

Gideon

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 6–8

MAIN POINT: God used Gideon’s weakness for His glory.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

SMALL GROUP OPENING
(10–15 MINUTES)

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LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY
(25–30 MINUTES)

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SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES
(25–30 MINUTES)

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Leader BIBLE STUDY

Judges 6 starts out in a familiar way: “The Israelites did what was evil in the sight of the Lord.” The period of Judges was not a good time for the Israelites. Their cycle of sin, bondage, deliverance, and peace clearly showed they had not learned from their past mistakes.

The Israelites were oppressed by the Midianites, and they cried out to God for help. God chose a man to save them, and his name was Gideon. Gideon was an unlikely leader, and he knew this. Gideon said, “Please, Lord, how can I deliver Israel? Look, my family is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the youngest in my father’s house” (Judg. 6:15).

God doesn't need the biggest and the best to accomplish His plan. In fact, He often uses the weakest and least of people to fulfill His plans because that is what gives Him the most glory. God had a plan to empower Gideon in his weakness: "But I will be with you," He said. (Judg. 6:16)

Gideon and an army of men assembled. God told Gideon he had too many men. God didn't want the men to think they had the power to defeat the Midianites themselves. When the army was reduced to just 300 men, they prepared for battle. (See Judg. 7:1-7.)

The men ran toward the Midianites' camp, blowing their trumpets and shouting. God turned the swords of the Midianites against each other. They ran away, but Gideon and his army chased after them and killed them.

God was with the Israelites when they went to battle. The Israelites did not win the battle themselves; God fought for them. As you teach kids this week, point out that God used Gideon in the victory. Gideon alone was not enough to save the Israelites. Only God could win the battle. In the same way, we are unable to save ourselves from sin. Jesus came to save us from our sin because He is enough. Only God, through Christ, can save us.



MINISTRY GRID
training made simple

Additional resources for each session are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

The BIBLE STORY

Gideon

Judges 6–8

The Israelites did what is evil in the sight of the Lord, so God allowed them to be ruled by their enemies, the Midianites. The Midianites were very mean to them, so the Israelites cried out to God, “Save us!”

The Angel of the Lord came and sat under an oak tree. He **appeared to a man named Gideon and said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior!”**

Gideon was afraid. His family was the weakest family in his tribe, and he was the youngest son in the family. But **the Lord chose Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the power of their enemy. He assured Gideon, “I will be with you.”**

That night, God told Gideon to tear down the altar to a false god. So Gideon obeyed God, but Gideon did it at night because he was afraid of the men in the city.

The next day, the men in the city saw that the altar was torn down. “Who did this?” they asked. When they found out Gideon had torn down the altar, they wanted to kill him.

Some time later, Israel’s enemies gathered together. So Gideon blew the ram’s horn. An army of men gathered behind Gideon, ready to fight. Gideon still wanted a sign from God. “If You will deliver Israel by my hand, as You say, I will put fleece on the ground. If the fleece is wet with dew, but the ground is dry, I will believe You.”

That is exactly what happened—the fleece was so wet Gideon squeezed enough water out of it to fill a bowl! Again, Gideon asked for a sign. This time, the fleece was dry and the ground was wet.

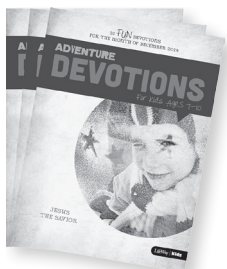
God told Gideon that he had too many people with him. They let anyone who was afraid to go to battle go home. There were 10,000 remaining. “That’s still too many,” God said. **God made a test for the people. All of them were to go to the river to drink the water. Anyone who knelt to drink water was sent home, but whoever lapped the water with his tongue stayed. Three hundred men remained.**

The next day, the army carried torches, blew their trumpets, and shattered pitchers before running toward the camp of Midianites. God gave Israel the victory, and everyone in the Midianite army ran. Gideon and his army chased them away.

The Israelites said to Gideon, “Rule over us, for you delivered us from the Midianites.”

Gideon said. “No, God will rule over you.” But after Gideon died, the Israelites did not remember the Lord, who had delivered them from the power of their enemies.

Christ Connection: The Israelites cried out to God because they knew they could not save themselves. Even Gideon was not enough to save them; God used Gideon to save His people, but God fought the battle for them. The people needed someone who was mighty to save. Jesus Christ came to save us from sin because we cannot save ourselves. Only God, through Christ, can save us.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD’S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!**

Invite kids to check out this week’s devotionals to discover that he Angel of the Lord told Gideon that God was with him, but Gideon was still unsure of his part in God’s plan. The Lord said again: “I will be with you” (Judg. 6:16). Order in bulk, subscribe quarterly, or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Gideon

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 6–8

MAIN POINT: God used Gideon’s weakness for His glory.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. As kids arrive, invite them to decide who is the strongest kid in the class. How will they decide? What makes that person the strongest?

SAY • Today’s Bible story is about someone who was weak, but God made him mighty!

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “A Name for Gideon” on the activity page. Instruct kids to fill in the blanks with the corresponding letters of the alphabet to discover what the Angel of the Lord said to Gideon.

SAY • In today’s Bible story, the Angel of the Lord called to Gideon. What did he say? (“*The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.*”)

- “A Name for Gideon” activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers



Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Elimination game

Instruct kids to stand. Call out traits one at a time. If a kid fits the description, he should follow your command. For

each trait, you may choose to allow kids to remain standing or to be seated. For example:

1. Sit down if your name begins with a vowel.
2. Remain standing if your birthday is in January, February, March, April, or May.
3. Sit down if you are left-handed.

Continue calling out traits. When only one or two kids remain, invite all the kids to stand. Play again, allowing a volunteer to call out traits.

SAY • In today's Bible story, an army started out with thousands of men. With that many soldiers, they probably could have easily won any battle! But God gave them a test to reduce the number to just 300. Do you think they won with that few men? Get ready to find out!

OPTION 2: Key word concentration

Write the following words on separate index cards: *Gideon, judges, warrior, God, sign, Israel, Midianites, altar, fleece, river, army, battle*. Make two sets. Mix up the cards and position them facedown. Invite kids to play a concentration game. Kids will take turns turning over two cards.

• index cards
• marker

If the cards match, they keep the set and take another turn. If the cards do not match, the player returns them facedown and play passes to the next kid.

SAY • These are all words we will hear in our Bible story today. God used a man named Gideon for His glory and the good of His people.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Gideon

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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

Countdown

• countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

• leader attire
• Bible
• piece of paper

[Large Group Leader enters wearing khaki pants, a solid-colored shirt, an apron, and a hat. Leader carries a Bible and a piece of paper.]

LEADER • Hello again! Some of you look familiar, but there isn’t anyone here who goes by “Mr. G” is there? Mr. G? *[Study the paper.]* It says here on his resume that he tends to not be very punctual. Oh, dear. He must not be here yet. Well, it’s about time for my break, I suppose. Working at a restaurant is hard work! There is always something to do.

[Hold up the Bible.] I cannot wait for you to hear our Bible story today. Just like our last stories, this story is also found in the Book of Judges.

Giant timeline (1 minute)

• Giant Timeline

LEADER • Can anyone tell me which judge we learned about last time? I’ll give you a hint: This judge was a

woman. (*Deborah*) After Deborah died, God raised up another judge. [*Point to today's Bible story on the giant timeline.*] His name was Gideon.

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Before we listen to the Bible story, do you remember the answer to our big picture question? ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.*** As you listen to the story of Gideon, think about how God used him to bring about His glory and the good of His people.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Judges 6–8. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the Bible story video “Gideon.”

LEADER • The Midianites were very mean to the Israelites, but when they cried out to God for help, He helped them. Let's see what you remember from the story.

Explain that you will read a sentence. If the sentence is true, kids should stand. If the sentence is false, they should sit.

1. The Midianites were good friends to the Israelites. (*false, they were enemies; Judg. 6:2*)
2. The Angel of the Lord appeared to a man named Raymond. (*false, to a man named Gideon; Judg. 6:12*)
3. Gideon's family was the weakest family in the tribe. (*true, Judg. 6:15*)
4. Gideon was the youngest son in his family. (*true, Judg. 6:15*)
5. God promised to be with Gideon. (*true, Judg. 6:16*)
6. Gideon put fleece on the ground and asked God to make it disappear. (*false, to make it wet; Judg. 6:37*)

- Bibles
- “Gideon” video
- Big Picture Question Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

7. Gideon's army went to a river to go fishing. (*false, to drink water; Judg. 7:4-5*)
8. Gideon went to battle with only 300 men. (*true, Judg. 7:6-8*)
9. Israel lost the battle against the Midianites. (*false, they won the battle; Judg. 8:4,12,22*)
10. When Gideon died, the Israelites forgot about God. (*true, Judg. 8:33*)

LEADER • God used Gideon's weakness for His glory.

If God had used a strong warrior with an army of 10,000 men, people might have thought the army had won because it was strong. By using Gideon and a small army, the only way Israel could have won the battle is if God fought for them. And He did!

The people needed someone who was mighty to save. We are weak like Gideon, but God sent us His Son. Jesus came to earth as a man. He was humble and looked weak, but He was strong! Jesus came to save us from sin because we cannot save ourselves. Only God, through Christ, can save us.

How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Tip: Provide *I'm a Christian Now* for new Christians to take home and complete with their families.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids to read together Isaiah 33:22.

- Key Passage Poster
- “He Will Save Us” song

LEADER • Very good. We have been learning about the four things that this verse tells us about God. Who can tell me what they are? (*He is our Judge, lawgiver, and King. He will save us.*)

Great! We heard how God chose people to be judges over Israel. A judge is someone who has authority and makes decisions about what is right and wrong. Ultimately, God is our Judge.

God is also our lawgiver. He used Moses to give laws to the Israelites. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.***

Later in the Old Testament, God chose men to be kings over Israel, but He was still in charge. God is our King.

Guide kids to read the verse again. Then lead them in singing “He Will Save Us.”

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • God used Gideon to defeat Israel’s enemies. But Gideon was the youngest son in his family, and his family was the weakest in the tribe. Why do you think God chose Gideon? Watch this.

- “Unit 9, Session 3” discussion starter video

Show the “Unit 9, Session 3” discussion starter video.

Guide kids to talk about what was more impressive—completing the task with a lot of resources or with very few?

LEADER • Gideon went to battle with just 300 soldiers.

How did this give more glory to God than if he had gone with 10,000 men? Can you think of any ways God might use someone like you to do something

big? *How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.*

Sing (4 minutes)

• “All for Your Glory” song

LEADER • That reminds me of our theme song. God does everything for His glory and our good. That makes me want to praise Him! Let’s sing.

Sing together “All for Your Glory.”

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Lord God, You are mighty. We give You glory when we hear the story of Gideon and the Israelites defeating the Midianites. We know that the Israelites did not win the battle on their own. You fought the battle for them. Help us to rely on You and not ourselves. You are our strength. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.



God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.



We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)



God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.



Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:19.



We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Gideon

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 6–8

MAIN POINT: God used Gideon’s weakness for His glory.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

Key passage activity (5 minutes)

• Key Passage Poster

Instruct kids to sit in a circle. Each kid should put her right hand over the left hand of the player to her right and her left hand under the right hand of the player to her left. Demonstrate how a player can swing over her right hand to pat the left hand of the next player.

As the first kid pats the hand of the next player, she should say the first word of the key passage. Continue around the circle with each player saying one word at a time. Encourage kids to “pass” the key passage around the circle faster or slower.

SAY • Great work. If you haven’t yet memorized our key passage, keep working at it! We will practice it again the next time we meet.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

• Bibles, 1 per kid
• Main Point Poster
• numbered cube

Form two teams. Ask the first team a review question. If they answer correctly, allow a player to roll a numbered cube to determine how many points they earn.

If they are incorrect, award no points and play passes to the second team.

1. What book of the Bible contains the story of

Gideon? (*Judges, Judg. 6–8*)

2. Who was judge of Israel before Gideon? (*Deborah, Judges 4:4*)
3. What group of people took over the Israelites? (*the Midianites, Judges 6:1*)
4. Who appeared to Gideon? (*the Angel of the Lord, Judges 6:12*)
5. What did the Angel say Gideon was? (*a mighty warrior, Judges 6:12*)
6. What time of day did Gideon tear down the altar to the false God? (*at night, Judges 6:27*)
7. How did Gideon call men to battle? (*He blew the ram's horn, Judges 6:34*)
8. How did God prove to Gideon that He would be with him? (*God gave Gideon a sign by making the fleece wet and the ground dry, and then He made the fleece dry and the ground wet; Judges 6:36-40*)
9. How many men stayed to fight the battle with Gideon? (*300, Judges 7:6*)
10. What three items did the Israelites have when they attacked the Midianite camp? (*pitchers, torches, and trumpets; Judges 7:16*)
11. Who won the battle between Israel and Midian? (*Israel, Judges 8:22*)
12. Who did Gideon say would be the Israelites' leader? (*Gideon said God would lead them, Judges 8:23*)
13. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.***

SAY • Great job! When God called Gideon to be a leader for Israel, Gideon was not sure that God really wanted him. But **God used Gideon's weakness for His glory.**

A circular icon with a dark background and white text that reads "LOW PREP".

LOW PREP

- index cards
- marker
- timer (optional)

Tip: If your group is large, prepare multiple sets and form small groups.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Bible story guessing game

Write the following words on separate index cards: *Gideon*, *Midianites*, *Angel of the Lord*, *fleece*, *river*, *300*, *Jesus*.

Invite kids to play a guessing game. Kids will take turns drawing a card. They have 30 seconds to describe what is on the card without saying the actual word. Group members may call out guesses. The first player to guess the word gets to draw the next card.

Prompt kids who guess the word to describe how the word relates to today's Bible story. Possible responses:

- **Gideon**—the man God chose to lead Israel as a judge
- **Midianites**—Israel's cruel enemies
- **Angel of the Lord**—appeared to Gideon with a message and calling
- **fleece**—used by Gideon to receive a sign from God
- **river**—where the soldiers went to drink water
- **300**—the number of soldiers remaining to fight
- **Jesus**—the only One who truly saves

If kids guess the words quickly, play another round but emphasize they must give one-word clues. Play a third round, instructing them to use gestures only.

SAY • The Israelites cried out to God because they knew they could not save themselves. Even Gideon was not enough to save them; God used Gideon to save His people, but God fought the battle for them. The people needed someone who was mighty to save.

Jesus Christ came to save us from sin because we cannot save ourselves. Only God, through Christ, can save us.

OPTION 2: Make a torch

Trace around a cardboard tube on the bottom of a cup. Then cut out the circle. Insert the tube into the bottom of the cup. Push it up until it is almost aligned with the top of the cup. Cover the cup and tube with aluminum foil.

Cut strips of tissue paper and stuff them into the center tube. You may glue or tape them into place.

As kids work, remind them that **God used Gideon’s weakness for His glory.**

SAY • Keep this torch as a reminder that you do not have to be big or strong or brave for God to use you. God does not depend on us to accomplish His plan, but He uses us for His glory and our good. Let’s say our big picture question and answer together. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.***

- paper or foam cup
- cardboard tube
- aluminum foil
- scissors
- red, yellow, and orange tissue paper
- tape or glue
- markers

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages to boys and girls. Prompt them to describe something they like to do—even if they are not the best at it. Lead them to write about how they might do that task for the glory of God.

SAY • We give God glory by making Him famous. We can show others that our lives are different because we trust in the Lord.

As time allows, lead kids to complete the “Main Point Word Maze” on the activity page. Help kids fill in the word maze by counting the number of letters in today’s main point—**God used Gideon’s weakness for His glory**—and writing each word in the correct row or column.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- “Main Point Word Maze” activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week’s *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

Journal Page

God Judges His People

Key Passage: Isaiah 33:22

Big Picture Question: How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.

Session 1: The First Judges

Judges 3:7-31

God's people turned from Him to worship idols.

Session 2: Deborah and Barak

Judges 4-5

God's people needed someone to rescue them from their enemies.

Session 3: Gideon

Judges 6-8

God used Gideon's weakness for His glory.

Session 4: Samson

Judges 13-16

God gave Samson power.

Session 5: Ruth and Boaz

Ruth 1-4

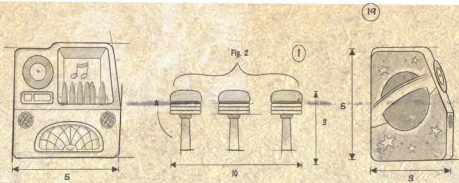
God provided a redeemer for Ruth.

Session 6: Eli and Boy Samuel

1 Samuel 1-3

God called Samuel to share God's plan.

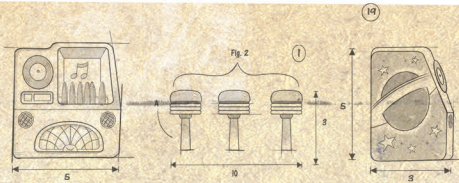




**The LORD is our
Judge, the LORD is
our lawgiver, the
LORD is our King.
He will save us.**

Isaiah 33:22

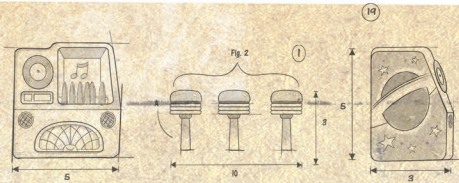




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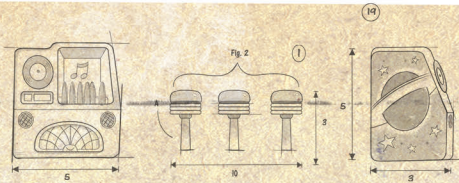




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Isaiah 33:22





The LORD is our
judge, the LORD is
our lawgiver, the
LORD is our king; it is
he who will save us.

Isaiah 33:22



God used
Gideon's
weakness for
His glory.





Journal Page

Write down something you like to do—even if you are not the best at it. Then write a few sentences about how you might do that task for the glory of God.



FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- How many men went to battle with Gideon? (See Judges 7:7.)
- Who was really responsible for the Israelites' victory?
- Read Ephesians 2:8-9. Who saves us from our sin?



Gideon

Judges 6–8

MAIN POINT: GOD USED GIDEON'S WEAKNESS FOR HIS GLORY.

The Israelites did what is evil in the sight of the Lord, so God allowed them to be ruled by their enemies, the Midianites. The Midianites were very mean to them, so the Israelites cried out to God, “Save us!”

The Angel of the Lord appeared to a man named Gideon and said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior!”

The Lord chose Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the power of their enemy. He assured Gideon, “I will be with you.”

Some time later, Israel's enemies gathered together. So Gideon blew the ram's horn. An army of men gathered behind Gideon, ready to fight. Gideon still wanted a sign from God. “If You will deliver Israel by my hand, as You say, I will put fleece on the ground. If the fleece is wet with dew, but the ground is dry, I will believe You.”

That is exactly what happened! Again, Gideon asked for a sign. This time, the fleece was dry and the ground was wet.

God told Gideon that he had too many people with him. God made a test for the people. All of them were to go to the river to drink the water. Anyone who knelt to drink water was sent home, but whoever lapped the water with his tongue stayed. Three hundred men remained.

The next day, the army carried torches, blew their trumpets, and shattered pitchers before running toward the camp of Midianites. God gave Israel the victory. But after Gideon died, the Israelites did not remember the Lord, who had delivered them from the power of their enemies.

Christ Connection: The Israelites cried out to God because they knew they could not save themselves. Even Gideon was not enough to save them; God used Gideon to save His people, but God fought the battle for them. The people needed someone who was mighty to save. Jesus Christ came to save us from sin because we cannot save ourselves. Only God, through Christ, can save us.

A Name for Gideon

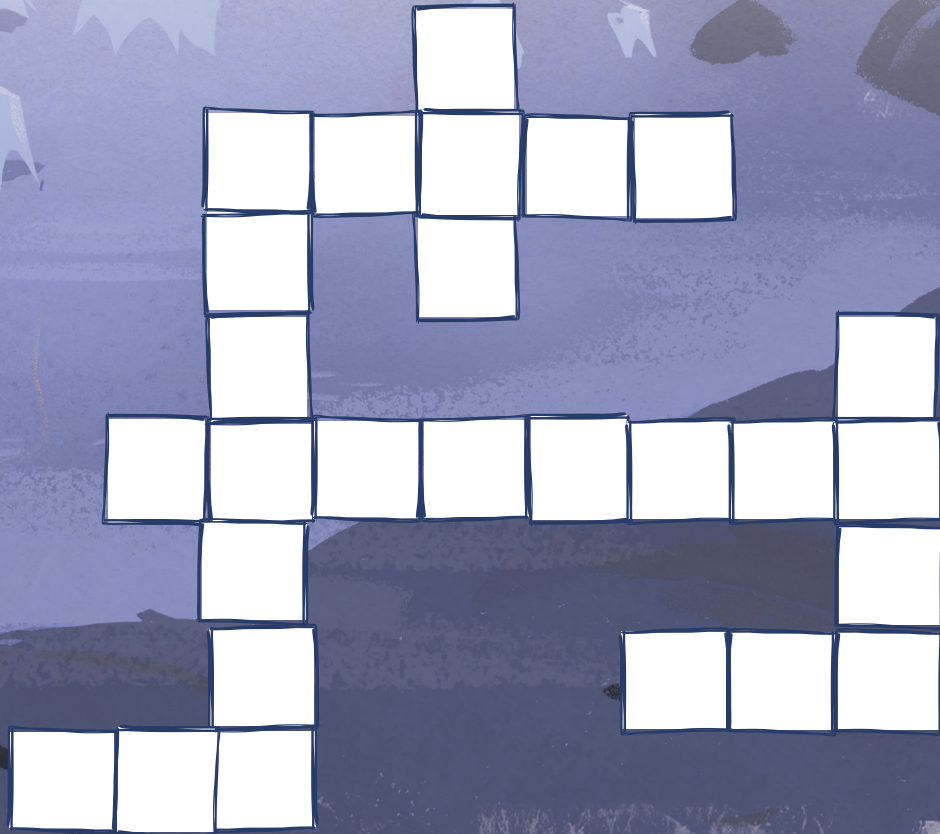
Solve the code to discover how the Angel of the Lord called to Gideon.

Each number matches up with a letter of the alphabet. (1 = A, 2 = B, 3 = C, and so on)

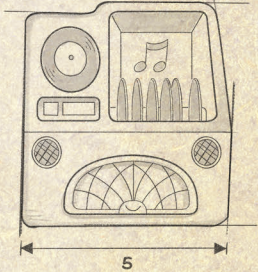
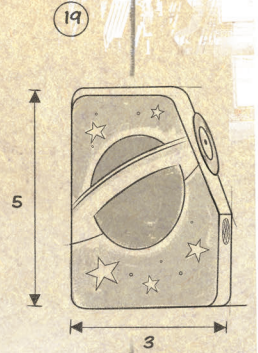
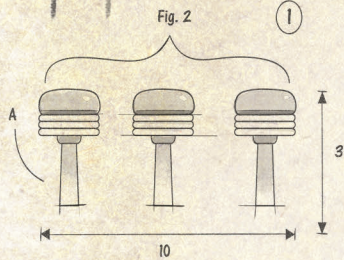
“The Lord is with you, _____.”
13 9 7 8 20 25 23 1 18 18 9 15 18

Main Point Word Maze

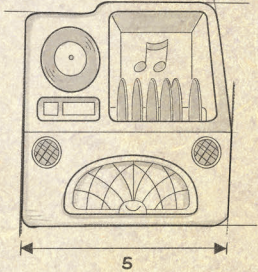
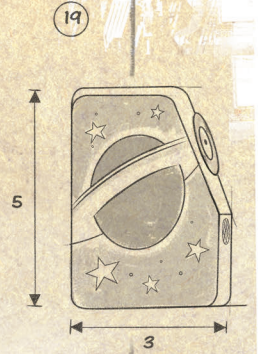
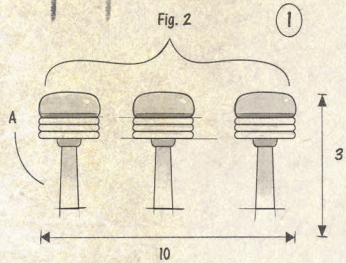
Use the words of today's main point to fill in the crossword puzzle.



How does God accomplish His plan?



How does God accomplish His plan?



God uses people for His glory and our good.





God's people forgot about God.



God let Israel's enemies defeat them.



God's people cried out to Him for help.



God sent a judge to help His people.



God gave His people peace.