

A JUDGE LEADS

Gideon
Judges 7:1–23
1172–1133 BC

OVERVIEW

BIBLE TRUTH

God rescues us from our enemies.

BIBLE VERSE

The Lord is my helper; I will not fear. Hebrews 13:6

LEARNER GOAL

I understand that God rescues me from sin and enemies.

LAW & GOSPEL

Though God promises to be with us, we doubt His Word. **God is faithful in our doubt and persistent in His love for us. He refuses to let us die in our sin, but instead sends us a Savior, Jesus Christ.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

God calls Gideon to lead His chosen people against their Midianite enemies. God leads Gideon to reduce his army from 32,000 men to a mere 300 strong. Reassured by the Lord, Gideon moves forward with God's improbable plan. Armed with just torches and trumpets, Gideon's mini army defeats the mighty Midianite force without lifting a sword.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read Judges 7:1–23 and notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible*.

MORE TIME Read the leader devotion, found in the digital resource center.

IN DEPTH Read the section “The Seventh Petition” in *Luther's Small Catechism with Explanation* (2017).

SUPPLY LIST

FOR THIS LESSON

- Paper towel tubes
- Empty ice-cream cones
- Cheese curls or cheese popcorn
- Plastic action figures
- Balloons

FOR EVERY LESSON

- Bible
- Device with prepped music
- Copies of downloadable activity page
- Copies of Enduring Faith Page
- Supply Box

LAUNCH

Plan your lesson by reading through the options in each section. Choose the activities that will best fit your learners, and mark those boxes to guide you as you teach the lesson.

BEGIN

- Follow the Order of Opening Worship, use the Lesson Opening, or do both (part of the planning resources in the digital resource center).
- Sing songs using music found in the digital resource center, or sing your own favorite songs.

PRAY

Dear heavenly Father, thank You for bringing us together to study Your Word today. Help us to learn how You rescue us from our enemies and give us the victory over sin through Jesus. In Your name we pray. Amen.

LEARN

Show your Bible, and remind the children that all the stories in God's Word are true.

TELL THE BIBLE NARRATIVE

Choose one of the options on the next page to tell the Bible narrative.

DO THIS!

Use one or more of the following activities to talk about the Bible narrative after you've read it.

- FOR A MIX OF AGES** Ask volunteers to take turns reading sections from the Bible narrative as you and several students act out the story.
- FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS** Roll pieces of paper to make horns and torches. Or bring paper towel tubes for torches. Put red tissue paper in the open ends. Have students use these to act out the end of the story.
- FOR A LARGER GROUP** Start with your whole group as Gideon's army. As you tell the story, move some students away from the group, leaving only one or two students. Ask if they can win any battle with just these few kids.

SAY

- How are you today? Did any of you have any troubles this week? Today we'll learn how God is our helper.**
- How do armies win a battle? Tell me all the ways you know.** Listen to responses and be sensitive to any students whose parents are in the military and deployed. **As usual, God's ways aren't our ways. Let's see how God helps Gideon win this battle in some unexpected ways.**

TALK ABOUT IT

Choose a few questions that best fit the learning level of your group.

- How did God help Gideon and his army?
- Gideon didn't always feel worthy or strong enough, but God worked through him. Do you ever feel like Gideon?
- What kind of battles do we face today? Who are our enemies?
- Who is the true hero of this story?

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Guide discussion using these key points.

- God rescued the Israelites from their enemies and helped them win the battle.
- Let children share times they feel weak like Gideon.
- Guide students in talking about how God helps us in all types of difficult situations in their lives.
- God is the hero. He saved the Israelites. God saves us, too, from our enemies of sin, death, and the devil. He gives us the ultimate victory in Christ.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Gideon's battle started in darkness and ended in light. God won the victory. We who walk in darkness see the light that shines from Christ. He is our salvation.

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR YOUNGER CHILDREN

STORYTELLING DIRECTIONS: Have children do the actions with you as you read the story.

God gave His people a beautiful land to live in. They had plenty of food to eat. They had good water to drink. They had lots of green grass for their sheep and donkeys. God's people were happy. But after a while, they forgot about God and how He cared for them. They forgot about the good gifts God gave them. They stopped worshiping God.

This made God angry and sad. He let some bad people—let's call them enemies—come and take over the land. These enemies were big bullies! They took the food. They drank the water. They chased away the sheep and donkeys.

God's people were afraid! *Shake in fear.* They ran away and hid in caves. They prayed (*fold hands*), "Dear God, please help us!"

I wonder . . . do you think God heard their prayers? *Pause for answer.*

Let's find out.

God heard their prayers! He sent an angel to tell a man named Gideon that He wanted him to help His people. But Gideon said, "I'm just a farmer. I can't do that!" *Shake head no.* Maybe Gideon didn't feel strong enough. *Make a muscle.* Maybe Gideon didn't feel **BIG** enough. *Hold hands wide apart.* Maybe Gideon was afraid. *Shake.* But God is our helper! God is strong enough. *Make a muscle.* God is **BIG** enough. *Hold hands wide apart.* God has all power. *Make a*

muscle. He promised to be with Gideon and help him.

Gideon gathered many men to fight. But God said the army was too **BIG**. *Hold hands wide apart.* They would not beat their enemy because of their power. God is our helper. He would win the victory! God picked a small (*hold hands closer*) group of men and told Gideon to send the rest home.

One night, this small (*hold hands a small amount apart*) army of men followed Gideon to the **BIG** enemy camp. *Hold hands wide apart.* Gideon gave the men a jar, a burning torch to put inside the jar, and a trumpet. They stood in a circle around the camp. When Gideon gave the signal, the men threw down their jars. Crash! Bang! They blew their trumpets. Ta ta dah! They shouted in a loud voice (*shout*), "A sword for Gideon and for the Lord!"

The enemy soldiers saw the lights. They heard the loud noise. They thought a **BIG** army (*hold hands wide apart*) of men was around them. They started fighting one another! Then they ran away. Gideon did not have a **BIG** army (*hold hands wide apart*) though. He had a small army. *Hold hands a small amount apart.* But God is **BIG**. *Hold hands wide apart.* He has all power. God helped them win the battle. He rescued them from their enemies. God is our helper too! He is mighty to save! *Make a muscle.*

BIBLE NARRATIVE FOR OLDER CHILDREN

After Joshua died, the people started serving other gods again. God wanted to bring them back to Him, so He used a country called Midian to discipline them.

Every time the Israelites planted food, the Midianites brought in their animals to eat up all that food. When they saw the Midianites coming, God's people left their homes and hid in caves and up in the mountains. It got so bad that the Israelites turned back to God and asked Him for help.

This time God chose a man named Gideon to be the next judge. By himself, Gideon was way too scared to save Israel. So **God's angel came and promised him the Lord would be with him.**

Gideon called the Israelites to come fight with him against the Midianites.

Midianites were spread out all over the land, too many to count. Only thirty-two thousand Israelite soldiers were brave enough to come with Gideon. But God told him that was way too many men—they would think they won the

battle themselves. So Gideon sent home everyone who was too scared to fight. Only ten thousand were left, but God said that was still too many people. **God chose three hundred soldiers for Gideon.**

God told Gideon to have his three hundred men go out to the Midianites. In the middle of the night, they stood outside the Midianite camp. In one hand, they held a jar with a torch inside; in the other hand, they held a trumpet. When Gideon gave a signal, they broke the pots so their torches shone brightly. Then they shouted, "A sword for the Lord and for Gideon!" **Each stood in his place, holding his torch and blowing his trumpet.**

The Midianites woke up confused, like they were in the middle of a nightmare. In the darkness, they started swinging their swords wildly. They hit only one another before they ran away in fright. **Without using a single weapon from the Israelite army, God had saved His people.**

LIVE

Choose from the following activities and crafts to help connect Bible learning to life.

Torch Craft

Have children decorate brown construction paper. Show them how to roll the paper on the diagonal into a cone shape and tape the seam in place. Give each child red, orange, and yellow tissue to stuff in the torches for flames.



Say, **God helped Gideon and His people in a mighty way. He is our helper too.** Talk about fears the children have and ways God helps us in our fears.

Bible Verse Fun

Raise pretend torches and say the Bible Verse. Ask children to name more fears to include in the litany.

When a big dog barks at me,

(Raise torches)

I know: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.”

When a scary storm gives me the shakes,

(Raise torches)

I know: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.”

When I’m all alone, afraid of the dark,

(Raise torches)

I know: “The Lord is my helper; I will not fear.”

Thank You, God!



Torch Treat

Give each child an empty ice-cream cone for a torch. Set out cheese curls or cheese popcorn. Have children “light their torches” by spooning some of the treat into their cones.



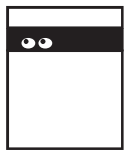
Action Figure Fun

Bring small plastic action figures for students to use to act out the story. Make sure they set aside their weapons and get rid of most of their figures before they show how God won the battle.



Hide-and-Seek

Play hide-and-seek. Then say, **The people hid because they were afraid. When you are afraid, what do you do? God helped His people. How does God help**



you? (God helps us through our parents and others. He hears our prayers.) We can trust God to help us in our problems.

Balloon Kazoo

Show children how to make a balloon kazoo using an inflated balloon. Move your fingers at the opening to let air out at different intervals. Talk about how God used loud noises to help Gideon and his small army win their battle.



LEAVE

SAY

Today we learned that God is our helper. God helped Gideon and His people. He rescued them from the mean Midianites. God helps us when we have troubles too. He sent Jesus to rescue us from our biggest trouble—sin. Jesus is our Savior!

PRAY

Dear Jesus, You are so powerful, and You take care of us all the time in so many ways. Thank You for Your love and care. Thank You for being our Savior. Amen.