



GOD'S INCREDIBLE PLAN

Unit 6 • Israel in the Land

UNIT DESCRIPTION

In this unit we begin with events that took place about 1400 BC. The book of Joshua is our starting point as we see the nation of Israel initiate their conquest and division of Canaan. Throughout the campaign Joshua is reminded, "Be strong and courageous... the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."

"The conquest of Canaan took between five and seven years. During that time, each tribe was given the responsibility of cleaning up its own area, a task which they never completely accomplished. The tribes disobeyed God by failing to remove the Canaanite sins and idolatries from the land and these unresolved Canaanite sins infected the nation of Israel for generations to follow." [1]

This unit also touches on the period of the Judges that commences after Joshua's death. "After conquering the Promised Land, the people of Israel began to intermarry with the remaining Canaanites. This resulted in worshiping false gods and the practice of various forms of sexual perversion. The Bible summarizes the prevailing attitude of this period of decay and disobedience by stating, '... everyone did what was right in his own eyes' (Judges 21:25).

"The effect of ignoring God's ways for man was clearly demonstrated during this era. When man does what is right in his eyes, without reference to God's Absolutes, decay and confusion always results... "During this period of chaos and confusion, God raised up Judges through whom He spoke. Because of the decay within, Israel also fell prey to enemies outside the nation. First one nation and then another invaded and made portions of Israel their vassal state, then God would use some of the Judges to lead the people in defense of Israel against the invading nations.

"Sometimes when the people were in great difficulty, they would turn to God and He would raise up a Judge, such as Gideon, to speak to the people and lead them. After the immediate peril was past, however, the people soon forgot and turned away from God. This attitude is not unlike the 'foxhole religion' of contemporary times. We can so easily cry out to God for help when we are desperate and then so quickly forget Him when the immediate terror is past." [2]

The final lesson, Ruth, shows that while unfaithfulness and idolatry on the part of Israel mark the time of the judges, there were Gentiles who did believe in the one true God. God's sovereignty continues to be constant during these turbulent times.

[1] Martha McCallum, God's Incredible Plan, Jane Hamblin, pp. 53, 54.

[2] Martha McCallum, God's Incredible Plan, Jane Hamblin., pp. 55, 56.



ENTERING THE LAND-JERICHO AND AI

God's Incredible Plan • U6 #1 1st-3rd Grade • Nov 30, 2025

Concept

God is sovereign and always victorious.

Goal

Students will learn that God is always victorious, and we need to depend on Him, not on our own strength. In order to depend on God, we must have a relationship with Him.

Passage

Joshua 6-8

Key Verse: "... Joshua commanded the people, 'Shout! for the Lord your God has given you the city!' Joshua 6:16

Planning Ahead

| Lesson Supplies | Craft Supplies |
|---|--|
| <p>Learning Activity #1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>8½" x 11" scrap paper, 100/room</i>• <i>Ark of the Covenant from Unit 5#3</i> <p>Learning Activity #3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Plastic shofar, 2/room</i>• <i>Antiseptic wipes, 1 container/room</i>• <i>Blindfolds, 1/student</i>• <i>Ark of the Covenant from Unit 5#3</i>• <i>Tootsie pops, 20/class</i> | <p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>3 decks of playing cards</i>• <i>Adventure Bible Handbook</i>• <i>"Fortifications of Jericho,"[1] Bryant Wood</i>• <i>Velcro for starting line and 3 "X's"</i>• <i>4oz., 8oz., 12oz. & 16oz. plastic cups – 12 of each size/room</i> |

[1] <http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v21/i2/jericho.asp>

*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

God's Incredible Plan • U6#1 1st-3rd Grade

This lesson illustrates through the battles of Jericho and Ai that trust in God to accomplish His will results in His blessing, while trust in ourselves results in defeat. The battle at Jericho demonstrates dependence on God and resultant success. The city of Jericho was a big, walled city tightly closed because the inhabitants were aware of the Israelites' presence in the area. It was virtually impenetrable by normal means of attack. Likely recognizing the impossibility of the situation, the Israelites sought and closely followed God's instructions even though unusual. This dependence clearly resulted in victory when the walls fell.

"From the point of view of Jericho's defenders, no battle strategy could have been more bizarre and nonsensical than this one. What was all this marching and trumpeting supposed to accomplish? What was to prevent the army of Jericho from raining spears and arrows onto the defenseless Israelites? What would stop the Canaanites from rushing out of the city gates to charge into Israel's marching column and simply butcher them? Joshua was an experienced military leader, a veteran of many battles. Certainly these and similar objections flashed through his mind as the divine strategy of God was explained to him. But unlike Moses, who spent a lot of time arguing with God over His plans for the Hebrew people, Joshua responded with unquestioning obedience."^[1]

By way of contrast, the battle at Ai resulted in defeat. Two reasons are suggested in the passage. First, the Bible expressly states that God was angry at the disobedience of the soldier Achan in stealing some of the plunder, despite God's instructions to the contrary (Josh 6:17-19). Secondly, the Israelites did not consult God with the battle plan because Ai, being a small city, seemed conquerable with a few men relying on their own strength.

As a further note: "(vv. 2-5) Jericho was a city of about 9 acres that would have taken about 20 to 30 minutes to march around. This unusual battle plan would require great faith and would be another lesson in walking by faith, not by sight (Jer. 17:5-8; Heb. 11; 12). As in the crossing of the Jordan, the prominence of the ark would remind Israel that this was the work of their God. The trumpet blast is also symbolic of the presence of God—cf. Ex. 19:13; Ps. 24:7; Isa. 18:3; 1 Cor. 15:52; 1 Thess. 4:16; Rev. 11:15."^[2]

[1] Donald K. Campbell, No Time for Neutrality, A Study of Joshua, 1994 Discovery House Publishers, pp. 86-92.

[2] Believer's Study Bible Notes, QuickVerse notes on Joshua 6:2, Parsons Technology.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

Instructions: Have the obstacle course props ready for quick setup.

Activity Stations:

- **Card Game – "War"**
 - **Instructions:** The game is played with 2-4 players. Deal a deck of cards evenly to the players. Each player puts his in a pile, hand face down on the table. At the signal each player turns up the top card and lays it in the center. The player with the highest card wins the "battle." Continue on in the same way until one player runs out of cards or one player has all the cards. At the end of the game the player with the most cards is the winner.
- **Game – Build a Wall**
 - **Object:** Each team will build a wall with 4 different-sized cups on their designated "x."
 - **Instructions:** Place a Velcro starting line at one end of the room. Divide the cups evenly between the teams. Put the cups near the wall across the room from the starting line. In the space between the cups and the starting line, make a velcro "x" for each team (as far apart from each other as possible) to mark the spot where each team will build their cup wall. The first player runs to the cups, grabs a cup and places it on his/her team's designated "x." He/she then runs back to the starting line to tag the next player, who runs to the cups, picks up a second cup of different size and stacks it on the first cup, etc. The first team to build their wall with all four sizes wins the round and gets one point. The catch is that a player may sneak to another team's "x" and knock over the wall as long as he/she doesn't get tagged. If caught and tagged in the other team's territory, an extra point is awarded to the team making the tag.
- **Research – "Fortifications of Jericho "**
 - **Instructions:** Read the provided article and pages 56-57 in Adventure Bible Handbook together. Look at the schematic cross-section diagram of the walls at Jericho. The city walls were built as fortresses to protect people from their enemies. It was truly an act of God that leveled those walls! An army of men could never have torn that wall down, but God crumbled it in seconds.
- **Missions Prayer**
 - **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving campaign.

Introduction Lg. Group

We're going to talk about events in history that we find recorded in the book of Joshua in the Old Testament. Specifically, we're going to learn about battles that took place in two different cities, Jericho and Ai. The Israelites fought to take over the land that God had promised them. God told Joshua in Joshua 1:6, 9, "Joshua, be strong and brave! You must lead these people so they can take the land that I promised their fathers I would give them.

Introduction Continued

Remember that I commanded you to be strong and brave. Don't be afraid, because the LORD your God will be with you everywhere you go." So God promised Joshua the land and that He would be with them wherever they went.

Who knows the story of Jericho? (Allow them to tell what they know. Affirm what is correct.) Listen while I read about the battle of Jericho in Joshua 6:1-15.

Transition

We're going to act out the 7th day. I'll need volunteers to assist me. We'll need four Israelite priests, some Israelite soldiers and some Canaanites.

Learning Activity#1 Lg. Group

Drama - Reenact "Jericho"

Goal: To help students identify with how ridiculous the Israelites must have felt.

Instructions: Have the kids work together to build the tallest wall of paper they are able to. **Tips on how to make it stand:** Set two accordion-folded sheets side-by-side and place a flat piece of paper on top. Set two more accordion-pleated pieces on top of the flat sheet and place another flat sheet on top of that. If desired, color the pieces of paper to look like bricks or stone before building the walls. Continue until you have a wall around which the students can march and a group can hide inside. The Canaanites will go inside the Jericho walls. Four students will be priests who carry the Ark of the Covenant behind the rest of the Israelites. Have the Israelites march around the box walls of Jericho, silently, seven times. As the Israelites march around "Jericho," have the Canaanites heckle them. After the 7th time around, read Joshua 6:16, "Shout for the Lord has given you the city!" A teacher should then lead the Israelites to shout, knock the wall down.

Transition

The walls fell down and the Israelites went into Jericho and captured it. God's way proved successful. Grab a Bible and sit down.

Lesson Lg. Group

How did you feel walking around that wall? Did anyone feel embarrassed or think this was a pretty stupid thing to do? Do you think the Israelites were embarrassed? Do you think they wondered how walking around this city would somehow result in overtaking Jericho? Did you see the pictures of the thick walls and the strong foundation of those walls? To capture Jericho seemed impossible to the Israelites under any method of warfare. But they trusted God to give the city of Jericho to them and they obeyed His command even though it didn't make any sense to them.

The next battle the Israelites fought was at Ai. Compared to the large city of Jericho, Ai was a small village. There were more Israelites than people in Ai.

Lesson Continued

They thought a battle at Ai would be a piece of cake. They could probably take that village without any trouble. Open your Bibles and follow along as we read Joshua 7:2-5.

Did anyone notice any differences between the way the Israelites approached the situation at Ai and at Jericho? (Allow students to respond.) They didn't consult God, did they? They also thought that Ai was such a puny city that they could send a smaller army. What does this reveal about the thinking of the Israelites? (They were confident in themselves after Jericho. They believed they could defeat Ai in their own strength. They forgot God had given them Jericho.)

Knowing God had promised that they would possess the land, what do you suppose Joshua thought when they were defeated? So, what went wrong? Why was Israel defeated? They failed to consult and depend on God. They probably thought they didn't need God since Ai was such a small city. Actually, Israel was defeated because Achan disobeyed God's instructions not to take any of the gold or silver from Jericho. Because they didn't bother to consult God, they didn't know that God was no longer with them because His command had been disobeyed.

Listen while I read in 7:6-11 what Joshua did after the defeat at Ai. Did you notice what Joshua did? He turned to God and talked to Him. He said basically, "I don't understand, God." This reveals a heart attitude of dependence once again. Also, when Joshua confronted Achan, he confessed his sin and it was dealt with. Once they returned to a right attitude before God, God was with them and gave them direction. Let's read the end of the story in Joshua 8:1. God instructed them to ambush the city using some of the soldiers to distract and some to attack from behind. When God's plan was followed, once again they had success. Our key verse is, "... Joshua commanded the people, 'Shout! for the Lord your God has given you the city!'" (Joshua 6:16). It was God who gave them the victory, not their power or strength. It is the same today. If we trust God and depend on Him, He will help us to do His will.

In order to depend on God, we must have a relationship with Him. God has a specific way to enter that relationship. Jesus said that we must be perfect. Some people think they can be good enough on their own, but the Bible says we can't be. Even when we want to do the right thing, sometimes we still don't. But God knows that we aren't and can't be perfect, so He provided a way. God's way is through Jesus. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me." Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sin. If we depend on God and ask Him to apply Jesus' death to us so we are forgiven, we will begin a relationship with Him.

Lesson Continued

Transition

Learning Activity# 2 Sm. Groups

As we then trust and obey Him, He will give us victory through the battles in our lives.

Let's get into small groups.

Let's remember the 2 cities and think about what happened.

- What is our key verse? "... Joshua commanded the people, 'Shout! for the Lord your God has given you the city!' (Joshua 6:16).
- Why did Israel win the battle of Jericho? (The Israelites obeyed and trusted God to knock down the walls and win the battle.)
- Why did they lose the battle of Ai?
- Have you ever decided that the bigger things are impossible and give up, but think you can do the smaller things on your own? Does anyone have a personal example you can share when you depended on God in a big or small thing? (If there is no response, use an appropriate example from your own life.) God promises to be with us wherever we go, if we seek and depend on Him.

Let's pray now. Let's ask God to help us remember that no matter how big or small something seems, we always need Him to help us.

Transition

For some fun, we are going to do an obstacle course. While 2 teachers set up the course, I will ask each of you whether you choose to have a teacher help you get through the obstacle course or whether you think you can do it on your own.

Learning Activity# 3 Lg. Group

Game - Obstacle Course

Goal: Students who choose to do the course their own way will find they have no direction and cannot do it. Those who depend on a teacher will complete the course.

Instructions: Have a teacher set up the course while the other teachers ask students whether they choose to have a teacher help them get through the obstacle course or whether they think they can do it on their own. The students who choose to do it on their own will stand in one line and those who choose to have a teacher help them will stand in another line. Blindfold all the students in the "on my own" line. Start them one at a time and tell them they have 1 minute to complete the course without any help! The students who choose to depend on a teacher will go through the course with a teacher and be given instructions at each part.

Jericho course set up: Place 2 plastic shofars, antiseptic wipes, the "ark" and a chair about 3 feet apart on the floor.

Learning Activity#3 Continued

Course instructions: 2 students at a time, students kneel down, blow the shofar, wipe clean w/antiseptic wipe, carry the ark of the covenant in a circle seven times and shout, "The Lord has given you this city!," climb over a chair and walk to the finish line to receive a reward. Those who correctly finish the Jericho course receive a tootsie pop.

Debrief: Many of you are mad now. Let's sit down and talk about it. Some of you don't think it was fair that you were blindfolded when the others weren't. This is a picture of what results when we think we can do things our own way without dependence on God. The students who chose to do the course their own way found they had no direction and couldn't do it. Those who depended on a teacher completed the course. When the Israelites believed they could take Ai on their own, they didn't depend on God and they lost the seemingly simple battle. When they chose to depend on God, they had victory. Let's remember our key verse, "... Joshua commanded the people, 'Shout! for the Lord your God has given you the city!'" (Joshua 6:16). We will be reminded that it was the Lord who gave the Israelites the city of Jericho. It will remind us to depend on God as Joshua did whether the battle seems big or small.