

LESSON 47

Gideon's Victory

JUDGES 7



BIBLE TRUTH

THE HAND OF THE LORD SAVES ISRAEL

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. **OPENING REVIEW** **5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
2. **BIBLE STORY** **10 MIN**
Read Judges 7 from the Scriptures or read story 47, “Gideon’s Victory,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
3. **OBJECT LESSON 1** **15 MIN**
Victory in Numbers
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ a bag of uncooked rice
 - ✓ a drop cloth
 - ✓ a plastic cup
4. **TEACHING/DISCUSSION** **10 MIN**
5. **OBJECT LESSON 2** **20 MIN**
Attack Skit
6. **WORD BIBLE MEMORY** **5 MIN**
7. **ACTIVITY TIME** **15 MIN**
The Bread and the Tent
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper
8. **CLOSING PRAYER** **5 MIN**
9. **BONUS OBJECT LESSON** **10 MIN**
You Can Trust in God
SUPPLIES:
 - ✓ twenty table tennis balls (use wadded up paper balls if you wish)
 - ✓ two large plastic cups
 - ✓ clear plastic bag

TOTAL 95 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

God reduces Gideon's numbers—Gideon brings thirty-two thousand men to fight against the Midianites. But God knows that winning the victory with such a large army would tempt Israel to think they had won the battle without God's help. So God instructs Gideon to send some of the men home. When Gideon has done everything God tells him, only three hundred men are left, less than one percent of the men that he started with.

God builds Gideon's faith—Imagine yourself in Gideon's place. God calls him to take three hundred men and attack an army so large that it “lay along the valley like locusts in abundance, and their camels were without number, as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance” (Judges 7:12). Anyone would be afraid when asked to do this.

But God knows that Gideon cannot lead his men well unless he has confidence in God. So God sends Gideon and his servant close to the Midianite camp. There, they hear about the dream and its interpretation. This builds Gideon's faith, and he immediately rallies the three hundred men to action.

God throws the Midianites into confusion—This is an amazing story of how God uses three hundred men to send a vast army fleeing in terror. At any other time, an army like this would have stood its ground, but as we read in Judges 7:22, “the Lord set every man's sword against his comrade and against all the army.”

If the Lord had not thrown the Midianites into confusion, the attack might have startled them but not terrified them. Instead of fleeing, they would have attacked and killed the Israelites. As it was, the Midianites attacked each other. God won a victory for himself and for his people!

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Ephod

The ephod was a priestly outer garment that looked much like our vests today. The ephod of the high priest was colorful and richly ornamented (Exodus 28:6–12). The golden ephod made by Gideon would have resembled solid gold armor weighing over forty pounds. Gideon didn't wear it but placed it on display in his city. People came from all around to see it, and it became a snare to Gideon and his family.

WHERE IS JESUS?

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read Judges 8:27.

The story of Gideon is a story of God saving his people. Gideon followed the Lord in faith during the battle, but it wasn't long after the battle ended that Gideon fell into sin. He made a golden ephod (a vestlike outer garment). All of Israel came to see it and sinned in its presence. The house of God was in Shiloh and it was there that the priest wore a golden ephod. Gideon created his own alternate place of worship. One day a deliverer would come who would not sin—Jesus the Lord.

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Judges 7 from the Scriptures or read story 47, "Gideon's Victory," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 15 MIN

Victory in Numbers

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ a bag of uncooked rice
- ✓ a drop cloth
- ✓ a plastic cup

The object of this lesson is to help the children understand the concept of strength in numbers and how amazing it is that God achieved victory over Midian with such small numbers.

Prior to class, experiment with this activity to try and set the proper distance to the cup. Start with six feet and reduce the distance based on the age and ability of the children.

Give each child three grains of rice, and have them try to throw the rice into the cup. The distance to the cup should be far enough or the cup small enough to make tossing a piece into the cup very difficult. Ask how many of the children think they can get a grain of rice into the cup with just one throw.

Take three grains and try to get them into the cup. Ask the children how we can make it easier to get rice into the cup. Ask them to think of the story of Gideon. There were over one hundred thousand Midianites. What would make it easier to beat them, more men or fewer men?

Once the children understand that the more men Gideon had the easier victory would be, tell them it is the same with the rice. The more you throw, the easier it is to get victory—rice in the cup! Take a whole handful of rice and throw it into the cup. (Practice this ahead of time too so that you can actually get at least one grain into the cup.) Then give the children a chance to do the same. (This should be a fun cleanup.)

Then ask the class the following questions:

- How hard was it to get just one piece of rice in the cup?
(very hard)

- Why did God limit Gideon’s army to so few people?
(God did not want Israel to think that they defeated the Midianites with their own strength or talents.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 20 MIN

Attack Skit

Divide the class into two groups. Instruct them to reenact Gideon’s attack on the Midianites. Only this time, imagine the story unfolding without God’s help. What might have happened? Certainly, the Israelites would have caught the Midianites off guard, but would the Midianites have started killing each other, or would they have realized Israel was only bluffing? Tell each group that everyone in the group must have at least one line and participate in the skit.

Give the children ten minutes to plan their skits. Have each half of the class perform their drama, and then discuss who should receive credit for the victory.

Read Judges 8:22–34, and ask them to tell you what happened to Gideon later in his life.

Note: Verse 27 says that Israel “whored after” or “prostituted themselves” in Ophrah, Gideon’s town. Basically it became a place of sin and spiritual adultery (if not actual adultery) as they looked to the ephod for help in times of need. The bottom line is that Israel committed horrible sins at the location of the golden ephod, and it became an alternate place of worship.

Point out to the children that one day another deliverer, Jesus Christ, would come. This Savior would deliver his people from their sins, but he himself would not sin. Jesus would bear the sins of his people so they might be forgiven.

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 15 MIN

The Bread and the Tent

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ colored pencils, crayons, and paper

Have the children draw a picture of the Midianite soldier’s dream from Judges 7:13.

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

You Can Trust in God

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ twenty table tennis balls (use wadded up paper balls if you wish)
- ✓ two large plastic cups
- ✓ clear plastic bag

Do this object lesson after you have read the story with the children.

Set up the plastic cups at least twenty feet away from a desk where you have a clear plastic bag containing the table tennis balls. Ask for a volunteer who thinks they can get one of twenty balls into the cup. Choose a volunteer and then say out loud, "I think twenty is too many tries for you. If you get a ball in, you will think you did it on your own." Then take ten balls away.

Continue by saying, "I think ten balls are too many for you. If you get a ball in you will think you did it on your own." Take away all but one ball.

Then say, "I think the cup is way too far away. If you get your ball in the cup you will think you did it on your own." Then pick up the cup, bring it to the volunteer, and say, "Put the ball into the cup." As soon as he or she does this, jump up and down and celebrate what they have done.

Finally, lead a discussion about how your exercise is similar to what God did in lessening Gideon's forces and in the end winning the battle by throwing the enemy into confusion.