Preschool–Grade 6

Gideon

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: God uses people who know they are weak, so the glory goes to Him. Your weakness is not what limits God.
Bible passage: Judges 6:1–7:22. Students read Judges 6:11–16 and 7:1–8 and 7:16–22 out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." *Zechariah 4:6 (KJV)* and "My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness." *2 Corinthians 12:9 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Judges 6–7, Zechariah 4:6 and 2 Corinthians 12:9. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Who Would You Pick? (5–10 minutes)

Say: "You need someone to lead a rescue mission. Pick one." Read three people: 1) the strongest athlete in your school, 2) the most popular person, who everyone listens to, 3) someone hiding in a pit doing chores, who says, "My family is poor, and I'm the least in my house." Students walk to one of three spots in the room to vote. Ask a few why they chose. Say: "God picked number 3. His name was Gideon (Judges 6:15). Today we'll see why."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Tell the beginning in your own words: Israel did evil, and for seven years the Midianites ruled over them (6:1). The Midianites, the Amalekites and the people of the east came every harvest like grasshoppers, with camels without number, and destroyed Israel's food (6:3–5). Israel hid in caves and cried to the LORD (6:2, 6:6).

Read out loud: Judges 6:11–16. Old words in this passage:

- **threshed** (6:11): beat the grain to separate the wheat; **winepress** (6:11): a pit for pressing grapes, a strange place to thresh, so he could hide
- **mighty man of valour** (6:12): a strong, brave warrior
- **befallen** (6:13): happened to; **forsaken** (6:13): left alone, abandoned
- **wherewith** (6:15): with what; **the least in my father's house** (6:15): the lowest in his family
- **smite the Midianites as one man** (6:16): defeat them as easily as if they were one man

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

Tell the middle part in your own words: God answered Gideon's request for a sign with fire from the rock, and Gideon built the altar Jehovah-shalom, "the LORD is peace" (6:17–24). That night, afraid of his family and the city, he tore down his father's altar of Baal and the grove (a wooden idol) by night, and built an altar to the LORD (6:25–27). The Spirit of the LORD came upon Gideon, and he gathered an army (6:34–35). Gideon asked for two signs with a fleece, and God gave both (6:36–40).

Read out loud: Judges 7:1–8. Old words in this passage:

- **vaunt themselves** (7:2): brag; **mine own hand hath saved me** (7:2): I did it myself
- **proclaim in the ears of** (7:3): announce to; **twenty and two thousand** (7:3): 22,000 went home and 10,000 stayed, so there were 32,000 at first
- **try them** (7:4): test them; **lappeth** (7:5): drinks by lapping; 300 lapped, putting their hand to their mouth (7:6)
- **victuals** (7:8): food; **retained** (7:8): kept; **host** (7:8): army

Tell the next part in your own words: God told Gideon to go down to the camp, and if he was afraid, to take his servant Phurah (7:9–11). He heard an enemy soldier's dream about a barley loaf knocking a tent flat, and the soldier's friend said God had given Midian into Gideon's hand (7:13–14). Gideon worshiped and called his men to rise up (7:15).

Read out loud: Judges 7:16–22. Old words in this passage:

- **companies** (7:16): groups; **pitchers** (7:16): jars; **lamps** (7:16): burning lights
- **look on me, and do likewise** (7:17): watch me and do the same
- **the beginning of the middle watch** (7:19): the middle of the night, just after the guards changed; **brake** (7:19): broke
- **to blow withal** (7:20): to blow with
- **the LORD set every man's sword against his fellow** (7:22): the LORD threw the enemy into confusion so they turned on each other

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. God called Gideon a "mighty man of valour" while he was hiding (6:12). Gideon called himself "the least" (6:15). Whose description turned out to be true, and why?
2. Gideon obeyed God about the altar of Baal, but he did it at night because he was afraid (6:27). What does that tell you about courage? Is it the absence of fear?
3. God's reason for shrinking the army was "lest Israel vaunt themselves" (7:2). Where are you tempted to take credit for something God did?
4. God kept 300 out of 32,000 (7:3, 7:7). Why would God choose to work with so few?
5. Gideon's men had to break their pitchers so the light could shine (7:20). What has to happen in us for God's work to be seen?
6. 2 Corinthians 12:9 says God's strength is made perfect in weakness. How does Gideon's story show that? Where do you feel weak right now?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: in Zechariah 4:6, **might** means strength, **power** means force, **saith** means says, and **the LORD of hosts** means the LORD who rules over all the armies. In 2 Corinthians 12:9, **sufficient** means enough, and **made perfect in weakness** means God's strength shows most clearly when we are weak.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Zechariah 4:6 this week; keep working on 2 Corinthians 12:9 next week too.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post

5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Gideon's victory showed that salvation belongs to God, not to us. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). The same Spirit of the LORD who came upon Gideon (Judges 6:34) fills God's people today. Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where do I feel like "the least" (Judges 6:15)? What would God say about me there (6:12, 6:16)?
2. What is one thing God is asking me to do that I'm afraid of? What is my first step this week?
3. Write a short prayer giving God your weakness and asking for His strength (2 Corinthians 12:9).
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: do one thing that takes courage because God asked it of you, and when it goes well, tell someone what God did.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, You don't need us to be strong; You need us to trust You. Take our weakness and show Your strength in it. Give us courage to obey You, and let all the glory go to You. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks what happened after the battle: this lesson stops at Judges 7:22 and leaves out 7:23–25. Read it yourself before class. Answer honestly and gently: the men of Israel chased the fleeing army, and two Midianite princes, Oreb and Zeeb, were killed (7:23–25). Midian was subdued, and the land had peace forty years in the days of Gideon (Judges 8:28).
If a student asks about "putting out a fleece": God was patient with Gideon, who was afraid (6:36–40). Today we have God's whole Word, prayer and godly counsel to guide us, and we can trust what He has already said.

Free to print & copy for church, classroom & home · Please don't resell or re-post