

The Lord Calls Gideon

Judges 6:1-6,11-24

Big Ideas: The Lord calls us to follow Him, to fight selfish feelings and false ideas that try to shut goodness and truth out of our lives.

Overview: The children of Israel have disobeyed the Lord and turned to false gods. Because of this the Midianites, along with others, invade the land and starve the people. An Angel of the Lord appears to Gideon and says that the Lord is with him. The Lord tells Gideon that he will save Israel from the Midianites if he follows Him.

Lesson 1 : The Lord Calls Gideon

Lesson Sections	Activity Options	Materials Provided	Materials Needed
1. Welcome (2-3 minutes)	All Ages Hidden Figures introductory game	directions and <i>Gideon & Israelites</i> figures p. 2	scissors
2. Reading & Discussion (5-7 minutes)	All Ages Read & discuss Judges 6	Judges 6 reading p. 3 questions pp. 4-5	
3. Projects & Activities Choose 1-2 activities (15-20 minutes) <i>Note:</i> Activity ages are approximate. Choose activities that will work for your group.	Ages 3-6 The Offering Is Burned decorative hanging	directions p. 6 <i>Fire from the Staff</i> template p. 7	scissors, tape, crayons or markers, yarn or ribbon, yellow tissue paper <i>optional:</i> glitter, glue
	Ages 7-10 The Angel Appearing to Gideon collage scene	directions p. 8 <i>Angel, Gideon and Winepress</i> p. 9	scissors, sandpaper or brown paper; blue paper; glue; crayons, markers, etc. <i>optional:</i> seeds, brown pipe-cleaners or small sticks, glitter
	Ages 11-14 Powered by Love experiment	directions pp. 10-11	round balloons, empty bottles with narrow necks, small funnel, baking soda, vinegar, spoon, permanent marker
	Ages 3-10 Gideon and the Angel picture to color	p. 12	crayons or markers
	All Ages Recitation	<i>Recitation Cards</i> p. 13	scissors or paper cutter
4. Closing (2-3 minutes)	All Ages wrap up notes	p. 14	

Welcome: Hidden Figures

Prepare Ahead of Time

Cut out the pictures of Gideon threshing in the winepress, and the Israelites hiding in the mountains at the bottom of this page. Hide the pictures in the classroom. For a group with children of mixed ages, make one picture easier and one harder to find.

New Church Concept Hiding in Caves

They hid themselves in caves...signifies truths and goods destroyed by evils of life and falsities therefrom. See *Apocalypse Explained* 410

Our story starts as two groups of people are hiding. One man is hiding alone. He is called Gideon. Some people are hiding in groups. They are the Israelites. I have hidden pictures of Gideon and the Israelites in this room. See if you find them!

Direct children to find the pictures. Give clues such as “warmer”, “colder” if needed. When both pictures are found, gather students.

Let’s look at the pictures. What is Gideon doing? (threshing wheat in a winepress) Where do you think the Israelites are hiding? (in a cave high up in the mountains) How do Gideon and the Israelites feel? (they are afraid)

Let’s find out why Gideon and the Israelites are afraid. As I read, listen carefully for two things:

- Why were Gideon and the Israelites hiding?
- Who were Gideon and the Israelites hiding from?

Stop and ask these questions again after reading Judges 6:1-6, and again after reading Judges 6:11-24 from the next page.

Gideon & Israelites



Reading: The Lord Calls Gideon

Read: Judges 6:1-6, 11-24 excerpted below. For young children you may wish to summarize some of the story and read aloud only the sentences in **bold**. There is a color picture of the Angel talking to Gideon on p. 14.

¹ **Then the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the Lord. So the Lord delivered them into the hand of Midian for seven years,** ² and the hand of Midian prevailed against Israel. **Because of the Midianites, the children of Israel made for themselves the dens, the caves, and the strongholds** which are in the mountains. ³ So it was, whenever Israel had sown, Midianites would come up; also Amalekites and the people of the East would come up against them. ⁴ **Then they would encamp against them and destroy the produce of the earth as far as Gaza, and leave no sustenance for Israel, neither sheep nor ox nor donkey.** ⁵ **For they would come up with their livestock and their tents, coming in as numerous as locusts; both they and their camels were without number; and they would enter the land to destroy it.** ⁶ **So Israel was greatly impoverished because of the Midianites, and the children of Israel cried out to the Lord.**

¹¹ **Now the Angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth tree which was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite, while his son Gideon threshed wheat in the winepress, in order to hide it from the Midianites.** ¹² **And the Angel of the Lord appeared to him, and said to him, “The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!”**

¹³ **Gideon said to Him, “O my lord, if the Lord is with us, why then has all this happened to us?** And where are all His miracles which our fathers told us about, saying, ‘Did not the Lord bring us up from Egypt?’ But now the Lord has forsaken us and delivered us into the hands of the Midianites.”

¹⁴ **Then the Lord turned to him and said, “Go in this might of yours, and you shall save Israel from the hand of the Midianites. Have I not sent you?”**

¹⁵ So he said to Him, “O my Lord, how can I save Israel? Indeed my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father’s house.”

¹⁶ **And the Lord said to him, “Surely I will be with you, and you shall defeat the Midianites as one man.”**

¹⁷ **Then he said to Him, “If now I have found favor in Your sight, then show me a sign that it is You who talk with me.** ¹⁸ Do not depart from here, I pray, until I come to You and bring out my offering and set it before You.”

And He said, “I will wait until you come back.”

¹⁹ **So Gideon went in and prepared a young goat, and unleavened bread** from an ephah of flour. **The meat he put in a basket, and he put the broth in a pot; and he brought them out to Him under the terebinth tree** and presented them. ²⁰ The Angel of God said to him, “Take the meat and the unleavened bread and lay them on this rock, and pour out the broth.” And he did so.

²¹ **Then the Angel of the Lord put out the end of the staff that was in His hand, and touched the meat and the unleavened bread; and fire rose out of the rock and consumed the meat and the unleavened bread. And the Angel of the Lord departed** out of his sight.

²² Now Gideon perceived that He was the Angel of the Lord. So Gideon said, “Alas, O Lord God! For I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face.”

²³ Then the Lord said to him, “Peace be with you; do not fear, you shall not die.” ²⁴ So Gideon built an altar there to the Lord, and called it The-Lord-Is-Peace. To this day it is still in Ophrah of the Abiezrites.

Discussion Questions

The discussion questions are grouped by approximate age levels. If you have a mixed age group, we suggest you read through all the questions before class and decide which ones you wish to use.

Questions for Ages 3-6

1. The Lord brought the children of Israel into a land flowing with milk and honey where everyone could worship the Lord. But as our story begins today, the people had done something wrong and were frightened. Why were they frightened? (People were stealing their food.)
2. Where were they hiding? (Many hid in the mountains in caves. Gideon hid in a winepress.)
3. What was Gideon doing when the angel of the Lord came to him? (Threshing or taking the husk off wheat.)
4. What did the angel ask Gideon to do? (To save the children of Israel from the Midianites.)
5. Did Gideon believe he could do what the Lord asked him to do? (No.)
6. How did the angel show Gideon the Lord would be with him? (Gideon put an offering on a rock. The angel touched it with his staff, and the offering burned up.) So Gideon knew that the Lord was with him. The Lord is with us too and wants to help us.



New Church Concept Midian

“Midian stands for those under the influence of falsity because the good of life does not exist with them; Amalek [stands] for those under the influence of falsities with which they assail truths; the sons of the east [stands] for those who possess cognitions that support what is false.”
Arcana Coelestia 3762.6

Questions for Ages 7-10

1. The Lord promised the children of Israel a land flowing with milk and honey. We call it the “Promised Land”. As the story of Gideon starts, the people were hiding in caves and strongholds in the mountains. Why were they afraid? (The children of Israel had turned away from the Lord and worshiped other gods. Because of this, enemies had invaded the land.)
2. What was happening down in the valley of Jezreel below the caves in the mountains? (The Midianites, Amalekites and Children of the East had come with their animals. There were many many people and animals. They were eating the harvest, so the Israelites were starving.)
3. A winepress was a place in a rock hollowed out to tread grapes for making wine. What was Gideon doing in the winepress? Why was he doing it there instead of where wheat was usually threshed? (Gideon was threshing or taking the husks off the wheat he had saved. He was trying to hide the wheat so it would not be found and taken away by the enemy.)
4. The angel asked Gideon to save Israel from the Midianites. What enemies does the Lord help us to overcome? (Our enemies are selfish thoughts and feelings that rob us of what is true and good.)
5. How did the angel give Gideon courage? (The angel did a miracle.)

6. The angel used his staff to do a miracle. A staff stands for the power of the Lord's truth. What other amazing miracles in the Word were done with a staff? (Moses' staff parted the Red Sea and brought water from a rock.)
7. Gideon was humble and willing to obey the angel. How does being humble and willing to do what the Lord asks help us do the Lord's work? (The Lord has all power. Being humble means we recognize that the Lord has all power. He can bless us when we are willing to do what He teaches in His Word.)

New Church Concept Wheat

"Wheat means the things which constitute love and charity." *Arcana Coelestia* 3941.2



Questions for Ages 11-14

1. Do you know what part of the Word the story of Gideon comes from? (Gideon is in the book of Judges.) Judges were people raised up by the Lord to defend Israel from attacking enemies. When the children of Israel first entered the Promised Land they were told to get rid of enemy nations living there. But they did not obey and began to worship other gods, called Baals. So the Lord allowed enemies to attack. Once things became difficult the people would cry to the Lord. Then He would raise a local Judge who would lead the Israelites in battle against their enemy. Once they returned to the Lord, the land would have peace.
2. This cycle takes place in our own lives. Our enemies are selfish feelings and false ideas that attack and prevent us from seeing and doing what is right. Why do you think the children of Israel went into hiding when the Midianites invaded, instead of standing up to their enemies? (Perhaps their enemies seemed so strong they thought they could not win a fight against them. Perhaps they hoped the enemies would just go away.)
3. What might "going into hiding" look like for someone struggling to obey the Commandments? (Not owning up to doing something wrong, refusing to listen to a different point of view about what happened and how others felt, refusing to talk about something that happened, etc.)
4. In what way were the Midianites harming the children of Israel? (They were starving them.)
5. Where was Gideon when the angel of the Lord found him and asked him to be a judge in Israel? What was he trying to protect? (Gideon was threshing or taking the husks off wheat in a winepress. He was in the winepress to try to hide and protect the wheat.)
6. How did Gideon respond to the angel's request? (Gideon said he was the "least" in Israel and was not strong enough to do it.) Who else in the Word responded in a similar way? (Moses said something similar when the Lord called him at the burning bush (see Exodus 3).)
7. Gideon presented an offering to the angel, and an amazing thing happened. What can we offer to the Lord? How can the Lord use what we offer Him? (We can offer a humble and willing heart. If we acknowledge the Lord and follow Him, He can lead us to heaven.)
8. Why was Gideon afraid when he realized he had seen an angel? (Because he believed he might die.)
9. Only the Lord can overcome evil. What must we do for Him to help us? (We must recognize that He has all power. As we say in the Lord's Prayer, "Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory.").

The Offering Is Burned (Ages 3-6)

Materials Needed

Fire from the Staff template for each child; scissors; crayons, colored pencils or markers; 12" (30cm) yarn or ribbon for each child; yellow tissue to tear into flames (4" x 4" (10cm x 10cm) for each child); tape *optional*: glitter and glue

Prepare in Advance

Print a copy of the *Fire from the Staff* for each child. For very young children, prepare the templates ahead of time. Fold the template in the middle of the page along the thin gray line and cut out the oval shape. To cut multiples, "stack and whack": fold several templates, stack carefully so the pictures line up, and cut out projects.

The angel of the Lord did an amazing miracle to show Gideon that the Lord would be with him. The angel's power was from the Lord. The angel struck Gideon's offering, and fire came out of the rock and burned it up. Similarly, the Lord touches our hearts through true ideas we know from the Word. When our hearts are set alight with His love we are inspired to do what the Lord teaches.



Children will make a hanging showing the angel's rod touching the rock and setting the offering alight.

1. Invite the children to color the picture of the angel using crayons, colored pencils or markers.
2. If not prepared ahead of time, fold the templates in half and have the children cut around the oval shape.
3. Open the template up and lay down so the picture is not showing.
4. Tear the yellow tissue into "flames". Tape the flames down along the edge of one of the ovals.
5. Tape the yarn or ribbon to the back of the picture at the top. Create a loop for holding or leave a long string for hanging.
6. Close the template so the picture shows on one side and the quote shows on the other side. Tape the edges together.
7. Read the quote to the children and, if there is time, invite them to tell you what is happening in the picture.

New Church Concept Fire

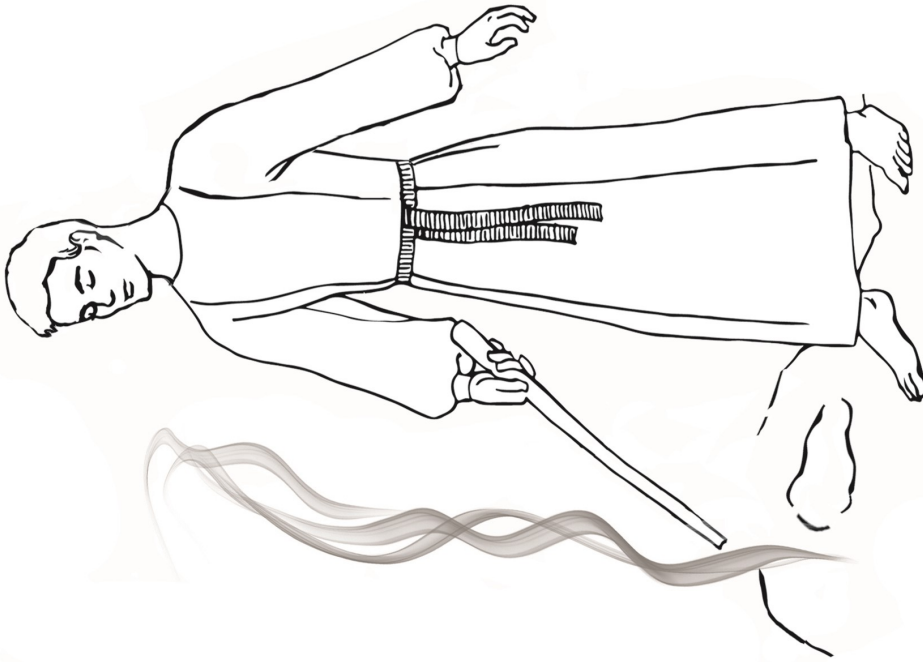
"The fire of heaven is Divine Love emanating from the Lord, and to be set ablaze by that fire is to will what is good."

Arcana Coelestia 9798

New Church Concept Staff

"A rod and staff signify the power of Divine Truth because they were branches of trees, and these signify the knowledges of truth and good, which are the truths of the natural person; and as they were used to support the body, they signified power." *Apocalypse Explained* 727

Fire from the Staff



**The angel of the Lord
touched the offering,
and fire rose
out of the rock.
See Judges 6:21**

The Angel Appearing to Gideon (Ages 7-10)

Materials Needed for Each Student

Gideon, Angel and Winepress template; scissors; sandpaper or brown paper; blue paper; glue; crayons, markers, etc.

optional: small seeds, brown pipe-cleaners or small sticks, glitter

Prepare in Advance

Gather supplies and print p. 9.

New Church Concept Angelic Form

“In heaven the Lord appears to the angels, but under an angelic form; for He fills an angel with His aspect, and thus with His presence from afar, and this He does in various places, but everywhere in accommodation to the good of love and of faith with those to whom He appears. Thus the Lord was seen by Gideon, and by Manoah and his wife, also by Moses, and the Israelitish people. This, therefore, is what is meant by seeing Jehovah face to face, and by seeing Jehovah and not dying.” *Apocalypse Explained* 412.16

In this project, students create a collage to illustrate the dramatic moment when the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon. New Church teachings tell us that before He was born on earth (in the New Testament) in a human form, the Lord appeared to people in the form of an angel. So it was really the Lord who called Gideon to his mission as it is the Lord Himself who calls us to fight against the evils that try to take us over, as the Midianites had taken over the land of Israel.



1. Imagine having an angel appear to you! This is what happened to Gideon while he was threshing wheat. What do you think that moment may have felt like? Would you be afraid? Excited? Confused?
2. Gideon was probably a bit of all of these. He was afraid because in those days people thought that if you saw an angel it meant you were going to die. He might have been excited both because it was such an unusual thing to happen and also because he was being called to do something important. He was probably confused because he wasn't sure if the angel was real and then because he didn't think he could do what the Lord was asking of him.
3. We're going to make a collage to illustrate the moment the angel appeared to call Gideon to lead his people against their enemies.
4. Give each child a set of materials (see top left). Use the blue paper as the background for the collage.
5. Gideon was in a winepress—a place hollowed out of the ground. Have children cut out the *Winepress template* (p. 9) and trace around it on the back of a piece of sandpaper or brown paper. Cut the winepress out and glue it to the bottom of the background paper.
6. Have children color the pictures of Gideon and the Angel. Cut them out and glue them to the collage, placing Gideon in the winepress hollow looking at the angel beside him.
7. Children can also add details like the terebinth tree with crayons or markers.
8. *Optional:* Decorate the collage with small seeds to represent the grain Gideon was threshing, brown pipe-cleaners or small sticks for the angel's staff and/or for Gideon's threshing flail, glitter around the angel, etc.

Gideon, Angel and Winepress

Winepress template



Powered by Love (Ages 11-14)

Materials Needed

assorted round balloons; empty bottles with narrow necks, such as water bottles; small funnel; baking soda; vinegar; spoon; permanent marker

Prepare in Advance

Gather or purchase supplies. Try the experiment to discover the proportions of vinegar and baking soda that work best.

Have you felt inspired to do something you know is right? Perhaps you've been moved by a cause you're passionate about, or something calls you to jump in to make a difference in a way you are able to. The Lord is present in our minds through true ideas we've learned. His presence can inspire us with a love of acting on what we know to be good or right and turning what we know into a positive action that makes a difference. This activity explores how connecting what we know with what we love results in action or use.



1. What true ideas do you know? How many can you think of?
2. The Lord is present with us through the true ideas we know. These ideas form our conscience—the voice we hear in our minds when we are thinking about whether or not to do something. Conscience tells us to do right actions and not to do wrong actions. Will knowing true ideas bring us closer to heaven if we do not act on them? Why or why not? (Knowing what's true will not change us unless we practice it. To become a heavenly person, we must do what we know is right when an opportunity comes up.)
3. The angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon while he was threshing wheat in the wine press. Gideon was hiding the wheat to keep it safe from the Midianites, who would have stolen it. Wheat means goodness. So this represents that Gideon loved what is good, as well as what is true. It is because of this that the angel of the Lord came to him and asked him to help Israel.
4. By doing what is right, true ideas become good and useful acts.
5. We're going to do an experiment that mixes two substances to create a new product. It illustrates how combining good loves (baking soda) with true ideas (vinegar) produces something new (carbon dioxide).
6. Pour vinegar into an empty bottle.
7. Use a permanent marker to draw a smiley face on a balloon.
8. Stretch the balloon as if you were preparing to blow it up. Using a funnel, put two teaspoons of baking soda into the balloon. Shake the baking soda down into the balloon.
9. Stretch the neck of the balloon tightly over the top of the bottle, holding the neck of the balloon so the baking powder does not go down into the bottle yet.

New Church Concept Rock

“As a rock signified the Lord as to faith, and faith from the Lord, therefore wonderful things were done upon a rock, of which it is written in the book of Judges: The angel of Jehovah said to Gideon that he should take the flesh and the unleavened things, and put them upon the rock, and pour out the broth, and there went up fire out of the rock, and devoured the flesh and the unleavened things.” *Ar-cana Coelestia* 8581.6.

10. When you're ready for the reaction to begin, straighten the balloon and let the baking soda drop down into the vinegar. Swirl the bottle a few times and let it sit. Watch the balloon grow.
11. When gas production slows down, swirl the bottle to see if it picks up. The quantity of baking powder in the balloon will make a difference to the quantity of gas produced in the experiment. To produce more carbon dioxide, add more baking soda.
12. How is the vinegar like true ideas we know? (It just sits there—like ideas sit in our minds.)
13. What happened when the baking soda mixed with the vinegar? (There was a reaction—a change in the vinegar and baking soda that produced carbon dioxide.)
14. The baking soda in this experiment is like true ideas. What do you think the inflating balloon might picture? (Doing something useful that makes a positive difference.)

New Church Concept Desire for Truth

“Those who desire to know truths, and to investigate them from the Word, are those who are in the spiritual affection of truth, and who love truth.... And those alone are in that affection who desire to live according to truths from the Word, thus according to the precepts of Lord.” *Apocalypse Explained* 249:2



New Church Concept The Power of Angels

“Angels have absolutely no power on their own. All the power they have comes from the Lord. They are powers to the extent that they recognize this fact. Any of them who believe that their power comes from themselves immediately become so weak that they cannot resist even a single evil spirit. This is why angels take absolutely no credit to themselves and turn down any praise or admiration for anything they have done, but attribute it all to the Lord.” *Heaven and Hell* 230

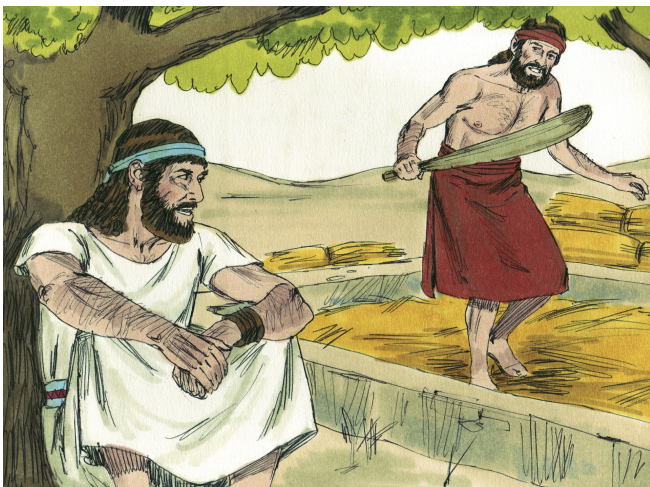


Recitation Cards

Print a recitation card for each student. To learn the recitation, say each phrase aloud. Ask the students to repeat after you. End by joining the phrases together. Ask students to take the cards home to practice the recitation.

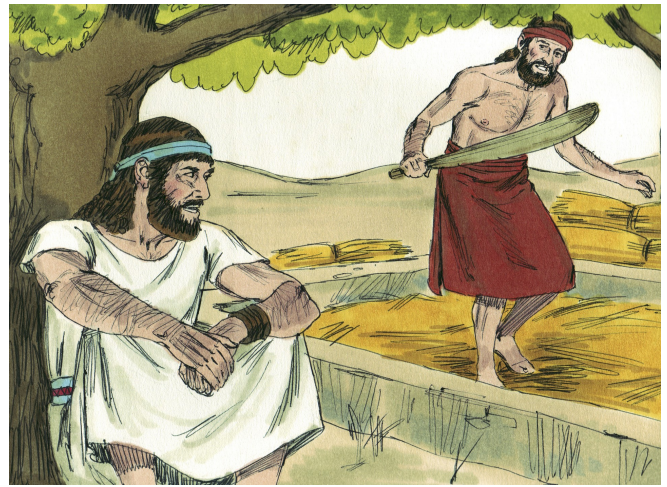
And the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said to him,

“The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!” (Judges 6:12)



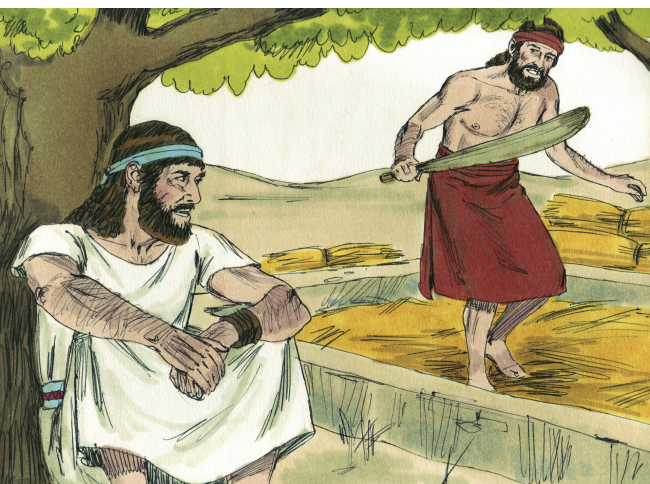
And the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said to him,

“The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!” (Judges 6:12)



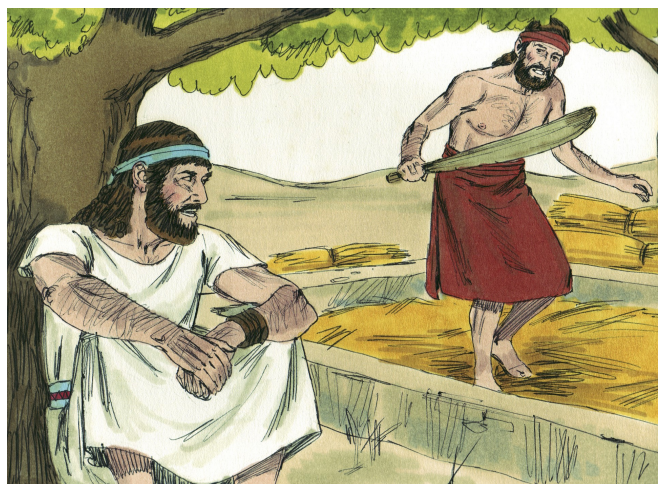
And the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said to him,

“The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!” (Judges 6:12)



And the Angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, and said to him,

“The Lord is with you, you mighty man of valor!” (Judges 6:12)



Closing

The Lord called Gideon to save the children of Israel from their enemies. He calls each of us to fight selfish feelings and false ideas that try to starve us of goodness and truth. Like Gideon, we can pay attention when our conscience speaks, for it is the voice of the Lord speaking to us. He helps us make good choices to follow Him.



Find additional Youth Series on newchristianresources.org or contact General Church Education at GCED@newchurch.org or 267-502-4949 or by mail at 1100 Cathedral Road, Bryn Athyn, PA 19009, USA.

