

Unit 7 Men of God

Week 1 A Brave and Mighty Man

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference: Judges 6-7

Main Teaching Points

- Gideon was a hero for God
- We can all be heroes for God
- God equips us with what we need to serve him

Themes to discover

An unlikely Hero

God's choice of Gideon as the next leader of Israel is a surprising one. He is the youngest in his family and his family are the smallest and least important tribe in Israel. He is found threshing wheat in a winepress when we first meet him, trying to keep this small amount of food hidden away from the eyes of the Midianites who had ravaged Israel and left the Israelites so impoverished that they cried out to the Lord. How could someone like Gideon lead Israel's army against the Midianites?

God shows his power to Israel

God chooses the most unlikely people to do his work to help us understand that it is through His strength alone that we succeed. In this story, God goes further by reducing the size of Gideon's army from 300,000 to 300 and giving the Israelite soldiers torches, trumpets, and jars with which to go into battle. There is no way that an Israelite victory could be attributed to human skill or achievement. All the glory for the victory would go to God and this would teach the Israelites that it is God alone that they must rely on.

The **Introductory activity** helps introduce the children to the theme of being a hero for God.

The **Story Challenge** and **Game** tell and reinforce the biblical story.

The **Prayer activity** encourages the children to believe that Jesus has power to help us in all situations.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

Why was Gideon hiding in a pit when God first spoke to him?

Why did Gideon think he wouldn't be good at the job God had for him?

Why did God not pick somebody stronger or better than Gideon?

Ages 7-11

Why do you think God chose the men who scooped up the water?

How would you have felt if you were one of the 300 men facing such a large army?

Week 1 Session Outline

Welcome and Intro

Registration/Welcome/Prayer

Intro Idea Unlikely Heroes

What is a hero? Allow the children to say what they think.

Here's what the Cambridge dictionary says:

'a person who is admired for having done something very brave or having achieved something great.'

Here's a quote from the late actor Christopher Reeve who played Superman for many years.

'A hero is an ordinary person who finds the strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming circumstances.'

Talk about some heroes from Film and TV and/or from history and encourage the children to join in with their ideas. Maybe they can think of someone they know who they consider a hero.

Think about some unlikely heroes from the bible – some examples from this year are Jeremiah, Naaman's servant girl, Ruth, Esther. Talk about why they are unlikely heroes.

Today's bible story is about how God calls someone very unlikely to take on a hero's role.

Story telling suggestions for unit 7

Choose some of these options to help tell the story.

1. Read the story from the Lion Storyteller bible with good pace and expression. Use the interactive ideas from pages 158-159 to encourage the children to participate in the story telling.
2. Use the short videos provided to tell the stories. (see digital resources for this unit)
3. Week 1 -tell or retell the first part of the Gideon story using 'Gideon Telling the story with folded pictures' and 'Gideon folded visual' (see resources)
Week 3- Retell the story of Nehemiah in song using 'Nehemiah, can you fix it?' (see resources)

Story

pages 40-41 from The Lion Storyteller Bible

See Story suggestions for this unit

Challenge Equal/Unequal Battles

You will need

Newspapers

2 large bins or containers

Masking tape

What to do

Ask the children to take sheets of newspaper and scrunch them up into balls and put them in the 2 containers.

Create a line on the floor with masking tape to divide the room in two. Split the children into 2 equal teams, with 1 team on either side of the line. Players must throw paper balls into their opponent's area as fast as they can. Explain that when you count down to stop the game, any team not immediately putting their hands on their head will lose points. They are not to cross the line into the opponents' side and there should be no kicking the paper balls. The aim of the game is to have fewer 'balls' on your side at the end.

Now tip a container of newspaper balls into each area and shout GO!

Keep the play fast and furious by having short 'in play' times e.g. 30-45 seconds. At the end leaders count up the 'paper balls' to see who the winning side is.

Next take half the players from one team and add them to the other team so that you end up with one team with 3 times as many players as the other. Even out the number of paper balls on each side ready to start again. Play again for a similar amount of time.

If time allows, play one last time but this time make one team have most of the children, leaving the other with only 1 or 2 children.

Talk about

How might Gideon have felt about his very small army. He must have wondered if God really knew what He was doing sending them into battle with only a few soldiers. The only way that they won was because God was on their side. Gideon (eventually) trusted God and followed His plan even though it felt ridiculous.

Prayer Activity A prayer shout

(Adapted from 'One hundred and one Ideas for Creative Prayers by Judith Merrell, written by Bill Paice)

Leader shouts out the question while clapping 4 beats and the children respond by shouting Jesus while clapping 2 beats.

Leader: Who is with us day by day?

All: Jesus

Leader: Who can show us what to say?

All: Jesus

Leader: When we're weak, then who is strong?

All: Jesus

Leader: Who can forgive us for doing wrong?

All: Jesus

Leader: Who is great, all others above?

All: Jesus

Leader: Who surrounds us with His love?

All: Jesus

Who is stronger than the crowd?

All: Jesus

Leader: Who do we want to praise out loud

All: Jesus

Game Attack!

You will need

Water pistol

What to do

To play this game, everyone sits in a big circle. Choose a volunteer who will sit in the middle of the circle. Ask the volunteer to go to a leader. Tell everyone to choose their favourite from a category that you suggest e.g. animals, colours, food, films, subjects at school etc. The volunteer tells the leader their choice and then sits in the middle of the circle. Give the volunteer a water pistol filled with water.

The players round the circle take turns to say what their favourite choice is for that category. If one player makes the same choice as the volunteer in the middle, the volunteer gets to scoot them with water from the water pistol. They must act quickly though because the person being attacked is allowed to run away. That person can then be the new volunteer for the middle. Choose a new category and play again.

Talk about

How did it feel waiting for an attack? Think about how Gideon's small army must have felt waiting to go into battle against the mighty Midianites.

Week 2 The Wise King

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference: 1 Kings 3

Main Teaching Points

- Solomon loved God and wanted to serve Him
- Solomon wanted a gift which would help him rule the Israelites wisely.
- We too can ask God for gifts which help us serve Him.

Themes to discover

God Speaks to Solomon

When God speaks to Solomon in a dream, He makes him an amazing offer. God offers Solomon anything he wants but Solomon does not take selfish advantage of God's offer. Instead he shows he has a heart for following God and serving Him. He asks for wisdom. *1 Kings 3:9 'So I ask you to give me the wisdom to rule and judge them well and to help me know the difference between right and wrong.'* This emphasizes that Solomon is God's choice as King David's successor. His prayer shows a humble heart and a desire to rule his people justly.

God's Wisdom

Asking for wisdom isn't the same as asking for knowledge. Wisdom is not so much about *what* we know, but how we *use* what we know to make the right choices. Solomon wanted to be able to listen to the truth and apply it. He asked God to make him wise because wisdom understands what is true and right. God gives us wisdom too. The bible is the word of God written down so if we want to pursue God's wisdom, we should dig into the bible. *James 3: 17 But the wisdom that comes from above leads us to be pure, friendly, gentle, sensible, kind, helpful, genuine, and sincere.*

The **Introductory activity** helps the children think about things they really desire to have.

The **Story, Challenge** and **Activity** tell and reinforce the biblical story and emphasize some of its themes.

The **Prayer activity** encourages the children to think about asking God for things that really matter, things that will help them serve Him.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

What did Solomon ask God for?

How did this gift from God help him in his job as King?

Ages 7-11

Where do we look for wisdom today?

Solomon knew that he was still very young and being King of Israel would be a hard job, so he turned to God for help. What do you need God's help with?

Week 2 Session Outline

Welcome and Intro

Registration/Welcome/Prayer

Intro Idea

Three wishes

Ask the children what they would wish for if they rubbed a magic lamp and a genie appeared and offered them 3 wishes. Allow them time to chat over their ideas in small groups of 2 or 3. After a few minutes, ask the children to share their wishes with the group.

In our story today, there is a new young King on the throne who is ruling God's people. His name is Solomon, and he is the son of King David. King Solomon gets the chance to ask God for anything he wants. Let's listen to the story and find out what King Solomon chooses.

Story

pages 56-57 from The Lion Storyteller Bible

[See Story suggestions for this unit](#)

Challenge

Weighing it up

What did Solomon ask God for? What is wisdom?

Wisdom - the ability to make sensible decisions and give good advice because of the experience and knowledge that you have. (Oxford English Dictionary)

Solomon needed to make wise decisions. People came to him for help when they faced difficulties or got into arguments and couldn't figure out what to do. The two women who were fighting over whose baby had died and whose was still alive came to King Solomon. He needed to be wise and be able to weigh up who was telling the truth and who wasn't. He had to come up with a solution to a very difficult problem. Our challenge involves making choices and weighing things!

You will need

Sets of scales (one per group)

Pairs of items to weigh

What to do

Divide your children into groups of 6-10 children. Keep children of similar age groups together.

Show the children 2 items at a time and ask them to guess which one is heaviest. Do not let the children hold the items. They will have to go on knowledge and past experience to make their choices. Then allow the children one at a time to weigh the various pairs of items on the scales to find out the correct answer. With older children, try to have some items which are surprising e.g. small heavy items and larger light items to make their choice a bit trickier. With younger children you can make the choices simpler.

Prayer Activity

Younger Children Ages 4-7

You will need

Prayer cube templates

Glue sticks

What to do

Solomon asked God for wisdom because he wanted to be a good King and serve his people well. He was young and he had little previous experience, so he needed God to help him.

We can ask God to help us to serve him too. We aren't being selfish and asking for things for ourselves. We are asking God to help us live in a way that pleases Him. What things can we ask God for to help us live for Him? Children can share their ideas e.g. being loving, being kind, having patience, sharing, being thoughtful, thinking of others etc. The children can write or draw their ideas on a prayer cube template or use the template with the ideas provided.

When the cubes are complete, use them to pray together. The children can roll their cube. When it lands, encourage each child to pray quietly using a prayer starter if helpful e.g.

Lord Jesus help me to be loving to the people I am with today.

The children can bring their prayer cube home to use each day during the next week.

Older Children Ages 7-11

You will need

A move cube or large dice

Cards which fit your cube/dice

BluTack or sticky tape

What to do

Talk together -when God said to Solomon, 'Ask for anything you want,' Solomon chose wisdom. Why did Solomon want wisdom? Notice that his reasons were not selfish. Solomon could have asked for money or anything for himself, but that isn't what he asked for. He wanted to do a good job as king, and to know right from wrong.

Do you know anyone who you think is wise? What is it they do that shows they are wise? What's the difference between being wise and being clever? Talk about times when the children might feel that they need wisdom to know what to do and what decisions to make.

Write down some ideas on a large dice or move cube. Allow the children to come up with their own ideas but have a few thoughts to inspire them if they need help at first, e.g. Wisdom to..... be a good friend, make good choices, make decisions about the future, know what my priorities are, look after my mental health, have positive family relationships.

Pass the cube around and roll it a few times. Pray together as a group saying 'Give me wisdom to be a good friend, etc.

Activity Picture Sequencing

You will need

Picture Sequencing worksheets (see resources)

Glue sticks

Scissors

Pencils

Colouring pens or pencils

What to do

Cut out the pictures and reorder. Younger children can read (with help if needed) the text which goes along with the pictures or retell the story in their own words. Older children can finish retelling the story by writing in each box in the space above the picture. If there's time colour the pictures.

Week 3 A Time to Build

Information for Leaders

Bible Reference: Nehemiah 1-4

Main Teaching Points

- God keeps His promises.
- Nehemiah trusted God and turned to Him for help.
- God wants us to obey and trust Him.

Themes to discover

God brings his people back to the promised land

The God who raised up kings and countries to punish the Israelites and remove them from the promised land, is the same God who raised up another king to free them to go back. God can change the thoughts and plans of kings. He makes them want to do certain things to accomplish His plans. And God was ready for His people to return to Jerusalem. It was time to rebuild. So God made the king want to let the captives go back. But not just that. The king wanted them to rebuild the temple of God and he helped them to do it. The temple had been burned and the walls that surrounded the city destroyed when Israel had been invaded. Without the temple, sacrifices for sin couldn't be offered the way they had been before. And without a wall, Jerusalem couldn't be inhabited safely. The people were excited. They began to rebuild the temple first. However those who had seen the beautiful temple King Solomon made for God were sad because they knew it would never be the same and their sinning and disobedience had caused its destruction.

God sends Nehemiah to help rebuild

God had allowed his people to return to the promised land, the temple had finally been rebuilt and the people were obeying God! But the city wall was still just a pile of rocks. God was ready to use another of His prophets, Nehemiah. Nehemiah's family had stayed in Persia instead of returning to Jerusalem. Nehemiah worked for the king, but he cared about Jerusalem and received reports. When he heard that Jerusalem was still in danger without a wall, he was very sad. God helped the king to trust Nehemiah, who sent him to Jerusalem to help his people rebuild the wall. Nehemiah inspected the walls secretly one night. Then he spoke with the people, "Come on. Let's rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. God is helping us." So they began to work. It wasn't easy, but the people rebuilt the wall in just fifty-two days! That's amazing. And because the walls were finished so quickly, all the other nations around Jerusalem realized that God had helped them finish the work. God had completed what He promised the prophet Jeremiah so many years before.

The **Introductory activity** helps introduce the theme of turning to the right person for help.

The **Story Challenge** and **Edible Craft** tell and reinforce the biblical story.

The **Prayer activity** gives the children an opportunity to bring the people/situations in their lives to God.

Additional discussion questions

Ages 4-7

What brave thing did Nehemiah do when he found out his people in Jerusalem needed help?

Why do you think Nehemiah was a good man for the job?

Ages 7-11

How did God answer Nehemiah's prayers for help?

What do you admire most about Nehemiah?

Week 3 Session Outline

Welcome and Intro

Registration/Welcome/Prayer

Intro Idea Drama -The Right Person

You will need

The Right Person drama (see resources)

What to do

Two leaders act out the drama which highlights how you need the right person to do certain jobs.

Use this to lead into the story of Nehemiah. Nehemiah knew he needed to help his people to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, but he wasn't even living in the same country. What could Nehemiah do and who could he turn to for help?

Afterwards discuss how Nehemiah prayed to God for courage to go to the King. Then he went to King Artaxerxes and asked for his help. What did he ask for?

Story

pages 80-81 from The Lion Storyteller Bible

See Story suggestions for this unit

Challenge Build a tower relay

You will need

Disposable cups (10-12*) per team

What to do

Divide your group into teams and line them up to run a relay race. Give each team a stack of cups. On the count of ready, steady, go, the teams run one at a time to the opposite side of the room each person with one cup. They must build a tower using the cups placed one on top of another so that either the rims or the bottoms go together. The winning team is the first team to build all their cups into a tower.

Tip*

Try out building the tower beforehand to see what is a suitable number of cups to give to each team. This will depend on how sturdy the cups are, the age/ability of the children in your group and how long you want the activity to go on for!



Prayer Activity

Prayer Wall

You will need

Bricks illustration (see resources section)

Felt pens

What to do

When Nehemiah faced a difficult task, he turned to God for help. Whenever things got tough, he prayed to God and he was able to keep going because he trusted that God was with his people as they rebuilt the city walls.

When things were going well, Nehemiah didn't forget about God – he thanked God and praised him for sticking by his people and giving them success.

What do you need God's help with? Do you sometimes face difficult challenges? Is there someone you know who is going through a difficult time?

What is good in your life? What can you say thanks to God for?

Younger children (Ages 4-7)

Talk to the children about things that are difficult and also things that are good in their lives. Together compose a prayer of thanks and a prayer asking for God's help on the bricks using the children's ideas.

Older children (Ages 7-11)

Encourage the children to write a prayer of thanks or a prayer asking for God's help on the bricks.

Stick all the bricks up on the wall together to form a prayer wall.

Edible Craft Marshmallow Wall

You will need

Paper plates

Packets of marshmallows (around 15 per child)

Melted chocolate – in bowls,

Knives (one per child)

What to do

Make sure the children wash their hands before starting this task.

Give each child their marshmallows and a spreading knife, and access to some melted chocolate. Ask the children to make a wall of marshmallows – using the chocolate as cement to stick the marshmallow bricks together. It can be long and thin or short and tall. Allow the chocolate to harden. The children can take their edible wall home to eat.



“Dive In” Activity Week

Welcome and Intro

Recap briefly on the stories covered in the last 3 sessions using some of the recap ideas at the beginning of the programme.

There is an information sheet to go along with each activity. It is helpful if leaders talk about the story as a reminder to the children when they are explaining the activity.

Make the story

Gideon's torch

You will need

Torch handle template
Muffin liner
Red, orange, yellow tissue paper
Battery tealight (optional)
Glue sticks
Sticky tape
Scissors



What to do

Print out the torch handle templates before the session onto thin card.
Cut out the torch handle template. Glue the flap, roll up the handle and stick. Make two slits in the muffin case and slot in the two tabs. Fold and stick them down using sticky tape.
Cut out flame shapes from tissue paper in fiery colours and glue inside the muffin liner.
Add a battery-operated tea light.

Design the Story

Gideon's Flag

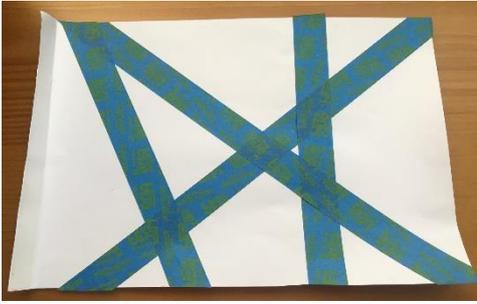
You will need

A4 sized white card
wooden dowels or skewers
Paints and paint brushes or paint pens
Low tack masking tape
Double sided sticky tape



What to do

Fold over the short edge of your card to form a flap about 1cm in width. Place some double-sided sticky tape along the flap. Stick lengths of masking tape all over your flag in a random pattern. Paint the flag in lots of bright colours. Carefully peel off the masking tape trying not to rip the card. Write the words the angel spoke to Gideon in the white lines. Place a dowel on your flag, peel off the backing on the double-sided sticky tape and wrap the flap around the stick to secure.



Get active with the Story Solomon's crown

You will need

Gems or sequins
Crown templates printed onto card or laminated
Straws
Timer



What to do

In this game, players must suck up jewels with a straw and then put them back down to cover a card crown completely. Players try to complete the challenge in under 1 minute.

Recreate a Scene from the Story Nehemiah the King's Cupbearer

You will need

Paper cups
Cardboard tubes
Cardboard box card
Liquid paint and paint brushes
Stick on gems, glitter or metallic tape
Glue gun or strong glue
Scissors



What to do

Cut a circle out of cardboard. Paint the circle, card tube and cup all the same colour.
Once the paint is dry glue the card tube to the bottom of the cup and glue the circle to the bottom of the card tube. When the glue is dry stick gems all over!

Retell the Story Nehemiah with emojis

You will need

Nehemiah story with emojis sheet (see resources)
Pencils, colouring pencils/pens

What to do

Read the story of Nehemiah on the sheet and draw an emoji to go with each part of the story. Colour the emojis.

Draw the Story

Grid drawing

You will need

Grid drawing sheets (see resources)

Pencils, colouring pencils/pens

What to do

Try to copy the small picture as exactly as possible onto the large grid and colour. Copy the same colours as in the small grid or choose your own.