



JOSHUA-THE NEW LEADER

God's Incredible Plan • U5#3 1st-3rd Grade • Nov. 9, 2025

Concept

God gives courage and strength to those who trust Him.

Goal

Students will learn that God is always with us and gives us courage and strength.

Passage

Joshua 1 and 3; Numbers 13; 27:18-20

Key Verse: "... Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9 (NASB)

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 toilet paper tubes• Bibles <p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "God's Travel Plans" map• 1 blue bed sheet• Bibles <p>Learning Activity #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bibles	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Picture of Ark of the Covenant• 18" x 9" cardboard carton with lid• Two broom handles (or dowel rods)• Four 1½" binder rings (or size needed for broom handles)• Gold wrapping paper• Four twist ties• Various colors of construction paper• Glue, tape, markers, scissors

*TEACHERS PLEASE NOTE

For clarity, the italicized areas in the Planning Ahead section indicate supplies that are in—and should be returned to—your classroom SHARED SUPPLY bag.

Background Information/Teacher Helps

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The response to the word “command” is often legitimately negative. If I were to command or order you to do something, you may find the hair on the back of your neck standing on end. But it is a total misunderstanding on our part to ever believe that God's commands are harsh or unfair. In our walk with the Lord we must learn that it is essential to fight our natural tendency to resist His authority. God's commands are for our benefit and success. Joshua understood this and was used mightily by God. The word “command” is found at least seven times in the first chapter of Joshua. After Moses died and Joshua took over the leadership role, the Lord continually commanded Joshua, “be strong and courageous” (Joshua 1:6,7 and 9). His command to be strong and courageous was preceded with, “No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you or forsake you” (Joshua 1:5). If God is with us and in charge we have nothing to fear. Joshua was strong and courageous because He believed that God is faithful and powerful enough to do what He has promised.

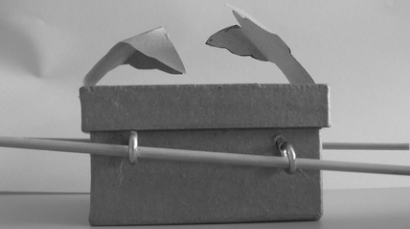
Joshua had a great role model in Moses (Deut. 34:10-12). “Moses had been a great spokesman for God. There would be other prophets in Israel, but none would ever hold the place of the man who led them out of Egypt to the Promised Land. Nevertheless, One would come whose sandals Moses was not worthy to unloose. That One, Jesus Christ, would carry the sins of us all, including those of Moses.”[1]

Joshua was blessed to be with and learn from Moses. However, Joshua had to make his own decisions. Last week we saw that only two of Moses' twelve spies came back willing to trust God enough to face the “giants.” Joshua was one of those two spies. He continued throughout his life to remain obedient to God's commands, willing to persevere. After reading through this book, you'll see why Joshua's name means “Savior.” He trusted God and had a willing heart. Therefore, he had the authority and confidence to command the Israelites to march in and take the Promised Land.

[1] Children's Ministry Resource Bible, 1993, Child Evangelism Fellowship Inc., note on Deuteronomy 34:10, p. 259.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group



Introduction Lg. Group

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Instructions: Set up the chairs in the square formation for the Game. Students can listen to the Introduction sitting in the square, eliminating the need for a transition.

Activity Stations:

- **Props – Ark**
 - **Instructions:** Read Exodus 25 about the Ark and study the two artist renderings to get an idea of what it was like. Cover box and lid with gold paper, taping or gluing in place. At both ends of the box poke 2 holes on both sides through lid and box with scissors. Put twist ties through holes in box and attach binder rings. Cover or color wrapping paper tubes for poles. Put them through the rings. Using the 2 pictures, design and make cherubim to attach to top. If there is time, have the students make the contents of the ark and put them inside.
- **Scenery – Jordan River**
 - **Instructions:** Using the provided paper, have students create creatures, vegetation, rocks found in a river to put in the Jordan River.
- **Missions Prayer**
 - **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving campaign.

Last week we talked about some spies who were sent to check out the Promised Land. Most of them returned unwilling to go back because of the LARGE “giants” who lived there. Two of the spies were willing to go back and claim the land that God had promised them. Who were they? (They were Joshua and Caleb.) So Joshua was chosen by God to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land.

We'll learn today that Moses passed the “baton” of leadership to Joshua. We are going to play a game where you will pass a baton to a teammate.

GAME - Pass the Baton [5]

Instructions: Divide into four teams. Line up in the formation of a square and sit in chairs, one team along each side of the square. Place a chair or other marker in the middle of the square. Give a baton (toilet paper tube) to each team. At the signal, the first player on each team takes the baton, runs to the center and around the chair and then takes the vacant seat at the opposite end of the team's line while the rest of the team moves down one seat. The baton is passed down the line, person to person, until it reaches the first player in the line. The game continues until the original player again has the baton.

[5] Adapted from Adventure Club, The Great Commission Expedition, "Banana Relay" ©1991 by Adventure Club, David C. Cook Publishing Co., p. 85.

Learning Activity#1 Continued

Transition

Learning Activity#2 Lg. Group

Transition

Lesson Lg. Group

Debrief: Open your Bibles to Numbers 27 and follow along as I read verses 15-23.

God had just told Moses that his life was at an end. So Moses asked God to choose a leader for the nation of Israel. He knew that only the leader chosen by God would be able to lead the people into the Promised Land. God told Moses to take Joshua to a priest and, as all the people watched, the priest laid his hands on Joshua and gave him his orders. This would be like the President of the United States being sworn into office. Joshua was given an incredible job. The responsibility of leading the Israelites into the Promised Land was passed from Moses to Joshua. As you passed the baton to a teammate in the race, Moses passed the "baton" of leadership to Joshua.

Turn to Joshua 1 verse 2. The Lord wanted Joshua to lead the people across the Jordan River into the Promised Land.

Let's all stand up and act out this part.

Drama - "Crossing the Jordan"

Instructions: Have the stage/set crew set up the Jordan River with the objects made in the Activity Station. Have the priests get the Ark. Have the "God's Travel Plans" map with you. Drama script is included at the bottom of the lesson.

Cast:

- Joshua – teacher
- 4 Priests –students
- Narrator – teacher
- Israelites –students
- Blue sheet holder – students
- God – student

Grab a Bible and sit down. We'll be in the book of Joshua.

Joshua believed God and God kept His promise. Turn to Joshua 1 in your Bibles. Read verse 9. "... Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). As Joshua believed God and followed His instructions, God did what He said He would. As God guided the Israelites to the Promised Land, He cleared a dry path through the Jordan River for the people to walk through. Can you imagine being there for that? Do you remember a few weeks ago we learned that God parted the Red Sea for the people as Moses led them out of Egypt where they were in slavery? And He parted the Jordan River for the people as Joshua led them into the Promised Land. This was one way that Joshua was similar to Moses. Can you think of some other ways that Joshua and Moses were the same? (Write on white board):

Parallels Between Moses and Joshua

MOSES	JOSHUA
Leader of the Israelites Led the people out of slavery Trusted God Crossed the Red Sea Got to see God at work Experienced God's blessings	Leader of Israelites Led people into Promised Land Trusted God Crossed the Jordan River Got to see God at work Experienced God's blessings

The bottom line is that both Joshua and Moses were NOT perfect people. They sinned like you and me. Joshua could have made it to the Jordan River, looked at the deep water and said "FORGET IT." He didn't do that. He trusted that God would be with him. Joshua and the Israelites entered the Promised Land. Joshua and Moses trusted God and saw the power, love and leading of God. They knew Him and experienced His blessings.

In the same way we can know God and experience His blessings. First, we must believe what He says about Himself and about us. He says He loves us so much that He sent His son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins. He says we are sinners and need to be forgiven for our sin. God promises that if we tell Him we know we sin and ask Jesus' death to pay for our sins, He will forgive us and Jesus will come into our lives. Then we can get to know Him, follow His truth and experience His blessings.

Does trusting God to give you strength also affect other people? (Yes! Give the kids time to respond with how it is good and can help other people when we trust God to give us strength.)

Remember God's purpose was that all nations would know that He is God and there is no other god like Him. Turn to 1 Timothy 2 and follow along as I read verse 4. Would anyone like to share what that verse means?

Let's get into small groups to discuss and pray.

Joshua is a great example of someone who believed God's promises. God had said, "... Be strong and courageous! Do not tremble or be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9).

Transition

**Learning
Activity# 2
Sm. Groups**

Learning Activity# 2 Continued

Open your bibles to Joshua 4 and follow along as I read verses 21-24.

- According to these verses, what was God's purpose for keeping His promises? Was it just for His chosen people?
- Why do you think it is important to God that people respect Him and know He has great power?
- When you know what God wants you to do, but you're afraid, what do you do?
- What is something that is hard or scary that God might want you to do? (Allow students to offer their experiences.) If you believe, as Joshua, that God will be with you, how do you think that would look in your situation?

Let's pray and thank God that He is always with us and give us courage and strength.

DRAMA - "Crossing the Jordan"

Narrator: Once again the Israelites are ready to go into the Promised Land. They are camped on the bank of the Jordan River (point out on the map). Joshua sends only two spies this time to sneak into Jericho to see what is going on. When the spies return they report, "The LORD surely has given us all of the land. All the people in that land are terribly afraid of us." They, like Joshua, believe that God will give the Israelites the land.

Joshua: Okay, let's get moving. Here we are. (Point to the East bank of the Jordan River on God's Travel Plans map. Review the journey from Egypt across the Red Sea, down into the desert, back up to Canaan, around the Dead Sea, up to the East bank of the Jordan River.) But, oh dear, we're in a bit of a jam here. The Lord told us to cross the river here to get to our Promised Land. We don't have a boat and there is no bridge. Maybe the only way we can get across is to swim. I hope you all have been keeping up with your workout routines because it's going to be hard swimming across this fast running river—but WE CAN DO IT! SO COME ON—I WANT 20 OUT OF ALL OF YOU! 20 PUSH-UPS, JUMPING JACKS AND ARM CIRCLES.

Kids exercise

Narrator: Time out...Now do you guys think Joshua really believed they would have to swim across the Jordan River? Did they take boats? Rafts? Inner tubes? Did they build a bridge? Let's continue on to find out how the Israelites REALLY crossed the Jordan River.

Joshua: God has told me what we are to do. When you see the priests carrying the Ark of the Covenant you are to follow them. Be sure to stay about 1/2 mile behind. Now go and make yourselves clean, for tomorrow the Lord will do a great miracle.

Kids bathe & sleep

Narrator: The next day Joshua tells the priests to take up the Ark and lead them across the river. Remember the Ark of the Covenant is where God met with Moses. Because it was in their presence they knew that God was leading and dwelling among them. The Lord then spoke to Joshua,

God: TODAY all of the Israelites will KNOW that I AM WITH YOU just as I was with Moses. Tell the priest to stop at the edge of the river.

The priests and Ark will lead. Have the kids walk around the room.

Joshua: LISTEN TO GOD. Today we will see that He is with us. The Ark of the Covenant will go before us and lead us across the river. The priests carrying the Ark will touch the water with their feet and the water will stop flowing and pile up as though an invisible wall is holding it.

Narrator: The Jordan River, at this time, is at its HIGHEST level. The water is overflowing its banks. This does not stop Joshua and the people from doing what God tells them to do. They still believe His promise. The priests touch the water at the river's edge and suddenly the water piles up as though against a wall.

As the priests touch the water/blue sheet, have a teacher lift the sheet off the ground and make a wall for the Israelites to walk by.

Joshua: The riverbed is DRY! Let us walk across.

The priests stop halfway while the people cross to the other side.

Joshua: Come up from the Jordan.

Priests walk to bank. Lay sheet down on floor.

Narrator: It was a tremendous day for Joshua! The Lord made him great in the eyes of all the people of Israel. He lead them as God told him and they crossed on dry ground. The people respected him as much as they had Moses.

Joshua: Israel crossed the Jordan River on dry land. The LORD your God caused the water to stop flowing until you finished crossing it, just as the LORD did to the Red Sea. He stopped the water until we crossed it. The LORD did this so all people of the earth would know he has great power and so you would always respect the LORD your God.

And all the people say..."Hooray! God is great!!"