



## WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Your Chapter In God's Never-ending Story

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### Week 5

**Today's Theme:** Great stories happen when we step out of our comfort zone and trust God.

#### **Scripture Verses:**

- Judges 6-8, specifically Judges 6:12 – 7:24, 8:28

#### **Supplies:**

- Random images/pictures (see opening activity; at least 2 per group member to provide for choice)
- Copies of the journal prompt page & writing utensils (prompt page included at the end of this week's curriculum)
- Scrap paper with the bold word list words written on them and crumpled up
- Dry erase board & Markers
- Timer

#### **Opening Everyone Answers Question: (10min)**

*You want to get everyone talking here. This will set the tone for the meeting and introduce the theme.*

*Set up: The leader should have a set of images (could be stock images from online, could be ripped out of magazines, could be from a newspaper, etc.) there should be at least twice as many images as there are members in the group. Lay out the pictures so that everyone in your small group can see them.*

*Open with prayer then explain:*

*Select an image that speaks to you. It does not matter how the attention is drawn or how the image speaks; what matters is that you're drawn to an image.*

*Example:*

*Someone may be drawn to this image because it invokes a feeling of joy and newness and it may just make them smile. Or maybe someone started a new position at work or took on a new task that excites them and they are motivated and energetic about the new tasks.*



*Once everyone has chosen their picture, invite each person to share:*

Your small group leader will lay out pictures that everyone in your group can see. Select an image that speaks to you. It does not matter how the attention is drawn or how the image speaks; what matters is that you're drawn to an image. When everyone has selected an image answer the following question.

- What drew you to your picture and how does it represent who you are at this current moment?

Now that everyone has had a chance to share, let's "challenge" the original image holder's viewpoint. What do someone else's pictures mean to you?

*Example: For the puppy image...maybe someone just lost a dog who looks like that and the image causes them pain. Or perhaps someone is frightened of dogs and a picture of a jumping dog terrifies them. Or maybe someone's family is trying to get them to want to get a dog...but all they see are pee stains on the carpet, chewed shoes, and talking walks in the rain.*

*Encourage different viewpoints...those are expected and should be celebrated!*

*Transition to the study for the week - Stepping out of our comfort zone.*

**The only way we can allow ourselves to "think outside the box" or "step outside our comfort zones" is when we alter our original viewpoint. For some, this can be intimidating; for others, this can be exhilarating. Each individual is as unique as their perception...which is great. It is in shifting that perception, when we step outside our perceived comfort zone, that things can really change.**

**Scripture Exploration: (25 minutes)**

*This is the part of the study where you'll dig into Scripture so as to draw out the day's theme.*

Background: Throughout the book of Judges, a pattern repeats.

- The Israelites disobey God.
- The Israelites are conquered.
- In desperation, the Israelites cry out to God.
- God raises up a leader (a judge) who delivers the Israelites.

Gideon is one of the judges that God raises up to lead the Israelites.

1. Read Judges 6:12-16. What does the Lord want Gideon to do? How will doing this force Gideon to step out of his comfort zone?
2. Read Judges 6:17-18. Why do you think Gideon asks the Lord for a sign? How might having a sign from the Lord enable Gideon to step out of his comfort zone?

*God graciously gives Gideon a sign: A dewy fleece on dry ground (Judges 6:36-40).*

3. Read Judges 7:1-8 and 16-23. Describe how God reduces the size of Gideon's army.
  - a. How do you think Gideon feels when he has only 300 soldiers left?
  - b. How might the reduction of his army push Gideon out of his comfort zone?
  - c. Throughout his life, how does stepping out of his comfort zone enable Gideon to trust God more fully?
4. Read Judges 8:28. What is the outcome of the battle?
  - a. Do you think the outcome would have been the same if Gideon had ignored God's request to reduce to the size of his army and approach the battle in a more traditional way? Why or why not?
5. People may step out of their comfort zones for different reasons – for example, to fix an injustice, to challenge themselves, to grow personally, to reach the next level, to learn something new, or to develop a new relationship. What, if anything, motivates you to take a risk and step out of your comfort zone?
6. Tell us about a time when you stepped out in faith and did something you wouldn't normally do. What was the result?
  - a. Where, if at all, did you see God's hand in that situation?
  - b. How, if at all, did taking that risk change you?

### **Storytelling Practices (20 minutes):**

*Each week, we'll provide you with different storytelling practices designed to help those in your small group practice sharing their stories.*

Think about times when we have stepped out of our comfort zone (or perhaps were pushed out!). To do this, complete the journal prompts on the page your small group leaders hands out. Don't overthink them. Simply write down the first thing that comes to mind.

**Journaling Prompts** (*leaders will find this page to copy at the end of this lesson*)

I was the most embarrassed when...

I have never been as scared as when...

I have never laughed so hard as when...

Ever since \_\_\_\_\_ happened, I have been nervous to \_\_\_\_\_ because...

I took pride in \_\_\_\_\_ because...

I risked it all for love when...

Nothing fills me with greater joy than...

Nothing fills me with greater fear than...

I doubted myself when....

*As the participants are journaling, set up the final small group activity. Cut apart the following words and crumple them up in the center of the group. (Have enough words so that everyone has a chance to participate – it's okay to repeat some of the words)*

*A dry erase board (or flipchart paper) and markers will be necessary for the next part.*

**WORD BANK TO CUT APART:**

EMBARRASSED  
LOVE

SCARED  
JOY

LAUGHED  
DOUBT

NERVOUS

PRIDE

### **Storytelling (20 Minutes):**

*Once everyone has journaled, encourage each participant to select a crumpled word that is on the table. That word will be the story they will share.*

Today we're going to share our stories through the ***game of Pictionary***. Use the dry erase board (or flipchart paper) and markers to tell either your story or the theme of your story. *If someone guesses the theme, the "player" may stop drawing, but should tell their story based on the prompt that included that word.*

*Allow/encourage each group member to share their story. As people share, encourage them to think about sharing all or part of their faith story at our Storytelling Event on November 17.*

### **Processing / Wrap Up (10 minutes)**

1. How easy or difficult was it for you to participate in tonight's storytelling practices?
2. What was scary or intimidating to you about tonight's storytelling practices?
3. What did you learn about yourself from tonight's storytelling practices? About others in our small group?
4. As you thought about your own story, where did you see God at work?
5. Where did you encounter God during tonight's small group?

### **Closing Prayer:**

## Journaling Prompts

I was the most embarrassed when...

I have never been as scared as when...

I have never laughed so hard as when...

Ever since \_\_\_\_\_ happened, I have been nervous to  
\_\_\_\_\_ because...

I took pride in \_\_\_\_\_ because...

I risked it all for love when...

Nothing fills me with greater joy than...

Nothing fills me with greater fear than...

I doubted myself when....