

DEBORAH

Leader, prophet, and head of military in a time of men

Trust in God in all circumstances.

Text: Judges 4:1-24

Materials/supplies:

- ⊗ 3 broomstick puppets or masks or actors with the following additional supplies:
 - Deborah can have a headband or a braided rope around her head
 - Barak can hold a sword
 - Jael can have a scarf over her head
 - The group leader or presenter can be the narrator
- ⊗ A bowl or similar for each child
- ⊗ Some apples and a sweet potato
- ⊗ Blindfolds, tables and any chairs or other similar items that are available in the room or space for the obstacle course
- ⊗ Copies of the colouring picture
- ⊗ Plastic or foam leaf to add to the sensory bottle
- ⊗ Toilet rolls, 3 copies of leaves per child, 1 copy of Deborah per child
- ⊗ Copies of the bookmark
- ⊗ Copies of the crossword

WELCOME

- ❖ “Follow the leader”: The leader can do good, positive things like jumping up and down, giving high fives, and so on. Then, start to do negative things, such as sticking out your tongue or pulling a bad, ugly face. See what the children’s reactions are, and see if anyone decides not to do it.
- ❖ Give each child a bowl or glass with two small pieces of an apple, but in one bowl or glass, place one piece of apple and one piece of sweet potato. Ask the children to taste the two pieces in their bowls or glasses. Ask everyone who had only pieces that tasted like apple to stand, and afterwards, ask everyone who had something that tasted different to apple to stand. See if that one child will stand up.
 - I wonder who of us like to be different from the others around us.
 - I wonder who likes to be a good leader.
- ❖ **Obstacle course:** Divide the children into teams of 2 children each. Then, let one “seeing” child in each pair lead their partner, who is blindfolded, through an obstacle course by giving them directions. Tell each team only that they need to get the blindfolded friend through the obstacle course, but no-one may touch each other. That means that, for instance, whether a child takes an obstacle out of the way of their friend, or tries to get them to walk around the course instead of through it, they are allowed to do so! However, do not give them these options beforehand. Then, ask:
 - I wonder which pairs of friends worked better together.
 - I wonder why they worked together so well.
 - I wonder if it would still work well if the one who was blindfolded had to explain the path to their friend.

WORSHIP

Theme song:

The children sit with eyes closed and listen to the song "Trust in the Lord". (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPZJtZzQBB0>). The song can be played a few times and the children can sing along as soon as they catch the tune.

Settle down ritual:

Pass the sensory bottle around while the children say Psalms 23:1-3: "The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake."

WORD

This term, we will be talking about wondrous women in the Bible. Can anyone remember the 5 strange names of the 5 sisters whom we talked about last week?

Today, we will meet another wondrous woman. She didn't have a strange name, but she had a strange job, which woman of that time weren't expected to have...

Storyteller	<p>Twenty years is a very long time. For 20 long years, the Israelites were slaves under a strange and foreign king. This king's name was Jabin, and the leader of his army was Sisera. They treated the Israelites very badly. The people prayed and asked God to free them from their slavery. And so, God sent them a Judge and Prophetess to save them. I wonder who can tell us what a Judge is. (<i>Leaders that God appointed in a time before there were kings in Israel.</i>)</p> <p>And a Prophetess? (<i>Someone who had a message from God to tell the people.</i>)</p> <p>In the time that this story took place, many people thought that women were not important, and could not be leaders - women always had to be under a man's leadership. But, God works differently to people. In the story we are about to hear now, God used women as leaders.</p> <p>Firstly, we meet Deborah, the leader and prophetess. She would sit under a palm tree, and the Israelites would go to her to advise them on their problems. She was very clever. One day, God told her to call a man by the name of Barak and give him a message.</p>
Deborah	Yes, Lord, I will do what you ask and call Barak.
Deborah	(<i>Turn to Barak.</i>) Barak, the Lord, the God of Israel has given you an order. He says that you must take 10,000 soldiers and go to Mount Tabor. The Lord will lead Sisera into a trap Himself. The Lord will give him, his army and all 900 of his chariots into your hands.
Barak	But Deborah, Sisera and his army are so much stronger than all the Israelites together! We don't have 900 chariots like he does! But, if you go with me, I will go. If you don't go with me, I won't go either.
Deborah	Alright, I will go with you. But, because you didn't trust God that you will win the war, you will not be able to have the honour to say that you killed Sisera. Instead, a woman will kill Sisera and she will receive all the honour for it.
Storyteller	(<i>Whisper behind a hand to the audience.</i>) Barak didn't trust God, but Deborah did, even though she knew that Jabin's army was much stronger than them.
Barak	Let me get those 10,000 men together to go along with us. (<i>Walk away and come back.</i>) We are ready to go and

Deborah	Let us go right now. The Lord will conquer the enemy Sisera today. God will be with us and go with us. All we need to do is to trust him. <i>(Put the Deborah puppet aside if you are using puppets, or let the Deborah actress</i>
Barak	Soldiers, let us now go and fight Sisera in the name of the Lord!
Storyteller	While Barak and his soldiers were on their way to fight against Sisera's army, something amazing happened – something that only God could do.
Barak	Look! Sisera's army and all his chariots are suddenly frightened! They are all trying to get away! The Lord Himself is fighting for us! Quickly, follow them, soldiers! Look, Sisera has left his chariot here and ran away on foot, so he can't be too far away! Get him!
Storyteller	While Barak was looking for Sisera, he saw a woman sitting in front of a tent.
Barak	Hello, you at the tent! Who are you?
Jael	Hello, my name is Jael, and I am Heber's wife. Come and look inside my tent – I will show you the man that you are looking for!
Barak	Did you kill him?
Jael	Yes.
Barak	Do you know who this man is that you killed? His name is Sisera, the leader of the army!
Deborah	Barak, you must now sing and praise God, because today He has saved us! Everywhere we go, we must tell people what God has done!

Children now get a chance to think about the story:

1. I wonder how Deborah felt when she saw that Barak didn't trust God completely.
2. I wonder how Barak felt when Deborah told him that a woman would kill Sisera and get the honour for it.
3. I wonder who your favourite character was in the story.
4. I wonder why it isn't always easy to be a good leader.
5. I wonder what the most important thing is to remember when we want to be a good leader, or when we get into difficult situations.

Today's "wondrous woman" Deborah reminds us that God wants to use each of us here today, whether you are a girl or a boy. It doesn't even matter how old you are!

WORKING AND PLAYING

- ◆ Deborah under the palm tree: Give each child a toilet roll, which can be coloured brown as a palm tree's trunk. Give them a few blank "leaves" cut out of green paper. (Older children can write the names of the story's characters, or something they learnt, on the leaves.) The leaves can then be stuck to the toilet roll in order to form a palm tree. Each child could also get a picture of Deborah to cut out and paste on the trunk of the palm tree.
- ◆ The children can make bookmarks by writing Psalm 27:14 on them: "Trust the Lord! Be strong and take courage!"
- ◆ Fill in the correct answers on the crossword and then write down the hidden name that is found in the blocks that are marked.
- ◆ Colour or decorate the characters' faces (which can also be used for broom puppets or actors) by using any pens, wool, or stickers on them. Use them with the "I wonder" questions. Then, let the children use these decorated masks to tell the

story again at home.

◆ Picture to colour in.

BENEDICTION:

Close the session with a blessing:

May the Lord go before you to show you the right path;

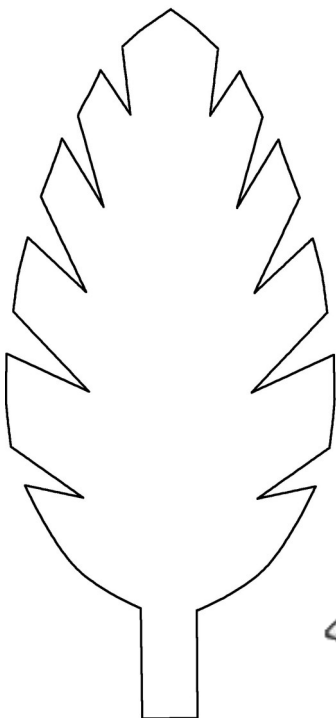
May the Lord be behind you to protect you;

May the Lord be beside you to comfort and embrace you;

May the Lord be below you to catch you when you fall;

May the Lord be above you to bless you;

May the Lord be in you to guide you with His Holy Spirit. Amen.

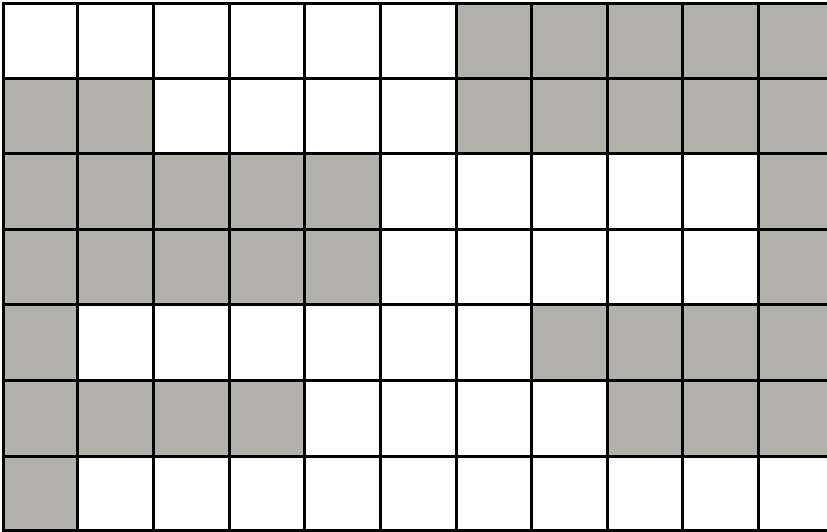


Psalm 27:14:
“Trust the Lord!
Be strong and
take courage!”



CROSSWORD

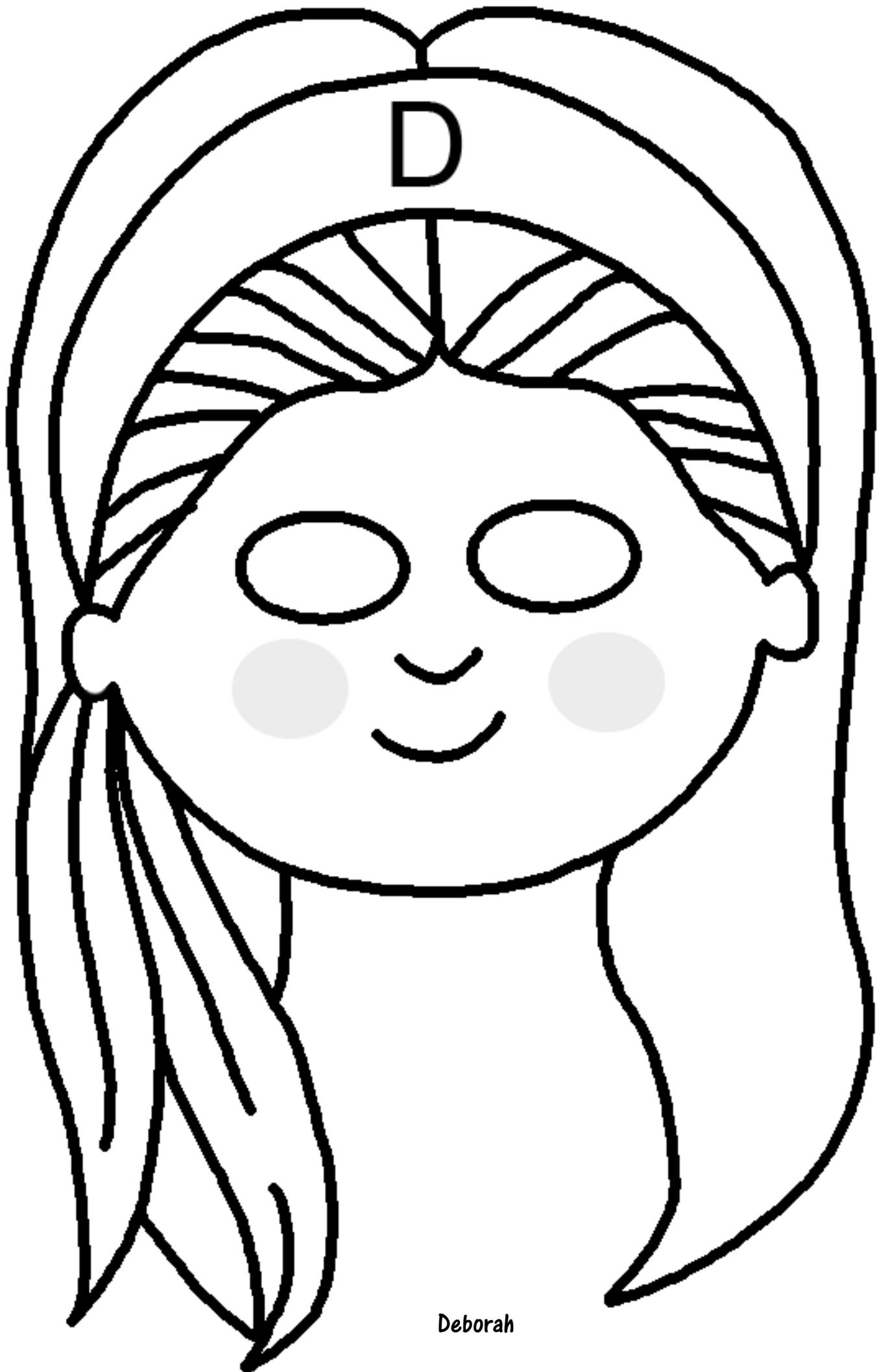
Fill in the correct answers on the crossword and then write down the hidden name that is found in the blocks that are marked.



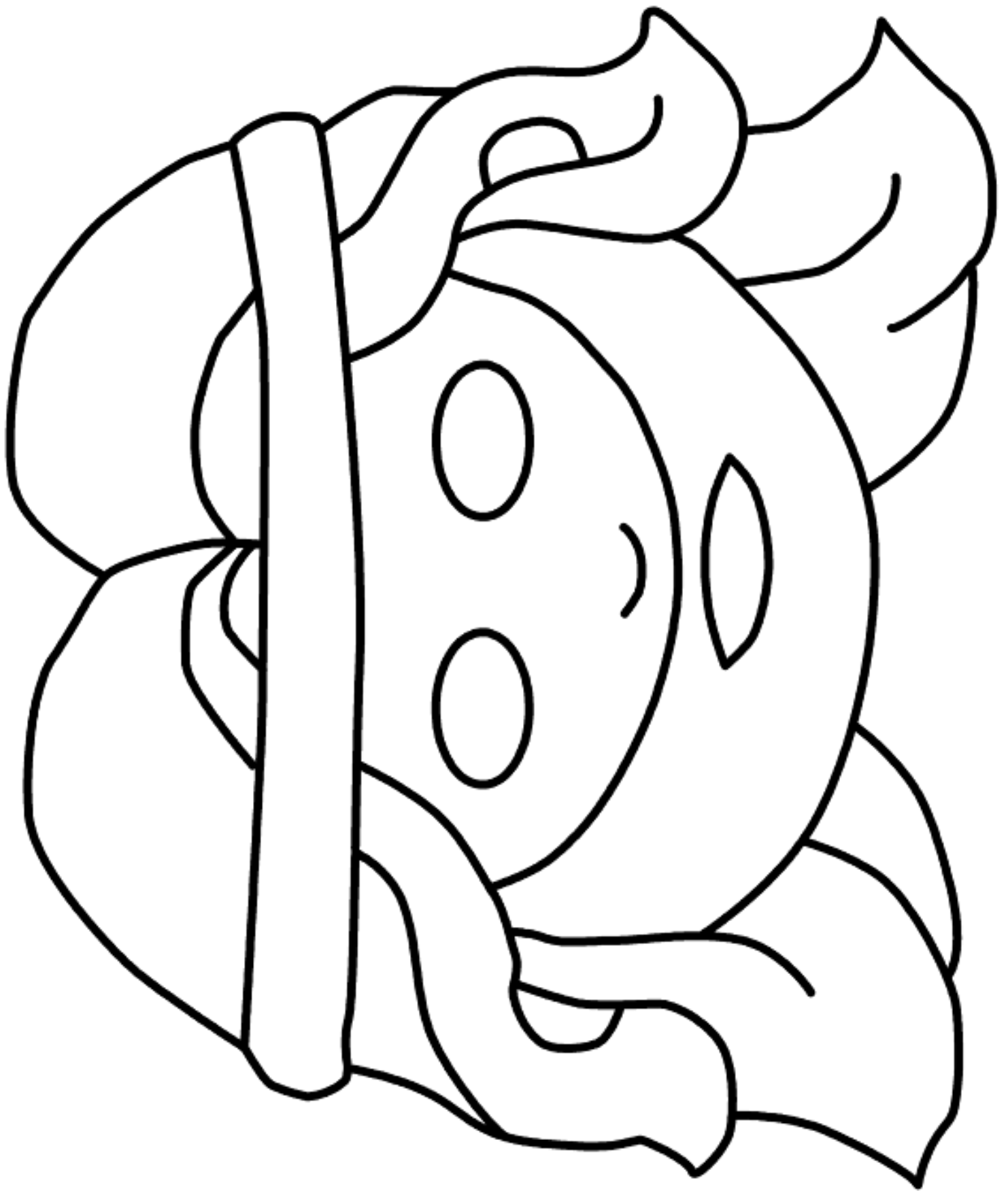
The people _____ and asked God to free them from their slavery.
 God sent them a Judge and Prophetess to _____ them.
 God told Deborah to give _____ a message.
 The God of Israel has given Barak an _____ to go to Mount Tabor.
 Barak had to fight _____ in the name of the Lord.
 _____ killed Sisera.
 Deborah was a judge and _____ .
 The hidden word is _____ .



S	S	E	T	E	H	P	O	R	P	
			L	E	J	A				
			A	R	E	S	I	S		
	R	E	R	O						
	K	A	R	B						
				E	A	V	S			
				D	E	A	P	R		



Deborah



Barak



Jael