

Use Week of:

## Unit 9 • Session 3

# Gideon

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Judges 6–8

### STORY POINT:

God gave Gideon victory.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 John 1:9a

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.



**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
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**TEACH THE STORY**  
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**EXPERIENCE THE STORY**  
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## LEADER Bible Study

Judges 6 starts out in a familiar way: “The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the LORD.” The period of Judges was not a good time for the Israelites. Their cycle of sin, bondage, deliverance, and peace clearly showed the law alone could not save them from sin.

The Israelites were oppressed by the Midianites, and they cried out to God for help. God chose a man to save them, and his name was Gideon. Gideon was an unlikely leader, and he knew this. Gideon said, “Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s family” (Judg. 6:15).

God doesn’t need the biggest and the best to accomplish His plan. In fact, He often uses the weakest and least of people to fulfill His plans because that is what gives Him the most glory. God had a plan to empower Gideon in his weakness: “But I will be with you,” He said. (Judg. 6:16)

Gideon and an army of men assembled. God told Gideon he had too many men. God didn’t want the men to think they had the power to defeat the Midianites themselves. When the army was reduced to just 300 men, they prepared for battle. (See Judg. 7:1-7.)

The men ran toward the Midianites’ camp, blowing their trumpets and shouting. God turned the swords of the Midianites against each other. They ran away, but Gideon and his army chased after them and killed them.

God was with the Israelites when they went to battle. The Israelites did not win the battle themselves; God fought for them. As you teach preschoolers this week, point out that God used Gideon in the victory. Gideon alone was not enough to save the Israelites. Only God could win the battle. In the same way, we are unable to save ourselves from sin. Jesus came to save us from our sin because He is enough. Only God, through Christ, can save us.

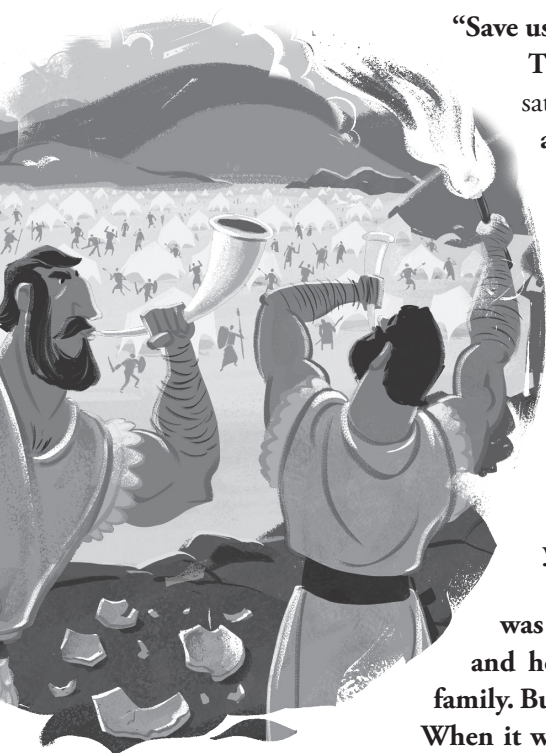
# The BIBLE Story

## Gideon

*Judges 6–8*

The Israelites were not very good at **doing what God told them to do**. God let their enemies from Midian rule over them for seven years. The Midianites were mean. They took Israel's food and animals.

The Israelites remembered how good life was when they loved and obeyed God. They **cried out to God, "Save us!"**



The angel of the LORD came and sat under an oak tree. The angel appeared to Gideon and said, **"The LORD is with you, mighty warrior!"**

Gideon was confused. "Please, my lord," Gideon said, "if the LORD is with us, why have all these bad things happened?"

The LORD said, **"You will save the Israelites from the power of Midian. I am sending you, Gideon!"**

Gideon was afraid. His family was the weakest family in his tribe, and he was the youngest son in the family. But God said, **"I will be with you."**

When it was time to go to battle, Gideon blew a ram's horn. Men lined up behind him, ready to fight. Gideon wanted a sign from God. "I will put fleece on the ground. If the fleece is wet with dew, but the ground is dry, I will believe that You will help me save Israel." That is exactly what happened. Again, Gideon

asked for a sign. This time, the fleece was dry and the ground was wet.

**God told Gideon that he had too many men. He let anyone who was afraid to go to battle go home. Most of the people left. "There are still too many," God said. God made a test for the people. All of them went to the river to drink the water. Anyone who knelt to drink water was sent home, but whoever lapped the water with his hand to his mouth stayed. Three hundred men remained.**

**That night, the army carried torches, blew their trumpets, and shattered the pitchers that were in their hands. The men ran toward the Midianite camp, shouting. Everyone in the Midianite army ran away.**

**The Israelites said to Gideon, "You saved us! Be our king."**

**Gideon said. "God saved you. He will be your King." When Gideon died, the Israelites again disobeyed God. They forgot what God had done for them.**

*Christ Connection: The people of Israel needed help. They asked God to help them. God used Gideon to help the people, and God fought for them. We need help too. We need God to save us from sin. We cannot save ourselves. God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

### **• Use your thumbs:**

Encourage children to listen for the words *Israelites* and *Midianites* as you tell the Bible story. Direct them to put their thumbs up when they hear *Israelites* and put their thumbs down when they hear *Midianites*.

### **• Sit under an oak tree:**

If weather permits, lead preschoolers to sit under a tree, preferably an oak tree, while you tell the Bible story. Invite them to imagine the angel of the LORD sitting under the tree.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Gideon

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Judges 6–8

**STORY POINT:** God gave Gideon victory.

**KEY PASSAGE:** 1 John 1:9a

**BIG PICTURE QUESTION:** What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.

## Welcome time

- “He Watches Over Me” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers, and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

## Activity page

- “More or Less?” activity page, 1 per child
- crayons or markers

Invite preschoolers to look at the groups of items. Guide them to circle the group with fewer.

**SAY** • Good job deciding which is less. What do you think is better for an army: more men or less men? In our Bible story today, God told a man named Gideon that he had too many men in his army. Why would God say that? Listen to the Bible story to find out.

## LOW PREP

## Play out afraid and not afraid

Ask the children to show you how they act when they are afraid. Choose an action to show being afraid such as hugging themselves and shivering. Ask the children how they act when they are not afraid. Choose an action to signal “not afraid” such as standing straight and tall. Give realistic scenarios and ask them to show “afraid” or “not afraid.” You might say, “How would you feel if you came

home and saw a fire at your house?” Other suggested scenarios: a dog growling, riding a roller coaster, hearing loud noises, your friend sneaking up on you, jumping in a swimming pool, or riding a horse.

**SAY** • In our Bible story today, a man named Gideon was afraid. God told Gideon that he would save the Israelites from their enemies. Gideon’s family was weak, and he was the youngest son. He wondered if he could do what God wanted him to do. Listen to the story and hear what happened.

## Build Bible skills

Print three copies of the “Genesis–Ruth” printable. Cut apart the strips. Set aside the Ruth strips for another session. Name the Books of the Bible from Genesis to Judges. Guide preschoolers to echo the names. Invite preschoolers to put the book names in order. Consider leading children to find matching names. Look at several Bibles. Find the Old Testament and New Testament. Find Judges.

**SAY** • This month we are learning Bible stories about several judges or leaders of the Israelites. The stories are in the Old Testament in the Book of Judges.

## Transition to tell the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, turn the lights off and on, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Encourage the children to march like they are in an army as they move to Bible study.

- “Genesis–Ruth” printable, 3 copies
- scissors (adult use)
- Bibles

Tip: Save the “Genesis–Ruth” printable to use in a later session.

- countdown video (optional)

# TEACH the Story



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## Introduce the Bible story

- Bible
- bookmark
- Giant Timeline

Place a bookmark at Judges 6 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

**SAY** • Our Bible story is in the Book of Judges. The stories in our Bible are true. The judges we are learning about really lived. Today, we will learn about another judge.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

## Tell or watch the Bible story

- Story Point Poster
- “Gideon” video (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

**SAY** • Once again, God’s people forgot about Him, and God let their enemies rule over them. When the people cried out for help, God made Gideon Israel’s next judge. **God gave Gideon victory!** God used a weak man like Gideon and a small army to show that He was the One fighting for His people. We need help too. We cannot save ourselves from sin, so God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us.

## Practice the key passage

Place the key passage marker at 1 John 1:9. Choose a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Say the key passage several times using the motions you chose as the child leads the group.

**SAY** • I chose a [*child's name*] to lead us to remind us that God used Gideon to help His people. We need help too. We need God to save us from sin. Our key passage tells us that if we confess our sins, God will forgive them. God forgives us because of Jesus.

Sing the key passage song, “He Is Faithful” and the theme song “He Watches Over Me.”

- Key Passage Marker
- Key Passage Poster
- “He Is Faithful” song
- “He Watches Over Me” song

## Learn the big picture question

**SAY** • Our big picture question is, *What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.* The people of Israel made wrong choices, but they finally chose to turn to God. We need God to save us from sin, so God sent His Son, Jesus. We can turn to Jesus. We can tell Him we are sorry for our sin, ask Jesus to forgive us and help us obey Him, and He will!

- Big Picture Question Poster



## Missions moment

**SAY** • Gideon was surprised when God said he would save the Israelites from Midian. The Dye family, North American missionaries living in Atlanta, were surprised with what God gave them to get to know people in their city. Let’s watch and see! Show the “Casting the Dye (Part 2)” video.

- “Casting the Dye (Part 2)” video

## Pray and transition to experience the story

# EXPERIENCE the Story



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## LOW PREP

- construction paper
- tape
- markers
- stickers (optional)

### Make trumpets

Give each preschooler a sheet of paper. Invite boys and girls to use markers to decorate their paper. Consider providing stickers if available. When a child finishes decorating, roll her paper so that one end is slightly smaller than the other end. Tape the paper in place. Retell the Bible story and encourage children to blow their trumpets at the appropriate time.

**SAY** • Gideon did not think he could help the people of Israel, but God promised to be with Gideon. Gideon obeyed God, and God fought for the Israelites. When the Israelite army blew their trumpets, everyone in the Midianite army ran away. **God gave Gideon victory!**

### Sort people cards

- “Youngest to Oldest” printable
- scissors (adult use)

Print the “Youngest to Oldest” printable and cut apart the cards. Encourage children to sort the cards by gender. Then sort each set in order from youngest to oldest. Talk with children as they work. Ask: “Are you a boy or a girl? Who is the youngest in your family? Who is the oldest? Which cards show people close to your age?”

**SAY** • The people of Israel needed help. They asked God to help them. God chose Gideon to help the people.

Gideon's family was the weakest family in his tribe, and he was the youngest son in the family. But God said He would be with Gideon. God fought for His people, and **God gave Gideon victory**. We need help too. We need God to save us from sin. We cannot save ourselves. God sent His Son Jesus to save us.

## Play with water

Set out two large plastic tubs on towels. Place several washcloths in each bin. Give preschoolers spray bottles of water. In one tub, lead preschoolers to try to spray water on the cloth without getting the tub wet. In the other tub, lead preschoolers to try to spray water on the tub without getting the cloth wet. Retell the part of the Bible story about the fleece.

- large plastic tubs, 2
- washcloths
- towels
- spray bottles of water

**SAY** • God helped Gideon believe He would use Gideon to rescue His people. God wants us to know that He will help us, too! He knows that we choose to sin and we cannot save ourselves. God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and save us. Remember our big picture question? *What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.*

## Make a pinch pot

Enlist preschoolers to help you add two cups of flour and one cup of salt to a large mixing bowl. Slowly pour in  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of water while stirring. Mix well until a doughy consistency is formed. Knead the dough until it is smooth. Give each child a chunk of dough on a sheet of waxed paper. Lead children to form the chunk of dough into a ball, press a thumb into the center, and deepen the hole by pinching up the walls of the pot. Encourage them to

- large mixing bowl
- flour, 2 cups
- salt, 1 cup
- water,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup
- spoon
- waxed paper
- play dough tools

Tip: Adjust the measurements to make enough dough for your group.

continue to pinch up the sides and to try to keep the walls the same thickness. Lead the children to make light designs with a play dough tool on the outside of their pots. When you send the pots home, instruct parents to let them air dry or dry them in a 180 degree oven.

**SAY** • The people of Israel asked God to help them. God used Gideon to help the people, and God fought for them. When the Israelite army shattered the pitchers that were in their hands, everyone in the Midianite army ran away. **God gave Gideon victory.** We need help too. We need God to save us from sin. We cannot save ourselves. God sent His Son Jesus to save us.



### Make a cone treat to share

Ask preschoolers to think of someone who might need to know more about Jesus and His love. Suggest preschoolers make a treat for that person.

Give each preschooler a cone paper cup. Provide stickers for preschoolers to decorate their cups. Sanitize hands. Help preschoolers fill a ziplock bag halfway with small treats such as pretzels or fruit snacks. Then place the bag of treats in the cone. Challenge preschoolers to give their cone to the person they thought of and to take the opportunity to tell him or her about Jesus.

**SAY** • God gave the Dye family a fun idea to meet more people in the city of Atlanta: snow cones! Selling snow cones gave them more opportunities to tell others about God's love. Isn't it exciting how God gives missionaries and us fun ways to share His good news?

- cone paper cups
- plastic sandwich bags
- small treats like pretzels or fruit snacks

Option: Consider allowing preschoolers to make an extra treat cone to eat for snack.

## Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands, and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve ice cream cones filled with cheese-flavored puffed cornmeal snacks to preschoolers. Comment that the snack reminds you of the fiery torches that Gideon and his army carried as they ran toward the Midianite camp. Remind children that **God gave Gideon victory.**

Show the Bible story picture as you ask the following questions. Retell parts of the Bible story as needed.

1. What did the angel of the LORD call Gideon? (*mighty warrior*)
2. Why was Gideon afraid? (*His family was the weakest in his tribe, and he was the youngest son in the family.*)
3. Why did Gideon send many men home? (*God said he had too many.*)
4. Who made the Midianites run away? (*God*)
5. What did Gideon tell the Israelites when they wanted make him king? (*God saved you. He will be your king.*)
6. ***What is repentance? Repentance is turning away from sin and turning to Jesus.***

## Transition

When children finish their snack, preschoolers may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- ice cream cones (optional)
- cheese-flavored puffed cornmeal snacks (optional)

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "He Is Faithful" song
- "He Watches Over Me" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers