

Gideon's Army of 300

Judges 7:1-25

MEMORY VERSE

JUDGES 7:4

“Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, ‘This one shall go with you,’ the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ the same shall not go.”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Several 35” to 40” pieces of string, several 3/8” dowel sticks, glue or tape, small magnets, construction paper and paper clips.

Enough plastic sandwich bags (Baggies) for the number of children in your class, folded paper towels, pinto or kidney beans and water.

Construction paper and markers or crayons.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Fishing

Make this simple fishing game by tying a 35” to 40” piece of string to the end of a 3/8” dowel stick. Glue or secure with strong tape so the string will not slide along the stick. Tie a magnet to the other end of the string. Make several of these for your class (this is a great game to have on hand at all times). Cut out paper fish in several different colors of paper and put a paper clip on the fish where the mouth would be. These can be placed on the floor inside a taped off circle surrounded by chairs as a barrier to keep the kids from getting too close to the “water.”

Tell the children to fish until they catch 3 fish. After everyone has fished tell them to fish again and only catch blue fish. Allow the children to try to catch only blue fish. This will be very difficult in a mixture of colors. Next, the teacher should sit near the water and put blue fish on the lines for the children. In other words, the kids

can try as hard as they want, but they could not catch only blue fish without the teacher's help.

It was the same with Gideon and his army. There was no way that small of an army could have won the battle! He had to have God's help. **God wants us to give Him the glory in all things.**

LESSON TIME!

Today's story is about a man named Gideon. In it we learn how God worked through Gideon's life to deliver the children of Israel once again. This time God delivers them from the hand of the Midianites.

The Israelites were having a very difficult time with the Midianites. They would come into Israel's land and completely wipe out all their food supply. They destroyed their livestock (cows and sheep) and their crops (grains and wheat to make bread). They would try to take or destroy everything the Israelites had.

This drove the Israelite's to hide in caves because they were afraid of the Midianites. They cried out to God and the Bible says He heard their prayers. So the Lord raises up a man named Gideon to deliver the children of Israel.

We will learn today that God uses this particular situation to bring glory to Himself and in that reveals Himself to Israel so that they would put their trust in Him. **God wants us to give Him the glory in all things.**

JUDGES 7:1-8

Then Jerubbaal (that is, Gideon) and all the people who were with him rose early and encamped beside the well of Harod, so that the camp of the Midianites was on the north side of them by the hill of Moreh in the valley.

And the LORD said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.'

"Now therefore, proclaim in the hearing of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and afraid, let him turn and depart at once from Mount Gilead.' " And twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.

But the LORD said to Gideon, "The people are still too many; bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. Then it will be, that of whom I say to you, 'This one shall go with you,' the same shall go with you; and of whomever I say to you, 'This one shall not go with you,' the same shall not go."

So he brought the people down to the water. And the LORD said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps from the water with his tongue, as a dog laps, you shall set apart by himself; likewise everyone who gets down on his knees to drink."

And the number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people got down on their knees to drink water.

Then the LORD said to Gideon, "By the three hundred men who lapped I will save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, every man to his place."

So the people took provisions and their trumpets in their hands. And he sent away all the rest of Israel, every man to his tent, and retained those three hundred men. Now the camp of Midian was below him in the valley.

God allowed the Israelites to be persecuted by the Midianites for their disobedience to Him. They were worshipping other gods and now they were receiving the discipline for their sins. So they cried out to God for help and He heard them. But God didn't want the Israelites to win over the Midianites with their own resources. They would then begin to think that they were victorious in their own strength and not God's.

This would be disaster for them to think that they themselves were responsible for the defeat against the Midianites. The Israelites had to learn at that time that God was the author of all situations and that He and He alone was their help and strength if they would only obey Him.

Gideon and his army were camped together near the well of Harod. His army at that time numbered 32,000 soldiers. Even at this size, Gideon's army was nothing compared to the Midianite army. They had about 135,000 men (Judges 8:10). Gideon was probably afraid knowing how big the Midianites' army was, but perhaps he thought he might be able to defeat them with his 32,000 soldiers and the help of the Lord.

But the Lord had other plans in mind. So He spoke to Gideon and said, "The people who are with you are too many for Me to give the Midianites into their hands, lest Israel claim glory for itself against Me, saying, 'my own hand has saved me.'" Can you imagine what Gideon must have thought? "Too many soldiers? I'm short about 100,000 men."

But Gideon obeyed the voice of the Lord and followed His instructions. He said to his army “If there is anyone afraid among you let him depart from here.” We then see that 22,000 left to go home and only 10,000 remained. But God was not finished sifting the army yet.

God told Gideon that there were still too many people. God was looking at the quality of the people not the quantity. So God has Gideon implement another test to find those who are ready for war. He tells Gideon to take the men down to let them drink and to separate the ones who lap up the water like dogs and those who get on their knees to drink. So Gideon keeps the 300 men who draw the water to their mouths and sends the other 9,700 home.

It was important to God the way the soldiers drank, because it reveals the character of the individual. The men who got down on their knees and plunged their faces into the water to drink were susceptible targets, sitting ducks that could have been surprised by an ambush. But the ones who drew the water out with their hands and to their mouth were prepared for anything, watching and waiting, knowing the enemy could attack at any time. God wants to use people who completely trust Him and obey His instructions.

What would have happened if the 22,000 fear-filled soldiers had remained with Gideon? They could have acted foolishly because of their fear. Or what about the 9,700 overconfident soldiers? They might not have listened to God’s plan of action thinking they knew better.

In our own lives we must not let fear overcome us, but we also must not let pride drive us. We must not allow anything to rule us other than a complete trust in God. Remember God is our loving Father who has our best interest at heart, who wants to use us and work through our lives to be glorified. **God wants us to give Him the glory in all things.**

Where Have You Bean?

Same old thing but always fun. You will need enough Baggies for the number of children in your class, folded paper towels, pinto or kidney beans and water.

Let the kids “plant” two or three beans in a damp paper towel and place inside the plastic bag. Ask them who can make the beans grow. Gently tell them that all they can do is see that the beans have just the right amount of water, a little air, and not too much light. The actual growing part is all up to the Lord.

JUDGES 7:9-14

It happened on the same night that the LORD said to him, "Arise, go down against the camp, for I have delivered it into your hand.

"But if you are afraid to go down, go down to the camp with Purah your servant,

"and you shall hear what they say; and afterward your hands shall be strengthened to go down against the camp." Then he went down with Purah his servant to the outpost of the armed men who were in the camp.

Now the Midianites and Amalekites, all the people of the East, were lying in the valley as numerous as locusts; and their camels were without number, as the sand by the seashore in multitude.

And when Gideon had come, there was a man telling a dream to his companion. He said, "I have had a dream: To my surprise, a loaf of barley bread tumbled into the camp of Midian; it came to a tent

and struck it so that it fell and overturned, and the tent collapsed."

Then his companion answered and said, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon the son of Joash, a man of Israel! Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

The Lord comes to Gideon that same night and tells him that it is time for the attack against the Midianites. Now Gideon must have been kind of scared about leading an army of 300 against an army of 135,000 soldiers. So God graciously tells Gideon that if he is still afraid he and his servant Purah are to go down to the camp of Midian and there his hands will be strengthened and encouraged to lead God's chosen army into battle.

So Gideon and Purah went down into the camp of Midian and there they overheard a man telling a dream he had to his friend. He dreamed that a loaf of barley bread tumbled into camp and struck a tent and overturned it. His friend then went on to interpret the dream saying that this is the sword of Gideon and that the Lord would deliver then into his hands.

Isn't the Lord a gracious God and full of mercy? When we are afraid He doesn't get angry with us, but reassures us. He can use several different ways. Whether it is a person or through the richness of the Bible, He comforts us so that we need not be afraid.

Gideon was a fearful man from the beginning. Why would God choose someone as weak as Gideon? Because the Lord wanted to be glorified through him. Anyone who knew Gideon knew that he was a weak man, but that is the kind of people God picks to use. **God wants us to give Him the glory in all things.**

It says in 1 Corinthians 1:27, "But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the

weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty.” Maybe you think that God can’t use you because you’re weak in some areas. Well you’re wrong.

God wants to work through a life that trusts Him so He can be glorified. **God wants us to give Him the glory in all things.**

JUDGES 7:15-25

And so it was, when Gideon heard the telling of the dream and its interpretation, that he worshiped. He returned to the camp of Israel, and said, "Arise, for the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand."

Then he divided the three hundred men into three companies, and he put a trumpet into every man's hand, with empty pitchers, and torches inside the pitchers.

And he said to them, "Look at me and do likewise; watch, and when I come to the edge of the camp you shall do as I do:

"When I blow the trumpet, I and all who are with me, then you also blow the trumpets on every side of the whole camp, and say, 'The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!'"

So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outpost of the camp at the beginning of the middle watch, just as they had posted the watch; and they blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers that were in their hands.

Then the three companies blew the trumpets and broke the pitchers; they held the torches in their

left hands and the trumpets in their right hands for blowing; and they cried, "The sword of the LORD and of Gideon!"

And every man stood in his place all around the camp; and the whole army ran and cried out and fled.

When the three hundred blew the trumpets, the LORD set every man's sword against his companion throughout the whole camp; and the army fled to Beth Acacia, toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

And the men of Israel gathered together from Naphtali, Asher, and all Manasseh, and pursued the Midianites.

Then Gideon sent messengers throughout all the mountains of Ephraim, saying, "Come down against the Midianites, and seize from them the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan." Then all the men of Ephraim gathered together and seized the watering places as far as Beth Barah and the Jordan.

And they captured two princes of the Midianites, Oreb and Zeeb. They killed Oreb at the rock of Oreb, and Zeeb they killed at the winepress of Zeeb. They pursued Midian and brought the heads of Oreb and Zeeb to Gideon on the other side of the Jordan.

Gideon's first response to the dream was to worship God. So Gideon worshipped God and then went back to the camp of Israel and told his men that the Lord has given Midian into their hand. So he split the army into three companies and gave them each trumpets and torches to hide inside empty jars. Gideon tells his

men the instructions for the battle and they divide to go to their places.

Just as the guards for the Midianite army were put on their posts for their shift Gideon blew his trumpet and smashed his jar. His torch glowed against the dark sky and he shouted “a sword of the Lord and of Gideon.” And all the other soldiers did likewise.

Now this confused the Midianites so badly that they started to kill one another, thinking that there was more than one army fighting against them. So the Midianites fled and the men of Israel pursued them. Gideon sent messengers throughout all the land calling them to pursue the Midianites.

Now we see God glorified in the Midianites defeat. The children of Israel couldn't say that they beat the Midianites through their own strength, it was all the Lord's doing. The Lord defeated the Midianite army with three hundred men led by a feeble Gideon so that He could be glorified by all of the Israelites. He also did it so that Israel would trust and worship Him not only in times of war, but that they would remember what God did for them in times of peace also.

God wants to be glorified in our lives. It doesn't matter to God how weak we are as long as we trust Him completely, and follow the Bible and to live what it says. And then God will use us to bring glory to Himself, whether it is showing our friends Jesus, obeying our parents or it can be any area of life, people will notice Jesus in our lives and God will be glorified. Remember God doesn't look at our ability, but for our availability. **God wants us to give Him the glory in all things.**

Gideon Collage

Draw a torch, pitcher and trumpet to be used as a template for the children to cut out, paste and color onto a piece of construction

paper (see template provided with curriculum). You should draw yours on white paper and make enough copies for the number of children in your classroom

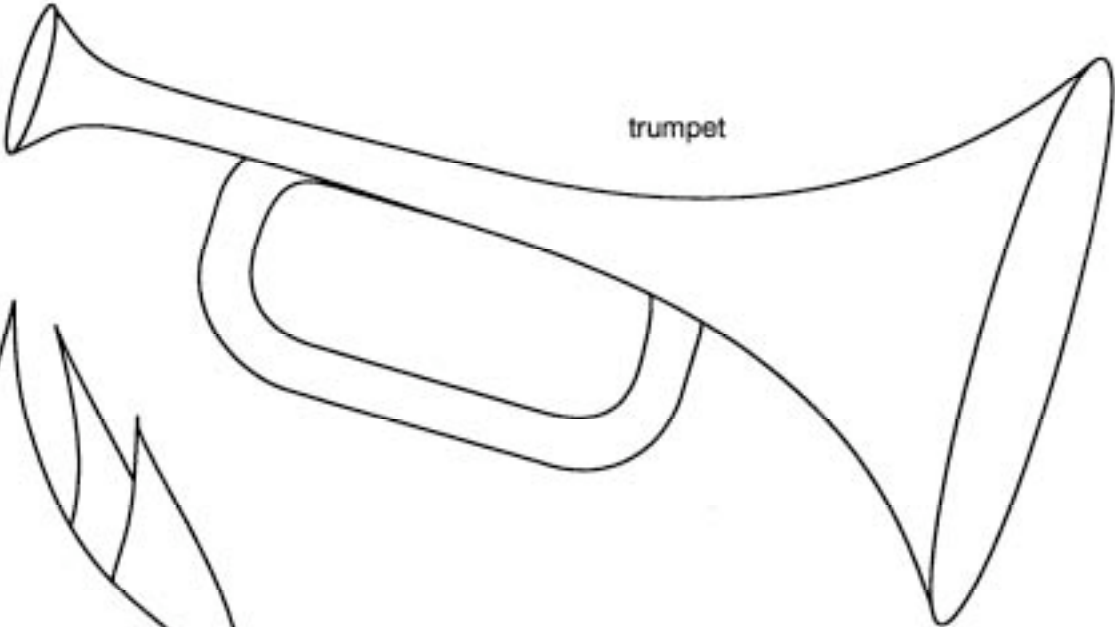
Allow the children to cut out the torch, pitcher and trumpet and paste them to the construction paper. As an option you can obtain barley (to represent the wheat Gideon was threshing when the angel came or the Midianite dream – it is found near the rice in the grocery store), cotton balls stretched out and glued on small tan paper circles (to represent the fleece) may also be added.

Explain to the children that they can use this collage to explain the story of Gideon to their parents or to friends to show that **God wants us to give Him the glory in all things.**

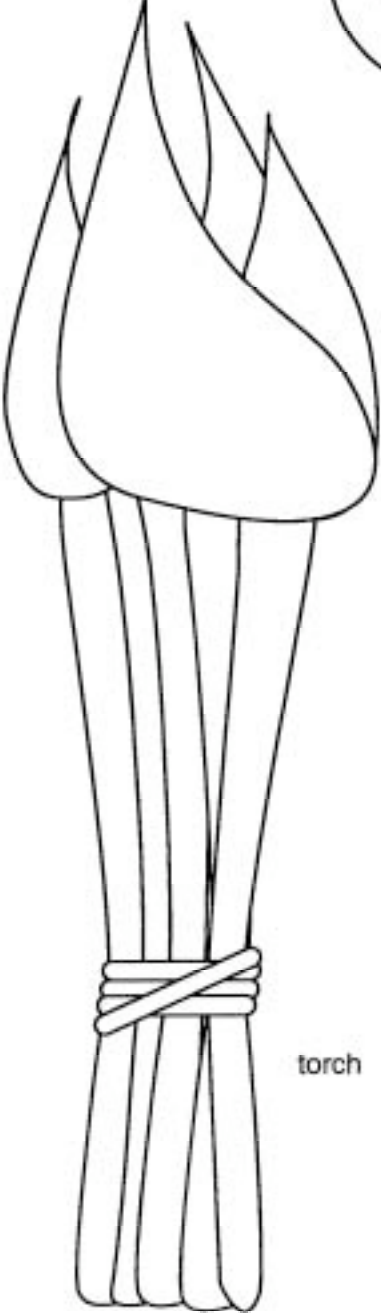
PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to give God the glory for everything in our lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.

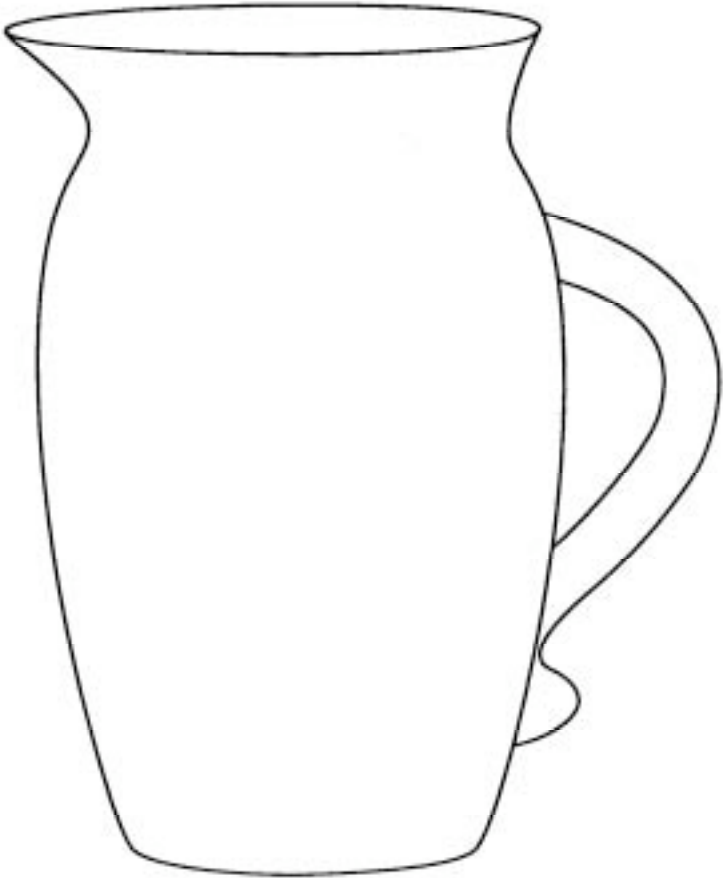
Lesson OT063 -Curriculum Template – “Gideon Collage”



trumpet



torch



pitcher