

GOD IS IN CONTROL

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

TRUST UNDERSTANDING SUBMIT PATH SOVEREIGN STRAIGHT

BIBLICAL REFERENCE

Joshua 10:1-21

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help students learn that God is sovereign.

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*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

Preadolescents are leaving behind the stability of childhood to enter a stage of rapid changes in their life. It is likely that this transition will disorient and confuse them and even cause pain. They need a solid anchor in their life. They must learn that although the situation is difficult and painful, God is sovereign and almighty.

It is also important that they understand that God intervenes to order our life. Maybe he does it silently, almost without us noticing, or with miraculous demonstrations of his power. In whatever form, God is in control of the whole world, and even the most powerful forces in nature obey him. As the sovereign Lord of the universe, God deserves our loyalty, love and obedience.

BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

Read Joshua 10:1-21. The Israelites had a significant military presence in Canaan. They had defeated Jericho and other neighboring towns. Those of Gibeon managed to trick Joshua into signing a peace treaty (Joshua 9). When the other nations heard about it, they joined forces to punish Gibeon.

Although the Gibeonites had deceived Joshua, he kept his promise and helped them. The army of Israel, which was relatively new, had to fight against the armies of five great cities at once: Jerusalem, Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish and Eglon. The Israelites hoped to take the cities one by one, as they did with Jericho, but the plan did not work.

Although their plans failed, God promised Joshua victory. And he showed his sovereignty over the opposing armies, confusing the enemies when Joshua attacked them. In addition, he showed his sovereignty over nature, sending a storm of hail that destroyed the enemy armies. He also demonstrated his sovereignty over time by answering Joshua's prayer and disrupting the normal pattern of the moon and the sun. Lastly, he showed his sovereignty over other gods, giving his people the victory over the pagan armies.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

God did it

Start the class by asking your students: Do you remember any time in your life when you wanted a miracle to occur? Allow some volunteers to respond, or ask them directly by name. Emphasize that miracles show that God is in control of the situation.

Ask them to find this activity in Student Activity Sheet #332-A. Divide the class into small groups to work on the alphabet soup. Gather your students and compare the words they found. They are LAZARUS, CARMEL, INVISIBLE, ELISHA, RED, HEALED, FISH, GOD, JORDAN.

Remind them that God is sovereign; therefore, he has the power to perform miracles. Miracles are a way in which God shows his sovereignty over nature and lives of people. If time allows, review what miracles God did in each of the stories represented in the alphabet soup. In what ways did God show his sovereignty?

TEACH THE LESSON

Five cities against a sovereign God

Read together the passage from Joshua 10:1-21. As you read, ask the students to identify the various ways in which God demonstrated his sovereignty in each situation. To encourage discussion, use the following questions:

How did God show that he was in control of the situation? (v. 8) (God told Joshua that the enemy would not defeat Israel. In addition, he confused the enemy army, sending a storm of hail to attack them. This favored the triumph of Joshua and the Israelites.)

Why did God encourage Joshua before he fought against the enemy? (The Israelite army did not compare with the army of the five enemy cities. God wanted to assure Joshua that he would accompany them and that the Hebrew army would triumph in battle with the help of the Almighty.)

God, our help in any trouble

Joshua and the Israelites recognized that God is sovereign. This recognition makes the difference when confronting enemies.

It is important to understand that the sovereignty of God is not limited by our lack of understanding.

Read Joshua 10:19 and reflect on the victory that God gave the Israelites, even though they faced a very large army. Neither the size of the army, nor the power of their weapons, nor time limited God.

Divide the class into small groups to answer the following questions. Then, discuss the answers.

1. Why did Joshua help the people of Gibeon?

(The combined forces of the Amorite kings would attack Gibeon. The Israelites had made a deal with the Gibeonites. Although they lied in making the deal, Joshua felt he had to do his part and help them in the battle.)

2. Why did God send hail?

(He used his sovereignty over nature to help his people in a time of need.)

God does not always use miracles to fulfill his plans. What do you think about that?

CONNECT THE LESSON

How do you feel?

Allow time for your students to go to this activity on Student Activity Sheet #332-B, and observe the expression of the characters' faces. Ask them to circle the feelings they have when they think about God's sovereignty. (Possible answers: happy, ashamed, sad, amazed, excited, strong, confused, frightened, and proud). Ask volunteers to tell and explain their answers.

It is important to emphasize that sovereignty without love can be cruel and painful. There is a saying, "Power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely." However, we should not be afraid of God. Although he is sovereign and powerful, he also loves us.

The sovereign God of the universe invites us to love and follow him.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Who is the winner?

For this unit, write the memory verse on pieces of paper or cardboard in the form of clouds or another form of your liking. Place in each of them a word from the text of Proverbs 3:5-6.

Mix them up on a table, with the words down. After repeating the memory verse several times, encourage the children to put the passage in order. For this memorization activity you can divide the children into two or three small groups. If so, you must prepare two or three sets of memory verses. Make it into a competition. The team that learns the text and puts it in the correct order first can receive a small prize, such as a pencil, stickers or stamps. This activity can be repeated every session while teaching this unit.

WRAP-UP

Pray

This is a good time for the group to reflect on and pray about some personal aspects related to the sovereignty of God in their lives.

Do I allow God to control my life, or do I try to do it myself?

Am I worried about situations that I am sure God has under his control? Why?

Ask that a member of the class finish with prayer.

Encourage

Encourage them to leave all their fears and concerns in God's hands.

Invite

Do not forget to invite the group to the next session, and remind them that visitors are welcome.