

## Lesson 5 - Beyond Your Measure

Ages: 3 to 9 years

### Notes for preparation by teachers.

Teachers to firstly read Judges 6-8. The lesson has been extracted from the story about Gideon as recorded in Judges 6-8. A summary of the story has been provided. However teachers are to explain the story to the children according to their different age groups and in some cases for the younger classes, perhaps with more detailed explanations if required.

You may also include additional pictures; charts; games and/or dramatization for further clarity. Memory verses and bible mnemonics may also be added wherever relevant.

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In our story we learn about the children of Israel that did evil in the eyes of the Lord. Because of this, God handed them over to the Midianites for seven years because they were doing wrong.

The Midianites were a group of people that had been mistreating the Israelites. They would destroy their crops and kill their sheep, cattle and donkeys. The Israelites had to hide in caves from the Midianites. They were poor and became so hungry that they cried out to God for help.

God himself appeared in the form of an angel to a shy man named Gideon. Gideon was a prophet and God told him to remind the people of all God did for them in the past and that they were still being disobedient.

Gideon was separating wheat in a winepress which was a hidden place to keep it away from the Midianites. The angel of the Lord appeared before Gideon and called him a mighty man of valour, which means a brave soldier, and told him that the Lord was with him.

**Here we see a picture of the angel of the Lord that appeared before Gideon.**



Gideon questioned God about the people's sufferings. The Lord told Gideon to lead a battle against the Midianites so that the people would be saved from the Midianites.

Gideon doubted his own abilities. He had suffered so many defeats and failures. He told God that he was afraid and that he did not have an army strong enough to defeat the Midianites and that he was the smallest and the youngest in his family.

The angel of the Lord encouraged Gideon to see himself the way God sees him and assured him that God would be with him and that the Midianites will surely be defeated.

Gideon put God to the test, not once but three times.

He asked God for a sign. He wanted to be sure that this was really God that he was talking to. He prepared an offering for God. He set his offering on a rock and fire came from the rock burning the meat and bread. Then the angel of the Lord disappeared.

After this God told Gideon to take down the altar his father had built of a false God. God was angry with the Israelites because they believed in other Gods.

Gideon took ten of his servants at night and destroyed the altars. He did this at night because he was afraid of getting caught.

**Here we see Gideon tearing down an altar that his father built for Baal, a false God.**



The people were angry when they realized Gideon had broken down their altars.

Gideon still wanted to make sure that God would save the Israelites so he asked for another sign. He placed a piece of wool from a sheep on the ground. If there was dew only on the fleece and all the ground around it is dry, then he would know that God would save them.

**Here we see a picture of Gideon's fleece.**



When Gideon checked the wool in the morning it was soaking wet and the ground was dry. Still Gideon asked for one more sign.

This time he asked that the fleece would be dry and the ground would be wet. The next morning it was just as Gideon asked. God did this as well.

**Here we see that Gideon found the ground wet.**



God was patient with Gideon because he had chosen him to defeat the Midianites.

After this Gideon gathered a huge army from the surrounding tribes, but God told him that he had too many men.

God told Gideon to choose his men – he had to give them a drink of water. Only the men who kneeled down and got a drink using their hands would be Gideon's army. By this method God reduced their number to only 300.

This was so that there would be no doubt that victory was from the Lord, not from the army's might.

**Here we see Gideon with the men drinking water at the lake.**



Gideon split up his 300 men into 3 groups - 100 in each group. They surrounded the camp in the three groups. They were up high looking down into the valley.

That night, Gideon gave each man a trumpet and a torch hidden inside a pottery jar. Gideon asked them to do as he does and say as he says.

**Here we see Gideon and his men positioned high up surrounding the enemy.**



When Gideon started to blow his trumpet the rest followed.

The Midianites didn't know what happened. God caused them to panic and turn on each other. They ran away in fear and started fighting and killing each other with their own swords. Gideon's army only used torches and jars instead of swords.

That was the day God saved Gideon and defeated the Midianites. Without God this would not be possible. The Bible tells us in **Matt 19:26 - 'With God all things are possible'**.

After this the people wanted to make Gideon their King and to rule over them but Gideon refused. He told them that the Lord shall rule over them.

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**Questions for revision:**

1. Who did God choose to conquer the Midianites? **Gideon**
2. How many soldiers did Gideon start off with? **32 000**
3. How many soldiers did God allow Gideon to use? **300**
4. Why did God not want Gideon to have so many soldiers? **So that they would not boast about winning. They had to know that it was God who made them win and not by their own strength.**
5. What did they use to win the battle? **Torches, trumpets, empty jars and shouting.**

## Lessons to be learnt from this story:

### 1. We learn about **FAITH and TRUST:**

We learn that when we are in a tough situation, we must believe that God can give us His strength and He will help us. All we have to do is ask and He will. We must have one purpose to succeed. We must be sure that nothing can stop us as long as God is with us.

Gideon and his small army beat the Midianites' large army, all because they had God on their side. Gideon's army only used torches and jars and not swords like the Midianites' army. The bible says in **Matt 19:26 - 'With God all things are possible'**.

### 2. We must be **HUMBLE** at all times and not have **PRIDE:**

God used Gideon, who was a humble and shy man, to overcome a strong army. This teaches us that we must remain humble at all times, and not be proud. The Word of God says in **James 4:6 - 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'**.

### 3. How to **OBEY GOD:**

We learn how important is it to obey God when He gives us an instruction to carry out the work He gives us to do.

### 4. We must not have **FEAR** as the Bible tells us in **2 Tim 1:7 - 'For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind'**.

In our story we learn that because of fear Gideon was afraid to go on his own and break down his father's altar even though he knew that God was with him and it was the right thing to do.

Sometimes in our lives we have to break down the bad things that are stopping us from getting the good things that God has in store for us.

Each one of us has a fear of something in our lives. Fear stops us from doing what we have to do. The people of Israel were afraid of the Midianites even though they were being ill-treated by them.

Fear made Gideon feel like he was the weakest and the least in his family.

In our daily lives sometimes we feel that if we are the youngest we cannot do better than our older brothers and sisters because we are afraid of being laughed at or that our parents will not be pleased or happy with us.

### 5. We must be in **ONENESS** with our leaders:

We must work in oneness with each other and we must obey the one in charge - the men obeyed and followed instructions from Gideon. When he shouted, they shouted.

When our Pastor or Sunday School Teacher speaks we must listen, obey the instructions and follow the teachings given to us.