

Story Time - Read the story to the children
Lesson 62: THE CALLING OF GIDEON
JUDGES 6:11-40

One day an angel from the LORD went to the town of Ophrah and sat down under the big tree that belonged to Joash, a member of the Abiezer clan. Joash's son Gideon was nearby, threshing grain in a shallow pit, where he could not be seen by the Midianites. The angel appeared and spoke to Gideon, "The LORD is with you, mighty man of valor." (which means that the LORD is helping you and you are a strong warrior). Gideon answered, "Please don't take this wrong, but if the LORD is helping us, then why have all of these awful things happened to us? We've heard how the LORD performed miracles and rescued our ancestors from Egypt. But those things happened long ago. Now the LORD has abandoned us to the Midianites." Then the LORD himself said, "Gideon, you will be strong, because I am giving you the power to rescue Israel from the Midianites." Gideon replied, "But how can I rescue Israel? My clan is the weakest one in Manasseh, and everyone else in my family is more important than I am."

"Gideon," the LORD answered, "You can rescue Israel because surely I am with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as easily as only one man." Gideon said, "It's hard to believe that I'm actually talking to the LORD. Please do something so I'll know that you really are the LORD. And wait here until I bring you an offering." "All right, I'll wait," the LORD answered. Gideon went home and killed a young goat, then started boiling the meat. Next, he opened a big sack of flour and made it into thin bread. When the meat was done, he put it in a basket and poured the broth into a clay cooking pot. He took the meat, the broth, and the bread and placed them under the big tree. God's angel said, "Gideon, put the meat and the bread on this rock, and pour the broth over them." Gideon did as he was told. The angel was holding a walking stick, and he touched the meat and the bread with the end of the stick. Flames jumped from the rock and burned up the meat and the bread. When Gideon looked, the angel was gone. Gideon realized that he had seen one of the LORD's angels. "Oh no!" he moaned. "Now I'm going to die."

"Calm down!" the LORD told Gideon. "There's nothing to be afraid of. You're not going to die." Gideon built an altar for worshiping the LORD and called it Jehovah Shalom, which means "The LORD is peace." It still stands there in Ophrah, a town in the territory of the Abiezer clan. That night the LORD spoke to Gideon again: Get your father's second-best bull, the one that's seven years old. Use it to pull down the altar where your father worships Baal and cut down the sacred pole next to the altar. Then build an altar for worshiping me on the highest part of the hill where your town is built. Use layers of stones for my altar, not just a pile of rocks. Cut up the wood from the pole, make a fire, kill the bull, and burn it as a sacrifice to me. Gideon chose ten of his servants to help him, and they did everything God had said. But since Gideon was afraid of his family and the other people in town, he did it all at night. When the people of the town got up the next morning, they saw that Baal's altar had been knocked over, and the sacred pole next to it had been cut down.

Then they noticed the new altar covered with the remains of the sacrificed bull. "Who could have done such a thing?" they asked. And they kept on asking, until finally someone told them, "Gideon the son of Joash did it." The men of the town went to Joash and said, "Your son Gideon knocked over Baal's altar and cut down the sacred pole next to it. Hand him over, so we can kill him!" The crowd pushed closer and closer, but Joash replied, "Are you trying to take revenge for Baal? Are you trying to rescue Baal? If you are, you will be the ones who are put to death, and it will happen before another day dawns. If Baal really is a god, let him take his own revenge on someone who tears down his altar." That same day, Joash changed Gideon's name to Jerubbaal, which means "Ba'al fights back" and he explained, "He tore down Baal's altar, so let Baal take revenge himself." All the Midianites, Amalekites, and other eastern nations got together and crossed the Jordan River. Then they invaded the land of Israel and set up camp in Jezreel Valley. The LORD's Spirit took control of Gideon, and Gideon blew a signal on a trumpet to tell the men in the Abiezer clan to follow him. He also sent messengers to the tribes of Manasseh, Asher, Zebulun, and Naphtali, telling the men of these tribes to come and join his army. Then they set out toward the enemy camp. Gideon prayed to God, "I know that you promised to help me rescue Israel, but I need proof. Tonight I'll put some wool on the stone floor of that threshing-place over there. If you really will help me rescue Israel, then tomorrow morning let there be dew on the wool, but let the stone floor be dry." And that's just what happened. Early the next morning, Gideon got up and checked the wool. He squeezed out enough water to fill a bowl. But Gideon prayed to God again. "Don't be angry at me," Gideon said. "Let me try this just one more time, so I'll really be sure you'll help me. Only this time, let the wool be dry and the stone floor be wet with dew." That night, God made the stone floor wet with dew, but he kept the wool dry.

62. THE CALLING OF GIDEON

(JUDGES 6:11-40)



And Gideon said to God, If You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said, behold, I will put a fleece of wool on the threshing floor. And if the dew is on the fleece only, and dry upon all the ground, then I will know that You will save Israel by my hand, as You have said.

Judges 6:36-37

62. THE CALLING OF GIDEON

(JUDGES 6:11-40)

MEMORY VERSE:

"And the LORD said to him, 'Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as easily as only one man.' " JUDGES 6:16

TRUE OR FALSE

1. The angel of the LORD sat down under a tree that belonged to a man named Joash. TRUE or FALSE
2. Joash's son Gideon was catching fish in a shallow pit. TRUE or FALSE
3. Gideon asked the angel why so many bad things were happening to the Israelites if the LORD was really with them. TRUE or FALSE
4. The LORD told Gideon that he was going to give him a tank that would help him rescue Israel. TRUE or FALSE
5. Gideon told the LORD that his clan was the weakest one of his tribe, and he was the least important person in his whole family. TRUE or FALSE

ANSWER THE QUESTIONS

1. Did Gideon believe he was really talking to the LORD at first? What did he ask the LORD to do? Was it to show him a sign? Did the LORD show him a sign?
2. What did the LORD tell Gideon to do to the altar where his father worshiped a false god named Ba'al? Then what did He tell Gideon to do? Was it to make a sacrifice to Him instead? Did Gideon obey the LORD?
3. Were the people of the town angry about Gideon tearing down Ba'al's altar? What did they want to do go Gideon?
4. When all the other nations came to attack Israel, what did Gideon do? Did he get together several tribes of Israel to fight back?
5. Did Gideon ask the LORD for another sign that He was going to help him? What did he ask the LORD to do? Was it to let the wool be wet and the stone floor to be dry?
6. Did Gideon ask the LORD for another sign after that? What did he ask the LORD to do this time? Was it for the wool to be dry this time, and the floor to be wet? Did the LORD show Gideon all the signs he asked the LORD to show him?

Lesson 62

The Calling of Gideon

Make a pile of wool on the floor like Gideon did (Optional Craft)

Supplies:

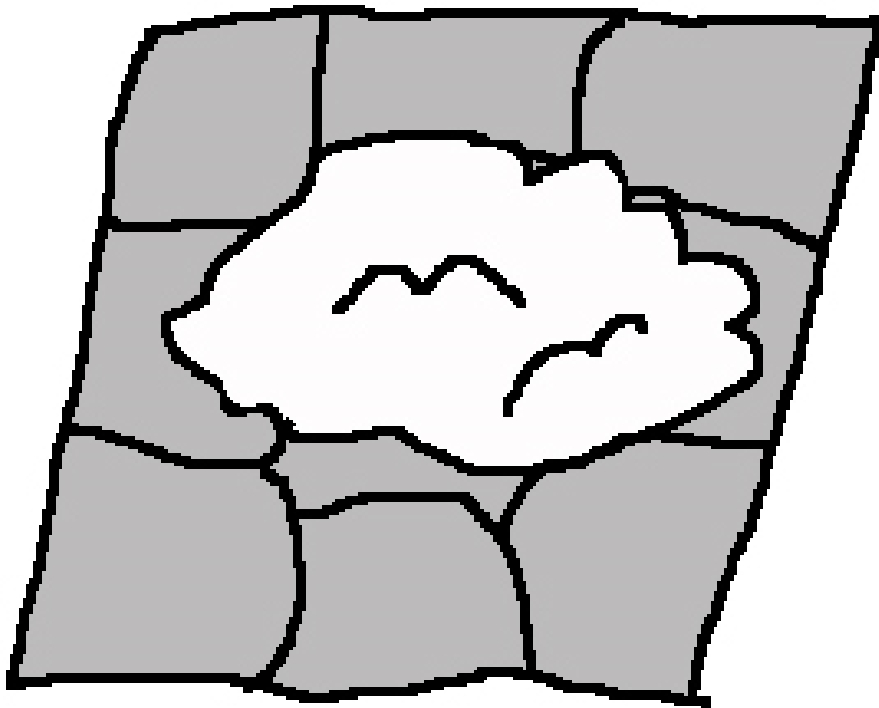
One 4"x4" square of cardboard for each child (Hint: You can use old boxes, or cereal boxes, or buy a poster board from the store & cut into 4" x 4" squares)

Poly fiberfill (a pinch for each child) – you can use cotton, but a bag of poly fiberfill is available at Wal-Mart or any craft store for very little money and looks more like 'wool'

Elmer's or any non-toxic glue

Children can color or draw 'stones' or 'bricks' on their cardboard 'threshing floors'.

Take their 'wool' and glue to the cardboard squares.



PRAYER Lead the children in a prayer of commitment that their lives be set apart for God's will. Have the children thank the Lord that He desires to do great things with their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the Gospel, give them opportunity.