

## GIDEON'S FEAR AND COURAGE

**Scripture:**  
Judges 6-7

**Materials Needed:**  
Marker for hangman game  
Either pictures or draw stick figures  
Two shallow 9x13 dishes that can be filled with water  
A fleece or "wooly" blanket  
A jar and flashlight ("torch")

**Memory Verse:**

Judges 6:12

The angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor."

**Objectives:** As a result of this lesson, I want my students

To Know—When Israel was oppressed by the marauding Midianites, God told Gideon that He was with him and to go defeat their army. He also told him to first tear down his father's Baal altar. Even though Gideon was afraid and asked for signs that God would really do what He said, he obeyed God's instructions, bringing a great victory and honor to God's Name.

To Realize—When God is with someone to do His will, even if it seems too big or scary, and they feel afraid, they can still act with true courage and do it.

To Respond by doing what God wants them to do despite their fear.

**Setting up the Story:**

Play a game of "hangman" with five blanks for the word "VALOR." After the word is guessed, ask if any of them know what it means.

Read definition: "great courage in the face of danger, especially in battle."

(courage is "the ability to do something that frightens you.")

If a person has courage, are they afraid? We are going to look at a person in the Bible and find out the answer to that question!

In Judges 6, the land of Israel had been invaded...

Scripture  
Judges  
6:1-10

**Telling the story:**

- I. Israel is Oppressed by Midianites
  - A. Midian ransacks field and farms
  - B. Israel cries out to God

**As you tell the story:**

135,000 warriors would sweep into the land at harvest and take the food growing in their fields and their livestock. This happened for 7 years. Do you know why this was happening? They had turned away from God and were worshipping idols!...Baal! Finally, the Israelites cried out to God for

## II. God Gives Gideon Instructions

### A. "Defeat the Midianites"

1. Gideon is beating wheat in a winepress
2. **"The Lord is with you, O mighty man of VALOR!"**
3. Gideon wants God to do something GREAT like he had heard about
4. "Go deliver Israel...I've sent you!"

### B. Gideon's gets a sign

1. Asks for a sign to be sure who is speaking to him.
2. **Prepares an offering**
3. Angel tells him to put the offering on the rock and pour out the broth
4. Fire consumes the offering and the angel vanishes
5. **Gideon builds an altar:** The Lord is peace

### C. God tells Gideon to get rid of his father's Baal altar

1. Tear down Baal altar and Asherah pole
2. Offer a burn offering

help!

There is this man in a small town and he is beating out his grain in a WINEpress! Normally they beat grain on the hill on a threshing floor! Why do you think he is hiding away in a winepress and threshing wheat?! (he is afraid) Is he acting like a mighty man of VALOR?!

Storytell details of story: Gideon wants GOD to do something great! God tells Gideon to go...and He will be with Him!

Can you imagine if you were Gideon and God told you to go and fight against this HUGE group of warriors! You know what Gideon did? He made sure it was REALLY GOD who was telling him this!

He asks for a sign. He doesn't want to know what to do...He wants to be sure God is going to be with him!

God has some more instructions for Gideon. Remember why the Midianites had come and God had let them take over? It was because His people had turned away from Him and were worshipping Baal. So God told Gideon that before He would do something about Midian... Gideon had to do something about his father's idol that EVERYONE knew was there!

### III. Gideon Follows God's Instructions

#### A. **Tears down Baal altar and offers sacrifice.**

1. Men of city are angry and want to have Gideon killed.
2. Gideon's father stands up for him: "Let Baal contend for himself!"

#### B. Gathers 32,000 to fight

1. Asks for a sign
  - a. Fleece wet/ground dry
  - b. Fleece dry/ground wet

#### C. Selects best men

1. God says "too many" because they might brag
2. Those who are afraid told to go home: 22,000 leave
3. 9,700 kneel to drink water: sent home
4. 300 lap like a dog: stay and take provisions and trumpets

Storytell about Gideon going at night with 10 because he was too afraid to go in the day!

Wait a minute!

Does Gideon have courage? But is he still afraid?! Gideon is doing the RIGHT THING that is pleasing to God, because God told him to do it. THAT is courage!

Well...after Gideon has gotten rid of the Baal worship in his area, guess what happens? Those Midianites invade again! And they set up camp! And God lets Gideon know it's time to gather those who are willing to fight!

Only 32,000 showed up. That wasn't very many compared to the BIG Midianite camp of warriors!

Does Gideon know what God wants him to do? Yes!

But he wants to make sure...

"Is this REALLY from God?!"

He asks God for a sign...

Show fleece (or "wooly" blanket)

Storytell two signs.

Why does Gideon ask for ANOTHER sign? This would be really scary to do! But what gives Gideon courage to do it? HE KNOWS FOR SURE THAT GOD IS WITH HIM!

Storytell. Use two shallow pans and have two students demonstrate—one flat on stomach drinking the water directly.

One kneeling lapping up the water.

#### IV. God Defeats the Midianites

- A. God gives another sign:  
dream to Midianite
  - 1. He was still afraid
  - 2. Takes Purah, his servant with him
  - 3. Hears Midianite telling dream about barley loaf
  - 4. Other Midianite says Gideon will win the battle.
  - 5. Gideon assures his men of victory
  
- B. Divides the men into 3 groups: each has a trumpet, and a torch inside an empty pitcher
  
- C. Men blow horns and smash pitchers with lights and Yell: "Sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"
  
- D. Midianites RUN!
  
- E. Rest of Israelites are called to help pursue their enemies.

Note: When those who were afraid were sent home, I wonder if Gideon felt like going home?!

Why did God tell Gideon he could go down into the camp with his servant? He was STILL afraid.

Storytell...imagining creeping down to edge of enemy camp. Overhearing dreamer recounting dream.

Hold up jar and flashlight.

They divide into 3 companies and surround the encampment below.

When the warriors heard the breaking pitchers, and saw the lights and heard the trumpets, they thought there was a BIG army coming after them.

They started fighting themselves in the confusion and RUNNING away!

#### **Concluding the Story:**

Did Gideon have courage? Was he afraid?

If Gideon had been looking only at what God wanted him to do and he had to go out and make it happen, he probably would have quit right then!

What gave Gideon his courage? What made him a mighty man of Valor?

The LORD WAS WITH HIM!

What are things we need to ask God to give us courage for?

(ideas...telling the truth when it would be easier to lie. Confessing a sin to our parents when they didn't know what we did. Standing up for someone that is being made fun of, when we are afraid of what others will think about us or say to us.)

Learn Memory Verse together.

## TITLE OF LESSON HELPS FOR THE TEACHER

### **Personal Application Questions:**

1. What task has God given you that you feel you are inadequate for? Do you know that God is with you and He will accomplish the task He has intended?
2. List your fears about the task you have at hand. What evidence has God given you that He is WITH you?
3. Is there any unconfessed sin (like the Baal altar in Gideon's family) that you need to take steps on getting rid of? Will you do that even if it involves others knowing?

### **Application Questions to Think Through for your Students:**

1. Are there any things your students need to take care of in order to be ready for God to use them? Unconfessed sin? Have they been saved? Is there anything to confess to their parents?
2. Although not faced with marauding warriors, what situations do your students face in standing for what is right that take great courage?

### **Memory Verse:**

For younger children, use the last part of the verse "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor!" For older children, the first part of the verse will reinforce the context of the story.

Divide your class into two groups.

### **Have everyone say together:**

*The angel of the Lord...*

**Group #1** then says: "APPEARED TO HIM" and makes motions of wide open hands around their faces.

**Group #2** then replies: "and SAID TO HIM" and cups their hands around their mouths like a megaphone.

**Group #1** says: "The Lord is with you!" (make motion as if locking arms with a friend)

**Group #2** replies: "O mighty man of valor!" (make motion lifting victory-fist into the air)

After a couple times through, switch the groups so that both groups get to repeat the alternate lines.

At the end, have both groups individually say the WHOLE verse.

### **Post-Lesson Activity:**

Big Book of Bible Puzzles for Preteens, p. 54 "Surprise"!

Big Book of Bible Crafts (Young Children) p. 30 Gideon's Torch

### **Homework Idea:**

During the week, write down the things that make them afraid to do what God wants them to do. Then write down the memory verse after each day.