



LESSON PLAN

Scripture Texts:

Joshua 3:1-17

Isaiah 43:1-3

Session Theme:

Remembrance

a. Welcome to Class

Teachers should arrive in the classroom well in advance of class. Welcome students as they enter, and inquire about their week. Pass out name tags and record attendance on a classroom chart.

b. Icebreaker: River Walk

Ask kids who has ever spent time near a river. Next, ask who has ever put their feet in a river. Finally, ask if anyone has ever crossed a river on foot. (*Emphasize that this is NOT something they should try to do because very few rivers are safe to cross this way.*) What might prevent us from trying to cross a river on foot? Let kids give their ideas.

In today's story, a crowd of people needed to cross the Jordan River while some were carrying something big and heavy. There wasn't a bridge or a boat nearby, and they weren't sure how to do this safely. But then a miracle occurred! What was it? Let's find out!

c. Opening Prayer

Lord God, when we face hard challenges, it's good to remember how you have helped us in the past. Remind us of these times, so that we may have faith and courage to meet the future. In the name of Jesus Christ we pray. Amen.

d. SEED Video or Song (Optional)

The teacher may introduce the lesson by playing the video clip from the SEED website. This time may also include an opening song or two, using a commercial Sunday School music CD.

Song suggestions for this lesson:

- "I Will Call Upon the Lord" (children's song)
- "He Leadeth Me" (hymn)

e. Brief Bible Background

Read together the introduction to the lessons for the day, and briefly summarize the context and setting:

- Today's Lesson is from the Old Testament
- Scripture Section: Conquest

Joshua led the people into the Promised Land and captured the cities of the Canaanites. God led the people to many miraculous victories, including the battle of Jericho.

f. Communicate the Bible Story

Always keep in mind that the main purpose of Sunday School is to put people in contact with Bible stories. Use a version that is appropriate to the age level.

Upper Elementary: Read the Bible Story and Rhyme

Youth/Adults: Read the Scripture text from the Bible

For Upper and Lower Elementary, use the Storyteller questions to help the students think about the events of the story.

g. Complete the Worksheet(s)

Continue with the handout sheets appropriate to the age level of the students in class:

Upper Elementary: Worksheet and Drama

Youth: Bible Study (Maps, Timelines, Questions)

Adult: Bible Study Sheet (Introduction and Discussion)

h. Craft and Activity Time

If there is time after covering the Bible story, the class may move to craft and activity time, described on the following page. (Do not let the activity time supersede the actual time spent on the Scripture lesson.)

i. Summarize and Review

Before ending class, briefly summarize the day's lesson one last time. If you have not already done so, introduce the Theme Word for the week, providing the definition, and asking how the lesson connects to that theme.

Youth/Adult: Discuss "Reflection for the Week Ahead"

j. Closing Prayer

Close the session in prayer before dismissal:

Upper Elementary: Practice a prayer from memory (e.g., the Lord's Prayer, Luther's Morning Prayer, etc.)

Youth/Adult: Use the ADTRC Prayer format



Bible Study Leader's Guide

The following is a discussion and answer guide for the Youth and Adult Bible Study sheets. For all leaders, it can serve to provide some background on the Bible lesson.

Discuss: Joshua 3:1-17

1. Who had God chosen to be the new leader after Moses? Why did God want the people to know that he was still with them, even though Moses was gone?

God chose Joshua to be the leader after Moses died (Joshua had served as an assistant to Moses during their time in the wilderness). God wanted the people to know that even though Moses was gone, God was still with them. Our faith in God is more than just confidence in a human leader. Leaders (good and bad) will come and go, but only God is eternal.

2. According to verse 3:12, how many tribes of people were there among the Israelites? These tribes were named after the sons of Jacob. Can you list them?

There were Twelve Tribes of Israel, named after the twelve sons of Jacob: Reuben, Simeon, Benjamin, Levi, Dan, Judah, Naphtali, Issachar, Gad, Zebulon, Asher, and Joseph. (In the Bible, the descendants of Joseph are often split into two "half-tribes" — Ephraim and Manasseh — named after Joseph's two sons).

3. The Ark of the Covenant was a box carried on poles (Exodus 25:10-22). What was so special about this box? What did it have inside? Why was this artifact so important to the Israelites?

The Ark of the Covenant was the gold-covered box that contained the Ten Commandments and a few other relics of the journey. (Refer to Exodus 25:10-15 for a description.) It was the symbol and center of God's presence among the people. For this reason, it was a source of power and a reminder that God was with them.

4. What happened when the priests came to the edge of the Jordan River? When had something similar happened to the Israelites before? How do these two events serve as "bookends" for the larger story?

The water of the river parted before them. In effect, the river stopped flowing as if it were blocked by a dam. The waters heaped on the upstream side, while they flowed away on the downstream side. This miracle is reminiscent of God's parting the Red Sea. So there was a miraculous parting of water at the beginning of

their wilderness wanderings, and a miraculous parting of water at the end of their journey.

5. Why did Joshua have the chosen men make a heap of rocks? What were the people told to remember about these stones? How would this memorial help the faith of future generations?

Just as the water "heaped up," Joshua had stones heaped up as a monument. The pile of stones was a marker of the place where God parted the waters and the Israelites crossed into the Promised Land. It would remind people of future generations of what God had done for his people, letting them know that God is trustworthy!

6. In the New Testament, John the Baptist's ministry took place very near this same spot at the Jordan. In what sense did John declare to the people of his day that "the living God is among you" (Joshua 3:10)? To whom did he point the people?

John the Baptist came to announce the coming of the Messiah, Jesus. Just as Joshua knew that God was with his people, John pointed to Jesus, who was literally and physically "God with us" (Emmanuel). The same God who had saved Israel in the past had come into the world as a human being.

6. Read Isaiah 43:1-3. In what way do the prophet's words here relate to the story of Joshua? Do you believe that God is with you in the things you face, or does God seem indifferent to your struggles?

In Isaiah 43:2, God says: "When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you." These verses remind us that even when we are facing danger and challenges, we need not be afraid, because God will get us through. Faith does not make us immune to the difficulties of life, but it does give us the strength to deal with problems and not let them overcome us.

7. In many old American spiritual hymns, the image of "crossing the Jordan" is used as a metaphor for death. Why do you think that is? How does it illustrate difference between this life and the next?

In a sense, our earthly physical death is when we "cross over" into our future eternal life. Just as the Promised Land awaited the Israelites on the other side, we move on to the promised eternal life with God. Whereas this world is like a "wilderness" of pain and struggle, our future life will be one of peace and happiness in the presence of God.

Classroom Craft and Activity Page

Listed below are in-class activities and craft projects related to the theme for the day. Choose one of the following based on the age and capabilities of the students. (Never let the activity or craft time take precedence over the biblical story.)

Activity 1: Ten Commandments Craft

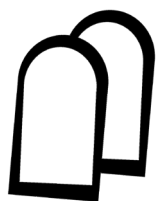
Materials Needed:

- Card stock or cardboard
- Pencils
- Markers
- Scissors
- Copies of the Ten Commandments (Lutheran version)
- Glue (optional)

Instructions:

Divide the class into pairs. Give each pair two pieces of card stock and scissors.

Invite each student to take a piece of card stock and round off the edges on one long end (see illustration above). Next, give each pair a copy of the Ten Commandments, along with two pencils and some markers. Invite one student to write the first five commandments, in pencil, on one piece of card stock, while the other student writes commandments six through ten, also in pencil, on the other piece of card stock. Next, invite kids to trace over their writing in marker. They may also want to add symbols or other designs to their work. If there is time left over, challenge kids to study the commandments; then to stand up and recite the main point of each one without looking at what they wrote.



In today's story, the priests carried a big box called the Ark of the Covenant across the Jordan River. But what was inside that Ark? The Ten Commandments! Those were so important to the Jewish people that they would not leave them behind.

Instead, they carried them throughout the wilderness for many years as they traveled.

The Ten Commandments are very important to us, too. Notice that the first three commandments have to do with our relationship with God, and the others with our relationships with people. There is a reason that these words have been preserved for thousands of years. May we value them always.

The Ten Commandments

1. You shall have no other gods.
2. You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.
3. Remember the Sabbath Day, and keep it holy.
4. Honor your father and your mother
5. You shall not kill

Activity 2: Carry It Across Activity

Materials Needed:

- Yarn or heavy string
- Scissors
- Big, lightweight books, such as children's picture books
- Masking tape
- Timer

Instructions:

Using masking tape, make two long lines on the floor near one end of the room. These represent the Jordan River.

Cut several pieces of yarn or heavy string, all the same length, between 3 feet and 4 feet long.

Divide the class into pairs. Invite both kids in a pair to stand a couple of feet apart from one another, facing forward. Give each pair two pieces of string and a book.

Have them hold a piece of yarn in each hand, and pull it taut between them. This will form a support on which you can balance a book.

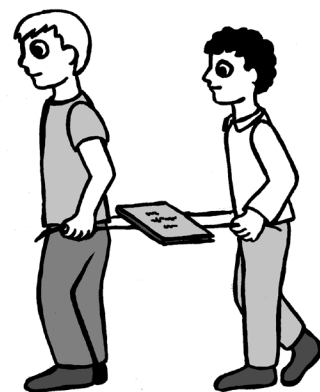
Explain that these pairs are going to be like the priests in today's story, carrying the Ark of the Covenant across the water. Point to the masking tape and explain that this represents the river Jordan.



The object of this game is for a pair to get across the river and over to the other side before a timer sounds. They must do this without dropping the book. If the book falls, the team must return to the starting position and repeat the process while the clock is still ticking.

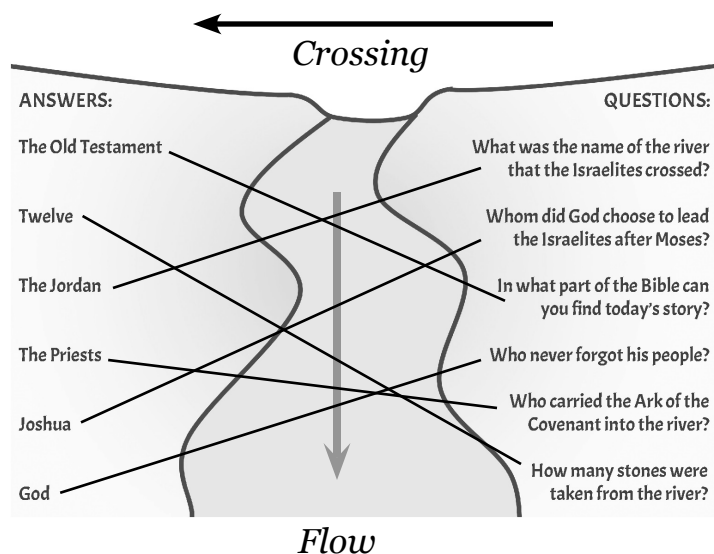
Set the timer for a couple of minutes (time will depend on the length of the room) and let the pairs try to cross the river. If your room is narrow, you may choose to have pairs go one at a time. Otherwise, two or more pairs can go at once. See how many are able to do it within the timeframe!

If the game goes quickly, have kids do additional rounds with successively less time on the timer.



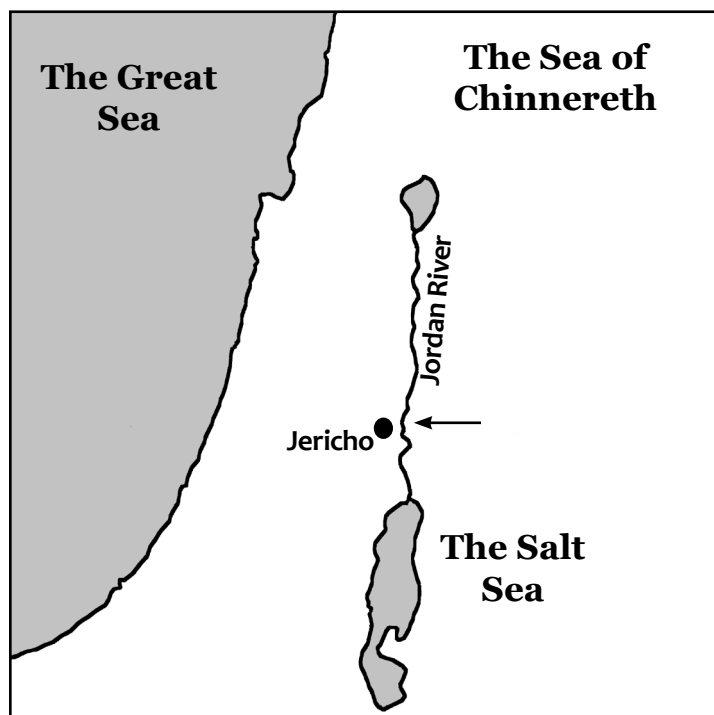
Worksheet Answer Key

Shown below is the solution to the children's worksheet for this week's lesson:



Map Answer Key

The place where the Israelites crossed the Jordan River into the Promised Land was at the south end (the downstream end) near the Salt Sea.



Vocabulary Word for the Week

Teachers may want to introduce the theme word for the week to help expand students' biblical vocabulary.

Remembrance

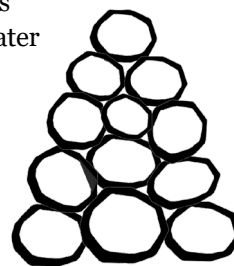
thinking back in time
to things that happened long ago

In faith, we remember all the many great things that God has done for us!

Reflection for the Week Ahead

How do you remember an important event or date? Do you write it on the calendar? Do you make a special meal or bake a cake once a year to celebrate it?

In today's story, God helped the Israelites cross the Jordan river by stopping the water in a miraculous way. Because the people were traveling in the wilderness when this happened, they wanted some way to remember the event. So they piled 12 stones in a heap. This would stand as a marker of what had happened there, and as a reminder of God's faithfulness to all who came later.



In Jewish tradition to this day, people often put a small rock on a headstone when they visit someone who has died. It's a visible way of showing that they have not forgotten that person. What can we do to remind ourselves of the blessings in our lives, whether those be people or special events?

Think of something special that you would like to remember. Maybe it's your baptism day, or another important date that you don't normally celebrate. What can you do to remind yourself of this each year?

The Practice of Prayer

Write a prayer praising God for his faithfulness. Thank him for seeing you through all the challenges and obstacles you face.

Practice using the ADTRC Prayer Form: Address, Description, Thanks, Request, Conclusion.