

# 435 02/25/08 **Discussing Bible stories to teach faith**

Last week, I wrote about teaching an elementary aged child using a classical approach. Prior to his going to school, a child's life was centered only in his family. When his world opened to more people, he became curious about how other families lived. For that reason, biographies and historical stories will hold his interest.

Gideon was called to defeat the Midianites even though he felt inadequate. He asked God for confirmation of what he was called to do. Then, he destroyed altars of idols, and he worshiped God. Before he went into battle, God had him reduce his army to only 300 men who carried trumpets and torches in clay jars instead of swords. They won in a very brief encounter in which the Midianites turned against each other. Judges 6-7. After reading the story of Gideon, engage your child in discussion.

Rather than tell your child what you think the story teaches, ask him questions that make him think. If a child discovers a concept or lesson from a story, he owns it. If you tell him, he may accept it, but not own it. Those concepts that are his are the ones most likely to become part of his foundation for how he lives his life.

Ask questions about Gideon's call: "Why would God call someone who feels inadequate?" "Have you ever been asked to do something that you thought was way beyond your abilities?" "We don't have Midianites to defeat today, but we do have challenges or enemies to overcome. You have seen me fight the desire to skip going to the gym. Can you think of something you're called to overcome?"

Discuss "putting out a fleece" as Gideon did in Judges 6:36-40: "Gideon was questioning whether or not he actually heard what God said to him. Do you think God was angry that he did that?" "Why or why not?" "How can we check to see if what God is saying is what we are hearing?"

Ask questions about the reduced army: "God had Gideon use a small army with no swords to face a large army. Why do you think God did that?" "If Gideon had had a well-equipped army much larger than the enemy, do you think he would have been as likely to give God credit for the victory?"

Next week, we will see how to use this approach on any story.

