

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)

PAGE 158

LARGE GROUP BIBLE STUDY
(25–30 MINUTES)

PAGE 160

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITIES
(25–30 MINUTES)

PAGE 166

3



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 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.

3



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
ADVENTURE!**

Invite kids 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 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, ask them if they've ever had trouble believing something someone said. Why are some things hard for us to believe?

SAY • In today's Bible story, a judge named Gideon was afraid to do what God called him to do. We'll see that Gideon asked God to give him a sign to prove that God was going to be with him in battle.

Activity page (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete the "Which Is Better?" on the activity page.

SAY • Is more always better? What are some times when more is better? What are some times when less is better? Today we are going to hear about a judge named Gideon who thought a bigger army was better, but God showed him that when God is fighting for you, a smaller army was better! We will see that **God used Gideon's weakness for His glory.**

- "Which Is Better?" activity page, 1 per kid
- pencils or markers

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Red light, green light

Invite kids to play “Red Light, Green Light” according to traditional rules. After a few rounds, ask them how they know that a red light means stop and a green light means go. Talk about how they understood the commands because they have seen traffic lights and understood what those colors represented.

SAY • Traffic lights, stop signs, one way signs, and other signs tell us important messages that we must understand if we’re going to drive safely. In today’s Bible story, Gideon asked for a sign from God. We will discover more in a little while.

OPTION 2: Water play relay

Cover a long table with a plastic tablecloth. Place a dry sponge and a bowl half-filled with water on one end of the table. Place an empty bowl on the other end of the table.

Guide the kids to line up with the bowl of water in front of them. When you say go, the first kid in line will dip the sponge in the water, hurry to the other side of the table (keeping the wet sponge over the tablecloth) and squeeze it into the bowl. Then he will bring it back to the next kid in line, and she will take a turn.

Continue playing until kids move all of the water from the first bowl into the second bowl. Keep towels handy for cleanup.

SAY • Today we will hear how Gideon used fleece and some water to make certain that God would be with him.



- bowls, 2
- water
- sponge
- plastic tablecloth
- towels

Transition to large group

Large 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.

Countdown

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

Introduce the session (3 minutes)

[Large Group Leader enters dressed in a polo shirt and slacks with an apron and a name tag. Leader is also carrying a notepad and pen to take orders.]

LEADER • Well hello, everyone! Welcome back to the diner.

It's been a pretty hectic day so far! It seems as if some of the other servers have caught the flu, and since we work in the food service industry, they can't come to work until they're no longer contagious. Do you know what that means? I'm the only server until Pat comes in at noon!

Can I tell you a secret? *[Look around to make sure no one is watching.]* I'm a little nervous. I'm not sure if I can do this. Thankfully, the breakfast rush is over and the lunch rush hasn't started. We have time to hear a Bible story about the judges. Maybe that will be just the encouragement I need!

- leader attire
- notepad
- pen

Giant timeline (1 minute)

LEADER • [*Point to the previous stories on the timeline.*]

Even though Israel had promised Joshua they would worship only God, it wasn't long before **God's people turned from Him to worship idols**. God punished them by letting their enemies attack them. Then the people cried for help, and God sent a judge to rescue them and lead them to worship God again. When the judge died, the Israelites went right back to worshipping idols.

Last week we learned about a judge named Deborah. **God's people needed someone to rescue them from their enemies**, and God told Deborah to tell Barak to gather an army. God confused Sisera's army, and the people praised God for the victory.

• Giant Timeline

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • Before we learn more about Gideon, let's go over our big picture question and answer. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.*** Isn't that amazing to know that Almighty God uses people to carry out His plan?

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 • What kind of a man was Gideon at the beginning of the story? Well, he was pretty much a coward! Why would God choose a man who couldn't get over his fear to lead an army into battle? I know I sure wouldn't do that! I would want to choose someone

• Bibles
• “Gideon” video
• Big Picture Question Poster
• Bible Story Picture Poster
• Main Point Poster

who was courageous! But **God used Gideon’s weakness for His glory.**

God was patient with Gideon. When Gideon laid out a fleece, God gave him a sign so he would know that God would be with Gideon in the battle. God knew that Gideon doubted his own abilities—not God’s power.

God showed Gideon that God didn’t need a brave warrior or even a large army to accomplish His plan. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.*** Gideon might have been afraid at first, but he trusted God to defeat the Midianites. God confused the Midian camp, and they turned on each other! Gideon and his soldiers mostly had to chase the Midianites!

Ask the following review questions:

1. Who attacked Israel after they turned away from God? (*Midian, Judg. 6:1*)
2. What did God’s angel call Gideon? (*a mighty warrior, Judg. 6:12*)
3. Did Gideon’s fear stop God’s plan? (*No, **God used Gideon’s weakness for His glory.***)
4. How many men did God choose to fight the Midianites with Gideon? (*300, Judg. 7:7*)
5. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.***

LEADER • 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.

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 the boys and girls to read together Isaiah 33:22. Invite any volunteers who would like to say the key passage from memory to do so now. Praise the volunteers' attempts.

LEADER • Who was the hero in our story? Was it Gideon or was it God? **God used Gideon's weakness for His glory**, and this Bible story reminds us of our key passage. God is our Judge, our lawgiver, and our King! God saved people from sin by sending His Son, Jesus, to die and rise again!

Sing the key passage song.

- Key Passage Slide or Poster
- "He Will Save Us" song

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • If two people made the same thing, but one person had few resources and the other had plenty, which would be more impressive? Watch this.

Show the "Unit 9, Session 3" discussion starter video.

LEADER • Gideon was the youngest son in his family, and

- "Unit 9, Session 3" discussion starter video

his family was the weakest in the tribe. Do you think God could have found a better warrior to lead the army? Why do you think God chose Gideon then? [*Invite responses.*] 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? [*Invite responses.*]

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

Guide kids to talk about ways God might use them to do something big for His glory—now and in the future. Encourage kids to trust in God to do great things. Remind them that they shouldn't be discouraged by their inabilities and limitations, just as they shouldn't trust in their abilities and talents. Just as **God used Gideon's weakness for His glory**, He will do the same with us.

Sing (4 minutes)

• "All for Your Glory" song

LEADER • I am so glad that we can trust in God's power instead of our own! Let's worship God because of that.

Sing together "All for Your Glory."

Pray (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.

LEADER • Dear God, You are strong and we are weak. We need You to save us because we cannot save ourselves. Thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and come back to life to rescue people from sin. Thank You that when we trust in Jesus, You give us life forever with You! 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
- strips of paper
- markers
- balloons
- paper wads (optional)
- Allergy Alert download

Option: If a latex allergy exists, write the key passage on paper. Crumple the paper and scatter the paper wads.

Write one or two words of the key passage on strips of paper. Roll up the paper strips and tuck them into balloons, one strip per balloon. Inflate the balloons and scatter them around the room.

When you say go, invite kids to pop the balloons by sitting, stomping, or squeezing them. (Make sure no one bites the balloons to pop them!) Then, guide kids to place the key passage strips in the correct order.

SAY • God used Gideon’s weakness for His glory. That means that God helped Gideon defeat the Midianites so the Israelites could see that God—their true Judge, lawgiver, and King—saves them from their enemies. God sent His Son, Jesus, to rescue us from sin and be our King.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

- Bibles, 1 per kid
- Main Point Poster
- kazoo (optional)

Open your Bible to Judges 6–8. Provide kazoo’s for the kids or demonstrate how to make a trumpet sound using your hand against your lips.

Explain that you will ask a review question. If kids know the answer, they should blow their “horns” and you will call on them. If a kid answers incorrectly, invite kids to

blow their horns again to give the correct answer. Ask the following questions:

1. Who attacked the Israelites? (*Midian, Judg. 6:1*)
2. What kind of tree did the angel sit under? (*an oak tree, Judg. 6:11*)
3. What did the angel call Gideon? (*mighty warrior, Judg. 6:12*)
4. When did Gideon tear down the altar to the false god? (*at night, Judg. 6:27*)
5. What did Gideon set out as a sign for the Lord? (*a fleece, Judg. 6:36-40*)
6. How many people were left in Gideon's army after God told him to send back the people who were afraid? (*10,000, Judg. 7:3*)
7. How many people were left after they drank water? (*300, Judg. 7:7*)
8. How did God use Gideon? (**God used Gideon's weakness for His glory.**)
9. ***How does God accomplish His plan? God uses people for His glory and our good.***

SAY • We saw how God used a frightened man to lead the people against their enemies. He reduced the army to only 300 men so that they could not claim credit for the victory for themselves.

God did all this so that the people would know that God is the One who saves. What can you tell someone at home or at school this week about God's plan to rescue us from sin?



- cups, 10
- beanbag or small ball

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Knock it down

Set up plastic cups into a simple pyramid shape. Invite kids to toss a beanbag or small ball to knock down the pyramid. As kids knock down the pyramid, talk about how God called Gideon to knock down his father's idols.

SAY • The Israelites turned from God and worshiped idols once again. Gideon's father worshiped idols. When God called Gideon to deliver the Israelites from the Midianites, the first thing God told him to do was knock down the idols in Gideon's house.

After that, the people of Gideon's village wanted to kill him, but guess what? Gideon's dad said, "If Baal is a god, let Baal fight for himself" (Judg. 6:31-32).

Maybe Gideon's dad didn't yet believe in the one true God, but Gideon's dad wasn't so sure about trusting in an idol either. **God used Gideon's weakness for His glory.** What are some ways that God can use you to help others know about Jesus? Pray with the kids for God to give them an opportunity to point others to the one true God and His Son, Jesus.

OPTION 2: Write notes to missionaries

- paper
- markers or crayons

Before the session, research a way to send mail to a missionary family in another country. Tell the kids a little about the family you have chosen, and then invite them to make cards to encourage them.

Provide paper, markers, crayons, and other art supplies. Fold the paper in half to form a card. Guide kids to write the big picture question and answer and a note of encouragement and thanks, and then decorate the cards.

SAY • Many people around the world haven't trusted in Jesus. They need to hear the gospel. Thankfully, missionaries have followed God's call and are all around the world sharing Jesus right now. We need to pray for these missionaries. Maybe one day, God will call you to be a missionary too!

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Distribute each child's journal and instruct the kids to write about or draw a picture of something they do well and something they don't do well. As kids work, talk about how God uses our gifts and talents for His glory, but God can also use our weakness for His glory too.

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

When we turn away from sin and trust in Jesus, He becomes our Lord. That means He decides what we will do with our lives. A lot of times, God uses our weakness for His glory. This week, remember that God can use all of you—your strengths and your weaknesses—to help others learn about Jesus.

Make sure each child secures this week's sheet in the journal, and then collect them. Keep the journals in the classroom so they will be available every week or as often as you wish to use them.

If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the coloring page provided with this session. Pray, thanking God for using people like Gideon in His plan. Thank God that we don't have to be perfect to give God glory; we just need to trust and obey God to carry out His plan.

- pencils
- Journal Page
- Bible Story Coloring Page, 1 per kid
- crayons or markers

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

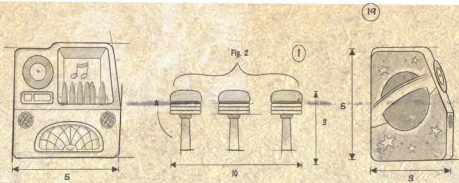
God provided a redeemer for Ruth.

Session 6: Eli and Boy Samuel

1 Samuel 1-3

God called Samuel to share God's plan.

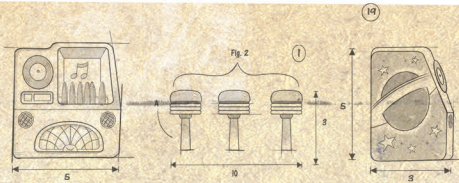




The LORD is our
Judge, the LORD is
our lawgiver, the
LORD is our King.
He will save us.

Isaiah 33:22

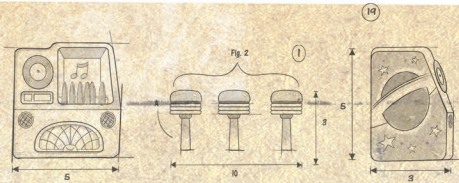




The LORD is our
judge, the LORD is
our lawgiver, the
LORD is our king;
he will save us.

Isaiah 33:22

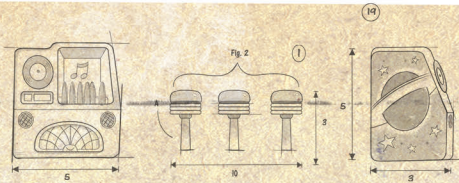




The LORD is our
judge; the LORD is
our lawgiver; the
LORD is our king;
he will save us.

Isaiah 33:22





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.

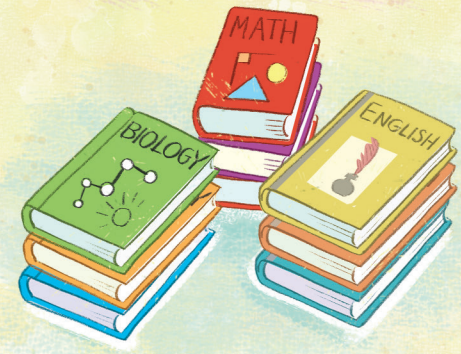
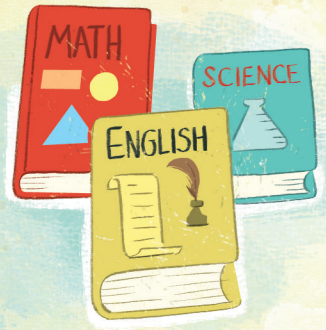




Which Is Better?

DOWNLOAD THE
TGP FAMILY APP

INSTRUCTIONS: Circle the item on the left or the right which you believe would be better.



KEY PASSAGE: Isaiah 33:22

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

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

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 he had too many men and reduced his army to 300 men.
- Gideon's army carried torches, blew trumpets, and shattered pitchers and God gave them the victory.

FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- How did you think the 300 men felt going into battle?
- What makes you afraid? Why?

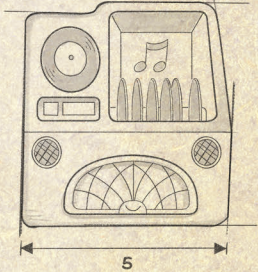
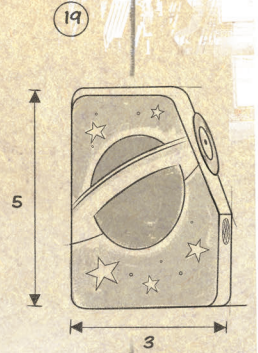
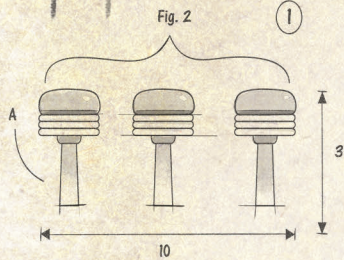
FAMILY ACTIVITY:

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

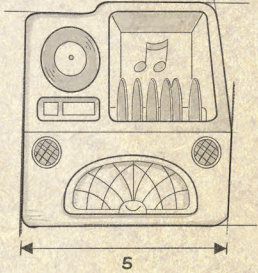
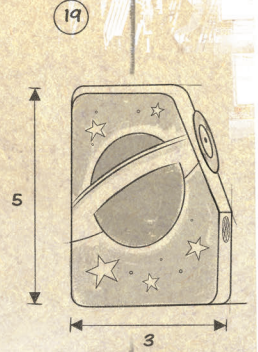
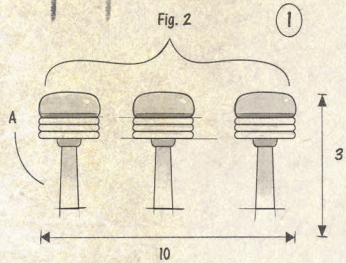
Younger Kids Activity Pages
Unit 9, Session 3



How does God accomplish His plan?



How does God accomplish His plan?



God uses people for His glory and our good.

