

Literacy International: Numbers, Riddles, and God



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English

Spiritual

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English

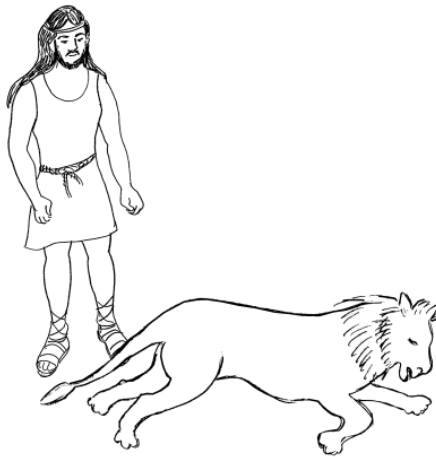
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The book of Judges in the Bible tells about Samson. Samson was a very strong man. A lion attacked him and he killed it. Then he went away, and came back some days later. The lion's body was full of honey and bees. The honey made him think up a riddle (a question). Here it was: "Out of the eater came something to eat. Out of the strong came something sweet." What was it? (A lion and some honey.)



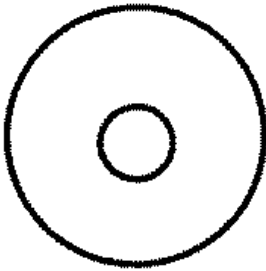
He had thirty men with him. "I have a riddle," he told them. "If you can indeed show me what it means within seven days, I will give you thirty linen wraps and thirty changes of clothes. But if you are not able to tell me the meaning, then you shall give me thirty linen wraps and thirty changes of clothes." (See the Bible story in Judges 14:12.)

Samson had a good time with that riddle. Nobody could solve it. He won many free clothes that day.

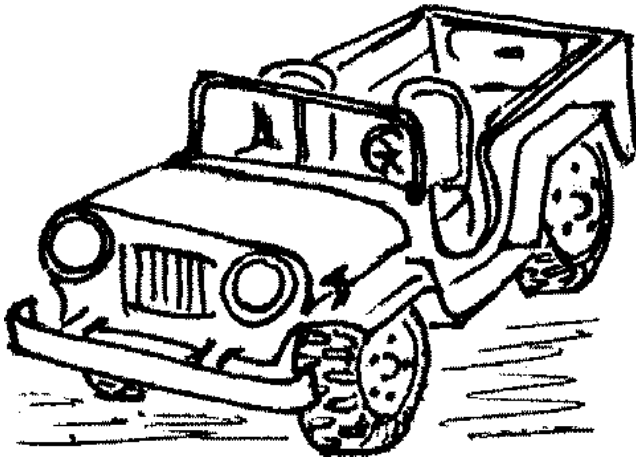
Here's a riddle for our day.

Out of a box comes something sweet. It is so good for the children to eat! All by itself it means nothing alone. It tells about some things no person will own.

What is it?... or who is it? A doughnut! A zero!



A zero means nothing, by itself. No one can own a zero. Tires and doughnuts and many other things are round, and may look like a zero, but a zero by itself does not mean anything, not a tire or a doughnut.



Write down a zero (**0**). It means nothing by itself. But, you can write a **3** just in front of the zero. It becomes something. It becomes thirty (**30**). Add another zero and you have **300** yards or meters. It's long enough for an American football game. **3,000** yards is how high some small airplanes will go.

We all know about numbers and names. In a city, we may use numbers to help us know where someone lives. We might say, "He lives at 62 Gateway Lane." These things say where he is. We will probably find him there.

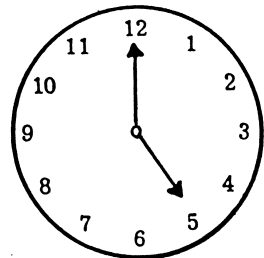
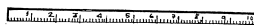
Scientists and accountants use numbers to tell about greater things. What things? Think about it.

Numbers tell us about money, size, distances and time.

We have dollars, pesos, and shillings for money.

We have inches, miles, and kilometers for distance.

We have minutes, hours, days, and years for time.



God led Abram outside one night and told him to count the stars he could see. The story is in Chapter 15, verse 5 of the book of Genesis in the Bible.

How many stars were there? God said this number would be the number of Abram's family. Abram's name became Abraham, which means father of many nations.



On a clear night in a desert Abraham might have seen 5,000 stars. This number is just a small part of all the stars in our universe or all the people in Abraham's "family" now.

Write down a one (**1**). Add a zero behind the 1 and it becomes ten (**10**). Add a zero to the 10 and you have one hundred (**100**).

Add a third zero and you have one thousand (**1,000**). Call each one a yard or meter to show how long or big this 1,000 is.

Every time you write a zero you have more and more meters or yards. If you add 26 zeroes, it means 10 times 10 times 10 times 10..... until you have 26 tens. Now you will have an idea of how big God's universe may be. Some scientists have thought this.

100,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 meters

But we know now that it is just an idea. We don't know how far the universe goes. There may be no end at all. Try thinking about "no end." It isn't easy. It's like trying to think about "no thing."

God loves each man, woman and child. Right now there are about 7 billion human beings on earth for Him to love. (Over **7,000,000,000** people!) Those who have already died and all those who will live after us are billions more. He died for all of us. It isn't easy to think about this, just as isn't easy to think about "no end" or "no thing."

But we can praise the One who made it all. We can thank Him for His numbers and size. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1) - we can't count how long ago. We don't have to. But we know that God is BIG and that His plan for the human race is big. We know this from His words in the Bible.

ZEROES AND LOVE: two things.

Zeros give an idea of how great God is. They tell us about His glory.

Love gives an idea of how He feels toward all us human beings.

PRAISE THE LORD. Thank Him for His glory and His love.

