

Lower Elementary

Gideon at the River

Checklist

- opaque plastic water pitcher
- paper cups
- paper towel rolls
- yarn
- red, orange, and yellow tissue paper
- big flashlight for teacher
- small flashlights for children

Introduction:

Blow some bubbles.

Let children pop them.

Bubbles are beautiful to look at.

They have beautiful colors when the light hits them.

How are bubbles made? (you blow air through the soap)

The bubbles are very delicate.

It is easy to pop them.

But they can be very big, if you blow enough air into them.

Who makes a bubble big? (the one who blows into it)

We might feel weak, like bubbles, but with God breathing in us, we can become very big, like Gideon.

Now that the Spirit of God was in Gideon, he was ready to lead the Israelites to stand up to their neighbors who had been stealing their food. Many strong young men from Gideon's clan had gathered around him, ready to defend their land.

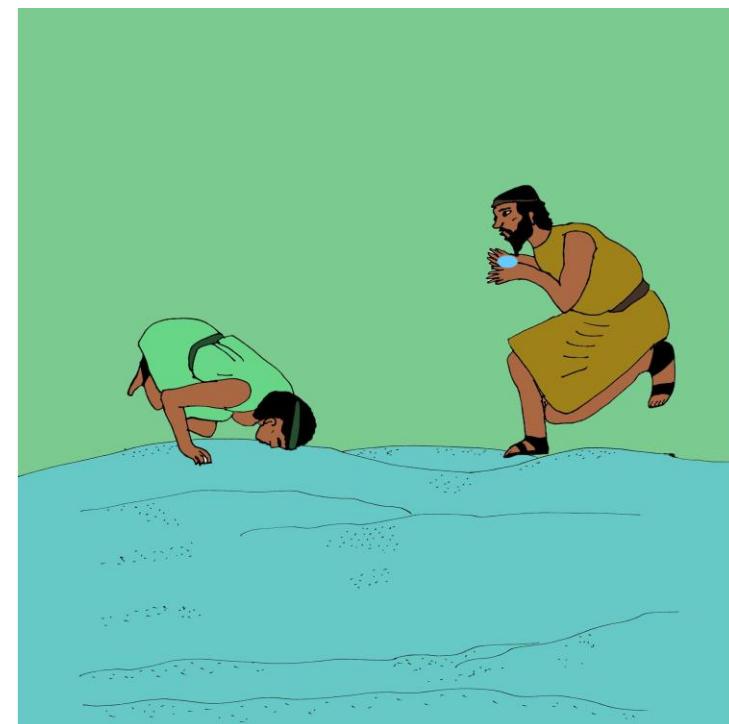
"Gideon," God whispered to him, "I don't want you to fight with such a big group. I want it to be obvious that I am the one giving you this victory. Tell everyone who is afraid to stand up to the Midianites that it's okay for them to go home."

After Gideon told the soldiers this, twenty-two thousand men went home, leaving only ten thousand to help Gideon.



“Ten thousand is still too many,” God told Gideon. “Go to the water and I’ll show you which soldiers I want you to keep.” So, Gideon did what God told him. He brought all the volunteers to the water and told them to drink. Most of the soldiers crouched down and drank right out of the spring. But three hundred scooped up water in their hands and brought their hands to their mouths.

“Those men are the ones who will make the best soldiers,” God told Gideon. “Have them stay and send the rest home.” So, Gideon was left with only three hundred soldiers. He might have wondered how only three hundred men could stand up to the Midianites, who felt like a swarm of insects because there were so many of them, but God had a plan.



A few hours after dark, when the first group of guards had gone to bed and the second group was beginning their turn, Gideon and his three hundred soldiers quietly crept toward the camp of the Midianites. They surrounded the camp in a giant circle.



Each of them carried a trumpet and a torch with a jug held over the fire to keep anyone from seeing them. When Gideon gave the signal. Everyone blew their trumpets. They smashed the clay jars onto the ground and yelled out, "For the Lord, and for Gideon!"

The Midianites woke up out of a sound sleep. All around them they saw fire from the torches, while the sound of the trumpets and clay jars breaking confused them.

Unsure of what was happening, they leapt out of bed and began to fight each other.



Meanwhile, the Israelites didn't have to do a thing. They stayed in their positions surrounding the camp, while the Midianites defeated themselves.



The Midianites left and stopped stealing the Israelites' food. Everyone was so happy, they told Gideon they wanted him to become their king.

"Then your son and grandson can rule after you," they told him.

"No," Gideon insisted. "I don't want to be king. God is your ruler."

So, Gideon served as a judge in Israel. But after his time, the Israelites forgot that the Lord was their God, once again. The stories their parents told them about God defeating the Midianites with only three hundred soldiers became boring, and the mystical worship of their neighbors began to attract them again.



Closing Discussion:



The people of Israel were having trouble with the Midianites because they had stopped praying to God for protection.

Should we only talk to God when we want something, or all the time?

Did God want the Israelites to think they had defeated the Midianites by themselves?

What did He do to show that He was the one in charge? (get rid of most of Gideon's team)

What did God tell Gideon to do when they went to the Midianite camp? (blow trumpets, smash jars and wave torches)

What did the Midianites do when this happened? (fight each other and run away)

Have you ever had someone be mean to you?

What did they do?

What did you do?

What else could you do that would be a gentler solution?

Craft:

Paper towel roll torch and trumpet

Closing Activity:

Turn out the lights.

Place the flashlight inside the water pitcher and turn it on.

Hand flashlights and paper cups to children to do the same.

When the Israelites entered the Midianite camp, they could not be seen or heard.

When you say go, have everyone take their flashlights out and shout, "For the Lord and for Gideon!"

Gideon at the River

Name: _____



**The angel appeared and spoke to Gideon,
“Take them down to the spring and I’ll test
them.” ~ Judges 7:4**

Materials: paper towel rolls, paper cups, yarn, colored tape, red, yellow & orange tissue paper

Trumpets:

- ❖ Children color paper towel roll and cup with markers
- ❖ Teacher ties yarn through roll and tapes cup

Torches:

- ❖ Children color paper towel roll and cup with markers
- ❖ Teacher tapes cup to roll
- ❖ Children stuff tissue paper in cups

Act out Gideon scaring the Midianites.

