

# youthESource Bible Study

## Gideon: Asking for Proof

by Victoria Weaver

### Opening (10 minutes)

Act out a short courtroom scene to illustrate what a judge does in our society.

- Characters: Attorney 1, Attorney 2, Defendant, Plaintiff, and Judge (or you can leave out the attorneys)
- Scene: Traffic court. The Defendant failed to yield at a stop sign and therefore received a ticket from the Plaintiff. The judge has to determine if the ticket should stand or if the Defendant was guilty.
- Props: a black robe, police hat or badge, "photo evidence," ticket
- Let your actors know that they have 5 minutes to act out this scene with the props provided. At the end of the skit, the Judge must come up with a ruling.

After the skit, ASK- How many of you can tell me exactly what judges do in our society? Do you think it would be easy or hard to be a judge?

### Dig-In (25 minutes)

Review of what judges did in the Old Testament. (See handout).

- Explain Israel's pattern of sin. Recall other times in Israel's history regarding this pattern (golden calf built for Baal, complaining about food in the wilderness).
- Call of the Judges. Check out Judges 3:16-23.
- ASK-
  - Do you think the people would have easily listened to the Judges? Why or why not?
  - Do you often listen to people who seem to be very wise or tuned in to God's directions?

### Overview of Gideon's story (Judges 6-8)

- Read Judges 6:1-10. The Israelites were worshipping the false gods of Baal. God called Gideon to deliver His people from the Midianites, who were stealing Israelite food and ruining crops and herds.
- Read Judges 6:11-27. Gideon received a visit from the Angel of the Lord. He then asked for a sign to know that it was truly the Lord calling him. God gave him instructions to destroy the altar to Baal.
- ASK: Right away, Gideon received a sign from the Lord, in the form of an angel appearance. Why do you think Gideon was so skeptical? What reassuring words does God give to Gideon (v. 12, 14, 16, 23)?
- Gideon responded with fear and doubt. Gideon chose to follow God's instructions, but tore the altar down at night so no one would know he did it. Do you think this was a brave act or cowardly?
- Read Judges 6:28-35. Everyone in town knew that Gideon was the one to tear down the altar to Baal. Gideon's father was called out to give some sort of explanation. The people in town wanted Gideon to die for this act. Gideon's father asked them to let Baal defend himself.
- ASK: We read that God was ready to prepare Gideon for battle. How does he call out the people to follow Gideon?
- Read Judges 6:36-40.
- ASK: Gideon still needs signs from God. Do you think this is a weakness of faith? Unbelief in God?
- What do we learn about the character of God in these repeated signs? (God's power, God's unending patience with His people, His compassion to save His people, a demonstration of God keeping promises)
- Read Judges 7. 32,000 men answered Gideon's call to fight, however, the morale was low. The Lord severely weakened Gideon's military to 300 men. Gideon was able to defeat the Midianites with just 300 men.
- ASK: What message was God trying to send the Israelites?
- God shows His power to the Israelites and those surrounding nations. What do you think the Israelites were feeling when they saw God at work?
- What did the Israelites use for battle? Does this seem foolish to you?
- What was the Midianite reaction? (v.21-22)

### **So, what? Life Application (15-20 minutes)**

ASK: (If you can think of specific times/stories in your life about God's direction it would be important to share to illustrate God's grace in our lives and in the life of Gideon. Feel free to skip some of the questions below that might not be good discussion for your group based on the age and maturity level).

- Has there ever been a time in your life in which you knew God had specific directions for you, but you preferred to do it your way?
- Why is it sometimes very hard for us to follow God's directions?
- God gives Gideon many signs to assure him that He is the Lord. Why do you think Gideon required so many signs? Have you ever asked God for a sign? What happened?
- Through Gideon's faith we learn a lot about God. What character qualities have we learned about God in this story?
- Many great leaders in the Bible struggle with leading God's people. He often calls people to lead in ways they may not be comfortable. Have you ever been put in a leadership position that you were nervous about? Tell about it.
- How is Gideon, the judge, like and dislike a judge today?

### **Closing**

We learn a lot about who God is in the story of Gideon. Gideon was called to lead God's people with much bravery, but he did not feel quite so courageous and brave. Sometimes, God calls us to lead His people in ways that push us out of our comfort zones or in ways we do not understand. God ultimately has a perfect plan for each one of us and He is always leading us through life. We know that God is with us in really hard times and we see God's love in the death and resurrection of His son, Jesus.

Silently, think about an area of your life where God may be encouraging you in leadership, faith or trusting Him. As we pray, include in your prayer God's direction in your life and strength to follow His direction.

Close with prayer and leave time for personal silent prayer.

## The Role of a Judge in Israel

- Judges were deliverers who rescued God's people from oppression by invading armies. They solved community problems and served as military advisors, leaders and warriors.
- The book of Judges is written after the time of Joshua (1380-1050 BC).
- No one judge ruled over the entire territory God had given to Israel. They operated in various localized parts of the land.
- The last verse of Judges sums up the way the people acted (21:25): "In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."
- Judges served by common consent in the region where they resided because people noticed and valued their godly wisdom. (13 judges in total mentioned)
- God "raised up" the judges—in the sense of military encounters. When God arises to battle on behalf of His people His enemies are scattered.

## Israel's Pattern of Sin

