

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 three 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.

There are some things we cannot do by ourselves. There was no way that the small army of Gideon could win in battle against the Midianites! They needed God's help. **God wants to receive the glory for what He has done!**

LESSON TIME!

In our last lesson, we learned of Israel's difficult time with the Midianites. Remember, the Midianites would come into Israel's land and wipe out all their food supply. They destroyed their livestock (cows and sheep), their crops (grains and wheat to make bread), and other possessions of the children of Israel. For fear of the Midianites, the Israelites began to hide in caves. The Bible says, "they cried out to God and He heard their prayers." Once again, God moved to deliver the children of Israel. God called Gideon to lead a small army into battle.

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 moved to deliver Israel. He did not want Israel to glory, boasting that their own strength and resources had won the battle. God desired all the glory for the victory He would give. He wanted to teach the Israelites to depend on Him.

Gideon and his army were camped together near the well of Harod. His army, at that time, numbered 32,000 soldiers. Gideon's army was nothing compared to the Midianite army, numbering 135,000 soldiers (Judges 8:10). Gideon was probably concerned; but perhaps, he thought his army of 32,000 *could* defeat them with the help of the Lord.

The Lord had other plans in mind. 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.' " Can you imagine what Gideon must have thought? "Too many soldiers? I'm short about 100,000 men."

However, 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." At that time, 22,000 left to go home and only 10,000 remained. The army was much smaller; but, God was not finished sifting the army yet.

God told Gideon that there were still too many people. He told Gideon to take the men down and let them drink water. He was to separate the ones who lapped up the water like dogs from those who got on their knees to drink. Gideon kept the 300 men who drew water to their mouths and sent the other 9,700 home.

Where Have You Bean?

Here's a familiar game, 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 came to Gideon that same night and told him that it was time for the attack against the Midianites. Now, Gideon must have been a little scared about leading an army of 300 against an army of 135,000 soldiers. God graciously told Gideon that if he was still afraid, he and his servant, Purah, should go down to the camp of Midian; and there, his hands will be strengthened and encouraged to lead God's chosen army into battle.

Gideon and Purah went down into the camp of Midian where they overheard a man telling his dream to his friend. He dreamed that a loaf of barley bread tumbled into camp and struck a tent and overturned it. The man's friend interpreted the dream saying, "This is nothing else but the sword of Gideon...Into his hand God has delivered Midian and the whole camp."

The Lord is a gracious God and full of mercy. When we are afraid, He does not get angry with us; He reassures us. Whether through a person or through the richness of the Bible, God comforts His children.

It seems Gideon was a fearful man from the beginning. Why would God choose someone as weak as Gideon? God often chooses to use those that are weak and helpless apart from His help in order that He might receive the glory for what He has accomplished through them.

In 1 Corinthians 1:27-29 we read, “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 which are mighty...that no flesh should glory in his presence.” Perhaps you have thought that God cannot use you because you are weak in some areas. Not so, it is God who enables us to do what He has called us to do. **God wants to receive the glory for what He has done!**

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.

Upon hearing the dream and its interpretation, Gideon worshipped God. Then, he went back to the camp of Israel and told his men "...the LORD has delivered the camp of Midian into your hand." Gideon split the army into three companies and gave them each trumpets and torches to hide inside empty jars. After receiving instructions for the battle, the three companies positioned themselves.

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." All the other soldiers did likewise.

This confused the Midianites so much that they began to attack one another, thinking that there was more than one army fighting against them. The Midianites fled and the men of Israel pursued them. Gideon sent messengers throughout all the land calling them to pursue the Midianites.

The children of Israel could not 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 feeble Gideon! God would receive the glory for His work and would again demonstrate that in times of war or peace, He was worthy of their trust.

God wants to be glorified in our lives. Our weaknesses provide opportunity for God to receive the glory for His work! We need only surrender our lives. Remember God does not look for *ability*, He looks for *availability*. **God wants to receive the glory for what He has done!**

Gideon Collage

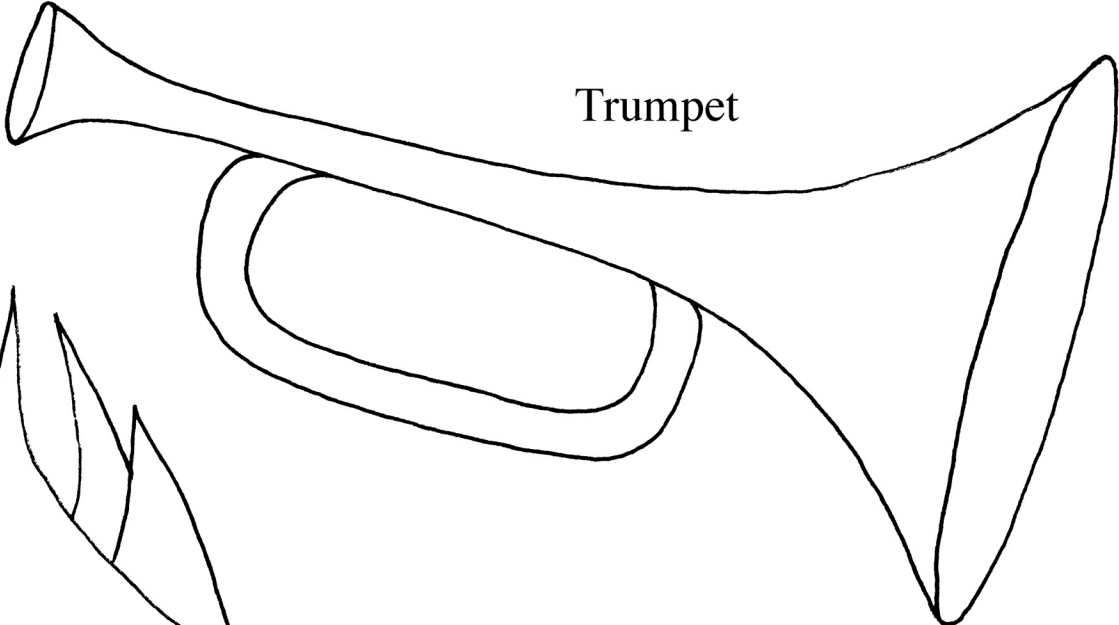
Draw a torch, pitcher, and trumpet to be used as a template for the children to cut out, paste and color onto a piece of construction paper (see template provided with curriculum). You should draw yours on white paper and make enough copies for the number of children in your classroom

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.

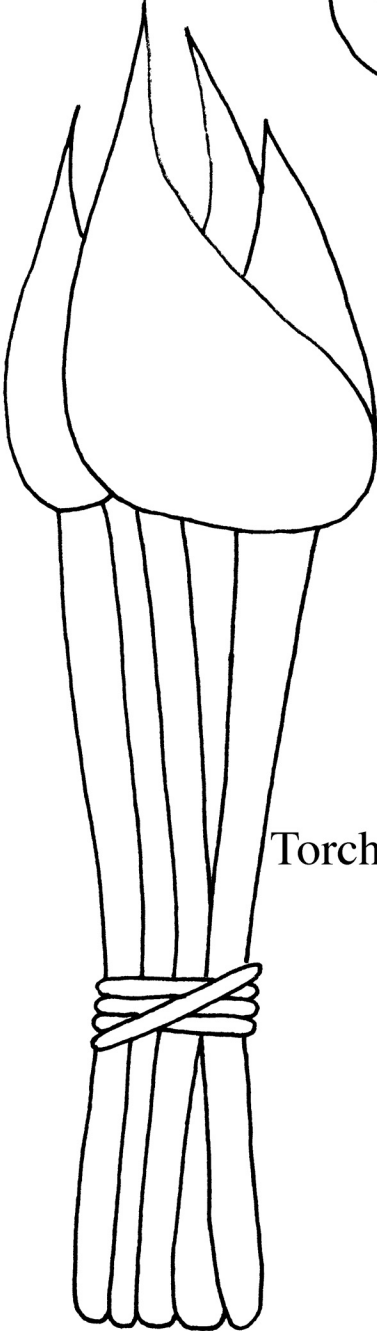
Explain to the children that they can use this collage to explain the story of Gideon to their parents or to friends to show that **God wants to receive the glory for what He has done!**

PRAYER

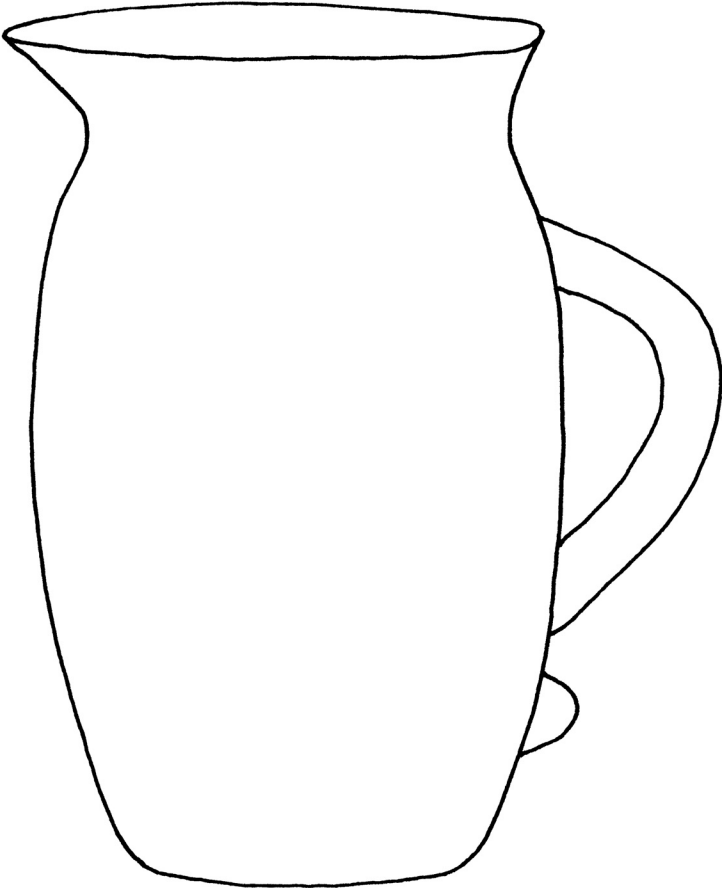
Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to give God the glory for everything in our lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.



Trumpet



Torch



Pitcher