

MinistryPlace.net

The Bronze Serpent

Scripture: Numbers 21:4-9

Theme: Look to Jesus and be saved

1st-3rd Grade (Ages 6-8)

Free curriculum for small and rural churches

Lesson Overview

Lesson Overview: "God Uses the Weak Things" (Judges 6:1, 7:25 , Gideon & the Fearful Heart) 1. God Sees What Others Don't Gideon was the weakest man in the Israelite army, a scared shepherd with a big fear of failure. The enemy, the Midianites, were strong and powerful, but God didn't ask Gideon to be brave; He asked him to trust. Just like Gideon, sometimes we feel small or unsure, but God sees our hearts. He wants us to trust Him with our fears, just as He trusted Gideon with a mission. 2. God Uses What We Have Gideon was told to fight with 10,000 men, but God later reduced the army to just 300 men, the ones who stayed awake in the night to defend their camp. Even though Gideon and his small group looked weak, God worked through them! This shows that God doesn't need big teams, He needs people who obey Him, no matter how small they feel. What if we gave God our "weaker" gifts, like serving in small groups or sharing the Gospel where it's hard? 3. God's Plan for Your "Weakness" God often uses people who don't feel strong enough. He calls us to trust Him with our fears, our doubts, and even our "small" talents. Just like Gideon, when we surrender our hearts, God will make our weaknesses strengths for His purpose! Challenge: Next Sunday, ask God to show you where He wants you to trust Him, maybe even in a quiet way, like praying alone or serving one person. 4. Application for Us This lesson reminds us that God doesn't care about our size, He cares about our willingness. If we're afraid to try something new, or if we feel too small, we can remember: God used Gideon's fear for His good plan. Today, ask God to help you trust Him, even when you feel weak. Prayer: "Lord, thank You for using me, even when I don't feel strong. Help me trust You today!" Encouragement for Teachers: - Keep it interactive! Use props (e.g., small army figurines for "300 men") or a simple "trust exercise" (e.g., have kids stand with arms outstretched, then ask, "How does God want us to trust Him with our arms today?"). - End with a fun challenge like: "Can you think of one way you'll serve God this week, no matter how small?" (Praise their efforts!) This lesson is gentle but powerful, God's heart is for all His children, even the ones who feel the least.

Bible Story

Gideon's Big Challenge

A long time ago, the people of Israel were afraid. They lived in fear of the Midianites, a big, strong enemy who took away their crops, their animals, and even their food. The Israelites cried out to God, begging Him to help. But God answered by saying, "I see what you are going through, and I will help you." Though Gideon was scared, he did not know how to fight, he was small and weak, with not many people to help him.

God told Gideon, "Do not be afraid. I will be with you." Gideon answered, "How can I save my people? I am only one man, and my family is too weak." God smiled and said, "Even the smallest things can do great things when they trust in Me." Gideon thought God was joking, but God gave him a sign: a burning bush that did not burn but showed His power. God reminded Gideon that He had already saved others in the past, and He would do it again.

Gideon then asked God for a sign in the fire and the dew, proving he trusted God's plan. Even though he was afraid, he obeyed and did what God told him to do. He asked God to send him 300 men, only a tiny army, to fight the Midianites. Gideon hid his men in barrels, pitchers, and caves so they wouldn't be seen. When the enemy came to sleep, the men shouted, and God made them afraid. The Midianites panicked and ran away! Israel was saved.

God used Gideon's weakness to show that He doesn't need strong men, He needs those who trust Him. Just like Gideon, we can be small in our own eyes, but God can use us in big ways if we obey and trust Him. When we fear things, we can ask God to help us like He helped Gideon.

Why This Story Matters This story teaches us that God doesn't always use the strongest or bravest people, He uses those who trust Him. Sometimes we feel too small to do big things, but God can turn our fears into faith. Just like Gideon, we can ask God to help us when we feel weak, and He will be with us every step of the way!

Key Verse

Numbers 21:8-9

God's people in that story had just won a big battle, but they were so excited that they didn't listen to God's plan. He told them, "You're not ready yet, there are too many of them." God wants us to trust Him, even when we feel scared or unsure. Imagine you're playing a game where you need to work together with friends, but there are too many of them. Sometimes, God says, "Wait a minute, you need fewer helpers." That's because He knows the best way to win, and we have to trust that, just like the Israelites did. Here's a simple way to think about it: If you and your friends are working on a big project, maybe God says, "Let's just use three of us, it'll be easier." That's what God did with Gideon (the man in Judges), and it worked perfectly! He chose just the right number of people to trust. God doesn't always want us to be the bravest or strongest, sometimes He wants us to be smart and willing to listen. When God asks you to do something, even if it feels hard, ask yourself: "Will I trust God like Gideon did?" If you do, you'll win just like He promised! Prayer Idea: "God, help me listen to You and trust You, like Gideon did. I trust You, even when I'm scared!"

Activities

Activity 1:

Kids will act out how God chose the smallest, least confident soldiers (the 300 men) to fight against the Midianites, showing that God doesn't always need the strongest or most famous, just the ones who trust Him.

1. Read the Story Shortly: Start with a 1-minute summary of Gideon's army, how God told him to count only the ones who trusted Him, not the loudest or strongest.
2. Draw Your "Soldier": Give each child a paper to draw a tiny soldier (like Gideon's 300 men). Encourage them to make them small but brave!
3. Glue "Weapons": Cut out or glue small sticks/beans onto their soldier to be "weapons" (like the trumpet and torches). Ask: "Why did God use small soldiers?"
4. Move Like Gideon's Army: Gather the group. Have kids mimic Gideon's slow, quiet march, showing how God works in hidden ways. End with a prayer: "God, help us trust You like Gideon!"

Activity 2:

Kids decorate "torches" (literal or symbolic) to show how Gideon's men trusted God to win the battle, not their own strength. They'll learn that God uses what's weak to do mighty things!

1. Tell the Key Moment: Explain how Gideon told his men to carry torches, not swords, showing they had to trust God to win.
2. Decorate a Torch: Pass out oranges/paper circles. Kids glue cotton "fire" and wrap pipe cleaners to make them "hold" (like torches).
3. Discuss Application: Ask: "How can we trust God like these men?" Share that even when things look small, God can make them powerful.
4. Shine Your Torch: Turn off lights (or dim them) and let kids "light" their torches. Sing a simple song (e.g., "God's strength is big, but His love is light").
5. Bonus Tip: End both activities with a "Gideon's Challenge", have kids pray to trust God in one "small" way that day!

Discussion Questions

- Here are four open-ended discussion questions for early elementary children (ages 6, 8) based on Gideon's story in Judges, designed to encourage thoughtful reflection:
- What surprised you about Gideon?
- Gideon was afraid, so much that he told God, "I'm just a small man, and my family isn't strong enough to fight." He didn't think he was ready for God's big plan. What made you think God might use you (or someone like you) to help others, even if you feel small or unsure? How could you trust God with something scary today?
- How did God help Gideon when he was afraid?
- God told Gideon that he would be with him, even when Gideon was trembling. Gideon didn't have a big army or fancy weapons, he just had two men to fight with! What's something in your life where you feel like you're alone or too small? How can you remember God is with you, just like he was with Gideon?
- What can we learn from Gideon's team?
- Gideon's men were just two, but God used them! Maybe you'll feel too young or not smart enough to do big things, but God might use you in a small way. What's something kind or helpful you've done for others, even if it felt small? How can you keep sharing your heart with God, even when you're nervous?
- Who could God use you to help today?
- Gideon helped Israel, and God used him to win a big battle. Who do you know who might need a kind word, a helping hand, or just someone to listen? How can you be like Gideon and trust God to help you serve others, even if it's just one small way?
- These questions encourage kids to connect the story to their own lives, ask themselves how they can follow God's example, and share their thoughts in a meaningful way. Would you like any adjustments to fit a specific lesson focus?

Prayer Focus

Here's a simple and heartfelt prayer focus for your early elementary lesson on Gideon and God Using the Weak Things (Judges 6, 7): Prayer Focus: "Dear God, You see how small and brave we all are, like Gideon when he felt too weak to fight. But You know exactly how to use us, just like You used Gideon to help Israel. Help us trust You with our fears and big jobs. Show us how to be brave and listen when it feels hard, just like Gideon did. Help us remember that even the smallest steps with You are powerful! Thank You for loving us and using us for Your purposes!" Why this works for kids (6, 8): 1. Gideon's Story Connection , Names Gideon's doubt (Judges 6:3) and

God's call (Judges 6:12), making it easy to relate. 2. *Simple Trust*, Focuses on trusting God even when we feel small, not just "being strong." 3. *Action Step*, Ends with a reminder that God's power works through our obedience (e.g., listening to Him), not just courage. *Teaching Tip*: After praying, ask: "How can we be like Gideon today? Maybe we'll do one brave thing for God!" (Let them shout, "YES!" as a group response.) *Bonus*: Write it on a poster with Gideon's story illustration for kids to trace their hands and pray together!

>> Missions Spotlight

The churches in rural Mozambique are often tiny, sometimes just 10-15 believers meeting under a tree. Yet these small congregations are transforming their communities. Gideon's story reminds them that God doesn't need big numbers to do big things.

-> To the Cross

Gideon went from hiding in a winepress to leading an army, but God reduced the army from 32,000 to 300 so that no one could boast. God delights in using weak things to show His strength. Jesus Himself was born in a manger, not a palace.