Lesson 4: Gideon

 Aim: To show the children that God chooses ordinary people to do special things for Him. We don’t have to be older or tall or strong or clever, but only obey God and trust Him.

 Memory Verse: God... has chosen what the world calls weak to shame what is strong. (1 Corinthians 1:27b)

 Opening Idea:
 Use a set of armour (may be purchased from most toy shops or departmental stores) to illustrate the following points:
 - The Helmet of Salvation protects our mind from Satan’s lies when he tells us that God is not real and we are not really a Christian.
 - The Breastplate stands for what is Right. It protects the heart and helps us to choose right from wrong.
 - The Belt is for Truth. Jesus said, ‘I am the truth’, and so we know that with Jesus, our lives will always be true and honest.
 - The Shoes are for Peace. Because Jesus has taken our sin away, we have peaceful hearts and can help to bring peace to others also.
 - The Sword is God’s Word found in the Bible. It is the truth and shows us the right way to live.
 - The Shield is our Faith. We know that God loves us no matter what others may say or do, and we always believe what God says.

 The armour may be placed on a child piece by piece as you emphasise each point. Years ago soldiers always went into battle wearing armour. (Ask children why. It was because soldiers fought with swords and were always close to the enemy and so they had to protect their bodies). The person underneath the armour does not have to be extremely strong to survive in battle because the vital organs of the body (heart, lungs, kidneys, brain, etc.) are protected. A weak person in armour is, in fact, stronger than an extremely physically strong person without armour. When we become Christians, the Bible tells us that we can put on God’s armour. It is invisible, but it works to protect us from evil and makes us strong in Christ.

 Story: God chose Gideon who was obedient Judges 6 and 7

 Tramp, tramp, came many, many soldiers into the land where God’s people lived. They were bad enemy soldiers. They ate up all the food from the gardens and from the fruit trees that God’s people had planted. They also stole all the Israelites’ animals. The people weren’t strong enough to protect themselves so they ran away to the mountains and hid in caves. They were very sad and prayed to God that He would help them get out of their trouble. God heard their prayers and sent them a brave and wise leader.
One day a young man named Gideon was working in a secret place under an oak tree. He was trying to hide from the enemy soldiers so they wouldn’t steal the grain he was gathering. Suddenly an angel, dressed as a traveller appeared to him and told Gideon he was the one whom God had chosen to save the people from the wicked enemy soldiers. Gideon was very surprised and a little afraid. He told the angel that he was too young to do such an important job, but the angel told him that God was with him and would help him.

Gideon asked the angel to sit under a tree and quickly went home and prepared a meal for him. When Gideon returned the angel told him to put the food on a rock and pour the soup over the top. Then the angel touched the food with a stick and instantly a fire appeared out of the rock and burned up all the food. Then the angel disappeared and Gideon knew that it was an angel.

To remember this special occasion, Gideon built an altar of stones under the tree which would remind him of God’s promise. Gideon called together all the soldiers belonging to God’s people. Even then, there were not nearly enough to fight the enemy. But God said something amazing. He told Gideon that he had too many soldiers! God explained that if all the soldiers fought and won the battle they would think they had don it all by themselves. So God told Gideon to send home all the soldiers who were afraid. Twenty two thousand soldiers packed up and went home.

Gideon looked at those who were left and then God told him again that he had too many soldiers. Gideon was more surprised than before, but he trusted God and listened to Him. God told him to take the soldiers down to a river to drink, those who laid down on their stomachs to drink were careless men. They weren’t watching for the enemy. God told Gideon to send them home. But the men who stood upright and drank out of their hands were watching for the enemy. They were the men to keep. So another ten thousand soldiers were sent home, leaving Gideon with only 300 men.

That very night God told Gideon to go with his servant to the camp of the enemy soldiers. It was a dark night and as they listened outside one of the tents, one man told the other how he had a dream that a loaf of bread rolled down the hill and knocked down the tent. The other soldier said that the dream probably meant that Gideon and his army was going to attack and win. Gideon was so glad to hear this news, he thanked God and quickly returned to his soldiers and told them the good news.

Gideon knew that God was on their side and so he gave each one of his soldiers a trumpet and a pitcher (jug) with a burning stick inside. What strange weapons to take into battle! They set themselves into position around the enemy camp in the darkness. When Gideon blew his trumpet, the soldiers blew as loudly as they could on their trumpets and broke their pitchers into pieces. The lights hidden inside the pitchers burned brightly in the darkness of the night. They all shouted together, “The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!”

The enemy soldiers awoke to all this noise in such a hurry that they became so confused and frightened that they didn’t know what they were doing. In the darkness and confusion, they grabbed their swords and began to fight each other, shouting and running out of the valley. Gideon and his soldiers stood still and waved their burning sticks and thanked God for defeating the enemy and showing them that God does wonderful things for people who trust Him and obey Him.
GOD CHOSE GIDEON WHO WAS OBEDEDIENT

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Read about Gideon in JUDGES chapters 6 and 7.
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Complete the memory verse. Look up 1 Corinthians 1:27b to help you.

“G_ _ h_ _ c_ _ _ _ _ w_ _ _

_ t_ _ w_ _ _ _ _ c_ _ _

w_ _ _ t_ _ s_ _ _ _ w_ _ _

_ i_ _ s_ _ _ _ _ .”

God chooses ordinary people to do extra-ordinary things for Him!
Gideon and the Midianites
Judges 7

There are many things in Gideon's tent. What did he use to fight the Midianites?

Unscramble these letters to find out what objects Gideon used in the battle.

CREPHTI
HOTCR
PUTTERM
What a strange list of words! See how these words fit together by reading the story of Gideon in Judges 6, 7, and 8. Then fit the words in the puzzle.
GIDEON'S TORCH
(15-20 MINUTES)

Materials
- tissue paper in red, yellow and orange
- gold or other metallic-colored crayons

Standard Supplies
- black construction paper
- glue
- transparent tape
- scissors
- paintbrushes
- shallow containers
- ruler

Preparation: Cut tissue paper into 12-inch (30-cm) squares—four to five squares for each child. Pour glue into shallow containers.

Instruct each child in the following procedures:
- Decorate the black paper with gold or metallic-colored crayons.
- With teacher's help, roll the paper (colored side out) into a narrow cone-shape. Tape edges in place (sketch a).
- To make tissue flames, place a crayon in the center of a tissue square. Gather the tissue around the end of crayon. Remove the crayon and pinch the gathered end of tissue together (sketch b).
- Brush glue on the inside edge of paper torch.
- Place the end of tissue paper flame on the glued part of torch (sketch c).
- Repeat to make additional flames and glue to torch (sketch d).
- Allow to dry.

Bible Bits: In Bible times, people didn't have lights to turn on in the dark. They needed candles or fire to see at night. God told Gideon to have his army hide their torches under clay jars, so the enemy couldn't see them in the dark. What happened when Gideon's army broke their jars? (The light shone through and surprised the enemy.) Then Gideon's men blew their trumpets. The enemy was so scared, they ran away. Because Gideon obeyed God, he won the battle without fighting!