

GIDEON TRUSTS IN GOD

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

AFRAID TRUST FEAR JUDGE

BIBLE REFERENCE

Judges 6:1-6, 15-16; 7:1-21

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children learn that they can trust God when they are afraid.

MEMORY VERSE

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding” (Proverbs 3:5, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

After the Israelites entered the Promised Land, they obeyed the commandments of God and lived in peace for some time. However, as time passed and a new generation came, people forgot all that God had done for them and their ancestors. Once again, the Israelites neglected their covenant with God and distanced themselves from him.

They began to practice the pagan customs of the neighboring towns, worshiping false gods. When the Israelites did not fulfill their covenant, God did not protect them from those nations.

This chosen people turned away from their God so much that it became easy for them to follow other paths. Their enemies entered their lands, destroying everything, including their crops. The problem was so extreme that people had to hide in caves and in the mountains to survive.

Once again, the struggle made the Israelites remember God. They remembered how the Lord had protected past generations. They cried out to God and he answered their prayers by giving them another judge: Gideon.

Through these stories of the Old Testament, we can prove God’s faithfulness. His love and forgiveness are evident in how he responded to the prayers of his people, even when they had gone astray.

At first, Gideon was uncertain and fearful, but despite this he began following God's instructions. He gathered the tribes of Israel to fight against the Midianites. God knew that even though Gideon was afraid, he still decided to obey him. God allowed Gideon to hear a man from the enemy army talking about a dream. In this dream, the Lord confirmed that the victory had been granted to the Israelites. In ancient times, dreams were considered signs. On this occasion, God used someone's dream to instill confidence in Gideon, so that he could lead his people in battle. God knew Gideon's fear, and he knows our fears. When fear or uncertainty surrounds you, remember that God is with you.

As you prepare these lessons, take some time to rest in God's peace. He knows and understands your thoughts, wishes, and fears.

ADAPTATION

These lessons dramatically illustrate how you as a teacher can impact our world. After only one generation, the Israelites forgot what God had done for them. This means that the new generations were not being instructed in the truth of God, nor were they receiving the necessary teaching for their spiritual growth.

As you teach, remember how important it is for your children to learn to trust in God. You have the opportunity to present biblical truths that will remain with them throughout their lives.

Preschoolers have a great imagination that often leads them to feel fear. The purpose of this lesson is not to focus on these types of fears, but to help children understand three important truths:

1. It is normal to feel fear.
2. God cares for you when you are afraid.
3. You can trust God when you are afraid.

When children learn to trust in God at an early age, they are more likely to continue to do so as they reach adulthood. On many occasions, preschoolers are pressured by their peers when they show fear. Perhaps they have heard an adult say: "Do not be afraid" or "big kids do not cry." During this stage, children may think that being afraid is bad. The story of Gideon will help them understand that we all feel fear at some point in our lives, and that God is with us when we go through that stage. Listen carefully to your children as they tell you about situations in which they have felt fear. Then, encourage them to talk with God about those feelings and trust in His care.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Torches

For this activity, you will need pieces of cardboard or thick paper, scissors, glue or strong (duct) tape, colored pencils and white sheets of paper.

Ask your children to outline the shape of a flame on a white paper (if necessary, show them an example) and cut it out. Meanwhile, using the pieces of cardboard, make a cone for each member of the group.

Give the cone to each one and ask them to stick the flame on it to form a torch. It is likely that for this activity your children will need help, so we suggest you ask for another adult to assist.

Explain the usefulness of torches in biblical times. Then tell them they will learn from a man named Gideon who used torches to defeat his enemies.

Tell the children that the torches will be used as part of the Bible lesson.

If possible, obtain some noise makers such as disposable cups that can be crushed and generate noise. Tell them that during the development of the story, you will indicate when they should imitate the sound of the trumpet, shake the torches and crush the cups. Until then, everyone will stay quiet and listen carefully.

TEACH THE LESSON

Use these activities to help your children have a better understanding of the biblical truth.

At the sound of the trumpet

Gather the children in a circle. Put your hands around your mouth and mimic the sound of a trumpet. Ask: "Can you make this trumpet sound with me?" (Place your hands near your mouth and make a trumpet-like sound all together.)

Tell them: "God told Gideon that he would help the Israelites. Gideon was afraid, but obeyed God. During the Bible story we will hear more about the trumpets that Gideon and the Israelites used. When Gideon plays his trumpet, I want you to make the sound as well." Practice a couple of times imitating the sound of trumpets.

Gideon trusts in God

The Israelites forgot to trust in God and everything started to go wrong. It was then when a group of people, called the Midianites, did very bad things to them.

"God, please help us," the Israelis cried. God heard their prayers and told Gideon that it was time to stop the Midianites.

Gideon was afraid. "How can I help my people?" he asked God. "I am very weak and the Midianites are strong."

"I'll be with you," God told him. So Gideon and an army of Israelites waited near a stream.

"There are too many men," God told Gideon.

"I will help you choose those who will stay with you for the battle. Send back home everyone who is afraid. "

Gideon obeyed and many men returned home. But God said, "There are still many men. Take them to the river and those who drink the water by bringing it to their mouth with their hand, will stay. Those who bend their knees to drink, you will send them home."

Gideon trusted God even though the army was now very small. He was sure that God would help him fight the Midianites.

One night, God sent Gideon to the Midianites' field. Two men were talking. "I had a nightmare," one of them said. "Oh no!" the other said. "I know that means God will help the Israelites!"

Listening to them, Gideon was very happy, and praised and worshiped God. He knew that the time had come to fight.

"Get up everyone!" Gideon called his men. Then he gave each one a trumpet, a jar, and a torch, and said to them, "Do exactly as I command you."

Gideon and his men went to the camp where the Midianites were. When they arrived, Gideon blew the trumpet and shouted loudly; then he broke the jar and waved his torch. All the men of his army did the same and shouted loudly, "For God and for Gideon!" (Instruct the children to follow the instructions, imitating the sound of the trumpet and shouting, "For God and for Gideon!")

The Midianites became afraid and started fighting among themselves. Everyone ran in despair. Gideon trusted God, and God helped him conquer the enemy town. We can also trust that God will help us overcome our fears or when we are in danger.

CONNECT THE LESSON

Trumpets and torches

Give each child a disposable cup. Help them write their name on it. Hand out Student Activity Sheet #75-A and #75-B. Let the children trace the word of faith of this unit, TRUST. Tell them: "To trust is to believe that God will do what he has promised. We know that we can trust in God because he loves us and cares for us."

Review the Bible story while the children are coloring and cutting the torch and trumpet. Ask: "What happened to the Israelites when they forgot to trust in God?" (The Midianites did bad things to them.) "What did God do when the Israelites remembered that they had to trust Him, and asked him for help." (God heard their prayers and helped them.) "What did Gideon do even though he was afraid?" (He chose to obey and trust in God.) Help the children to bend the flame of the torch and place it inside the cup. Then help them glue the trumpet on the cardboard.

Ask the children to take their torches and trumpets home and use them to tell the Bible story to their friends and family members.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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On a large piece of cardboard write the memory verse (Proverbs 3:5). Cut out each of the words. Another option is to write each word on cards or white pieces of paper. Place the memory verse words on a table and ask the children to try to put them in order in the shortest possible time. Remember that many preschoolers are just getting started in the reading process. Be patient and help them recognize each letter so that they form words.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Gather them together to say prayer requests and pray for them. Let some volunteers pray and conclude by giving thanks for the love and care that God has for each one of us when we feel fear.

Encourage

Give time for your children to pick up the material they used and prepare what they will take home. Encourage them to share the Bible lesson with their families and friends.

Invite

Say something interesting about the next session so the group will want to attend. If some of your children are absent due to illness, we suggest that you visit and tell them this Bible story. Be sure to pray with them too.