



What is it?

“So, what is Gideon’s 300?” you might ask. Gideon’s 300 is a challenge born in the heart of New York DYD, Doug DeMent. He realized that if just 300 New York students would commit to give \$1,000 each to STL, it would set a New York STL giving record!



Where is it going?

Now Gideon’s 300 is inspiring students all across the U.S. to take on this challenge. What if not just 300 New York students committed to becoming one of Gideon’s 300, but if 10,000 students from all over America did? Can you imagine the results? There would be an additional \$10 million available to provide our missionaries (many of whom have been waiting for years for vehicles and equipment) with everything they need to effectively reach the lost. Incredible!

Background on Gideon’s Story

If you’re not already familiar with the story, well, you’re in for a treat. In the book of Judges, we find that the Israelites have once again turned away from God. As a result of their disobedience, God allowed the neighboring, lawless Midians to pillage Israel for seven years. Midian so impoverished the Israelites that they finally cried out to God for help.

Then the Lord sent an angel to the young man, Gideon. Here’s how Judges 6:14-16 describes that encounter:

The Lord turned to [Gideon] and said, “Go in the strength you have and save Israel...Am I not sending you?”

“But Lord,” Gideon asked, “how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest...and I am the least in my family.”

The Lord answered, “I will be with you, and you will strike down all the Midianites together.”

A short time later, the Spirit of the Lord came upon Gideon, and he blew a trumpet, summoning many of the Israelites to follow him. Over 32,000 men showed up to fight the Midianites with Gideon. But that’s not what God intended. Judges 7:2-7 tells it like this:

The Lord said to Gideon, “You have too many men for me to deliver Midian into their hands. In order that Israel may not boast against me that her own strength has saved her, announce now to the people, ‘Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave Mount Gilead.’” So twenty-two thousand men left, while ten thousand remained.

But the Lord said to Gideon, “There are still too many men. Take them down to the water, and I will sift them for you there. If I say, ‘This one shall go with you,’ he shall go; but if I say, ‘This one shall not go with you,’ he shall not go.”



So Gideon took the men down to the water. There the Lord told him, "Separate those who lap the water...from those who kneel down to drink." Three hundred men lapped with their hands to their mouths. All the rest got down on their knees to drink.

The Lord said to Gideon, "With the three hundred men that lapped I will save you and give the Midianites into your hands. Let all the other men go, each to his own place."

What should you do?

Here are some practical steps you can take to help your students become one of Gideon's 300:

- 1. Set the challenge.** This is the most important thing you can do. Devote a youth service to presenting, explaining, and challenging your students to step out in faith...just like Gideon's 300 did. These are extraordinary times, and students need to be directly challenged to live true, meaningful, and fearless lives in the face of the pressures of this world. Incorporate this Gideon's 300 challenge into your STL goal-setting night or STL blitz.
- 2. Don't make it easy.** Frankly, God's chosen are few. Remember, less than 1% of those who showed up to fight for Israel actually got to take part in God's miraculous salvation. Challenge your students to *choose* to be in that 1%. Here's a way you can introduce this concept to your students:

What about you? Should you commit to become one of Gideon's 300? Well, to be perfectly honest, that depends on you. If you read the entire story in Judges chapter 6 and chapter 7, not everyone was included in God's miracle. Here are some ideas as to why only a select few were chosen:

- *Anyone who did not have faith in God to provide deliverance was sent home. Judges 7:3 states, " 'Anyone who trembles with fear may turn back and leave...'"*
- *Those who knelt down to drink (which hindered their ability to be ready at a moment's notice) were also sent home.*
- *But those who drank water from their hands (keeping vigilant and ready to fight) were allowed to stay and participate in the battle.*

- 3. Make it bigger than you.** There are Gideon's all across this great country. Hundreds, if not thousands, of students are choosing to be a part of something bigger than themselves, something that can make a true difference in this world. Let your students know that even if just one of them chooses to become one of Gideon's 300, they are joining a huge army of students who are willing to do whatever it takes to defeat the enemy and see souls saved and lives changed.
- 4. Use the trumpets, jars, and torches.** Not every student will have a jaw-dropping testimony. Not every student will have a "never-been-done-before" idea for raising money for missions. And not every student will reach their goal. Do not be discouraged! And don't let them be discouraged! God is teaching and training them to step out in faith and put their time, reputation, and self on the line for His mission. It took all 300 soldiers to defeat the Midianites. Gideon could not have done it by himself. Don't shy away from honestly evaluating each student's effort and working to improve the results.

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The Next Step

There is no set plan for each "Gideon." God tends to use the talents of any willing individual. Perhaps you have a student who is an artist and can sell pictures. Perhaps you have a student who loves the culinary arts and can earn money by cooking. Perhaps you have a student who is musically inclined and can make a home-made CD to sell for STL money. Perhaps you have a student who wants to walk 20 or 50 or 100 or 500 miles to raise money for STL. Perhaps you have a student who is excited to sit in a rocking chair in 40 degree weather and earn money for every minute he rocks back and forth in front of a pizza parlor (trust me, it's been done before!).

In fact, all of the above examples have been done before. All God needs is a willing heart and someone who is committed to raising money so our missionaries can see "souls saved and lives changed."

