline the shape of a heart over your heart.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

This week's verse concerning waiting on the Lord features a small boy sitting in front of a fence in a "waiting" posture. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut out the pieces with the portions of the verse written on them. With the help of your students, put the puzzle together as the verse is learned by your group.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: Draw a simple face with wide staring eyes to illustrate a person who is afraid. Use this to open your class session. Tell your group that today's lesson is about a man who could have been afraid — but he had the assurance that God was with him, even though he faced some incredible challenges.

1. God sent an angel to Gideon to call him to deliver the Children of Israel from the hand of the Midianites, and promised that God would be with him.
2. Gideon proved the promise of God by the double miracle of the fleece.
3. God selected 300 men out of 32,000 to do the job.
4. The men were equipped with a trumpet, a lamp, and a pitcher, and sent forth to meet the vast Midianite army.

Climax: As the 300 obeyed the command, the Midianites and their allies fled, giving Gideon and his men the victory God had promised.

Conclusion: Gideon was able to lead his men to victory because he was willing to do as God instructed him.

Response: The students will be able to describe what took place when Gideon obeyed God, and understand that they, too, will be victorious in spite of the odds against them if they are obedient to God.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Gideon is certainly among the heroes of the Old Testament. Although his birth was obscure and his family poor, God knew whom He was calling. Although Gideon's father had become an idolater, the God-fearing Gideon became known as *Jerubbaal*, which means "discomfiter of Baal" (Judges 6:32).

When Gideon received the call to lead the battle against the Midianites, who were oppressing Israel, God condescended to reveal His will through the double sign of the fleece. Because of his unswerving faith Gideon proved that a few brave men with God are a majority. Because of this, Gideon earned a place in the roll call of the faithful in Hebrews 11.

Gideon's life was characterized not only by courage, but also by humility (Judges 6:15), spirituality (Judges 6:24), obedience (Judges 6:27), and loyalty (Judges 8:23).

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Cut a thin sponge into a fleece shape. Have the sponge in a bowl with a little water in it. Wring out the fleece into another bowl to show that the fleece was wet. Use a dry sponge with a small box of damp dirt for the other sign.

Use finger puppets to act out the story of Gideon and his army. Also use the three small pictures: one of a crowd representing his army, one of a trumpet, and one of a light inside a jar (see Patterns).

Have a flashlight for each child, which they turn on all at once when you say "now." Have them pretend they are the army and you, the teacher, are Gideon. Use a sandbox with clothespin people and tents for Midian-

ites. You can use trumpets also. Have a flashlight for every other child and a paper or plastic trumpet for the rest. The children with the trumpets may make a trumpet noise at the same time as the children with the flashlights flip the switches.

QUESTIONS

Why do you think God chose Gideon to fight the battle?

How would you feel if an angel from Heaven came to you with a job that God wanted you to do?

Was it important that Gideon followed God's instructions? Why?

How do you think Gideon felt when all the men who were afraid left him and returned home? Do you think Gideon was afraid too? Why or why not?

Explain why Gideon put out the fleece.

How can we know God's will?

Will God ever give someone something to do that is too hard for them? Explain.

Talk about Gideon and his blowing the trumpets and breaking the pitchers. What do you suppose the men in the camp thought was going on?

Compare Gideon's trumpet to our testimonies. We, too, can proclaim the power of God. Discuss some places where we might have to "fight" a battle for the Lord.

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTIONS

Bring several items illustrating things small children could be afraid of; for example, a stuffed dog, a picture of a crowd of people, a flashlight (to represent darkness). Point out that they aren't afraid if Mommy or Daddy is close by them. Gideon wasn't afraid because he knew God was with him.

Give each child a copy of the picture showing the thoughtful child with a fold-over flap showing Jesus (see Patterns). Help your little ones fold over the picture of Jesus, and talk about how Jesus is always with us. Let the little ones add a smile to the face of the thoughtful child, to show that we are happy because we know Jesus will never leave us.

Ideas for trumpets: Purchase from a sewing factory, large cone-shaped thread spools. These will be fun for the children to use as trumpets. Or use ice cream cones. When the lesson is over, you have a ready-made snack! Another idea is to fold and tape half circles of paper into cone shapes.

For each child, fold a square of orange cellophane paper to represent flames. Tape the flames to a popsicle stick and set a paper cup over the top to represent a pitcher. Let them take the cups off the flames to show the lights as they were when the army broke their pitchers.

REVIEW IDEAS

Dress up as a soldier, labeling each piece of "armor" with the character aspects shown by Gideon — humble, brave, careful, leader, loyal to God, earnest, etc. Discuss with the children what each piece adds up to — a person God can use.

Make comparison pictures of what Gideon might have seen or done, as a coward or as a brave man. One picture could show his reaction to the trumpet, candles, and vessels through the unknowing eye of a coward (what good are **these** for battle?). Then the other picture — what God showed him to do with them. We can listen to God's directions and obey (win) or we can give up everything (lose). Another picture — "We need **all** the 32,000 soldiers to win this battle!" versus Gideon's 300 true men. A picture of Gideon thinking of himself as a leader contrasts with his knowing that God was the true Captain.

COORDINATING SONGS

"Lord's Army"

"God Answers Prayer in the Morning"

"This Little Light of Mine"

"There Was a Brave Soldier Named Gideon," by A. Smith, Rodeheaver Publishing

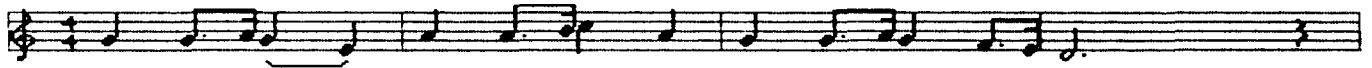
SUPPORT MATERIAL

Stories About Joshua and Judges — Pict-o-graph, Standard Publishing

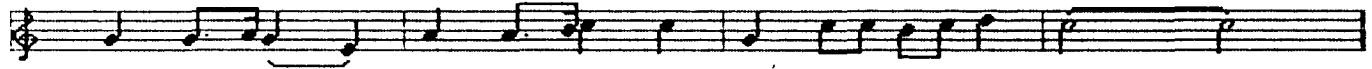
Gideon the Brave — Palm Tree Book, Concordia

The Man Who Won Without Fighting — Arch Book, Concordia

MEMORY VERSE SONG



Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart.



Wait on the Lord: be of good cour - age, and he shall strengthen thine heart.

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

