

Lesson 71

God Uses Gideon

God used Gideon to defeat the Midianites and deliver the Israelites.

Studying God's Word

Lesson Time

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Have the students assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs.

Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, and any items you prepared for this lesson.

Prayer

This prayer time is designed to help the students begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to encourage them to pray.

We start our Bible lesson with prayer. Turn to the Flip Chart Prayer Page. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there.

Today let's say prayers of adoration and give God praise.

I'll start. Dear God, you are so . . . (insert personal prayer here).

Pass a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—around the circle, giving all the students an opportunity to pray, or choose a volunteer to stand beside you and pray.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away, and we'll answer our Bible Truth questions.

I love you prayers—Adoration
I'm sorry prayers—Confession
I'm thankful prayers—Thanksgiving
Please prayers—Supplication

Bible Truths

These four questions will be repeated each week to help the students learn foundational truths.

Who should we worship? The one true God.
When can we trust God? All the time.
What should we do if we love God? Obey him.
What word means God does everything perfectly without mistakes? Wise.

Bible Treasure Hunt

Before Bible Treasure Hunt, place a sticky note in your Bible to mark the first passage to be read.

Each week before class, hide your Bible somewhere in the room. Use different methods each week to keep the students excited about finding the Bible. For example, you might set a timer, play music while the students search, tell students when they are getting warmer and colder, or choose a student to hide the Bible and let you or classmates find it.

We are going to start out today by looking into God's Word, the Bible. God's Word is true, and we can always trust what it says. It's like a great treasure that tells us about who God is and what he has done for us. But where is this treasure? You will have to help me with that. We're going to go on a Bible Treasure Hunt. Somewhere in this room, I've hidden the Bible. When I say "Go," you will need to look for it. Whoever finds the Bible must bring it back to their seat and hold it very carefully until it is time to look in it. When it is time to read, you can bring it to me, and we'll open it to see what we are going to talk about today! Explain the method you chose for today. Ready? Set! Go!

K-1st Lesson continues next.

Pre-K Lesson

K-1st Lesson

Pre-K Lesson

Review

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. The Israelites were living in the promised land. But after Joshua died, they turned away from the Lord and disobeyed his commandments. Their sin began a cycle that kept repeating for many years: 1) The Israelites sinned by worshipping false gods; 2) God became angry and sent enemies to punish them; 3) The Israelites cried out to God to forgive them; 4) God chose a judge to rescue them from their enemies; 5) The Israelites thanked God for saving them and giving them peace.

The judges God chose to help the people usually led them into battle against the enemy. That can be a scary job. In today's lesson, we'll see how God chose a leader who started out feeling afraid but learned to trust God even when he was outnumbered.

God Calls Gideon

The Israelites had sinned again by worshipping false gods and idols, so God brought enemies called the Midianites against them to punish them.

The Midianites were so powerful and there were so many of them that whenever they came the Israelites had to run and hide in caves! The Midianites took everything—all the food in the fields and all the animals. Finally, the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. So, God chose a judge to help them. His name was Gideon. But he wasn't any superhero. Actually, the Bible tells us that Gideon was hiding from the enemy when the angel of the Lord came to him and said that he would lead the fight against the Midianites.

Gideon didn't think this was such a good idea, but the Lord promised to go with him. God was going to show Gideon how he would fight for Israel and bring victory, even when it seemed impossible.

God Reduces Gideon's Army

Have the small objects and tape ready for the army sizes demonstration.

Place a large amount of small objects on a table or the floor where the students can easily see them. Attach a piece of tape next to the objects for a battle line. It wasn't long before the Midianites came and camped in the land of Israel. Their army had 135,000 men—an enormous number of soldiers! They were a scary sight! But this time, the Midianites would be in for a big surprise because God was fighting for Israel.

Place a lesser amount of small objects on the other side of the tape. Israelite men came from all over to join Gideon in the fight—32,000 in all! But they were outnumbered. There were still a lot more Midianites.

Refer to the objects. How do you think Gideon felt when he looked at how many soldiers he had and how many the Midianites had? Allow answers.

Gideon began to wonder if he really was supposed to lead this battle. But God helped Gideon trust that he was with him. Finally, Gideon set out for battle with his 32,000 men.

Gideon and his army were ready to go out and fight. But the Lord had a different plan. He stopped Gideon and gave him some instructions—God was about to make his army even smaller!

Judges 7:2–3

Let's find out why. Judges 7:2–3 tells us the reason. Have the student bring up the Bible and open it to the sticky note. Read the verses.

Why did God want to make Gideon's army smaller? What would the people of Israel say if they won the battle now? My own hand has what? Saved me.

Reread the verses as needed so students can hear the answers straight from God's Word.

Yes. They would boast that they saved themselves without God's help. God did not want them to think they were the heroes and didn't need to trust in him.

What did God tell Gideon to proclaim to the people? Whoever was fearful and trembling could do what? Go home.

Take away about two-thirds of the objects from the Israelites' side. A bunch of men left and went back home. Now Gideon's army was even smaller. Yikes! There were only 10,000 men left to fight against 135,000.

Judges 7:4

So, were they ready to go to battle now? Let's find out in Judges 7:4. Read the verse.

What did God say to Gideon about the army? The people are still too many.

What?! The army was still too big, and God was going to make it even smaller! God told Gideon to take his army down to the water to get a drink. Those who drank the water from their hands and lapped it up like a dog were chosen to go with Gideon into battle. The rest were sent home.

Remove half of the objects left on the Israelites' side. Now there were only 300 men left! But God still said he would give them victory over the Midianites. With such a small army, the Israelites would know that only God could help them win!

God Gives the Victory

Refer to the objects. So, what will happen in this battle? How can 300 Israelites win against 135,000 Midianites? Gideon gathered his 300 men and told them the plan. He divided his men into three groups and gave each man a trumpet, an empty jar, and a torch.

Refer to the Flip Chart. Those seem like strange things to take to a battle, don't they? But the men took the trumpets and hid their torches inside the jars so the light from the fire couldn't be seen and followed Gideon.

Divide the Israelites' objects into three groups and move them out around the Midianites' objects. In the dark of night, Gideon and his men spread out around the enemy camp. When they were all in place, Gideon blew his trumpet and smashed the jar holding his torch, letting the light shine brightly into the night. That was the signal, and everyone else smashed their jars and blew their trumpets! Suddenly, the Midianites were surrounded by torches and the loud sound of trumpets. Then they heard the Israelites give a great shout, "For the Lord and for Gideon!"

The Midianites cried out, "We're surrounded! Let's get out of here!" And they started to run. But God made them panic, and they began fighting and killing each other. When they tried to get away from there, Gideon and his men chased them. Soon the Midianites were defeated! Hooray!

What a battle! No one could say that 300 men with trumpets, jars, and torches could beat such a huge army on their own. This was a great miracle showing God's power to save his people.

It's true that Gideon was hiding when God came and told him to lead the Israelites into battle—he didn't think he could do it at first. But God was faithful

to help them win, even when they were outnumbered. After this battle, Gideon became a brave and mighty man and led Israel as a judge for 40 years!

Continue with the Lesson Review Game below.

K-1st Lesson

Review

Refer to the Exodus to Malachi Timeline. The Israelites were living in the promised land. But after Joshua died, they turned away from the Lord and ignored his commandments. Their sin began a cycle that kept repeating over and over for many years: 1) The Israelites sinned by worshipping false gods; 2) God became angry and sent enemies to punish them; 3) The Israelites cried out to God to forgive them; 4) God chose a judge to rescue them from their enemies; 5) The Israelites thanked God for saving them and giving them peace.

But it didn't end there. Whenever God gave the Israelites peace and safety, they would forget what God had done for them and turn back to worshipping idols. This started the whole cycle again!

God was merciful, though. He listened to the Israelites' prayers and helped them even when they kept on sinning. The judges God chose to help the people usually led them into battle against the enemy. That can be a scary job. In today's lesson, we'll see how God chose a leader who started out feeling afraid but learned to trust God even when he was outnumbered.

God Calls Gideon

The Israelites had sinned again by worshipping false gods and idols, so God brought enemies called the Midianites to punish them.

The Midianites were so powerful and there were so many of them that whenever they came the Israelites had to run and hide in caves! The Midianites took everything—all the food in the fields and all the animals. The Israelites were left with nothing!

This kept happening for seven years. Finally, the Israelites cried out to the Lord for help. They had forgotten God, but now they were sorry for their sin.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. So God chose a judge to help the Israelites. His name was Gideon. But he wasn't any superhero. Actually, the Bible tells us that Gideon was hiding from the enemy when the angel of the Lord came to him and said that he would be the one to lead the fight against the Midianites.

Gideon didn't think this was such a good idea, but the Lord promised to go with him. God was going to show Gideon how he would fight for Israel and bring victory, even when it seemed impossible.

God Reduces Gideon's Army

Have the small objects and tape ready for the army sizes demonstration.

Place a large amount of small objects on a table or the floor where the students can easily see them. Attach a piece of tape next to the objects for a battle line. It wasn't long before the Midianites came with a huge army and camped in the land of Israel. Their army had 135,000 men—an enormous number of soldiers! They were a scary sight to the Israelites!

The Midianites probably thought they would just come and steal whatever they wanted, like usual. But this time would be different—they would be in for a big surprise because God was fighting for Israel!

Place a lesser amount of small objects on the other side of the tape. Israelite men came from all over to join Gideon in the fight—32,000 in all! But there were still a lot more Midianites.

Refer to the objects. How do you think Gideon felt when he looked at how many soldiers he had and how many the Midianites had? Allow answers.

Gideon began to wonder if he really was supposed to lead this battle. But God helped Gideon trust that he was with him. Finally, Gideon set out for battle with his 32,000 men.

Gideon and his army were ready to go out and fight. But the Lord had a different plan in mind. He stopped Gideon and gave him some instructions—God was about to make his army even smaller!

Judges 7:2–3

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. Let's find out why from the book of Judges. Have the student bring up the Bible and open it to the sticky note. Read Judges 7:2–3.

Why did God want to make Gideon's army smaller? What would the people of Israel say if they won the battle now? My own hand has what? Saved me.

Reread the verses as needed so students can hear the answers straight from God's Word.

Yes. They would boast that they saved themselves without God's help. God did not want them to think they were the heroes and didn't need to trust in him. God wanted the credit for the victory.

What did God tell Gideon to proclaim to the people? Whoever was fearful and trembling could do what? Go home.

Take away about two-thirds of the objects from the Israelites' side. So, a bunch of men left and went back home. Oh no! Now Gideon's army was even smaller. Yikes! There were only 10,000 men left to fight against 135,000.

Judges 7:4

So, were they ready to go to battle now? Let's find out in Judges 7:4. Read the verse.

What did God say to Gideon about the army? The people are still too many.

What?! God said the army was still too large, and he was going to make it even smaller! God told Gideon to take his army down to the water where God would test them by how they drank their water. Those who drank from their hands and lapped the water up like a dog were chosen to go with Gideon into battle. The rest had to go home.

Remove half of the objects left on the Israelites' side. Now there were only 300 men left! But God still said he would help them win and give them victory over the Midianites. With such a small army, the Israelites would know the victory wasn't because of anything they did. They would know the victory would be all because of God!

God Gives the Victory

Refer to the objects. So, what will happen in this battle? How can 300 Israelites win against 135,000 Midianites? Gideon gathered his 300 men and told them the plan.

Judges 7:16

Gideon divided his men into three groups. Listen to Judges 7:16 to find out what he gave his army to use for the battle. Read the verse.

What three things did Gideon give his men for the battle? Trumpets, empty jars, and torches.

Refer to the Flip Chart. Those seem like strange things to take to a battle! But the men took the trumpets and hid their torches inside the jars (so the light from the fire couldn't be seen) and followed Gideon.

Divide the Israelites' objects into three groups and move them out around the Midianites' objects. In the dark of night, Gideon and his men spread out around the enemy camp. When they were all in place, Gideon blew his trumpet and smashed the jar holding his torch, letting the light shine brightly into the night. That was the signal, and everyone else smashed their jars and blew their trumpets! Suddenly, the Midianites were surrounded by torches and the loud sound of trumpets. Then they heard the Israelites give a great shout, "For the Lord and for Gideon!"

The Midianites cried out, "We're surrounded! Let's get out of here!" And they started to run. But God made them panic, and they began fighting and killing each other. When they tried to get away from there, Gideon and his men chased them. Soon the Midianites were defeated!

What a battle! God wanted the glory for this victory, and he would get it! No one could say that 300 men with trumpets, jars, and torches could

beat such a huge army on their own. This was a great miracle showing God's power to save his people.

It's true that Gideon was hiding from the Midianites when God came and told him to lead; he was afraid at first. But Gideon and his men were obedient to follow God's instructions, even when they didn't seem to make any sense. And God was faithful to protect them and help them win just as he said he would, even when they were outnumbered. After this battle, Gideon became a brave and mighty man and led Israel as a judge for 40 years!

Continue with the Lesson Review Game.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

Basket Toss

Students give the correct answer and toss the beanbags to see how many points they can collect for their team. Each basket has greater points.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Two beanbags
Three laundry baskets or boxes
Masking tape

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use masking tape to make a tossing line. Bring in three laundry baskets or boxes. Set the baskets in a line, making each one a little farther away from the tossing line. Label the baskets with 5, 10, and 25 points so the farther away it is the higher the score.

Divide the class into two or more teams depending on size. Have the teams line up at the tossing line. Take turns asking the first students in line from each team a review question. When a student answers correctly, he will have a chance to toss a beanbag into a basket then go to the end of the line. If the beanbag misses, there are no points scored. If someone does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Keep track of the scores for each team on the board. Continue until all the questions have been answered. Repeat questions if necessary.

Bible Baseball

Students will answer questions and run the bases!

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Three chairs set out for bases
Optional: gift wrap tube and a large balloon

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Set out chairs as bases. Have the students line up by the home base area facing you (at the pitcher's mound). Each student up to "bat" will have a chance to answer a review question. If he can answer it correctly, let him run the bases. If he can't answer correctly, give the answer and ask him to go to the end of the line and try again.

You may want the students to sit on the chair at each base while they wait to run to the next base or have them run all the way around and return to the line. Repeat the questions until all the students have run around the bases.

For some added fun, you can use a gift wrap tube as a bat and toss a large balloon for students to hit after they answer each question.

Board Game

Teams will answer questions and make their way to the finish on the Game Board.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Game Board
Dice, numbered cards, or spinner
Buttons or other small items as game pieces for each team

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Divide the class into teams.

Team members will take turns answering the review questions. If they answer correctly, they will roll the dice, spin, or draw a numbered card and move that number of spaces on the Game Board. Follow the directions on the spaces to move ahead, fall back, or switch places with another team. If someone does not know or does not answer correctly, he may ask his teammates for help. Alternate between teams as long as time permits, repeating questions if necessary. The first team to make it all the way to the Finish wins.

Bowling

What do you do with extra water bottles and softballs? Go bowling, of course. Students will answer questions then bowl for points.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Six to ten empty water bottles
Softball or other small playground ball
Masking tape
Optional: dried corn or beans

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. If available, pour a small amount of dried corn or beans into the bottom of each water bottle (to add weight) and tighten the lid. Set out the bottles on one end of the room. Use masking tape to form a "lane" from the bottles to where the students will line up across the room.

Divide students into teams. Have students line up. Ask the first student a review question. If he answers correctly, let him roll the ball down the lane toward the bottles. Each bottle that is knocked down is worth 1 point. A strike (knocking down all the bottles) is worth 20 points. Take turns asking questions of each team. If a student gives an incorrect answer or does not know the answer, he can ask his teammates for help. Keep track of scores.

Goofy Golf

Hit the sock with the noodle? Teams must work together to answer the questions and putt to get a hole-in-one in this crazy golf game!

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
Swimming noodles or rolled up newspapers
Rolled up socks
Masking tape
Ten sheets of paper
Markers

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Use the markers to number sheets of paper 1–10 (use more or less depending on class size and time). Tape down the sheets of paper around the room in a random pattern to form a golf course. You may want to add chairs as obstacles in the path.

Divide the class into teams. Give each team a rolled up sock and a swimming noodle. Ask the first student a review question from the lesson. If he answers correctly, allow him to use the noodle to drive the rolled up sock toward the

first sheet of paper labeled #1. Continue with the next team. Take turns allowing team members to answer questions and continue putting the socks along the course to each hole, continuing from where the last teammate left off. The sock must touch or roll over the sheet of paper to consider it in the hole. The first team to reach the tenth hole wins.

Racetrack

Who will reach the checkered flag first? Teams will race to the finish by answering review questions.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
White board or chalkboard
Markers/chalk
Optional: paper cutouts for each team (cars, animals, circles, etc.),
tape/poster putty

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Draw a racetrack on the board. It may be as simple as a straight horizontal path or a curvy circle. Label "Start" and "Finish" (with a checkered flag) at either end of the track. Add numbers along the track (e.g., 1–10) at equal intervals between Start and Finish. The numbers will be used as placement points for the racers as they progress along the track.

Divide the class into teams. You may draw a different symbol (e.g., stick figure, circle, X or O) to represent each team at the Start, or use paper cutouts as team markers and stick them to the board with tape/poster putty.

Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, move their marker or redraw their symbol along the track at #1. If they answer incorrectly, give the next team a chance to answer and move to the first number. If they do not know, give the answer and ask that question again later. Continue to alternate asking review questions and moving teams' markers along the racetrack according to the numbers along the track. The first team to reach the Finish wins!

Toss for It

How many points? Toss for it! Students answer the questions and toss the beanbag to earn points for their team.

Materials

Review Questions (included in lesson)
A deck of numbered cards, or numbers and "wild" written on index cards
One beanbag

Masking tape
Two baskets or containers for cards

Instructions

Print one copy of the Review Questions for your use. Place several rows of numbered cards facedown with a few inches between them to form a grid pattern (make sure to put several wild cards or Jokers down, too). Use the masking tape to make a tossing line several feet from the cards.

Divide students into teams and have them line up behind the tossing line. Ask the first student a review question. If he gives the correct answer, have him toss the beanbag onto a card. Turn the card over to reveal the points he receives for his team. Face cards or word cards are 10 points each. Wild or Jokers are also 10—plus another turn. All other cards are face value.

Have the student pick up his card and put it in the team's basket to be counted at the end of the game. Next team's turn. If a student gives an incorrect answer, he should go to the end of the line. Give the answer and repeat that question later. Continue taking turns until all the questions have been answered. Add more cards to the grid if necessary.

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Bible Version

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