

Gideon

BIBLE PASSAGE: Judges 6–8

MAIN POINT: God gave Gideon victory over his enemies.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom does God use in His plan? God uses people in His plan.

SMALL GROUP OPENING

(15–20 MINUTES)

PAGE 122

LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY

(10–15 MINUTES)

PAGE 124

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES

(20–25 MINUTES)

PAGE 126



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 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 preschoolers 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.

3



MINISTRY GRID
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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 were not very good at doing what God told them to do. God let Midian rule over them for seven years. The Israelites tried to hide from **the Midianites** because they **were** so **mean**. The Midianites took their food and their animals. **Israel remembered how good life was when they loved and obeyed God. They cried out to God, “Save us!”**

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

Gideon was confused. **“Please, sir,” Gideon said, “if the Lord is with us, why have all these bad things happened?”**

The Lord said, “You will be the one to save the Israelites from the power of Midian. I am sending you, Gideon!”

Gideon was afraid. His family was the weakest family in his tribe, and he was the youngest son in the family. **But God said, “I will be with you.”**

Some time later, Gideon blew the ram’s horn. Men lined up behind him, ready to fight. Gideon wanted a sign from God. “If You will help me save Israel, 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 men. He let anyone who was afraid to go to battle go home. About half of the people left. “There are still too many,” God said. **God**

made a test for the people. All of them went 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, they carried torches, blew their trumpets, and shattered the pitchers that were in their hands. The men ran down toward the Midianite camp, shouting. Everyone in the Midianite army ran away. Gideon chased the kings of Midian and killed them.

The Israelites said to Gideon, “Be our king because you saved us.”

Gideon said. “God saved you. He will be your King.” When Gideon died, the Israelites again disobeyed God. They forgot what God had done for them.

Christ Connection: The people of Israel needed help. They asked God to help them. God used Gideon to help the people, and God fought for them. We need help too. We need God to save us from sin. We cannot save ourselves. God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us.



**WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
MORE!**

Invite preschoolers to check out this week's devotionals to discover that the 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 gave Gideon victory over his enemies.

KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Whom does God use in His plan? God uses people in His plan.

Welcome time

- “Help, Help, Help” song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play the unit theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church’s security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- “More or Less” activity page, 1 per child
- pencils or crayons

Guide preschoolers to circle which is less of each pair.

SAY • Good job deciding which is less. What do you think is better for an army: more men or less men? In our Bible story today, God told a man named Gideon that he had too many men in his army. Why would God say that? Let’s find out why.

Whittle it down

Invite all preschoolers to stand. Name a characteristic and instruct all preschoolers who share that characteristic to sit down. Continuing calling out characteristics until only a few preschoolers are standing. Then play again. Examples of characteristics include number of siblings, hair color, eye color, gender, favorite foods, and favorite toys.

SAY • There are only a few of you left! In today’s Bible



story, God wanted a very small army to defeat the Midianites. God chose an unusual way to decide who stayed with the army to fight and who went home. Let's find out what it was.

Sort “a lot” and “a few”

Provide an array of sorting items such as counting bears, beads, uncooked beans, buttons, or blocks. Invite preschoolers to sort the items based on item, color, or size. When sorting is complete, help preschooler determine if each group has “a few” or “a lot.” Explain that *a few* of an item means very little, and *a lot* of an item means very many.

SAY • Most of the time we think having a lot of something is a good thing, but in today's Bible story, God told Gideon that he had too many men in his army. God wanted very few men in Gideon's army so everyone would know God defeated the Midianites, not the Israelites themselves.

- sorting items
- sorting baskets or buckets

Transition to Bible study

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Invite preschoolers to move to Bible study a few at a time.

- countdown video (optional)

Large Group LEADER

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Introduce the Bible story

Say, “God is with you, [*child’s name*].” to each child.

SAY • In our Bible story, Gideon had a special visitor who told Gideon that God was with him. God had an important job for Gideon, and God would help Gideon do it.

Watch or tell the Bible story

Open your Bible to Judges 6.

SAY • God’s words are in the Bible. That is why the Bible is the most special book of all. Everything in it is true. Today’s story comes from the Book of Judges.

Show the Bible story video “Gideon” or tell the Bible story in your own words using the script provided. Use the bolded version for younger preschoolers.

Talk about the Bible story

SAY • Israel had once again forgotten about God. God allowed the Midianites to rule over them. The Midianites were mean. God’s people cried out to Him to save them, and God did. He chose Gideon to lead Israel into battle with a tiny army. **God gave**

- Bible
- “Gideon” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

- Main Point Poster
- Giant Timeline or Big Story Circle

Gideon victory over his enemies. God fought for His people and saved them once again.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline or big story circle as you ask the following review questions:

1. Who appeared to Gideon? (*the Angel of the Lord*)
2. What did the Angel of the Lord call Gideon? (*mighty warrior*)
3. Did God tell Gideon he had too many men or not enough? (*too many*)
4. What did Gideon say when the Israelites wanted him to be their king? (*God will be your King.*)

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question is, *Whom does God use in His plan? God uses people in His plan.* The people of Israel needed help. They asked God to help them. God used Gideon to help the people, and God fought for them. We need help too. We need God to save us from sin. We cannot save ourselves. God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us.

• Big Picture Question Poster

Practice the key passage

Open your Bible to Isaiah 33:22. Read the key passage aloud several times. Sing together the key passage song “He Will Save Us.”

SAY • The Israelites wanted Gideon to be their king, but Gideon reminded them that it was God who saved them from Midian, not Gideon. God is the only King they needed. Our key verse reminds us that God alone is the true Judge, lawgiver, and King.

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

Transition to small groups

Small Group ACTIVITIES

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LOW PREP

Tip: For safety, play this game outside or in a large, open room.

Play freeze tag

Form two teams. One team is *Israel*. The other team is *Midian*. When you say, “Go!” *Israel* should chase *Midian*. When a preschooler is tagged, he must freeze. The game ends when all the preschoolers on the *Midian* team are tagged. Switch teams and play again.

SAY • When Israelite army ran toward the Midianite camp, everyone in the Midianite army ran away. Gideon chased the kings of Midian and defeated them. **God gave Gideon victory over his enemies.** The people of Israel needed help. They asked God to help them. We need help too. We need God to save us from sin. We cannot save ourselves. God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us.

Play with water

Fill a shallow plastic tub with a few inches of water. Provide sponges and washcloths for preschoolers to use to soak and wring out water.

SAY • Gideon asked God for a sign that only God could do. Gideon put a fleece—wool from a sheep or goat—on the ground. When the fleece was wet, the ground was

- plastic tub
- sponges
- washcloths
- towels
- waterproof smock

dry. When the fleece was dry, the ground was wet. Both of those things are impossible for anyone but God! God showed Gideon that He was with him. **God gave Gideon victory over his enemies.** God used Gideon to help His people, and God fought for them. We need help too, and God sent Jesus to help us. God sent Jesus to save us from sin.

Make trumpets to blow

Provide a heavyweight sheet of paper for each preschooler. Allow her to decorate her paper with markers or stickers. Roll the paper to form a cone and secure with tape. Make a trumpet of your own to demonstrate how to blow into the cone to make sounds.

- heavyweight paper
- markers
- stickers
- tape

SAY • The army blew their trumpets as they ran toward the Midianite camp shouting. Everyone in the Midianite army ran away. **God gave Gideon victory over his enemies.** The people of Israel needed help. They asked God to help them. God used Gideon to help the people, and God fought for them. We need help too. We need God to save us from sin. We cannot save ourselves. God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us.

Work helping people puzzles

Provide an assortment of puzzles that depict people in helping professions or people in general. Invite preschoolers to work the puzzles while you talk about the Bible story and big picture question and answer.

- puzzles

SAY • *Whom does God use in His plan? God uses people in His plan.* God's plan is to use people to help each other and point each other to Jesus. The people of Israel needed help. They asked God to help them.

God used Gideon to help the people, and **God gave Gideon victory over his enemies.** We need help, too. We need God to save us from sin. We cannot save ourselves. God sent His Son, Jesus, to save us.

Decorate name signs

- paper
- markers
- glitter glue
- stickers

Write each preschooler's name on a sheet of construction paper. Provide markers, glitter glue, stickers, and other items for preschoolers to decorate their sign.

SAY • The Angel of the Lord called Gideon “mighty warrior.” Gideon did not think he was a mighty warrior. His family was the weakest family in his tribe, and he was the youngest son in the family. **God gave Gideon victory over his enemies.** Gideon was a mighty warrior because God was with him. When we put our trust in Jesus, God is with us too. God sent Jesus to save us from sin.

Snack

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Guide preschoolers to clean their areas. Take a restroom break and wash hands. Gather preschoolers for snack time. Thank God for the snack.

Serve water along with snack. Remind preschoolers that God told Gideon he had too many men. Anyone who knelt to drink water was sent home, but whoever lapped the water with his tongue stayed. **God gave Gideon victory over his enemies.** The small army showed everyone that God won the battle for the Israelites, not the Israelites themselves.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- snack food
- paper cups and napkins

Transition

When a child finishes his snack, guide him to throw away any trash. He may select a book or puzzle to examine, play quietly with play dough or a favorite toy, or color the Bible story coloring page.

Offer the journal page and invite preschoolers to draw a picture of a time they needed help. Explain that God used Gideon to help the people, but God fought for them. We need help, too. We need to be saved from sin. God sent Jesus to save us.

SAY • God, You always help Your people when they are in need. Thank You for giving us people to help us when we are in need. Thank You most of all for giving us what we need most—someone to save us from sin. Thank You for sending Jesus. Amen.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- books
- puzzles
- play dough
- Journal Page printable, 1 per child
- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- *Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschool*

Journal Page

God Judges His People

Key Passage: Isaiah 33:22

Big Picture Question: Whom does God use in His plan? God uses people in His plan.

Session 1: The First Judges
Judges 3:7-31
The Israelites forgot about the one true God.

Session 2: Deborah and Barak
Judges 4-5
God sent judges to help His people.

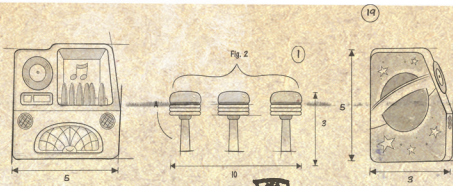
Session 3: Gideon
Judges 6-8
God gave Gideon victory over his enemies.

Session 4: Samson
Judges 13-16
God made Samson strong.

Session 5: Ruth and Boaz
Ruth 1-4
God gave Ruth a family.

Session 6: Eli and Boy Samuel
1 Samuel 1-3
God spoke to Samuel.

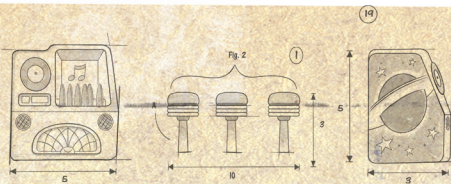




**The LORD is our
judge, the LORD is
our lawgiver,
the LORD is our
king; it is he who
will save us.**

Isaiah 33:22

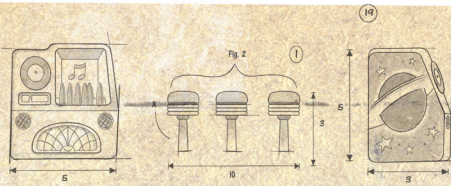




**The LORD is our
judge, the LORD is
our lawgiver, the
LORD is our king;
he will save us.**

Isaiah 33:22

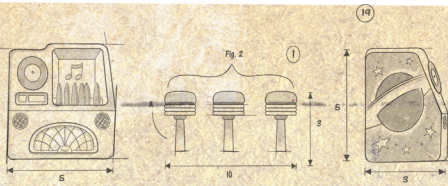




**For the LORD is our
Judge, the LORD is
our lawgiver, the
LORD is our king.
He will save us.**

Isaiah 33:22





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

Isaiah 33:22



God gave Gideon
victory over
his enemies.

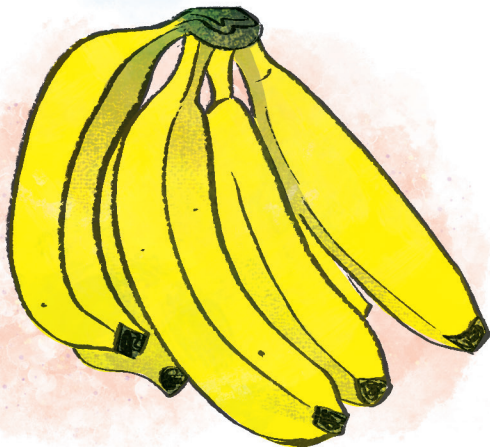
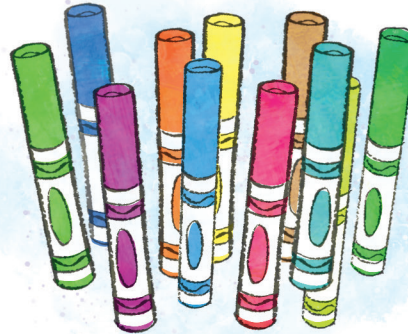




More or Less?

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle which is less in each pair.

DOWNLOAD THE
TGP FAMILY APP



KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

- Whom does God use in His plan? God uses people in His plan.

BIBLE STORY:

GIDEON

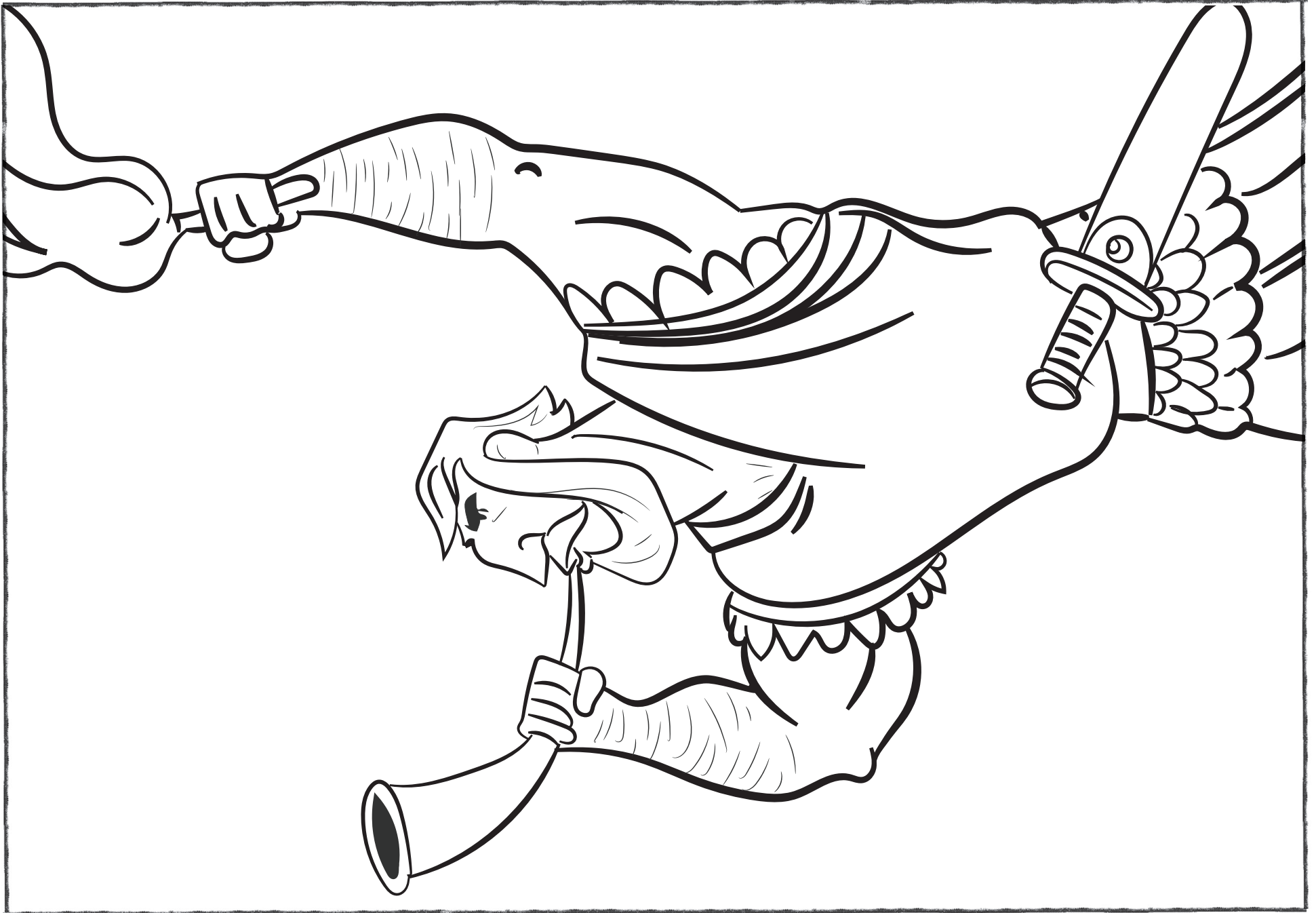
- God called Gideon as a judge to deliver Israel from the Midianites.
- Gideon used a fleece as a sign from God that He would be with him.
- God told Gideon that he had too many men and reduced his army to 300 men.
- God gave the Israelites victory.

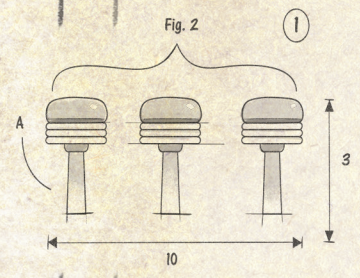
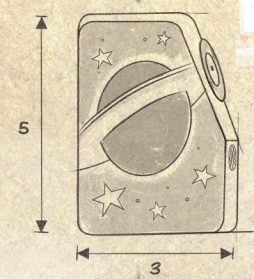
FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How did you think the 300 men felt going into battle?
- What makes you afraid? Why? Ask God to help you remember He is with you.

FAMILY ACTIVITY:

- Research various phobias and what the Bible says about fear. Read 2 Timothy 1:7.
- Go further: Overcome a common fear by telling someone about Jesus or inviting him to church with you.

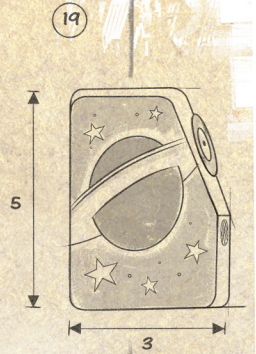
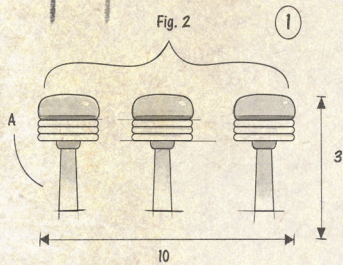




Whom does God use in His plan?



Whom does God use in His plan?



God uses people
in His plan.





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.