Preschool–Grade 6

Gideon

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: God used Gideon and just 300 men, so Israel would know the win came from God. God can use me when I trust Him.
Bible passage: Judges 6:1–7:22. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the LORD of hosts." *Zechariah 4:6 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible, 5 paper cups, 5 paper strips, a marker, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the 5 paper strips (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Judges 7:7.

1. Opening game: Do What I Do (5 minutes)

You are the leader. Kids stand and face you. Without talking, they copy everything you do: pat your head, march in place, hold one hand up high, blow a pretend trumpet, freeze. Go faster, then slower. Then ask: *Was it easy to watch me and do the same thing?* Say: "Today we will meet a man named Gideon. He told his men, 'Look on me, and do likewise' (Judges 7:17). That means, 'Watch me and do what I do.'"

2. Bible story: God Uses Gideon (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Judges 6, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

The people of Israel did evil and turned away from the LORD. So for seven years God let the **Midianites** rule over them (Judges 6:1). The Midianites came with their cattle and their tents. There were so many of them, they were like **grasshoppers**, and no one could count their camels (6:5). They ruined Israel's crops and left them no food, and no sheep, oxen or donkeys (6:4). The people of Israel hid in caves in the mountains (6:2). Then they cried out to the LORD for help (6:6).

A man named **Gideon** was hiding too. He was **threshing** wheat, beating the grain to get the good part out. He did it down by the **winepress**, a place for squeezing grapes, so the Midianites would not see his wheat (6:11). The angel of the LORD came and sat under an oak tree. He said, "The LORD is with thee, thou mighty man of valour" (6:12). **Valour** means courage. Gideon said his family was poor, and he was the least in his father's house (6:15). But the LORD said, "Surely I will be with thee" (6:16).

That same night God told Gideon to tear down his father's altar to **Baal**, a false god, and to build an altar to the LORD. Gideon was afraid, so he did it at night, but he obeyed (6:25–27).

The story continues: The enemy armies came and camped in a valley (6:33). The **Spirit of the LORD** came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet to call the men of Israel to come (6:34–35). Gideon asked God for a sign. He put a **fleece**, a piece of sheep's wool, on the ground. In the morning the fleece was wet with **dew**, the drops of water that come in the night, but the ground around it was dry. Gideon squeezed a whole bowl of water out of the fleece (6:37–38)! The next night God did the opposite: the fleece was dry, and the ground was wet (6:39–40). God was patient with Gideon.

Now Gideon had a big army. But God said, "The people that are with thee are too many" (7:2). God wanted Israel to know that the win came from Him, not from a big army. So Gideon told the people that whoever was "fearful and afraid" could go home. 22,000 men went home, and 10,000 stayed (7:3). That means Gideon started with 32,000 men!

But God said, "The people are yet too many" (7:4). God told Gideon to bring the men down to the water to drink. Most of them got down on their knees to drink. Only 300 men **lapped** the water, bringing it up to their mouths with their hand (7:5–6). **Read Judges 7:7 from your Bible:** "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you." Say: "Only 300 men! God was going to win this battle."

That night God sent Gideon down to the edge of the enemy camp with his servant Phurah (7:9–11). Gideon heard an enemy soldier tell a dream: a loaf of barley bread rolled into their camp and knocked a tent flat! His friend said it meant God had given their whole army to Gideon (7:13–14). When Gideon heard that, he worshiped God (7:15).

Gideon split the 300 men into three groups. He gave every man a **trumpet** and an empty **pitcher**, which is a jar, with a **lamp**, a burning light, hidden inside it (7:16). In the middle of the night they stood all around the enemy camp. Gideon blew his trumpet. Then all 300 men blew their trumpets, broke their pitchers and held up their lamps. They shouted, "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon!" (7:19–20). Every man stood still in his place (7:21). The LORD made the enemy army all mixed up, and they ran away (7:21–22)! God won the battle, just as He said.

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. What was Gideon doing when the angel of the LORD came? *(Threshing wheat by the winepress, hiding it from the Midianites, Judges 6:11)*
2. What did the angel call Gideon? *(A mighty man of valour, 6:12)*
3. What happened to the fleece the first morning? *(It was wet with dew, and the ground was dry, 6:37–38)*
4. How many men did God keep in Gideon's army? *(300 men, 7:7)*
5. What did the 300 men have in their hands? *(A trumpet, and a pitcher with a lamp inside, 7:16)*

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4. Memory verse: Pitcher Verse game (5 minutes)

Turn the 5 cups upside down in a row and hide one strip under each, in order: *Not by might, / nor by power, / but by my spirit, / saith the LORD of hosts. / Zechariah 4:6.* Kids take turns lifting a cup, like Gideon's men showing their lamps. Explain the old words: **might** means strength, **power** means force, **saith** means says, and **the LORD of hosts** means the LORD who rules over all the armies. Say: "God wins by His Spirit, not by how big or strong we are." Read the verse together. Then put one cup back over its strip and read it again. Keep covering one strip each time until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Gideon said he was the least, and his army was tiny. But God won the battle, so Israel knew it was God. God loves you very much. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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) To **repent** means we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."

Pray with the kids, 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.

This week: when you feel small or afraid, pray, "LORD, be with me," and then do what God says. Remember: God won with only 300 men!

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6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Gideon word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/gideon-word-search), the Gideon crossword, maze, coloring page or craft (vbshq.com/bible-stories/gideon), or **Stand in Your Place:** split the class into three groups and stand them in three corners of the room. You are Gideon. Do a motion (blow a pretend trumpet, hold up a pretend lamp, crouch down low), and every group copies you. When you say, "Now!", everyone shouts, "The sword of the LORD, and of Gideon!" and freezes in place. Anyone who moves before you say "Go" sits down for one round. Then a child takes a turn being Gideon.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You can use anyone who trusts You, even when we feel small. Help us be brave and obey You, because You are with us. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a child asks what happened to the enemy army: this lesson stops at Judges 7:22 and leaves out 7:23–25. Read it yourself before class. Answer simply and gently: God made the enemy army run away, and Israel was free from the Midianites. The land had peace for forty years (Judges 8:28).

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