

# Gideon's Faith

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Sunday Plan

SCRIPTURE

Judges 6–7

MEMORY VERSE

Judges 7:2

OPTIONAL VIDEO

Gideon and the 300 Men

<https://southside.cc/620-325>

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*God wins with little so the glory is his.*

## For the Teacher

Read this before you teach. Last week the kids met Deborah — a judge God used to rescue Israel from one oppressor. Today they meet another judge, Gideon, in the middle of another oppression. But the shape of this story is different, and the difference is the whole lesson. God doesn't just rescue Israel through Gideon. God deliberately makes the rescue *look impossible* — first by picking the wrong man, then by shrinking the army from 32,000 to 300 — so that when victory comes, no one in Israel can say “look what we did.”

### KEY TRUTH

God wins with little so the glory is his.

**Glory is the load-bearing word.** When the kids hear “glory,” they think gold light and angels singing. The Bible word means *credit* — who gets the praise, who gets remembered as the strong one. That's what Judges 7:2 is about. God says, in plain language, “you have too many soldiers, because if you win with this many, you'll think *you* did it.” Use the word “credit” with the kids. God wins on purpose with too little so the credit goes to him.

**Gideon is the least, from the least, in the least.** When the angel calls him a “mighty man of valor” in 6:12, Gideon is hiding in a winepress threshing wheat — terrified the Midianites will see him. He answers in 6:15: my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house. God's response is the hinge of the chapter: *I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man.* Same promise God gave Moses. Same promise God gave Joshua. Same God.

**The 32,000 to 300.** This is the part the kids will remember, so get it right. Gideon raises an army of 32,000. God says it's too many. Round one: anyone who's afraid can go home. 22,000 leave. 10,000 stay. God says still too many. Round two: take them to the water. The ones who lap with their hand stay; the ones who kneel and drink go home. 9,700 leave. 300 stay. Then God says: *with these 300 I will save you.* The math is the point. God is making the victory mathematically impossible without him.

**What we're skipping and why.** Judges 6 also has Gideon tearing down the altar of Baal (6:25–32), and the famous fleece test (6:36–40). Both are good — but they're sub-stories about Gideon working up his nerve, and both pull focus from the bottom line. The fleece especially is a bad model for how Christians should make decisions. Today stays in 6:1–16 (the call) and 7:1–22 (the victory). If a kid asks about the fleece, tell them it's in the chapter and they can read it later — but God doesn't want us putting him to tests.

**Where this connects.** The kids have heard *I will be with you* twice already this quarter — Joshua at the river (Q3L1), Deborah at the battle (Q3L4). Today they hear it a third time, to the most unlikely man yet. Same God. Same promise. The pattern is being hammered in on purpose. Last week's bottom line was about courage; this week's is about credit. Where Q3L1 said *be brave because God goes with you*, Q3L5 says *don't take the credit, because God did it on purpose this way.*

**Repeat the bottom line all morning.** Say it at least six times. Have the kids say it back. Write it on the board. End with it.

### MATERIALS

- Bibles for every student
- Whiteboard or large paper, markers
- Pencils, crayons or colored pencils
- A handful of small objects (pennies, paper clips, pebbles) — for the closing visual
- Activity sheets (printed in advance from this week's activities — pick what you'll use)

# 1. Gather

Welcome the kids. Tell them you're picking up where you left off: last week was Deborah, the brave judge. Today is Gideon, the *scared* judge.

## ASK

*Has anyone ever felt like the smallest, weakest, or least qualified person to do something — and somebody picked you anyway?*

Let two or three kids answer. Don't push. Then tell them: today's story is about a man who was the least likely person in Israel to lead an army — and God picked him on purpose. Write the bottom line on the board:

## SAY

*God wins with little so the glory is his.*

Tell them "glory" means *credit* — who gets the praise for what happened. Underline the word *little* and the word *glory* on the board.

# 2. The Story

## Setting the Stage

Before opening the Bible, set the scene:

## SAY

*Israel is in trouble again. They've stopped following God, and a people called the Midianites have been attacking them for seven years — riding in on camels, stealing their food, burning their fields. Israel is hiding in caves. They're starving. And finally they cry out to God for help. The man God picks to rescue them is named Gideon. And when God picks him, Gideon is hiding in a winepress, threshing wheat — too scared of the Midianites to do it out in the open like normal.*

## Reading the Call

Have everyone open to Judges 6:11. Pick a confident reader.

### Judges 6:11–16

After the reading, work through these together:

## DISCUSSION

- In verse 12, what does the angel call Gideon?
 

→ *"Mighty man of valor." Mighty warrior. Make sure they catch the irony — Gideon is hiding in a winepress when this happens. He does not look mighty at all.*
- In verse 15, how does Gideon describe himself?
 

→ *"My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." Least — from the least — in the least. He's nobody.*
- What does God promise him in verse 16?
 

→ *"I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." Same promise God gave Moses at the burning bush. Same promise God gave Joshua at the river. Same God, different scared guy.*

### The Army Gets Smaller

Tell the kids the story has a fast-forward. Gideon agrees to lead. He sends out the call, and 32,000 men show up to fight.

Write on the board: **32,000**.

Then say:

#### SAY

*You'd think God would say great, that's a good start. But God says the opposite. God says: you have too many.*

Have everyone open to Judges 7:1. Pick a confident reader.

### Judges 7:1-8

Walk to the board and write the cuts as you talk:

32,000 → 10,000 (round one — the scared go home)

10,000 → 300 (round two — the water test)

Then ask:

#### DISCUSSION

1. Look at verse 2. What reason does God give for sending soldiers home?

→ *"The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'" If they win with 32,000, they'll think they did it. God doesn't want that.*

2. So who did God want the credit to go to?

→ *Himself. God. The win has to look like God's win, not Israel's win. That's the whole reason for the smaller army.*

3. With 300 men against an army of thousands of Midianites, who has to do the saving?

→ *God. There is no other answer. 300 men cannot win that battle on their own. That's the point.*

#### TRANSITION

This is the most important thing in the lesson. God didn't shrink the army because the soldiers were bad. He shrank it because the victory had to belong to him.

### Trumpets, Jars, and Torches

Tell the kids the battle plan is bizarre — and that's also on purpose. Pick a confident reader.

### Judges 7:19-22

Walk through it for them:

#### SAY

*Three hundred men. No swords drawn. They split into three groups, surround the camp at night, and at Gideon's signal they break clay jars, hold up torches, and blow trumpets all at once. The Midianites wake up, panic in the dark, and start fighting each other. God wins the battle without Israel swinging a single sword.*

Then say:

#### SAY

*Trumpets and jars and torches. That's it. God wins with little so the glory is his.*

### 3. The Point

Say the bottom line again, with the kids:

**SAY**

*God wins with little so the glory is his.*

#### The Memory Verse

Have everyone turn to Judges 7:2. Have a student read it aloud:

**SCRIPTURE**

*Judges 7:2*

*The LORD said to Gideon, "The people with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel boast over me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'"*

Read it together once. Then point at the words "too many" and ask:

**ASK**

*Has God ever said too many in a story before? When have you ever heard somebody say "we have too many helpers"?*

You're looking for: *never. That's not how anybody else thinks. Only God.*

**SAY**

*Most of the time, when something hard is coming, we want more. More people. More money. More strength. More smart. God says the opposite. He says less. Because if we win with more, we think we did it. If we win with less, we know he did.*

#### The Pennies

Pull out the small objects you brought — pennies, paper clips, pebbles, whatever fits in a hand. Put one in each kid's palm.

**SAY**

*That's nothing. A penny doesn't win a battle. A paperclip doesn't fix anything big. A small rock doesn't impress anybody. But Gideon had 300 men against an army, and clay jars and trumpets, and God won. God wins with little so the glory is his.*

Tell them to keep the small thing in their pocket this week as a reminder: *when I feel small, that's exactly when God wants to work.*

Pray over the class:

**PRAY**

*God, you picked Gideon when he was hiding in a winepress. You sent soldiers home when the army looked too big. You won a battle with 300 men, trumpets, and jars. Help us remember that you don't need us to be strong — you want us to trust you. When we feel small, remind us that you do your biggest work with the smallest things. The glory is yours. Amen.*

### 4. The Work

Pick one or more activities from this week's menu. Print enough copies for each kid in advance. The kids don't have to do all of them — pick what fits the group's energy and what time you have left.

The menu for this week:

- **Trumpets and Torches** — coloring page reinforcing the 300 men with their jars and torches surrounding the camp.
- **Gideon's 300** — word search with names, places, and key words from Judges 6–7.
- **When I Feel Small** — drawing prompt connecting the lesson to the kid's own life.
- **Remember the Battle** — fill-in-the-blanks recall using the kids' Bibles (Judges 6–7).

The full production specs for each activity are in this week's activities file.

**NOTE**

While the kids work, sit with them. Ask one or two what they're working on. Reinforce the bottom line one more time before class ends. If you finish early, have a few kids share what they made. If you run long, send the activity sheets home.

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## What Comes Next Week

The kids meet Ruth — a foreign widow who chooses to follow God's people and God's God when nothing forces her to. Where today was about God using the small and weak to win a battle, next week is about God using the loyalty of one quiet woman to write a line in the family tree of Jesus.