



JOSHUA'S CHOICE

God's Incredible Plan • U6#2 1st-3rd Grade • Dec. 7, 2025

Concept

Only God can perfectly meet our needs.

Goal

Students will learn that it is important to decide for yourself if you believe in the God of the Bible and want to follow Him.

Passage

Joshua 13-24

Key Verse: "... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Joshua 24:15 (NIV)

Planning Ahead

Lesson Supplies	Craft Supplies
<p>Introduction:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>World map</i>• <i>God's Travel Plans map</i>• <i>Laminated, magnet-backed puzzle pieces, w/ tribe name, 1set/room</i> <p>Learning Activity #2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Velcro, 2 five-foot lengths/room</i>• <i>Chairs</i>• <i>12 cardstock tubes from Activity Station</i>• <i>Paper balls from Activity Station</i>	<p>Activity Stations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Cardstock printed with "talk to God," 4/room</i>• <i>Cardstock printed with "remember God's goodness and faithfulness," 4/room</i>• <i>Cardstock printed with "know what God says in His Bible," 4/room</i>• <i>Lots of scrap paper</i>• <i>Twelve tribes stickers, printed on Avery Labels #8463, 1 set/classroom</i>• <i>"The Land of the 12 Tribes" map, 1/student</i>• <i>Symbols for 12 tribes on Avery Labels #5160, 1 page/5 students</i>• <i>"Tribe Symbols & Names" reference sheets, 10/room</i>• <i>Tribe banners, 1 set/class</i>• <i>Markers; crayons; tape</i>

*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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"There is much for us to learn by observing Joshua's life which was a steady walk with God, first as a humble member of, and then as the leader of, the Israelites. In his farewell address to Israel, Joshua summed up the choice which is open to people of every age. He told them their choice was whether they would worship God and God alone or worship the false gods of the Canaanites. If they chose Jehovah God who had brought them out of Egypt and into the Promised Land, He would bless them and make them prosper. But if the people chose against Him and pursued their own idolatries, God's protection would cease. Joshua closed his farewell address by declaring, 'As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord' (Joshua 24:15 LB)."[1]

"The people of Israel agreed to worship the Lord only and Joshua made them witnesses to their own choice. . . . At the age of 110 years, Joshua died. Throughout his life, Israel had walked faithfully with God, but after his death a gradual turning away from God began which was to result in chaos."[2]

"Joshua's great call 'Choose! Choose!' is as meaningful to us today as to the people of God when Joshua was preparing to leave them. If you are a Christian, I urge you to continue to make this choice:

Now therefore fear the LORD, and serve him in sincerity and in truth: and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the flood, and in Egypt; and serve the LORD. And if it seems evil to you to serve the LORD, choose this day whom you will serve; whether the gods your fathers served that were on the other side of the flood, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell: but as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD. (Josh. 24:14-15)"[3]

Every person is faced each day with the same decision that Joshua voiced to the Israelites. You will have done a great service if you believe yourself and make it clear to your students that loving and serving God is by far the most rewarding, and sensible way to live. Consider the benefits to God's Kingdom if they would make this daily choice at a young age and continue to choose for God rather than wasting years trying to figure out what could be more satisfying than loving the one true God. This is the challenge for all of us each day, "... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."

[1] Martha McCallum, Jane Hamblin, God's Incredible Plan, Fleming H. Revell Company, p. 54.

[2] Ibid, p. 54.

[3] Francis A. Schaeffer, Joshua and the Flow of Biblical History, ©1975 by L'Abri Fellowship, InterVarsity Press, pp. 214-215.

Set Up

Incorporation Lg. Group

Introduction Lg. Group

Instructions: As students enter the classroom, assign each to a tribe of Israel by giving them a 12 Tribes sticker to wear like a nametag. Give each tribe their piece of the giant Israel puzzle right before you assemble the class for their instruction. When put together, all pieces will create a map of Canaan/Israel as divided among the twelve tribes.

Activity Stations:

- **Map**
 - **Instructions:** Give each student the "The Land of the 12 Tribes of Israel" map page. Color the land of each tribe a different color. Give each student the stickers with the 12 symbols. Cut the stickers apart, color and place them on the corresponding location on the map. To identify where each sticker should go, use the provided reference sheet to match the symbols with the tribe names.
- **Tribe Banners**
 - **Instructions:** Lay the 12 banners made of the "Tribe Symbols & Names" out for students to color. When they are finished, tape them to the back of a chair. Place the chairs in the location you want the students to sit for the Introduction.
- **Props**
 - **Instructions:** Make paper balls from the provided scrap paper for the Game. Roll the cardstock with printed words on them up to form a tube then tape them closed.
- **Missions Prayer**
 - **Instructions:** Talk about and pray for the Oasis Giving campaign.

Instructions: Have kids sit beside tribe banner with their tribe. Choose a student from each tribe to take the tribe puzzle piece to put on the white board. Tribe names: Manasseh (east and west), Gad, Reuben, Simeon, Judah, Dan, Ephraim, Benjamin, Issachar, Zebulun, Asher, and Naphtali. See attached map.

Last week we talked about the Israelites going in to conquer the Promised Land. This area was called Canaan, but when the Israelites took it, it was named Israel. (Show them where it is on the world map.) They first took Jericho and then they defeated Ai. (Show on God's Travel Plan map.) The battles continued until they took much of the land. Canaan had cities and lots of beautiful land on which to grow food. Do you remember that the people of Israel were divided into 12 tribes? As they took the land, Joshua gave each tribe some land to call their own. We assigned each one of you to a tribe of Israel when you came in today. I am going to name the tribes. As you hear your tribe's name, have your representative get up and bring the puzzle piece to the white board. We will help you put the puzzle piece where it belongs.

Introduction Continued

Transition

Lesson Lg. Group

When we are all done, we will have a map of Israel the way it was in Joshua's time. You will see how Joshua divided the land for the tribes after God so faithfully gave them the land He promised.

Everyone get a Bible and sit down to learn about Joshua's reminder to the Israelites.

After the tribes of Israel went to live in their land, Joshua was getting old. He knew he would die soon, so he called a big meeting. He wanted the leaders from each tribe to meet with him one more time so he could deliver a message from God. Turn to Joshua 24 in your Bibles. Chapter 24 is the last chapter of the book. Follow along while I read verses 1-7, 11-24. (skip verses 8-10). So Joshua said, "God wants me to remind you of some very important things. God says, 'Remember Abraham, he was the first one I led to this land. Remember Isaac and his son Jacob. Jacob and his boys went to Egypt. Remember Moses who brought you out of Egypt. Remember the Red Sea and all the battles I made sure you won so that you could live on this beautiful land. And remember that I gave you land you never worked on, cities you didn't build, and fruits and vegetables from plants you didn't plant.'"

Joshua wanted the people to remember all the things that God had done for them. God knew they would be tempted to believe in the idols of the people of the land where they now lived. The land was full of all kinds of good things. They no longer had to depend on God for the manna to fall from the sky or to find water each day. They had everything they needed and more right there in that land. It would be easy to believe in the idols of the other people in the land. He wanted them to remember, never forget that only God can perfectly meet their needs. Joshua wanted them to remember so they would choose to serve the one true God rather than the idols from Egypt or Canaan. Our key verse today is chapter 24, verse 15. Because Joshua knew it was their choice, he said, "... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15).

Who knows what an idol is? (Get kids' responses.) It can be anything – a special toy like an iPad or video game, a person or even an idea. It is whatever you decide will give you what you need. The problem is that God is the only idol who can perfectly meet all our needs. The problem is that sometimes we don't believe He knows or will give us what is best for us. When things aren't going the way we want them to go we often decide that God isn't good enough. So we choose to serve something or someone else. These idols always disappoint us so we go to another and another and another idol rather than choosing to serve God.

Lesson Continued

Transition

Learning Activity#1 Sm. Groups

Of course it wouldn't make sense to trust and serve God if you don't even believe in Him, would it? It is important to decide for yourself if you believe in the God of the Bible and want to follow Him. Everyone has to make their own choice. Who would like to tell us why you first chose to believe God? (Kids respond.) I know that the Bible is true. It is not just a bunch of stories. (Hold up Bible.) The stuff in here really happened. And the Bible says that God loves us so much that He sent Jesus to earth so that we could see what He is like. When Jesus came to earth He took the punishment for all of our sins when He died on the cross. The Bible says that if you tell God you want Him to forgive you, you will be forgiven forever! What about that for a good reason to choose God?

We're going to get into small groups now to talk about this some more.

Drama – Charades

Goal: To help the students think about their responses and to consider how to choose to trust God when things don't go their way.

Instructions: Describe the four scenarios and ask the student if they struggle with any of them. Choose 4 volunteers to act out what it looks like when these things happen to them. Encourage them to exaggerate the way they really are in these situations to emphasize how ridiculous they can look. The teacher may want to act one out to get it going.

- Afraid – when your mom or dad isn't with you, when you go to bed at night or other times when you are afraid.
- Angry – when friends, brothers, sisters, Mom and Dad, etc., don't do what you want them to do.
- Frustrated – when you or someone else can't do something perfectly or just the way you want it done.
- Greedy – when you want more and are ungrateful.

Debrief/Discussion

- Drama – Charades
- We all have idols. Can you name your idol? What need do you think one of your idols will meet? How could God meet that need better?
- Can you think of a time you chose to serve yourself rather than God? What happened?
- The key verse is "... choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:15). What do you think it looks like to choose for yourself each day to follow and serve God?

Let's pray.

We are going to play a game that will help us remember how we can choose to trust and serve God.

Transition

Learning Activity# 2 Lg. Group

Game - "Paper Shoot" [1]

Goal: Review the things that Christians have to help us trust God rather than idols.

Instructions: Place the two buckets so you can have two games going on at the same time. Set a circle of chairs around and about 10 feet away from each bucket. One team lies down on their backs around the bucket with their heads closest to the bucket. Each player has a card stock tube. The opposing team tries to throw the paper balls into the bucket, while the defending teams tries to swat the balls away. The words written on the tubes are "talk to God," "remember God's goodness and faithfulness" and "know what God says in His Bible."

Explain to the class that the paper wads represent the things that don't go our way and the tubes represent the things God has given us to help us choose to trust and serve Him. Read the labels on the tubes to the class. Give the opposing team plenty of paper balls and about a minute to throw in as many as possible. Give each team a chance at both positions. The team that keeps the most paper balls out of the bucket wins.

[1] Rice and Yaconelli, Play It!, ©1986, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, adapted from "Paper Shoot," pp. 125-126.