

Use Week of:

## Unit 9 • Session 3

# Gideon

### BIBLE PASSAGE:

Judges 6–8

### STORY POINT:

God showed Gideon that victory comes from Him.

### KEY PASSAGE:

1 John 1:9

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

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

**INTRODUCE THE STORY**  
(10–15 MINUTES)  
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Additional resources are available at [gospelproject.com](http://gospelproject.com). For free training and session-by-session help, visit [www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject](http://www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject).

## 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 kids 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 once again did not obey God, so God allowed them to be ruled by their enemies, the Midianites. The Midianites were cruel to Israel. 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. He appeared to a man named Gideon and said, "The LORD is with you, mighty warrior!"

Gideon was afraid. His family was the weakest family in his tribe, and he was the youngest son in the family. But the LORD had chosen Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the power of their enemy. The LORD assured Gideon, "I will be with you."

When the time came to go to battle, Gideon blew a ram's horn.

An army of men gathered behind Gideon, ready to fight.

Gideon wanted a sign from God. He prayed, "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 deliver Israel as You say."

That is exactly what happened; the fleece was so wet that Gideon squeezed enough water out of it to fill a bowl. But Gideon asked for

another sign. This time, the fleece was dry and the ground was wet.

**God told Gideon that he had too many people with him. Gideon sent home everyone who was afraid to fight. Ten thousand men remained. “That’s still too many,” God said. God made a test for the people. All of them were to go 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, Israel’s army carried torches, blew their trumpets, and shattered pitchers. They ran toward the camp of Midianites. Gideon and his army chased the Midianites, and they ran away. God gave Israel the victory.**

The Israelites said, “Gideon, you rescued us! Now we want you to be our king.” Gideon said, “No, God will rule over you.” But after Gideon died, the Israelites once again ignored God and forgot about Him, who had delivered them from the power of their enemies.

*Christ Connection: The Israelites cried out to God because they knew they could not save themselves. Even Gideon was not enough to save them; God used Gideon to help His people, but God fought the battle for them. The people needed someone who was mighty to save. Jesus Christ came to save us from sin because we cannot save ourselves. Only God, through Christ, can save us.*

## **Bible Storytelling Tips**

### **• Draw pictures:**

As you tell the story, draw simple sketches on a chalkboard or dry erase board of an oak tree, a ram’s horn, a bowl of water, a river, a torch, and so forth.

### **• Stand to speak:**

For lines of dialogue, stand tall and speak loudly and clearly. Convey appropriate emotion with your voice.

# INTRODUCE the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Gideon

**BIBLE PASSAGE:** Judges 6–8

**STORY POINT:** God showed Gideon that victory comes from Him.

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

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

## Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about a time they felt strong.

## Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Gideon Grab” on the activity page. Challenge kids to find the name *Gideon* hidden in the word search 14 times.

**SAY** • Do you know anyone named Gideon? The Bible tells us about a man named Gideon who lived long ago. Not many people had heard of Gideon, but God chose him to lead the Israelites against some of their greatest enemies. We’ll find out more about Gideon today.

- “Gideon Grab” activity page.
- 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

**LOW  
PREP**

## Session starter (10 minutes)

**OPTION 1:** Narrowed down

Instruct all the kids to stand up. Give instructions to narrow down the number of kids standing. For example, “Remain standing if you were born in the year [*give year corresponding*”

to kids' average age]. Remain standing if your birthday is in [current month]. Remain standing if your birthday was within the last week. Remain standing if your birthday is today.”

Other examples: number of siblings (begin with one and increase), number of cities lived in, farthest traveled, number of pets at home, and so on.

**SAY** • We narrowed down the number of people standing pretty quickly. In the Bible story we will hear today, Gideon prepared for battle with more than 30,000 troops but God narrowed them down to just 300! We'll find out why.

### **OPTION 2:** Bible bingo

Print a bingo card for each kid. Provide plastic counters or coins for kids to cover the squares on their cards.

Read the clues on the second page of the printable in a random order. Mark off clues as you read them.

When a kid shouts “Bingo!” refer to the marked clues to check his answers. You may choose to award small prizes to winners. Continue calling out clues for more kids to win, or instruct boys and girls to clear their cards and begin again.

**SAY** • Great job! God gave us His Word, the Bible, so we can know Him. The Old Testament in the Bible tells us the story of God's people, the Israelites. Today we'll hear a Bible story about how God gave victory to His people through a man named Gideon.

- “Bible Bingo Card” printable
- plastic counters or coins
- pencil or pen
- small prizes (optional)

## **Transition to teach the story**

# TEACH the Story



**SESSION TITLE:** Gideon

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## Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as you transition to teach the story. Set it to end as the session begins.

## Introduce the session (3 minutes)

*[Leader enters holding a brochure for a science museum. A Bible is positioned nearby on a table.]*

• leader attire  
• science museum  
brochure or flyer  
• Bible

Tip: If you prefer not to use themed content or characters, adapt or omit this introduction.

**LEADER** • Hey, everyone! I'm so glad you are here. I'm *[your name]*. Check out this brochure. I'm going to a science museum later today, and it looks awesome! I think it will really help me as an amateur astronomer. Every amateur astronomer needs to spend time observing the universe and also researching the universe! We can learn a lot by finding books at the library, watching videos online about astronomy, visiting a science museum, or even talking to a professional astronomer!

Everything I've been learning about being an astronomer is helping me learn about God and the Bible, too. God is so big and we don't know everything about Him, but we do have the Bible. *[Pick up the Bible.]* God gave us His Word to teach

us everything we need to know about Him. That's one reason I'm so excited for you to hear today's Bible story.

### Big picture question (1 minute)

**LEADER** • Let's review the big picture question that we've been thinking about the last couple of weeks. Here it is: ***What is repentance?*** And here's the answer: [*Stand facing one way.*] ***Repentance is turning away from sin and*** [*turn to face the other way*] ***turning to Jesus.*** Stand up and say that with me.

· Big Picture Question Poster

### Giant timeline (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

· Giant Timeline

**LEADER** • Can any of you tell me who led God's people out of Egypt? (*Moses*) And who led God's people after Moses died? (*Joshua*) Right. Joshua led God's people into the promised land. Sadly, when Joshua died, the people ignored God and forgot about Him. They turned away from God, and we have seen over the last couple of weeks how the Israelites' cycle of sin caused them to be ruled by their enemies until God sent a judge to deliver them. Today's Bible story is about a judge named Gideon.

### Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Judges 6–8. Use the Bible storytelling tips on the Bible story page to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video "Gideon."

· Bibles  
· "Gideon" video  
· Story Point Poster  
· Bible Story Picture Poster

**LEADER** • The Midianites were enemies of God's people, the Israelites. God had a plan to rescue His people

from their enemies. One day, the Angel of the Lord appeared to a man named Gideon. Was that because Gideon was the best fighter in Israel? No! Gideon's family was the weakest family in the tribe. Not only that, Gideon was the youngest son in his family. Gideon wasn't strong enough to rescue Israel on his own, but God promised to be with Gideon.

To prove that the battle was under God's control, God told Gideon to reduce his army to just 300 men. Still, because of God, Israel won the battle against the Midianites.

**God showed Gideon that victory comes from Him.** If God had used a strong warrior with an army of 10,000 men, people might have thought the army had won because it was strong. By using Gideon and a small army, the only way Israel could have won the battle is if God fought for them. And He did!

## Christ connection

**LEADER** • The Israelites cried out to God because they knew they could not save themselves. Even Gideon was not enough to save them; God used Gideon to help His people, but God fought the battle for them. The people needed someone who was mighty to save.

We are weak like Gideon, but God sent us His Son. Jesus came to earth as a man. He was humble and looked weak, but He was strong! Jesus came to save us from sin because we cannot save ourselves. Only God, through Christ, can save us.

## Questions from kids video (3 minutes)

Show the "Unit 9, Session 3" questions from kids video.

Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided on page 181 to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.

• "Unit 9, Session 3" questions from kids video

Prompt kids to think about why God gives people different talents and abilities. Guide them to discuss areas in which they are weak and need to depend on God.



### **Missions moment (3 minutes)**

**LEADER** • God told Gideon to do something pretty surprising to win the battle and save God’s people from the attack of their enemies. God is the One who goes before us and wins our battles, and He is the One who knows how to reach more people with His saving message of forgiveness through Jesus.

The Dye family, North American missionaries living in Atlanta, Georgia, learned this when God gave them a surprising idea to get to know more people in their city which gave them more opportunities to tell others about Jesus. Just watch and see!

Show the “Casting the Dye (Part 2)” missions video.

**LEADER** • God is mighty and knows just how to reach His people with the saving message of the gospel. He uses all things ... even snow cones!

• “Casting the Dye (Part 2)” missions video

### **Key passage (5 minutes)**

Show the key passage poster. Lead the boys and girls to read together 1 John 1:9.

**LEADER** • These words come from the Book of 1 John, which was written by one of Jesus’ closest friends—the apostle John. He wanted people to understand that Jesus really is God’s Son! Sin separates us from God, but Jesus brings us back to Him. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has forgiveness and eternal life. Let’s sing our key passage song.

• Key Passage Poster  
• “Faithful and Righteous” song

Lead boys and girls in singing the “Faithful and Righteous” song.

### **Sing (4 minutes)**

Open your Bible and read aloud Psalm 24:8.

**LEADER** • The Lord is strong and mighty. He is mighty in battle. Victory comes from Him! Let’s sing. Sing together “Onward, Christian Soldiers.”

### **Pray (2 minutes)**

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to apply the story.

**LEADER** • God, we confess that it is hard to go into a situation knowing we are not strong enough or talented enough to accomplish something on our own. Lord, help us remember that You are glorified when we willingly obey You. You can work in our weakness and show Your power. Help us follow You in obedience and with trust. Amen.

### **Dismiss to apply the story**

• “Onward, Christian Soldiers” song

## The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



**We sinned.** Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



**God provided.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



**We respond.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus. Provide *I'm a Christian Now!* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

# APPLY the Story



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

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

## Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Display the key passage poster and lead kids to read aloud 1 John 1:9. Instruct kids to sit in a circle. Begin reading the key passage, clapping your hands and patting your lap to the rhythm of the words. Pause and repeat the first phrase, inviting kids to join you. Then pat and clap for the second phrase, practice with kids, and repeat with the next phrase. Continue until you develop a clap and pat rhythm for the entire key passage. Challenge kids to practice the key passage as they play out the rhythm.

**SAY** • These words from the Bible are true! Everything in the Bible is true. This is such good news. Keep working to memorize our key passage. Hide these words in your heart. God forgives our sin!

## Discussion & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid  
• Story Point Poster  
• Small Group Timeline  
and Map Set  
(005802970)

Distribute Bibles. Guide boys and girls to open their Bibles to Judges 6. Explain that today's Bible story comes from Judges 6–8. Challenge kids to identify which Bible division the Book of Judges is in. (*Old Testament History*)

**SAY** • In our Bible story today, God raised up Gideon to deliver Israel from their enemies, the Midianites.

The Midianites were from Midian. [*Point to Midian (I10) on the Old Testament Mediterranean Map.*]

Gideon and his army of 300 men chased away the Midianites, and **God showed Gideon that victory comes from Him.**

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss:

1. How did God use the Israelites' weakness to show His power? *Guide kids to recall that God instructed Gideon to reduce the size of the army from 32,000 to 300 men. Israel could not claim the victory came from their own strength; victory came from the Lord.*  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Isa. 12:2.)
2. How do you think Gideon felt about God's calling on his life? *Emphasize to kids that Gideon recognized his own weakness. He did not think he could deliver Israel and asked God repeatedly to confirm his calling. Gideon had to learn that God works through our weakness to show His power.*  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Tim. 2:21.)
3. Are you ever afraid to follow God like Gideon was? How does Gideon's story help you handle your fear? *Lead kids to recognize that the victory did not depend on Gideon and his strength. The victory came from God; He is mighty to save. We can rely on God to bless our faithful obedience and to give us power to do what He calls us to do. When God accomplishes His plan through our weakness, He gets glory.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 12:9.)

Option: Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

## LOW PREP

- construction paper
- popcorn
- tape
- plastic wrap
- ribbon

### Activity choice (10 minutes)



**OPTION 1:** Cone creation

Cut triangles out of construction paper. Remind

Tip: Use this activity option to reinforce the missions moment from Teach the Story.

kids that God gave the Dye family a fun idea to meet more people in the city of Atlanta: snow cones! Explain that they are going to make something fun to give to a friend this week!

Give each kid a triangle. Instruct them to roll the far corners of the paper into the center so that the paper's edge is touching the middle of the triangle. Tighten the rolled folds as necessary. Roll excess flaps of paper at the top into the cone. Use a piece of tape to secure the seams on the inside. Scoop popcorn into each cup and wrap it with a piece of plastic wrap. Secure the top with a ribbon.

Encourage kids to think about someone they know who might need to know more about Jesus. Challenge them to give their cone to that person this week and to take the opportunity to tell them about Jesus.

**SAY** • God wants everyone, everywhere to know He sent His Son, Jesus, to save us. We can share this good news with others in many ways.

### OPTION 2: Washer wristband

- 1/2-inch metal washers, 1 per kid
- craft cord, 3 feet per kid
- scissors
- colored permanent markers
- Bibles

Give each kid a metal washer. Provide permanent markers for kids to write a word or Bible reference on the washer. (Examples: *trust; faith; love; 1 John 1:9; Isaiah 12:2; 2 Corinthians 12:9*)

Cut a 3-foot length of cord for each bracelet. Cut the cord in half so each kid has two 18-inch pieces. Thread the two ends of a length of cord through the washer and then back through the center loop of the cord to secure the cord to the washer. Repeat on the opposite side of the washer with the second length of cord.

Help kids tie on the bracelet and trim any excess cord. Encourage kids to wear their wristbands as a reminder of

Note: Be careful not to trim the cord too short or it will be difficult to tie in the future.

God's strength and power.

**SAY** • In our Bible story today, **God showed Gideon that victory comes from Him.** We obey God's call on our life not because we think we have what it takes, but because we trust Him to work through us for His glory and our good. 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 do His plans because that is what gives Him the most glory.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

### **Journal and prayer (5 minutes)**

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

• pencils  
• Journal Page  
• "What's Right?" activity page,  
1 per kid

As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas. Then pray, praising our mighty God who is not limited by our weakness. Thank Him for sending Jesus to save us from our sins. Ask Him to show His power in kids' weaknesses.

As time allows, lead kids to complete "What's Right?" on the activity page. Kids should mark whether each statement is true or false. Encourage kids to compare answers with a partner and then look up each reference in the Bible to check their answers.

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.