

Gideon and the Fleece

Scripture Reference: [Judges 6](#)



Suggested Emphasis: The Lord can help us do great things for Him, even if we feel we are not good enough.



Background Study



Story Introduction



Telling the Story



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Story Overview:

As Israel again drifted away from God, the Midianites began to attack and destroy crops and loot the people. While Gideon was threshing wheat in a secret location, an angel of the Lord came to him and told him to lead the Israelites in a fight against the Midianites. Gideon came from the weakest clan in Israel and even his own father worshipped idols, so he wanted reassurance that the Lord really wanted him to lead. The Lord miraculously made wool fleece wet and then dry according to Gideon's request so Gideon knew that he should obey God and become the new Judge of Israel. The Lord chose Gideon to lead even though Gideon's family was not famous or strong.

Background Study:

[Click here for The Book of Judges: The Big Picture](#)

The Midianites (from southeast of Israel), Amalekites (from the south), and some eastern nomads were annually raiding the Israelites. The Midianites were fierce desert nomads who banded together to make raids on the crops and animals of the Israelites. These dreaded raiders rode on camels and brought their animals to graze on Israelite land in the spring when barley and wheat were growing in the fields. Politically and spiritually weak, the Israelites were no match for the invaders.

When the Israelites finally turned to God, He gave them a conqueror. But since God wanted to be recognized as

the true deliverer, He chose an insignificant man as His instrument.

Gideon was threshing wheat in a rocky hollow usually used for crushing grapes, trying to keep out of sight of the invaders. Usually Gideon would have used oxen to thresh wheat on the community threshing floor. Out of fear of the Midianites, however, Gideon threshed his grain in secret. Using a wooden instrument called a flail, Gideon laboriously pounded the grain in his father's wine press - a pit dug out of rocky ground.

The angel of the Lord sat down under an oak tree next to where Gideon was working. The angel gave Gideon a commission that Gideon hesitated to accept. So Gideon devised a test: he prepared a generous food gift, as if for a sacrifice, and laid it on a rock. By consuming the food with fire, the angel of the Lord revealed that He was actually God. Gideon was afraid, because he realized that no one can see God and live. But after some divine protection and reassurance, Gideon built an altar as instructed.

Before he could purge the land of invaders, Gideon had to purge his own family and town of idolatry. At this time, many Israelites worshipped deities of the Canaanites, whom they had displaced in the land. Under cover of darkness, Gideon destroyed the local Canaanite worship places and built another altar to God, this time in the hills. When the townspeople found him out, only his father's diplomatic reasoning saved him.

At the next invasion, Gideon gathered forces from among his kinsmen and the northern tribes. Doubts still remained in his mind, however. So he devised two more tests, both of which God patiently accepted. As with the food offering, Gideon put out a fleece for God to dampen and dry to prove that it was really God who was giving him orders. We can see that a faith that is dependent on signs is usually short-lived; soon it grows dependent upon signs in order to keep going.

More about Gideon in the story [Gideon and the Midianites](#).



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Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring fleece (sheep's wool) to class and let all of the children touch it. If possible, pour some water on it and then ring it out. "If I were to leave this fleece outside in my garden tonight what would it feel like in the morning? It would be wet with dew. I'm going to set this fleece in the corner of the room for now. Later, in our story, if any of you hear me talk about fleece and dew I want you to quietly go over to the corner and get the fleece. Bring it to the table so that we can look at it again."

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The Story:

Sometimes it seemed like the Israelites never learned a lesson. The same thing happened again and again. First, the Israelites would begin to leave God and disobey Him. Then, the Lord would let enemies win battles against them and treat them badly. When the people were suffering, they were sorry they had disobeyed God. They would pray to God to help them. Finally, the Lord would send someone to help the people and save them from their

enemies. This person was called a JUDGE.

Once again, the Israelites began to forget about God. They even began to build idols and worship false gods. The people from the land of Midian did not like the Israelites. They stole animals, fruit, and grain, leaving nothing for the Israelites to eat. The Israelites began to pray to God to help them.

Gideon was an Israelite farmer. He came from a family that did not obey God. Gideon had to do his work in a hidden place so that the Midianites would not steal from him. One day Gideon was threshing grain. His threshing stick hit the wheat so that the grain seeds came loose from the straw. The grain would be used to make bread. While he was working, the angel of the Lord came and sat down under an oak tree right beside Gideon.

The angel said to Gideon, "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." The angel told Gideon that he had been chosen to save Israel from the Midianites. Gideon couldn't believe what the angel was saying. Why would God choose him? He didn't think he was good enough. His family was not even a family that believed in God! They were small and weak.

"The Lord will be with you, Gideon. Go now and save Israel."

Gideon was still not sure. He didn't feel good enough. He wanted some proof. He begged the angel, "Could you please give me a sign. If you will please stay here I will go and make an offering for God.

Gideon left and prepared a young goat and made bread to offer as a sacrifice. He quickly brought these back to the angel. The meat was in a basket and the broth was in a pot. Gideon wanted these to be a gift to the Lord. The angel told Gideon to put these on a rock. When Gideon put them on the rock, the angel pointed his staff at the offering. When the tip of the staff touched the food, fire came from the rock. The fire burned up everything that had been on the rock. Now Gideon knew that this was really an angel. He knew that God had really chosen him to save the Israelites. Gideon built an altar and worshipped the Lord.

The first thing that Gideon did was to tear down the altar that his father had built. This altar was not built to worship God. This altar was built like an idol. Gideon's family worshipped the false god, Baal, at this altar. They had even made a tall pole to worship an idol. Some of the Israelites were angry with Gideon but Gideon did what the Lord commanded.

When the Midianites started to come and hurt the Israelites again, Gideon gathered together an army. He still wanted to make sure that he was doing the right thing, so he prayed to God to give him another sign. Gideon put a piece of fleece (or lamb's wool) outside on the ground. Usually, if fleece was left outside on the ground then dew would fall on it and make it wet. Both the ground and the fleece would be wet. This time Gideon asked the Lord to do something different. He asked the Lord to make the fleece wet during the night but to keep the ground dry.

When Gideon looked at the fleece the next morning, guess what had happened? The fleece was wet and the ground was dry!

Next Gideon asked the Lord to do it one more time. This time he asked God to make the ground wet and the fleece dry. The next morning, the ground was wet and the fleece was dry. Just like Gideon asked! Gideon knew that God wanted him to fight the Midianites. He knew that the Lord thought he was good enough to do the job. Gideon decided to follow the Lord and do exactly what he wanted him to do!

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download these illustrations and slideshow.](#) Be selective. Each teacher is unique so only use the illustrations that best relate to the way YOU are telling the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Review Questions:

1. How were the Midianites hurting the Israelites? They stole their crops and animals. The Israelites were so afraid that they often hid in caves in the mountains.
2. What happened to Gideon when he was threshing grain? The angel of the Lord appeared to him.
3. What did the angel tell Gideon to do? Save the Israelites.
4. When Gideon put the fleece on the ground on the first night, what did he ask the Lord to do? Make the fleece wet and the ground dry.
5. What about the second time? Make the fleece dry but the surrounding ground wet from the dew.

Song Suggestions:

- [I'm in the Lord's Army Song](#)
- [God is Listening When We Pray \(Song\) English/Cebuano](#)
- [My God is So Big Song](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:



- Use this simple Judges Review Wheel to explain the cycle of the Judges. [Printable instructions for Judges Review Wheel.](#)
- Use magazine pictures to make a poster comparing the world's heroes with God's heroes.
- Let each child write down his/her favourite colour, food, colour of eyes, colour of hair, etc on a piece of paper. Collect the papers and read them out to the class. Let the class guess who that person is. Give only one clue at a time.
- Gather samples of wool and wool fabrics (try a fabric store or craft store) and have children experiment with making them wet and dry as in the story.

Crafts:

- Draw pictures of heroes of the Lord that you know or that the children know. This can include children who have said “no” to drugs, stood up to peer pressure, etc.
- Cut stiff paper into the shape of a sheep-skin. Glue cotton wool to it.
- Divide the class into pairs. Let the children draw portraits of each other. Each person is unique and special.
- Make a [shoebox diorama](#). If you are teaching over a number of weeks then you could make a diorama each week to form a collection that reviews the stories. You can have one box for each character and let the class work together or you could even have each child work on his or her own box(s). Ideas for a Gideon Box might be idol figures, jars, lamps or torches, wool (fleece), toy soldiers.

Check the [Teaching Ideas](#) page on this website for ideas that are adaptable to any lesson.



[Click here for “Gideon and the Fleece” printables to print \(A4 paper\)](#)
[Click here for “Gideon and the Fleece” to print \(Letter size-USA\)](#)

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Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets at Calvary Curriculum](#)
- [Visual Aid: Colour drawings that can be viewed online or printed out as .pdf files. Covers both Gideon and the Fleece and Gideon Fights the Midianites. From <http://www.bibleforchildren.org/>](#)
- [Craft: Make a fabric collage out of wool from <http://fun.familyeducation.com/activity/collage/39495.html>](#)
- [Worksheets: There are a number of Old Testament worksheets on the following link. Just scroll down to “Judges Worksheets-Gideon”. The link is <http://www.squidoo.com/bible-worksheets-OT#module110252211>](#)
- [A good selection of both online and printable puzzles, activities and story words covering the Judges: Gideon and Samson at <http://gardenofpraise.com/bibl12s.htm>](#)

Note: Also see the [Gideon and the Midianites Story](#) on this site. Some of the resources relate to both stories.

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/gideon/>
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