



LESSON 26

3rd and 4th Grade

Principle: Letting God fight our battles. Trusting in Him rather than man or self.

Bible Character(s): Gideon

Scripture Reference: Judges 7



PERSONAL PREPARATION: Before this weekend, please read through Judges 7. See

how God tested Gideon by asking him to reduce his army from 32,000 to 300 men. This would show that the battle was won by God, not by the strength of the Israelites. Gideon trusted God with this battle and allowed Him to fight it. Gideon obeyed everything God asked of him, and they were victorious. Spend some time thinking about different battles you've dealt with throughout your life. When did you depend only on yourself to fight the battle? During which battles did you put your trust in God and allow Him to fight for you? How was it different when God fought your battle instead of depending on yourself to fight it? How do you allow God to fight your battle? Are there any battles you are fighting right now that you need to give to God?

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

Letting God Fight Our Battles Conversation

Spend a few minutes before Big Group asking the campers what kind of battles (problems or struggles) they have had to fight in their lives. Did they see God present in these situations? How did they trust in Him to help them, rather than trying to fight these battles alone?



BIG GROUP Time - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts - fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

***Take your cabin flag to Big Group.**

The Bridge to Small Group

Today we will continue with our study in Judges. We will see God use Gideon and the Israelites' weakness in number during battle with Midian to show His glory. We will learn how we can put our trust in God to fight our battles in His way.

Small Group Time - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn in Big Group today? Why did the boxer want to fight "the Hulk"? (He's angry at "the Hulk" so he wants to fight him.) Did God want him to fight his own fight or let God handle it? (God wanted the boxer to let God handle it.)

Last week we learned about having courage to stand up for God and following him even when others do not. We saw God choose Gideon to show us His glory. Gideon was young and inexperienced, but God wanted to save the Israelites from the Midianites through Gideon. God's strength was needed to defeat the Midianites, not Gideon's. Gideon was afraid, but he obeyed what God asked him to do anyway.

Today we are going to read about the battle with Midian. Let's begin reading the Bible in Judges 7 [NLT].

Judges 7:1-4

1 So Jerub-baal (that is, Gideon) and his army got up early and went as far as the spring of Harod. The armies of Midian were camped north of them in the valley near the hill of Moreh. 2 The Lord said to Gideon, "You have too many warriors with you. If I let all of you fight the Midianites, the Israelites will boast to me that they saved themselves by their own strength. 3 Therefore, tell the people, 'Whoever is timid or afraid may leave this mountain and go home.'" So 22,000 of them went home, leaving only 10,000 who were willing to fight.

4 But the Lord told Gideon, "There are still too many! Bring them down to the spring, and I will test them to determine who will go with you and who will not."

Gideon had all of the Israelite men ready to go to battle, but God wanted things done differently. God knew if the Israelites were victorious with the number of men they had, 32,000, then they would claim the victory and glory for themselves instead of for God. God had Gideon send men home who were afraid of the battle. 22,000 men went home and this left Gideon with 10,000 men. God said that was still too many. God then had all of the men go down to a stream where He determined who would go to battle based on who passed His test. All who drank water by scooping it into their hand, with their head up so as to be alert in case they were attacked, were chosen to stay in the army. All who drank straight from the stream with their mouths, with their head down, were made to go home.

This left the total count at 300 men. Gideon's army went from 32,000 men to 300 men. (Show picture of slides from Big Group.) Let's continue reading the Bible in Judges 7.

Judges 7:7-8

7 The Lord told Gideon, "With these 300 men I will rescue you and give you victory over the Midianites. Send all the others home." 8 So Gideon collected the provisions and rams' horns of the other warriors and sent them home. But he kept the 300 men with him.

Do you think Gideon and his men really believed they would win the battle with only 300 men? That seems impossible, doesn't it? We do not know for sure what they thought, but we do know that Gideon had to choose to trust God to fight this battle or choose to do things how he wanted to do them. God wanted to show His power through a few men so that Israel could not brag about what they did and steal God's glory.

God's Power



The purpose is to learn about God's power and strength.

Supplies:

Big boxing glove (1 per session)

Ask the campers to think back over all that we have studied with the Israelites and have them give examples of how God has shown His power and strength in the stories we have studied. Write these examples on the boxing glove cutout. (Examples: creation; Noah's protection and the flood; Egypt – the plagues, the parting of the Red Sea; Jericho and the walls falling down.)

Tie It Together



God has shown some great examples of His power and strength so far. We have a God who is big and powerful and He wants us to trust in His strength to fight our battles for us. Gideon had every reason to trust in what God wanted to do! Even though it seemed impossible to fight the whole Midianite army with only 300 men, Gideon knew that God had been faithful to his ancestors and his people so far. He had a choice to trust God with this battle against the Midianites or choose to do things his own way that made more sense to him. Gideon chose to trust God to do things how God wanted to do them, even if it did not make complete sense.

Let's continue reading the Bible to see what happened next.

Judges 7:12-15

12 The armies of Midian, Amalek, and the people of the east had settled in the valley like a swarm of locusts. Their camels were like grains of sand on the seashore—too many to count! 13 Gideon crept up just as a man was telling his companion about a dream. The man said, "I had this dream, and in my dream a loaf of barley bread came tumbling down into the Midianite camp. It hit a tent, turned it over, and knocked it flat!"

14 His companion answered, "Your dream can mean only one thing—God has given Gideon son of Joash, the Israelite, victory over Midian and all its allies!"

15 When Gideon heard the dream and its interpretation, he bowed in worship before the Lord. Then he returned to the Israelite camp and shouted, "Get up! For the Lord has given you victory over the Midianite hordes!"

We see that the Midianite army was huge! Verse 12 tells us it was, "like a swarm of locusts" and their camels, "were like grains of sand on the seashore – too many to count!" So it seems impossible for Gideon's small 300 men army to be able to defeat the large, numerous Midianite army. But Gideon overheard the dream of one of the Midianites, and from this dream Gideon knew God was with him. What was the first thing Gideon did after hearing this dream and its interpretation? (Allow responses.) He bowed in worship. He knew God was on his side and was blessing him, and he worshiped God for it. Then he returned to his camp to let his army know what he had heard.

Let's read more of the Bible in Judges to see how the battle ended.

Judges 7:16-22

16 He divided the 300 men into three groups and gave each man a ram's horn and a clay jar with a torch in it.

17 Then he said to them, "Keep your eyes on me. When I come to the edge of the camp, do just as I do. 18 As soon as I and those with me blow the rams' horns, blow your horns, too, all around the entire camp, and shout, 'For the Lord and for Gideon!'"

19 It was just after midnight, after the changing of the guard, when Gideon and the 100 men with him reached the edge of the Midianite camp. Suddenly, they blew the rams' horns and broke their clay jars. 20 Then all three groups blew their horns and broke their jars. They held the blazing torches in their left hands and the horns in their right hands, and they all shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!"

21 Each man stood at his position around the camp and watched as all the Midianites rushed around in a panic, shouting as they ran to escape.

22 When the 300 Israelites blew their rams' horns, the Lord caused the warriors in the camp to fight against each other with their swords. Those who were not killed fled to places as far away as Beth-shittah near Zererah and to the border of Abel-meholah near Tabbath.

Gideon and his 300 men defeated the Midianites just by blowing their rams' horns and breaking their clay jars. Seems pretty amazing, doesn't it? Does it remind you of another story we read where the Israelites defeated a city by following some crazy instructions God gave them? (Allow responses.) That's right, when they defeated Jericho by walking around the wall for several days, blowing horns and yelling. God sure has a different approach to battle than what we would choose to do!

Gideon trusted in God to fight this battle instead of trying to fight it his own way. He handed the problem in front of him over to God, and God told Gideon exactly what to do. Victory seemed impossible with God's plan, but Gideon knew that with God, all things are possible. God was faithful, and in the end He got all of the glory and praise for the victory.

God Fights My Battles



The purpose is for the campers to recognize times in their life when God has fought their battles, and to examine any battles they are not letting God fight.

Supplies:

White board

Spend some time talking about example of battles (problems or struggles) in their lives. Write examples on the white board. Ask the campers what it looks like to fight a battle on their own, and then ask what it looks like to have God fight their battle. Have them reflect on times in their life when God has fought their battles, and examine if there are any battles they are fighting right now that they are letting God fight or they need to give to Him.

Tie It Together



Life is full of different types of battles coming into our path as time goes on. When we encounter a battle we have a choice to either deal with it ourselves or choose to allow God to fight our battle. When we allow God to fight our battle, we are humbling ourselves by saying we cannot do it on our own and we need God. God loves us and is so faithful to us, so we can be confident that with God leading us on, He will take care of us. Gideon had that same choice; he could have gone into battle with all the men he started with, but God may not have been with him and it probably would not have ended well. Because Gideon chose to allow God to fight his battle and he obeyed all of God's instructions, he came out victorious. How have you seen God to be faithful to you in fighting a battle in your life? If you could go back, would you choose to fight it yourself instead?

Preparing For Battle



The purpose is to help the campers understand how God wants us to be prepared for battle.

Supplies:

Ephesians 6:13-18 bookmark (1 per camper)

Teacher's guide (1 per bin)

Hand each camper a bookmark and read through the passage on it together. Use the teacher guide to walk through what each piece of armor looks like.

Tie It Together



God gives us instructions on how to be prepared for battle. In Ephesians 6 He explains the pieces of armor to us so that we can be prepared for anything that happens. This helps us understand how we allow God to fight our battles. Every piece of armor is given to us to make us strong in Him. Remember, being a Christian means understanding that we are completely dependent on Him for help with everything. Keep this bookmark as a reminder of God's armor.

All Things Are Possible



The purpose is to help the campers remember that everything is possible with God.

Supplies:

“The Armor of God” worksheet (1 per camper)

Give each camper a warrior worksheet. As you talk through each piece of God’s armor and discuss that these are ways the Lord fights our battles, have campers write the pieces of God’s armor on the correct line. Then have each camper write “Everything is possible with God. Mark 10:27” on the top of the worksheet.

Tie It Together



Gideon trusted God with his battle and he won even when it seemed impossible. God wants us to trust Him with our battles. He wants us to hand over any problems we have so that He can help us handle them. Sometimes a problem in our life may seem impossible to overcome. But we can remember that with God, everything is possible.

Prayer Time

Spend some time in prayer to close small group time, asking God to help us trust him with our problems instead of trusting ourselves.



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