

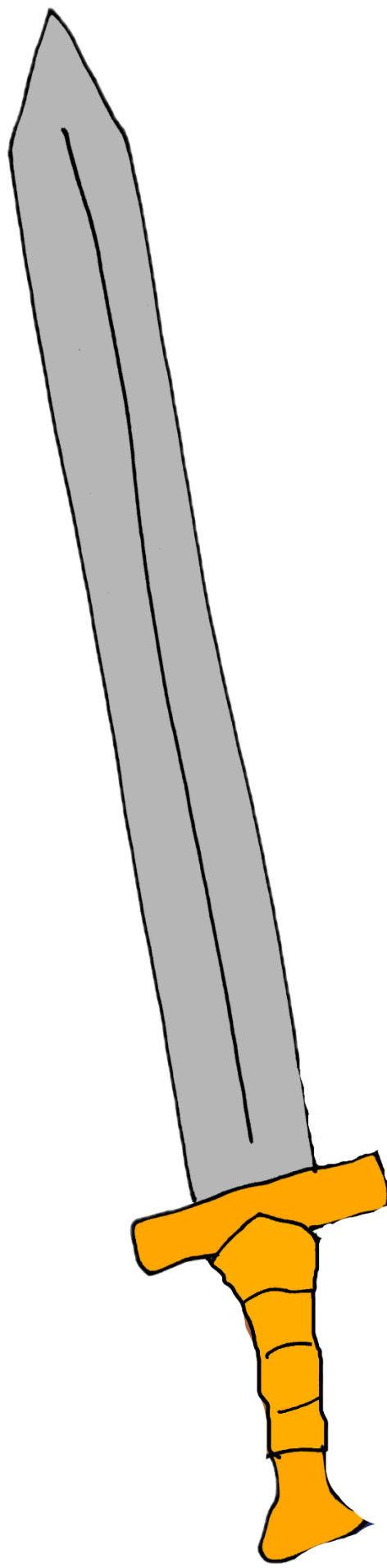
Upper Elementary

Gideon at the River

All scripture quotations are taken from the World English Bible, 2020.

Checklist

- ☐ 6 glass cups (each with a line made in painter's tape 1 inch from the bottom)
- ☐ flashlights
- ☐ paper cups
- ☐ spinning top
- ☐ paper sword



Topic:	Gideon at the River
Intro:	Place six cups (each with line drawn in marker 1 inch from bottom) in front of students. Fill the third, fourth and fifth cup to the line. Tell children you want them to rearrange the cups in this order: full, empty, full, empty, full, empty. The rule is they can only pick up one cup. After they have had some time, show them they can pour water from the fourth cup into the first cup, and then put it back in its original place.
	Sometimes we have a problem that is frustrating. The answer might seem really hard, but when you have instructions from the one who is in charge of the situation, you might find that the answer is actually very easy. It's just something clever you hadn't thought of on your own. This is like what happened to Gideon.
Judges 6:34	But Yahweh's Spirit came on Gideon, and he blew a trumpet; and Abiezer was gathered together to follow him.
	After God had shown Gideon that He was really speaking to him, Gideon put together an army to fight the Midianites. Who was working in Gideon that made him strong? (the Lord's Spirit, the Holy Spirit)
Judges 7:2-3	Yahweh said to Gideon, "The people who are with you are too many for me to give the Midianites into their hand, lest Israel brag against Me, saying, 'My own hand has saved me.' Now therefore proclaim in the ears of the people, saying, 'Whoever is fearful and trembling, let him return and depart from Mount Gilead.'" So, twenty-two thousand of the people returned, and ten thousand remained.
	God wanted Gideon to defeat the Midianites. But He didn't want anyone to help if they didn't want to. He only wanted soldiers who were brave and trusted in Him. God always has a best plan for us, but it's up to us if we want to follow it or not.



Gideon at the River



Judges 6:34

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Who was working in Gideon, to make him strong?

The _____



Judges 7:2-3

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_____ soldiers - 22,000 who were frightened = _____ soldiers

Judges
7:4-7

Yahweh said to Gideon, "There are still too many people. Bring them down to the water, and I will test them for you there. It shall be, that those whom I tell you, 'This shall go with you,' shall go with you; and whoever I tell you, 'This shall not go with you,' shall not go." So, he brought down the people to the water; and Yahweh said to Gideon, "Everyone who laps of the water with his tongue, like a dog laps, you shall set him by himself; likewise, everyone who bows down on his knees to drink." The number of those who lapped, putting their hand to their mouth, was three hundred men; but all the rest of the people bowed down on their knees to drink water. Yahweh said to Gideon, "I will save you by the three hundred men who lapped, and deliver the Midianites into your hand. Let all the other people go, each to his own place."

Sword Tag

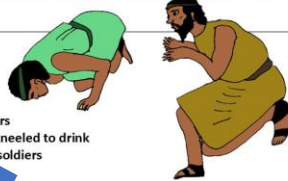
Place the blue tablecloth/sheet against one wall. Have children line up against the other wall. Have one child wear a picture of a sword taped to their back and walk over to river and lie down, pretending to drink. As soon as they lie down, tap another child to run across and take the paper. They must get back to the other side before the first child can get up and tag them (they cannot start running until the paper has been taken). Try this again when the child is standing to drink. Let other children take turns.

Which way was easier to tag the person? Why do you think God chose these people to be part of Gideon's army? How were they better soldiers?

Why didn't God want Gideon to have so many soldiers? (So everyone would know it was God who was winning the battle.) God cared about the Israelites suffering, but He had a bigger goal. He wanted them to stop worshiping false gods. Gideon's army had already been smaller than the Midianites. But there was still a chance they could win with their own power. God wanted his army to be so small, it was really obvious that they were only winning because of God. He then gave Gideon some strange instructions. Rather than fight a battle the normal way, He would have Gideon trick the Midianites into thinking they were being attacked by a large army.

Judges 7:4-7

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10,000 soldiers
- 9,700 who kneeled to drink
= 300 soldiers

Judges 7:19-22

So Gideon and the hundred men who were with him came to the outermost part of the camp in the beginning of the middle watch, when they had but newly set the watch. Then they blew the trumpets and broke in pieces the pitchers that were in their hands. The three companies blew the trumpets, broke the pitchers, and held the torches in their left hands and the trumpets in their right hands with which to blow; and they shouted, "The sword of Yahweh and of Gideon!" They each stood in his place around the camp, and all the army ran; and they shouted, and put them to flight. They blew the three hundred trumpets, and Yahweh set every man's sword against his fellow and against all the army; and the army fled as far as Beth Shittah toward Zererah, as far as the border of Abel Meholah, by Tabbath.

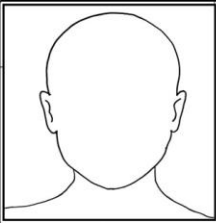
Turn out the lights. Place the flashlight inside the jar and turn it on. Hand flashlights and paper cups to children to do the same. When the Israelites entered the Midianite camp, they could not be seen or heard. Imagine how frightened the Midianites were when they suddenly found themselves surrounded by Israelites. They were taken by surprise. They did not know exactly how many Israelites there were. They were not prepared to fight and panicked. They actually defeated themselves, so that Israel had little work to do.

Have children fill in the face with how they think the Midianites looked when this happened.

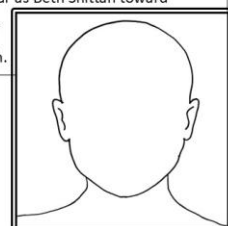


Judges 7:19-22

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When this happened, I think the Midianites faces looked like:



Judges 8:22-23	Then the men of Israel said to Gideon, “Rule over us, both you, your son, and your son’s son also; for you have saved us out of the hand of Midian.” Gideon said to them, “I will not rule over you, neither shall my son rule over you. Yahweh shall rule over you.”
	Gideon could have become very powerful after this battle. He was a hero. But he cared about doing what was right. He wanted the people of Israel to obey God alone.
Judges 8:33-34	As soon as Gideon was dead, the children of Israel turned again...and made Baal Berith their god. The children of Israel didn’t remember Yahweh their God, who had delivered them out of the hand of all their enemies on every side.
	The Israelites kept making the same mistake again and again. Only after they had been punished did they change their ways. Can you think of a mistake in your life that you keep making? (being competitive with a sibling, fighting over who gets to do something first, talking back, whispering during lessons) Rather than waiting until you are being punished, try to catch yourself and change the action as soon as you realize you are doing it.
Closing:	Show children the top and spin it. When a top starts spinning, there are only two ways for it to stop: if you stop it (stop the top, then spin it again) or if it runs out of steam and collapses (wait for the top to collapse). Do you want to keep doing a bad habit until you run out of steam and collapse? It might seem hard to stop something once you're in the motion of it, but you can. Have children take turns spinning the top themselves, then stop it before it collapses (encourage them to find a way to do this without letting the top touch the table).

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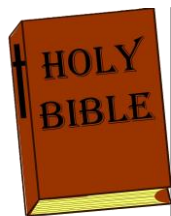
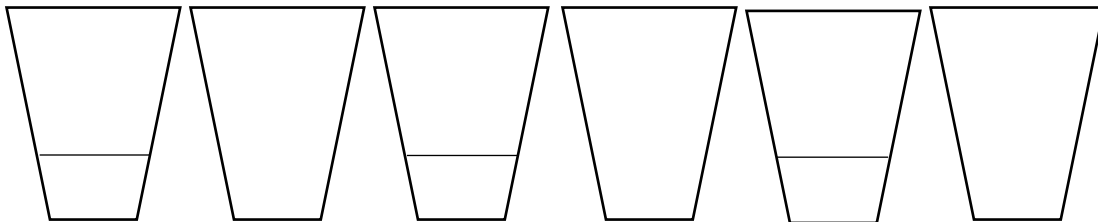
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If I am repeating a bad habit, I should stop it:

☐ as soon as I realize I'm doing it
 ☐ when I get punished

Gideon at the River



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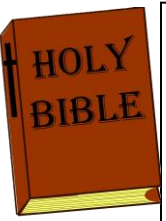
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Judges 7:2-3

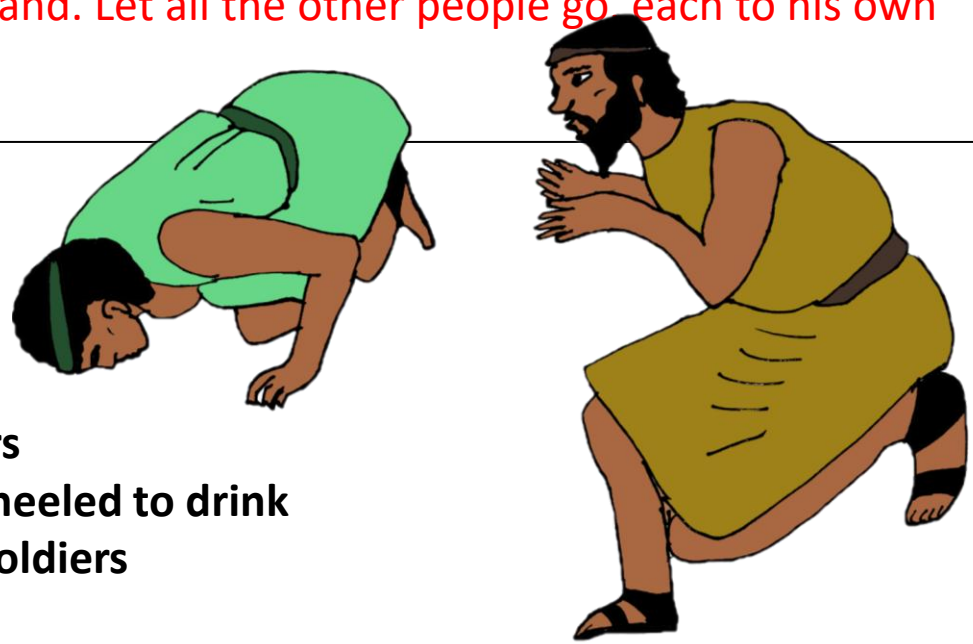
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32,000 soldiers – 22,000 who were frightened = _____ soldiers

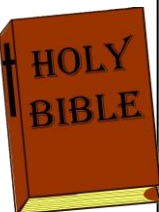


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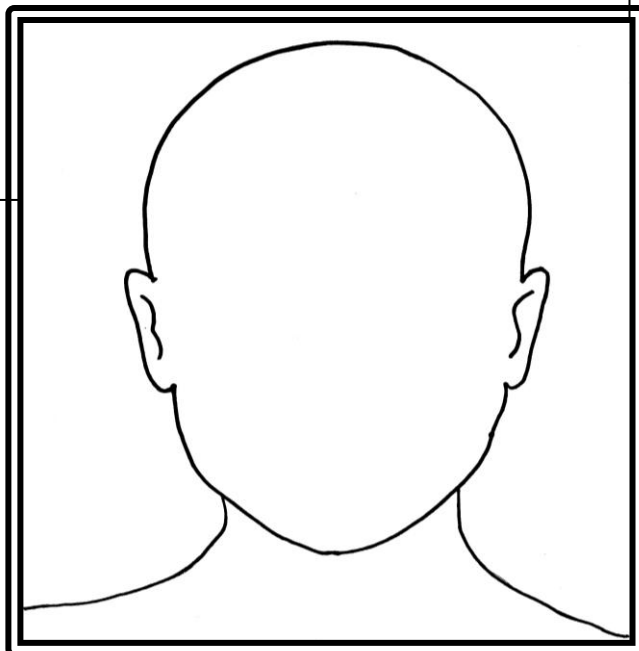
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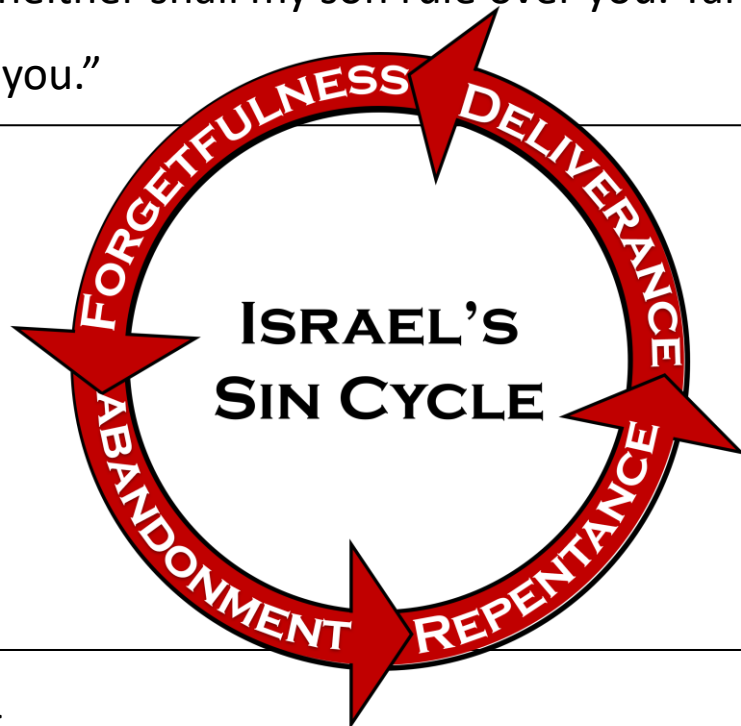
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Gideon at the River



Name: _____

Gideon, river, Midianites, judges, torches, sword, trumpets,
victory

ujedsg _____

etcorsh _____

ogdine _____

dsrow _____

erirv _____

cyitovr _____

uspretmt _____

isidinmtae _____