

Gideon

Judges 6-8:35



Old Testament 5

Part 1: Israel's Cycle of Disobedience; The Time of the Judges

SUNDAY MORNING

Old Testament 5 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Judges 6-8:35; Hebrews 11:32; James 2

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear" (Hebrews 13:6b).

OLDER CHILDREN: "So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:6).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF LESSON FOR WORDS):

A [song book](#) and [audio recordings](#) of many of the curriculum songs are available on the curriculum Web site.

- ["The Judges"](#)
- ["A Happy Place"](#)
- ["Choose You This Day"](#)
- ["Trust and Obey"](#)
- ["The Judges"](#)
- ["Faith, Obedience, and Authority"](#)

LESSON VISUALS AND TEACHING AIDS (NOTE ANY DISCLAIMERS):

- See [AP's Pinterest page](#) for ideas on bulletin boards, visuals, crafts, etc. [DISCLAIMER: Pins may sometimes need to be adjusted to be Scriptural.]
- [Judges and King Saul](#) Bible fact cards (provided under "O.T. 5 Bible Facts" on curriculum Web site)
- "Summary of the Bible" from ["Kids Prep"](#) CD by Jeff Miller
- Betty Lukens' felt pieces
- Judges A Beka Flash-A-Card Series (DISCLAIMERS: use the cards, *not the lesson book*; skip cards 3.2 and 3.3)
- Cut out a large circle from poster board. Cut the circle into four equal sections to show the cycle of the Israelites' behavior in the time of the judges. If possible, include pictures to go with each part of the cycle (e.g., picture of idol with word "Disobeyed," picture of soldier with word(s) "Trouble" or "Attacked by Enemies," picture of person on his knees praying with word "Repented," and picture of judge with "God sent a DELIVERER.")



PERSONAL APPLICATION:

If I trust God (have faith in Him), I will show (demonstrate) that trust by the things that I do.
(This is the same application as was used in Lesson 3.)

LESSON STARTS HERE

INTRODUCTION: (YOUNGER CHILDREN)

Last week, we studied about the only judge who was a woman. Do you remember her name? [Deborah] Deborah showed that she loved and trusted God by doing what He told her to do. Deborah wasn't afraid to do what God said, but today we are going to talk about another judge who was afraid to follow God's instructions. His name was Gideon. We will learn from Gideon that God is with us even when we are scared!

INTRODUCTION: (OLDER CHILDREN)

Review last week's lesson.

Has anyone ever asked you to do something you were afraid to do? (Let the children discuss this, giving instances such as jumping off a diving board, riding a roller coaster, etc.) Would you be afraid to do something God asked you to do? In today's lesson, God asked Gideon to fight for Him, but Gideon was afraid and had trouble trusting God. Let's see what happened with Gideon.

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. After 40 years of peace under the counsel of Deborah, the Israelites returned to their ways of disobedience and rebellion against God. God sent the Midianites to punish them. In the Old Testament, God often used enemies of the Israelites to discipline/punish them for their disobedience (like how a father trying to teach His children uses discipline/punishment to train them to do what is right—Hebrews 12:5-11).



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article "[Why Would God Punish America Before He Would Punish Hindu or Islamic Nations?](#)" by Dave Miller on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about why God would use wicked people to punish the righteous.

2. The **Midianites** came against Israel during harvest times and destroyed homes, crops, and livestock, over and over. They were "as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number" (Judges 6:5). Many Israelites hid in caves and in the mountains to escape these attacks. After seven years of very hard times, the Israelites finally cried out to the Lord (prayed) for help. (Remind the children of the cycle of disobedience throughout the time of the judges.)



NOTE: The Midianites were also descendants of Abraham, through his second wife, Keturah (Genesis 25:1-2). They were warlike nomads who knew how to use camels in warfare very well. But they were also skilled merchants. Midianite traders (apparently traveling with Ishmaelites, also descendants of Abraham, through Sarah’s Egyptian maidservant, Hagar) bought Joseph (Genesis 37:25,28). Moses’ father-in-law and wife were Midianites (Exodus 3:1). When the Israelites were getting ready to take over Canaan (the Promised Land), the Midianites joined the Moabites to fight against them (Numbers 22; 24; 25).

3. God sent a prophet, whose name we do not know (Judges 6:7-10), to remind the people that it was He—YAHWEH, the “Great I AM”—who brought their ancestors out of slavery in Egypt and gave them the land in which they dwelled. But instead of being gratefully obedient, the Israelites turned to idols over and over again, worshipping man-made things they could see instead of the all-powerful (omnipotent), One True God.
4. After that, an angel of the Lord sat down under an oak tree near where Gideon, of the tribe of Manasseh, was secretly threshing grain to hide it from the Midianites.



HISTORICAL NOTE: While in control, the Midianites would not allow the Israelites to harvest their grain, so Gideon was hiding his work in a winepress. A winepress was usually made of two troughs, cut out of rock, with a channel connecting them. The grapes were brought in baskets from the vineyard and put in the winepress (in the upper trough); there the grapes were smashed with bare feet, and the juice drained off into the lower reservoir. The upper trough could be eight or ten feet square and 12 to 18 inches deep, while the lower one was three or four feet deep and about four feet square.

5. The angel called Gideon “a valiant (brave) warrior,” which was ironic for two reasons: he was working in secret because he was afraid; and he was a farmer, not a warrior (trained soldier). God can see what we are capable of, even before we know it!
6. Even though Gideon surely knew that the prophet was telling the truth about the reasons for their hardships (Judges 6:10), Gideon showed his lack of faith with questions: “If...Why...Where...How....” Verse 14 says “the Lord **turned to**” Gideon to look at him, saying, “Have I not sent you?” “Surely I will be with you.”



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article “[Seeing God ‘Face to Face’](#)” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about an alleged Bible discrepancy regarding humans seeing God.



NOTE: In Judges 6:14, the speaker changes from being the Angel of the Lord to being the Lord, Himself. Barnes explains: “When messages are delivered by the Angel of the Lord, the form of the message is as if God Himself were speaking” (*Barnes’ Notes on the Old Testament*, 2010, electronic database). “Angel of the Lord” and “Lord” are used interchangeably elsewhere in Scripture as well (e.g., Judges 2:1; Exodus 3).

7. God allowed Gideon to ask questions, to express his fear, and to ask for signs (proof) that this angel was really speaking for God. Gideon prepared unleavened bread and a lamb and brought them to the angel. The angel told him to put the meat and bread on a nearby rock and pour broth over everything. After Gideon followed his instructions, the angel held out his staff, and fire came from the middle of the rock, burning up everything.
8. The angel told Gideon to tear down his father's altar to Baal and the **Asherah** beside it using a young bull. Gideon was afraid to do so during the day, because of the wrath of his family and the men of the city, so he went at night time. Then Gideon offered the bull as a sacrifice to God on the wood left from the Asherah.



Asherah: a wooden pole worshipped as an idol representing the Canaanite goddess Asherah

9. The next morning, the men of the city were very upset. After an investigation, they found out that Gideon had torn down the idol and burned the Asherah. They wanted to kill Gideon, but his father Joash said if Baal were really a god, he could defend himself.



NOTE: It is interesting to note that Gideon's father stood up for him when the men of the city came to kill Gideon. Judges 6:25 indicates that the altar was Gideon's father's, and verse 27 indicates that Gideon had reason to fear "his father's household" or "family" by destroying the idols. Either his father was still loyal to Baal, but stood up for his son so he would not be killed, or he had a change of heart concerning his allegiance to Baal. Given his zealous statement in verse 31, the later seems more likely.



RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS: See the article "[Different Names, Same Person](#)" by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about an alleged Bible discrepancy regarding Gideon's name.

10. Then the Midianites, Amalekites, and others from the East, gathered together in the Valley of Jezreel. So Gideon gathered Israelites, including the Abiezrites (i.e., descendants of Abiezer, the son of Manasseh) and others of Manasseh, soldiers from Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali. Many soldiers came.



NOTE: It is interesting to note that men from the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali were a significant part of Gideon's army, as they were in Barak's army (Judges 4:6,10; 5:18).

11. Then Gideon asked for a second sign to determine whether God would give Israel victory through Gideon. He asked God to make a piece of wool (fleece) wet and the ground around it dry. The next morning, that is exactly what he found. Gideon asked for a third sign: make the fleece dry and the ground around it wet. The next morning, it was exactly as Gideon had asked.
12. At least 32,000 Israelite men came to Mount Gilead, near the Midianite camp. After all the signs God had given Gideon, He expected Gideon to trust Him even more—to defeat the Midianites with only a "skeleton crew," an "army" of only 300 men. (With OLDER CHILDREN, read Judges 7:1-8 to find out why thousands of men were sent home.) Gideon had to trust God to go into battle with only 300 men and not be afraid.

13. God told Gideon to sneak into the Midianite camp that night with his servant Purah to listen to what the enemy soldiers were saying. The Midianites and their allies, the Amalekites, were camped in a huge valley; there were so many that they looked like locusts covering the ground. Gideon and Purah were able to get close enough to some of the soldiers and overhear them talking about a dream. The Midianite soldier who had the dream described it. His companion then said, “This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon...for into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp” (Judges 7:14). Hearing this, Gideon and Purah went back to their own camp, excited and confident that God would help them defeat this vast army. Gideon responded by bowing down and worshipping God.
14. As God directed him, Gideon divided the 300 men into three companies and spread them out around the valley. They each had a trumpet in their right hands and empty pitchers and torches in their left hands. “At the beginning of the **middle watch**” (i.e., just after 10:00 PM), Gideon gave the signal, and all 300 men blew their trumpets at the same time, jolting the enemy soldiers from their sleep! Then Gideon and his men broke all their pitchers. The loud noises and the torches all around them made the Midianites think a much larger army was ambushing them. In the darkness, the Midianites were confused and frightened. They were so frightened that they started killing each other! Over 120,000 enemy soldiers died that night (Judges 8:10).



HISTORICAL NOTE: The Israelites divided the night, starting at 6:00 PM, into three, four hour “watches.” The **middle watch** was from 10:00 PM-2:00 AM, when we are in our deepest sleep. [See *The Pulpit Commentary*, Volume 3, 2007, electronic database]

15. Throughout the Bible, signs and miracles have been given to prove that the message spoken was, without any doubt, from God, Himself (Mark 16:20). Although the signs that God gave Gideon proved God’s will for Gideon, Gideon was still afraid at times to obey God, just as we will be afraid to obey God at times too, even though we know God is there and with us. God knew that Gideon could do the job, but he had to overcome his fear and obey.
16. Even when I am afraid, I must remember that God is with me, just like He was with Gideon. If I believe that God is with me, I have to be willing to do whatever He asks me to do—faith plus action!

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

- Click here for complete [Activity Book](#) and [Answer Key](#).

Ages 2-5:

- “[Gideon Coloring Sheet](#)” (provided in activity sheets)
- Help the children roll up laminated sheets of construction paper to form “trumpets.” Provide paper coffee cups with handles for their “pitchers”/“empty jars.” An illustrated horn pattern is available from *Bible Stories to Color and Tell* for ages 6-8 from 21st Century Christian (p. 59).
- Coloring page in *Bible Stories to Color and Tell* for ages 6-8 from 21st Century Christian (p. 58).
- Gideon activities in *Bible Stories to Color and Tell* for ages 3-6 from 21st Century Christian (pp. 61-62).
- Let the children act out the story, or ask some teenagers from your congregation to act out the story for them.
- Ask the children to stand against one wall, and tell them they are in Gideon’s army, moving toward

the Midianites. Ask a simple question from the story and when someone answers, they can all take a step closer to the other side of the room. Ask questions until they have advanced to the other side of the room (the Midianite camp).

1st-2nd Graders:

- Let the children act out the story, or ask some teenagers from your congregation to act out the story for them.
- [“Gideon Word Search”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Torches and Jars: Cut out 8-10 jar shapes and torch shapes. Write questions about the lesson on the jars and the answers to the questions on the torches. Let one or two students match the correct torches and jars. To use this as a group game, tape the torches on the board. Let each student choose a question, then look for the correct answer on the board.
- [“Gideon True or False”](#) Activity (T/F questions provided in activity sheets): Write true and false statements about the story of Gideon and his army on the lid of a fairly shallow gift box. (To make the box more sturdy, stuff it with newspaper or styrofoam pieces. Tape the box together well, with packing tape.) With an ice pick, punch a hole beside each statement. Then write “T” or “F” on the heads of several golf tees. Tell the students to put the “T” golf tees in the holes beside the true statements and “F” golf tees in the holes beside the false statements.
- Gideon and 300 Men Review Game: Draw a valley between two mountains on the lid of a large, fairly shallow gift box. With an ice pick, punch 8-10 holes on each mountain. (To make the box more sturdy, stuff it with newspaper or styrofoam pieces. Tape the box together well, with packing tape.) Divide the class into two teams, and give each team 8-10 golf tees. Each team will take turns answering questions about the lesson. For every correct answer, they can put a tee on their own “mountain.” [To add difficulty, for every incorrect answer, they must remove a tee.] The first team to put all its tees on their mountain wins the game.
- [“Gideon Fill in the Blank”](#) (provided in activity sheets)

3rd-4th Graders:

- [“Gideon Word Search”](#) (provided in activity sheets)
- Torches and Jars: Cut out 8-10 jar shapes and torch shapes. Write questions about the lesson on the jars and the answers to the questions on the torches. Let one or two students match the correct torches and jars. To use this as a group game, tape the torches on the board. Let each student choose a question, then look for the correct answer on the board.
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- [“Gideon Fill in the Blank”](#) (provided in activity sheets)

- Have the children read the following:
 - Judges 6-10 [This could be assigned Sunday, to be completed by Wednesday.] Print out copies of the Judges 6-10 quiz from AP's [Advanced Bible Reader](#) site for the children to take
 - *God Provides Victory through Gideon*, by Joanne Bader, Arch books
 - *Gideon, Blow Your Horn!* by Jennifer Nystrom and Marjorie Redford, Standard Publishing, Happy Day Books
 - *Gideon's Army*, by Maissa Bessada, Creative Publishing
 - *Gideon and the Small Army*, by Joy Melissa Jensen, Famous People of the Bible, Scandinavia Publishing House
 - *Gideon: Soldier of God*, by Carine Mackenzie, Christian Focus Publications
 - *Gideon and the Times of the Judges*, by Joy Melissa Jensen, Contemporary Bible Series, Scandinavia Publishing House (DISCLAIMERS: change "bride-to-be" on p. 33 to "wife"; p. 34: the Bible does not say that the foxes were tied together with oil-soaked rags that were lit; p. 42: remove "at least one of")
 - *Gideon Fights for God*, by Penny Frank, Lion Publishing
 - *Why Was Gideon Worried?* by Pauline Youd, Scandinavia Publishing House
 - "Furnace of Faith" article from *Discovery* magazine: [June, 2000](#)
 - "The Cycle of Judges" article from *Discovery* magazine: [December, 2004](#)

SONGS:

"THE JUDGES"

Author: Jeff Miller

(Tune: See "[Kids Prep](#)" CD)

There once were Jewish judges,
After Moses and Joshua lived.
They helped to bring God's judgment,
On the wicked people of Canaan.

Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar, Deborah,
Gideon, Tola, and then Jair,
Jephthah, Ibzan, Elon, Abdon,
Samson, Eli, Samuel.

"A HAPPY PLACE" ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: "The Farmer in the Dell")

I like to go to church.
It's a happy place to be.
My brothers and my sisters,
And my mom and dad and me.

I like to see my friends,
Come walking down the aisle.
I'm happy when they nod to me,
And smile a great big smile.

Our teacher's nice and kind.
She teaches us to mind.

She tells us about Jesus,
And how we can be kind.

I like to go to church,
It's a happy place to be.
I know that you'll be happy,
If you come and go with me.

“CHOOSE YOU THIS DAY” ([Click to Hear](#))

(Author: Unknown*)
(Tune: “Are You Sleeping”)

Choose you this day,
Choose you this day,

Whom to serve,
Whom to serve.

As for me and my house,
As for me and my house,

We'll serve God.
We'll serve God.

“TRUST AND OBEY” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: John Sammis
(Tune: See church songbook)
(Last verse and chorus with older children; Chorus only with younger children.)

VERSE 1:

When we walk with the Lord,
In the light of His Word,
What a glory He sheds on our way!
While we do His good will,
He abides with us still,
And with all who will trust and obey.

CHORUS:

Trust and obey,
For there's no other way,
To be happy in Jesus,
But to trust and obey.

VERSE 2:

Then in fellowship sweet,
We will sit at His feet,
Or we'll walk by His side in the way.
What He says we will do.

Where He sends we will go.
Never fear, only trust and obey.

(CHORUS)

“THE JUDGES” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Unknown*

(Tune: “One Little, Two Little, Three Little Indians”)

God set jud-ges over Is-rael,
One brave wo-man, 13 men.

They helped Is-rael fight their bat-tles,
Led them back to God from sin.

Oth-niel, E-hud, Sham-gar, Debo-rah,
Gid-eon, To-la, and then Jair,
Jeph-thah, Ib-zan, E-lon, Ab-don,
Sam-son, E-li, Sam-u-el.

“FAITH, OBEDIENCE, AND AUTHORITY” ([Click to Hear](#))

Author: Sarah Richey

(Tune: “Farmer in the Dell”)

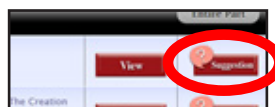
Believing in the Lord,
Believing in the Lord,
That’s what faith is,
Believing in the Lord.

Doing what He said,
Doing what He said,
That is obedience,
Doing what He said.

Telling what to do,
Telling what to do,
That is authority,
Telling what to do.

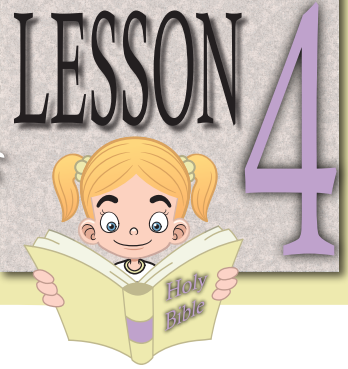
*Author Unknown: Please contact us through the feedback button for this lesson if you are aware of any copyright information for this song.

*** IF YOU HAVE SUGGESTIONS PERTAINING TO THIS LESSON, PLEASE CLICK THE
“SUGGESTION” BUTTON BESIDE THE BUTTON FOR THIS LESSON ON THE
CURRICULUM WEB SITE.



Gideon

Judges 8-9



Old Testament 5

Part 1: Israel's Cycle of Disobedience; The Time of the Judges

WEDNESDAY EVENING

Old Testament 5 [Class Attendance Sheet](#) provided in activity sheets (NOTE: The document is interactive, allowing the teacher to type in the Class, Teacher, and the children's names.)

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES:

Judges 8-9; Hebrews 11:32; James 2

MEMORY WORK:

YOUNGER CHILDREN: "The Lord is my helper; I will not fear" (Hebrews 13:6b).

OLDER CHILDREN: "So we may boldly say: 'The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?'" (Hebrews 13:6).

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS (SEE END OF SUNDAY'S LESSON FOR WORDS):

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- Cut out a large circle from poster board. Cut the circle into four equal sections to show the cycle of the Israelites' behavior in the time of the judges. If possible, include pictures to go with each part of the cycle (e.g., picture of idol with word "Disobeyed," picture of soldier with word(s) "Trouble" or "Attacked by Enemies," picture of person on his knees praying with word "Repented," and picture of judge



with “God sent a DELIVERER.”)

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

If I trust God (have faith in Him), I will show (demonstrate) that trust by the things that I do. (This is the same application as was used in Lesson 3.)

INTRODUCTION:

Review [O.T. 5 Bible Facts Flashcard](#) (provided under “O.T. 5 Bible Facts” on curriculum Web site)

POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

Review Sunday’s lesson (see [O.T. 5 Review Questions](#) for example questions)

OLDER CHILDREN:

After the great victory against the Midianites, the Israelites asked Gideon to be their king. He refused, saying, “The Lord shall rule over you!” But Gideon used this opportunity to ask for something else: all their gold earrings and ornaments. These “ornaments,” weighing about 70 pounds (Judges 8:21), were probably “crescents” associated with worship of the Moon (See Genesis 35:1-4). Gideon used the gold to make an **ephod**—which the Israelites later worshipped as an idol. “What the Midianites could not do by means of swords, Satan accomplished with earrings. It is sad to see the man who overthrew Baal’s altar now setting up an idol of his own” (Warren Wiersbe, *Wiersbe’s Expository Outlines on the Old Testament*, p. 238. ISBN: 0-89693-847-6)



An **ephod** was a garment worn by the Jewish high priest when he conducted worship to God under the Old Law (Exodus 28:4-35; 29:5; 39:22-26; Judges 17:5; 1 Samuel 22:18; 23:9-12; 30:7-8; 2 Samuel 6:14).

Discuss Gideon’s compromise (making the ephod) and problems with his family, especially with his son Abimelech (Judges 8-9):

PRE-CLASS ACTIVITIES/LEARNING CENTERS (TO BE USED AS CHILDREN ARE ARRIVING—BEFORE CLASS, AND UP TO THE FIRST FIVE MINUTES OF CLASS; OR AS HOMEWORK):

See Sunday morning’s lesson

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