

LESSON 5

GOD CALLS GIDEON

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Courageous

SCRIPTURE: Judges 6–7

GOD'S BIG STORY: God chooses Gideon to free the Israelites from the Midianites, but Gideon is afraid. God provides miraculous signs proving He is with Gideon and giving him courage to lead God's people into battle and defeat their enemies with God's help.

WORD OF WONDER: He will keep his covenant forever. He will keep his promise for all time to come.

—1 Chronicles 16:15

- Welcome Question: Can you think of a time when you were really brave? Tell about it!
- Curiosity Questions
- Word of Wonder Activity
- God's Big Story
- Discussion Questions for Elementary Kids and Preteens
- Small Group Prayer Time
- LARGE GROUP
- Elementary Responding in Worship: Courage Cups
- Preteen Responding in Worship: Imaginative Prayer



SCAN FOR THIS
WEEK'S VIDEO!

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Courageous

SCRIPTURE: Judges 6–7

WORD OF WONDER: 1 Chronicles 16:15

When I encounter big obstacles, fear is often my first response. I occupy myself imagining worst-case scenarios and shrinking back from the challenge before me. I once heard this saying: “Worry is like a rocking chair. It will give you something to do, but it won’t get you anywhere.”

After Joshua died, the Israelites forgot what God had done for them and did evil in His sight. God raised up judges to guide the people and point them back to Him. Gideon seemed an unlikely pick for this position of power and authority—he even doubted it himself—but God continued to work gently with the reluctant judge.

Read Judges 6:11–16 and 7:1–8. Gideon was hiding when the Lord told him he would be a mighty warrior. After testing God several times, Gideon finally believed God was speaking to him. When Gideon did go into battle, the circumstances made it obvious that victory came from God alone.

- When have you felt inadequate for the task to which God is calling you?
- How have you seen God work through your inadequacy?
- How can you surrender your fear to God and deepen your dependence on Him today?

Gideon didn’t see himself as a “mighty warrior,” but as he trusted God, the Lord gave him boldness. When we put our faith in the Lord, God gives us courage.

Thank God for equipping us for His work and giving us boldness.

—**Suzanne Gosselin**

Children’s Ministry Volunteer

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

The book of Judges takes its name from its leading men and women—the judges of ancient Israel. They were individuals through whom God overthrew foreign oppression and established godly leadership.

WHAT?

Judges 6–7 tells the story of the judge named Gideon. When the Midianites were oppressing Israel, God sent Gideon to lead the Israelites in battle. Though Gideon was scared, God gave him courage. God helped him and just 300 soldiers defeat their oppressors.

WHERE?

The story takes place in Canaan, after Israel had occupied the land. The Midianites were oppressing the Israelites in their own land. Midian is the land where Moses lived for 40 years before God called him at the burning bush to deliver Israel from Egypt (Exodus 3).

WHEN?

The book of Judges is set after Joshua and the Israelites conquered Canaan and before Israel asked God for its first king, Saul. Several judges likely served at the same time in different parts of Israel. Gideon served around or after the time of Deborah.

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY:

God often fulfills His plans through unexpected people. He chose Gideon and David, even though they were the least important members of their families. Likewise, God raised up Jesus, Israel's Messiah, from the house of a carpenter in the backwater town of Nazareth.

LESSON 5 ELEMENTARY & PRETEEN

Small Group

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Helps Us Be Courageous

SCRIPTURE: Judges 6–7

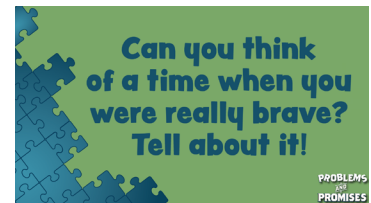
WORD OF WONDER: 1 Chronicles 16:15

Welcome Question

RESOURCE: paper, coloring utensils, whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Games & Activities

Small group leaders should be seated in place in their small groups 20 minutes prior to service time. Have activities ready to keep children occupied and engaged WITH you. This time is important to build relationships, welcome new kids, and keep structure in the room - you should be an active participant with them! Learn the kids names, and make sure they all know yours too!



As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome new friends, and introduce them to your group.

Use the Welcome Question and the following "I'm Curious" questions to engage kids. Say "I'm curious.." before each question and give kids an chance to think before answering each one. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

Consider having a whiteboard or poster for kids to write or draw answers to any of the questions:

- What does it mean to be brave?
- What does it mean to have courage?

Help kids understand the subtle difference between bravery and courage: **Bravery is defined by our actions in dangerous or difficult situation . Courage runs deeper—it's the state of our hearts when we depend on God (not just ourselves) for whatever comes next. As Jesus-followers, being courageous means trusting God in every situation.**

Small Group Begins

After the Opening Activity or game, Large Group Leader will begin small group time by reading the Welcome Question aloud and inviting everyone to open their Bibles and begin.

Word of Wonder Activity

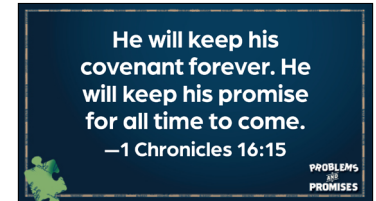
WORD OF WONDER

He will keep his covenant forever. He will keep his promise for all time to come.

—1 Chronicles 16:15 (NirV)

SUPPLIES: Bible, sticky notes (1 per kid), writing utensils (1 per kid), timers (1 per small group, optional), **Series Word of Wonder Poster (1/SG)**

In this activity, kids will be writing words or phrases from the Word of Wonder onto sticky notes. For younger kids (or to save time), consider writing on the sticky notes ahead of time.



In today's part of God's big story, God helped Gideon be courageous and lead the Israelites against their enemy. And God helped them win the battle! God continued to keep His covenant promises to His people! Let's say our Word of Wonder now. Open your Bible to 1 Chronicles 16:15. Read 1 Chronicles 16:15 several times together.

Gather the kids. Give each kid a writing utensil and a sticky note. Assign each kid a word or short phrase from the Word of Wonder verse and have them write it on their sticky note. If you prepared the sticky notes ahead of time, give one note to each kid. Then play a game where kids form a line (in random order) and take turns running to the wall and sticking their sticky notes on the wall in verse order.

Consider playing several rounds and timing each round with a timer to see if kids can beat their previous time. For added challenge, have kids switch sticky notes with someone in the group so each person has a different word each round. Or for a simple variation, mix up the sticky notes and put them on the wall randomly. Have kids see how quickly they can put the verse in order.

God's Big Story

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid)

Tell kids today's story comes directly from the Bible, is 100% true, and is found in Judges 6–7. Help kids navigate Scripture by locating the book of Judges in the Old Testament. Invite them to find the chapter number by locating the big black number six.

Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we'll experience more of the story!

Read Judges 6:11–21, 36–40 twice. Ask kids to read silently with you on the first read-through and then read aloud with you on the second read-through. Then do one or both of the following:

Elementary Questions

- **Who did God choose to help the Israelites defeat their enemies?** (Gideon)
- **What is something important that Gideon didn't have?** (Possible answers: courage, bravery)
- **Who did God send to encourage Gideon?** (an angel)
- **What did Gideon ask the angel for?** (signs that God would be with him)
- **Do you think the signs from God helped Gideon trust God more? Why or why not?** (For reference, the signs were burning wet food, wet sheepskin/dry grass, wet grass/dry sheepskin.)
- **Gideon never considered himself a mighty warrior until God helped him be courageous. What is one thing in your life that you need God to give you courage for?**

Everyone struggles to be courageous sometimes. Our situations can feel hard or scary. But just as God was ready to help Gideon be courageous, He's ready to help you too! Let's talk with God and ask Him to help us be courageous!

Leader Tip: God's heart breaks when people hurt children. So while God can give kids courage when they are being abused or mistreated, His will is always for the child to be safe. Courage is not a substitute for safety. If you suspect that a child is being mistreated, report your concerns immediately to your ministry leader.

Preteen Questions

- **Do you think Gideon was a surprising choice to lead God's people against the Midianites? Why or why not?** (Possible answer: Yes, because Gideon was fearful and was the least important person in the least important family in Israel.)
- **When God sent the angel to Gideon, what name did the angel call Gideon?** (mighty warrior)
Why do you think the angel called him that?
- **What three signs did God send to Gideon to prove Gideon could trust Him?** (burning wet food, wet sheepskin/dry grass, wet grass/dry sheepskin.)
- **Why do you think those signs increased Gideon's courage?**
- **Gideon wondered why God would choose him to save Israel. Do you ever wonder why God chooses you to do things that might be scary or hard for you? Tell about it.**
- **What's one thing you're facing that requires courage?**

Everyone struggles to have courage sometimes. Maybe it's hard to have courage when you're trying to make new friends. Maybe it's difficult to have courage when you're by yourself or when you're about to do something you don't think you can do on your own. Remember, God is always ready to help you be courageous. You can trust that He will be there and will help you. Let's talk with God and ask Him to help us be courageous!

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to sit in a group of two or three and share one area in their lives where they struggle to have courage. Encourage kids to share their praises and requests. Ask one kid per group to pray for their friends and their requests.

LARGE GROUP

Elementary Responding in Worship: Courage Cups

SUPPLIES: 1" x 3" labels (Avery® Template 94224), jumbo craft sticks (5 per kid), large disposable cups (1 per kid), markers, stickers, permanent markers (optional), whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Courage Cup Labels \(1/ Elem SG\)](#), [Problems and Promises Elementary Spotify playlist](#)

Ahead of time, print the Courage Cup Labels on 1" x 3" labels (Avery® Template 94224). You'll need one label per kid, and there are 16 labels per page.

Alternatively, use a permanent marker to write "God Helps Us Be Courageous" on each disposable cup, one cup per kid.

In this activity, kids will decorate craft sticks with statements of truth on them and place them in cups to take home. Decide if you'll have kids write on the sticks themselves (this works well for older kids) or if you'll write on the sticks ahead of time (this works well for younger kids). If you plan on having kids write on their own sticks, write the truth statements listed below on a whiteboard ahead of time. If you plan on preparing the sticks before kids arrive, write the truth statements listed below on craft sticks, one statement per stick. Each kid will need five sticks—they'll pick out the five they like best:

God is with you.

Be brave.

Trust God.

God keeps His promises. You got this!

God has you.

You can do it!

God gives you strength.

Set out supplies, and gather the kids. **In God's big story, we saw how Gideon felt too unimportant to do what God called him to do. Gideon thought he wasn't brave or courageous enough to carry out God's plan. He didn't trust himself and needed God to remind him that he could really do it! God not only sent signs to Gideon to prove He was with Gideon, but God also helped Gideon defeat the Midianite army with only 300 men.**

Wow! Talk about a God who can be trusted!

When God chooses you to do something that may take a lot of courage, you can be sure that He will be there with you every step of the way. He didn't leave Gideon for one second, and He won't leave you. God helps you be courageous and reminds you that He is faithful.



Sometimes, we need reminders that God is with us. Let's make courage cups filled with statements that remind us that God is with us and gives us courage. The words and phrases we choose are encouragements to us, and when we read and believe them, they pour courage into our hearts.

If you wrote statements on the whiteboard ahead of time, read them to the kids. Then invite each kid to take five craft sticks and to their five favorite statements on their sticks, one per stick.

If you wrote on the craft sticks ahead of time, read the seven statements to the kids. Then invite them to choose five sticks each.

Once kids have their five sticks with statements on them, invite them to decorate their sticks and a cup with markers and stickers. (Note that permanent markers work best on plastic cups.) If you have Courage Cup Labels printed, give one to each kid to place on their cups.

While kids decorate, play music from the [Problems and Promises Elementary Spotify playlist](#).

When the kids are finished, invite them to show a neighbor their favorite courage stick. Remind them that when they feel they don't have the courage to do something, they can pull a stick from their courage cups and remember that God helps us be courageous!

Preteen Responding in Worship: Imaginative Prayer

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Courage Statements Slide Poster \(1/Preteen SG\)](#), [Problems and Promises Elementary Spotify playlist](#) (optional)

Make It Inclusive: Some kids struggle to focus on prayer while remaining still and quiet. Have fidget objects and paper/coloring utensils available for kids to use as they engage their imaginations and pray.

Display the Imaginative Prayer Slide and gather the kids. **In God's big story, we saw how Gideon felt inadequate to do what God called him to do. Gideon thought he wasn't brave or courageous enough to carry out God's plan. Yet God didn't leave Gideon for one second. When He calls us to do something that takes courage, we can be sure He's with us too!**



Let's spend some time talking with God and receiving His strength and courage. The type of prayer we're going to do is called imaginative prayer. God created us with amazing imaginations. As we pray, we'll imagine scenes from today's Bible story and then from our own lives. Pay close attention to what God might be putting on our hearts. Let's get started!

Invite kids to spread out. They can sit or stand, remain still or move around some as they pray. They can keep their eyes open or close them—whatever helps them focus and engage their imaginations. If possible, dim the lights (but don't turn them off entirely).

Imagine that you're Gideon. The Midianites are terrorizing your people. They've stolen your livestock and crops. They've even forced your family into hiding. Yes, your people are oppressed and discouraged, but you're even worse off than many because you're the least important person in your entire family. You're hiding from the Midianites, threshing what little wheat your family has left, when suddenly ... an angel of the Lord appears, sitting under an oak tree!

Ask the following questions slowly, pausing after each for kids to imagine: **What do you notice? What do you see? Smell? Hear? How do you feel when you look up and see an angel?** Pause for several seconds.

The angel says to you, "Mighty warrior, the LORD is with you" (Judges 6:12). You're not sure you heard the angel correctly. You, a mighty warrior? "Pardon me, sir," you reply (Judges 6:13). How can I be a mighty warrior? Pause for a few seconds.

Again, ask these questions slowly: **Now what do you notice? What look is on the angel's face? What look is on yours? What are you thinking?** Pause for several seconds.

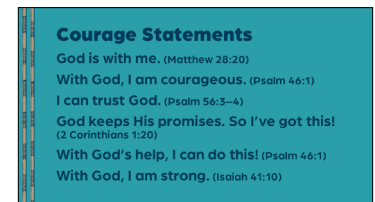
Then the angel says to you, "You are strong. Go and save Israel from the power of Midian. I am sending you" (Judges 6:14).

Again, you're confused. There must have been some mistake. You're not strong. You're not important. You're not brave. Yet here you are, face to face with an angel.

Ask these questions slowly: **If you really were Gideon in this moment, what would you say to the angel? What would you say to God?** Pause for several seconds.

Show the Courage Statements Poster. There are six statements of courage. Read each statement out loud:

- **God is with me.** (Matthew 28:20)
- **With God, I am courageous.** (Psalm 46:1)
- **I can trust God.** (Psalm 56:3-4)
- **God keeps His promises. So I've got this!** (2 Corinthians 1:20)
- **With God's help, I can do this!** (Psalm 46:1)
- **With God, I am strong.** (Isaiah 41:10)



The word encourage means to "give" or "fill with" courage. If you were Gideon on that day long ago, which statement would be most encouraging to you? Go ahead and say it out loud now.

Pause for kids to choose a statement and say it.

Now I invite you to imagine a situation in your life where you need God to help you be courageous. It might be a situation at school, with a friend, with your family, or maybe when you're playing a sport or doing another activity. Pause for kids to imagine.

What word describes how you feel when you think of that situation? Pause for kids to answer silently.

In our story, the angel called Gideon a “mighty warrior” when he did not feel like one yet. If God sent an angel to you right now to help you grow in courage, what name might he call you? Pause for kids to think.

Now, look again the statements on the screen. Which one do you find most encouraging as you think about this situation in your life? Pause as kids choose a statement. **Once you’ve chosen a statement, I invite you to say it out loud.**

Let’s finish this time of imaginative prayer by talking quietly with God. You can tell Him what you’re feeling or wondering. You can ask Him to give you courage, or you can simply sit quietly, knowing that God is with you. Consider quietly playing music from the [Problems and Promises Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids pray quietly for about one minute.