

JOSHUA TRUSTS GOD

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

TRUST OBEY UNDERSTANDING SUBMIT PATH GOD'S WORD

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Joshua 3-4

MEMORY VERSE

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight" (Proverbs 3:5-6, NIV*).

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help children trust in God and obey his Word, even if it is difficult for them.

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

They had already completed 40 years of walking in the desert when God brought the people back to Israel on the banks of the Jordan River. His plans for them were the same as before: enter the land of Canaan to possess it. That's what God promised Abraham hundreds of years before. Obeying his orders now would be as difficult as it was 40 years earlier; but perhaps even more because the Jordan River was more crowded.

Under the leadership of Moses, God revealed himself to the people through a cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night to guide them. Now the Ark of the Covenant was the visible sign of God's presence. The priests in charge of it carried it long distances in front of the people, and it symbolized the presence of God with them to guide them.

After reaching the bank of the Jordan and camping there, Joshua waited three days for God's instructions. Finally, he told the people to get ready, because the Lord had given them orders to follow; consecration prepared them for the wonderful power of God. This also showed their total dependence on him. It also teaches us that only when we go to God and depend on him can we do great things through us.

After the consecration, the people were ready to cross the Jordan. When the feet of the priests who carried the ark touched the water's edge, the river separated. The priests stood in the midst of this opening, and the people could cross over on dry ground.

After all had crossed, Joshua appointed a representative from each tribe, and each one took a rock from the bottom of the river where the priests stood. They made an altar. This would serve as a sign to remind people of the power of God when they were obedient.

ADAPTATION

The biblical story tells of the time when God used his power to help those who trusted in him and obeyed. Children need to know that almighty God, Creator of the universe, is interested in each of them. They should know that no matter the circumstance or situation where they are, they can trust in God. This kind of trust is the foundation for obedience.

Obedience in practice helps us to strengthen our confidence. Thus, when we obey, we can see God working in our lives. Somehow, the Lord allows us to help him complete his purposes on this earth.

Many children have not experienced demonstrations of the power of God. However, we can help them develop their confidence in him by teaching the stories of God and his people, as the 12 stones reminded the people of the power of God (Joshua 4.) This teaches us and reminds us who and what God is.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Tell the group: "The miracle of crossing the Jordan River is the result of the commitment of the people to obey God through the leader that he had raised (Joshua). It was not the first time they had crossed water. With Moses, they had crossed the Red Sea. However, the people who were with Joshua were now a new generation; some were children; others were born after crossing the Red Sea, so this was just a story for them. Today's Bible story tells of the time when God used his power to help those who trusted in him and obeyed."

The children need to know that almighty God, Creator of the universe, is interested in each of them. They should know that no matter the circumstance or situation where they are, they can trust in God.

TEACH THE LESSON

Carefully study Joshua 3-4 prior to this session. Be prepared to tell the story in your own words.

In developing this lesson, emphasize the fact that obedience made a miracle possible. Crossing the Jordan River in the conditions in which the people did was difficult, because it had overflowed. (It was the worst time of the year to try to cross the river.) This time, the people did not need to rush, and they were not pressured to cross like when they had crossed the Red Sea. When they had crossed the Red Sea, there was no other choice because Pharaoh was close behind them. However, the people obeyed Joshua and dared to trust in God.

Tell the story in creative ways. If you can, bring some elements of the lesson, such as water, sand, 12 stones. Emphasize the greatness of the miracle and the power that God has over nature. Finally, emphasize the gratitude of the people and the altar of 12 stones.

To begin, form a circle with the children and put 12 stones in the middle (if you can, make it like an altar). Then, ask the children: "What do you think these stones represent?" (Allow everyone to answer.)

Tell the group: "This lesson is about the 12 stones."

CONNECT THE LESSON

Crossing the Jordan River

You will need Student Activity Sheet #122-A and #122-B plus scissors. Follow the instructions on the activity sheet. Be sure that children understand the instructions. Have the materials ready beforehand, perforate the sections of the sheet where the illustration of the people crossing the river will be inserted. (It would be helpful if you use a knife to cut the slits before class time.) Ask, "When did God stop the Jordan River?" (When the priests touched the water with their feet.)

Read Joshua 3:15-16 and ask, "What do you think would have happened if the priests had been afraid to trust and obey God's directions? (Maybe God would not have done the miracle, or God might have decided to wait longer to introduce his people to

the Promised Land, like what had happened with Moses.) Why do you think that priests were willing to obey God's commands? (They had to trust in God, even when he asked them to do something dangerous and difficult.) What do you think people thought while crossing the river?" (Accept responses.)

Trust

Have the children look at the back of Student Activity Sheet #122-C and begin a discussion by asking, "How can children show their trust and obedience to God in these situations?"

Possible answers:

1) Figure 1 - top left: By praying for someone who is sick. The Bible teaches us to pray for one another (James 5:14); but we must also follow the doctor's instructions.2) Figure 2 - top right: By showing respect to those in authority (like teachers, parents, pastor, etc.), even though others do not want to obey; refuse to do evil even though others do bad things and ask you to participate.3) Figure 3 - bottom left figure: You trust and obey God when you obey the instructions of your father to cross a street. In a violent neighborhood, you can trust that God will protect and guide you to make it all right.4) Figure 4 - bottom right: By obeying the instructions of firefighters in case of a fire. We must trust in God even in difficult situations or whenever something bad happens to us.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Cut out the silhouette of a big heart, preferably red. Inside it, write the memory verse. Also, write it in the area where the twelve stones are that you used for the class. Emphasize that by putting the Word of God in our hearts, we are reminding ourselves of God's power, just like the 12 stones by the Jordan River reminded the Israelites of God's power.

If you can and have time, prepare a small heart for each of the children. This will help them as they work on their memory verse at home. Ask them to draw an altar of 12 stones on the back of their hearts.

Please review the following questions:

What promise did God make to the people the night before crossing the Jordan River into the Promised Land? (That he would do something amazing.)

What instructions did Joshua give the people while they prepared to cross the Jordan River? (Look and follow the priests; keep away from the Ark of the Covenant.)

What happened when the priests' feet touched the Jordan River? (The river stopped flowing and the people could walk on dry land.)

What did Joshua make with the 12 stones they brought from the middle of the river? (He built an altar.)

Why did Joshua build an altar? (To remind the people and their future families of the miracle that God had done that day.)

WRAP-UP

Pray

Close with prayer. You can make a circle with the children and pray for them around the 12 stones. Do not forget to ask them to express their prayer requests before you pray.

Encourage

Before finishing, help the children remember what to take home. Thank them for coming to this session.

Invite

Create anticipation for the next session, trying to make a connection and awakening interest for not missing. Challenge the children to bring their friends.