



WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

Your Chapter In God's Never-ending Story

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 (or flip chart paper) & Markers
- Timer

Opening Everyone Answers Question: (10min)

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?

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)

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?
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 leader hands out. Don't overthink them. Simply write down the first thing that comes to mind.

Storytelling (20 Minutes):

Once everyone has journaled, each participant will 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 his or her story based on the prompt that included that word.*

Consider sharing all or part of your faith story at our ***What's Your Story?*** 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: