UNIT 7 | SESSION 1

CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

JOSHUA 1; 3-4



CHRIST CONNECTION: Like God helped Joshua and the Israelites, He also sent Jesus to help us. Jesus showed His power so we can trust Him and live with Him forever.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful.

KEY PASSAGE: Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty. Psalm 24:8

STORY POINT: Joshua led God's people.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

LEADER Bible Study

In Joshua 1, the Israelites were preparing to enter the Promised Land following the death of Moses. God spoke directly to Joshua, commissioning him as the new leader of His people. The Lord commanded Joshua three times to be strong and courageous as he was about to guide the Israelites across the Jordan River.

What instructions did God impart to Joshua? How would God reveal to Joshua—and the rest of the Israelites—that He would be with them, just as He promised?

God urged Joshua to continue walking in the promises He made to Moses (Joshua 1:3,5). To do so, Joshua would have to commit to walking in God's ways: being strong and courageous, observing Moses' commands, and meditating on God's Word. God reminded Joshua of His faithfulness and affirmed that He would exalt Joshua before all Israel. No one would be able to doubt that God chose Joshua to fulfill His promises.

Joshua commanded the Israelites to get ready for a miraculous move of God (Joshua 3:5)—a feat that would require faith. He then relayed God's instructions for crossing the Jordan River. As the priests stepped into the river, the waters stopped flowing, and God's powerful presence made a way for His people to safely cross into the Promised Land.

Teach boys and girls that, like the Israelites awaited God's provision on their journey, we, too, need a miracle: to be made right with God the Father through faith in the Son. This gift of salvation cannot be earned; it is a gracious gift that demonstrates God's power and love.

Also consider the impact of children's curiosity in this story. God commanded the Israelites to memorialize this event by setting out 12 stones. When Israelite children and future generations asked the meaning of these stones, the people could use it as an opportunity to recount the Lord's faithfulness. May this story instill within your kids the same sense of wonder the Israelites experienced. God's faithful promises never fail, including His promise to save anyone who repents of sin and turns to Jesus by faith. Be prepared to share the story of how God saved you through faith in His Son. Pray for His gracious love to begin transforming kids' hearts and minds today.



THE WEEK PRIOR

Prepare your heart to teach; plan the session



10-15 MINUTES

Greet preschoolers and open the session



25-30 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers the story of the gospel





Lead preschoolers to live the mission of the gospel



60-65 MINUTES

Teach preschoolers for an additional hour



GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.

WELCOME	LIVE
Complete the puzzle Bible Story Picture Poster, 2 Big Picture Question Poster LEARN	Paint with watercolors watercolor paints paintbrushes small cups art smocks "Key Passage Phrase Labels" printable Missions Activity
Tell the Bible story "Crossing the Jordan River" video (optional) Learn and practice the key passage phrase Key Passage Phrase Marker	☐ "Overview of South Asia" missions video Snack and Transition ☐ hand sanitizer (optional) ☐ "Cross the Jordan River" activity page, 1 per child ☐ Big Picture Cards for Families
LOVE Pick up rocks	BONUS
shallow container rocks, 12 towel art smocks brown bulletin board paper, 2-3 feet long Make rocks paper bags of different sizes, 12 newspaper	Say the key passage phrase Key Passage Phrase Marker Transfer pom-poms 12-cup muffin pan pom-poms, 12 tongs Play with vehicles toy vehicles painter's tape



WELCOME Preschoolers

Provide as many learning activities as possible from the Love and Live sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ Connection, story point, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

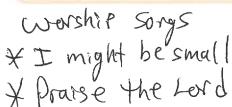
Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the Love and Live sections of the leader guide.

COMPLETE THE PUZZLE

Print two copies of the Bible Story Picture Poster. Cut one poster into a simple puzzle. Place the other Bible Story Picture Poster on a table inside the classroom. Post the Big Picture Ouestion and Answer Poster near the entrance of the classroom. Greet preschoolers as they enter, and point out the Big Picture Question and Answer Poster. Hand preschoolers a puzzle piece as they enter and encourage them to add it to the puzzle. Once the puzzle is complete, remove the pieces for the next preschoolers who arrive.

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SAY 👫 I am so glad to see you at church today. Our big picture question asks, Why can we trust God? We can trust God because He is faithful. God always does what He says He will do. We are completing a puzzle in our class today. Can you add this puzzle piece to our puzzle? It is a picture of God's people crossing the Jordan River. JOSHUA LED GOD'S PEOPLE. God was faithful to help His people.











LEARN the Bible Story



Crumble paper into pretend rocks and hide them around the classroom. Encourage preschoolers to find a rock and bring it to group time. Invite preschoolers to place the rocks in a pile in the center of the group time area.

SAY God told Joshua to pick up 12 big rocks from the middle of the river. The rocks would help the people remember what God did for them.



2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY WiceO

Open you Bible to Joshua 1; 3-4. Tell the Bible story using the following summary. You may choose to review the Bible story by showing the video.

CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

SAY M God chose a man named Joshua to be the leader of God's people. God promised to help Joshua. He said, "I will be with you. I will never leave you." God said, "Be strong and brave. Do everything Moses taught you."

Joshua told the Israelites, "Get ready! We are going across the river! God promised us a special land, and He is giving it to us." Everyone got excited and said, "We will do what you say, Joshua!"

The people went to a big river called the Jordan River. On the other side was the land of Canaan, which God promised to give to Joshua's family. But how would they get across the river? God told Joshua what to do: "When the priests carry the special box called the ark into the river, the water will stop."

Joshua told everyone to watch. The priests stepped into the river with the ark, and something amazing happened! The water stopped, and the people could walk across on dry ground!

After the people crossed, God told Joshua to pick up 12 big rocks from the middle of the river. He wanted the people to remember this special day when God helped them. These rocks would help them remember how amazing God is.

The priests stepped out of the river, and the water started flowing again. Now the Israelites were in the special land God promised them.

Christ Connection: Like God helped Joshua and the Israelites, He also sent Jesus to help us. Jesus showed His power so we can trust Him and live with Him forever.



3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Encourage preschoolers to take a pretend rock from the pile as they answer a question about the Bible story. Sample questions: Who did God choose to be the leader of the Israelites? (Joshua) How did the people cross the river? (The water stopped when the priests stepped into the river with the ark.) How many rocks did Joshua pick up? (12) What did the rocks help the people remember? (The rocks would help them remember what God did for them.)

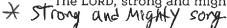


SAY JOSHUA LED GOD'S PEOPLE. God's people needed to cross the river. The priests carried the ark into the river, and the water stopped. The people walked across on dry ground. Like God helped Joshua and the Israelites, He also sent Jesus to help us.

SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow":

Who is the King of Glory?
Who is the King of Glory?
Who is the King of Glory?
The LORD, strong and mighty.



5 LEARN AND PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE



Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 24:8. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Encourage preschoolers to do the following motions when saying the key passage phrase: Who is the king of glory? (Pretend to place a crown on your head.) The LORD (point upward), strong and mighty (flex your arm muscles). Psalm 24:8. Say the key passage phrase together several times.

SAY God is strong and mighty. He helped Joshua lead the people. God stopped the water so the people could walk across on dry ground to the land He promised them.

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for helping Joshua and the people cross the river. Thank Him for helping us today.





LOVE God because of what we learned

TRACE SHOE PRINTS



Place construction paper, crayons, scissors, and tape on the floor. Invite preschoolers to stand with one foot on a piece of construction paper. Trace around their shoe. Encourage preschoolers to color the shoe prints with crayons. Tape the prints on the floor in a path around the classroom.

SAY We made a path with our shoe prints. **JOSHUA LED THE PEOPLE** to follow a path to the land God promised to give them. He told the people they were going to cross a river. But how would they get across the river? God told Joshua what to do, and he obeyed. When the priests carried the special box—called the ark—into the river, the water stopped. It happened just as God said it would. The people walked across on dry land.

PICK UP ROCKS

Place 12 rocks in a shallow container. Fill the container about one-third full of water. Place a towel nearby for spills. Assist preschoolers with putting on art smocks. Invite children to remove the rocks from the water and place the rocks on the brown bulletin board paper. Count how many rocks they find.

SAY How many rocks did you find? God's people crossed the Jordan River on dry ground. The priests carried the ark into the water, and the water stopped. After the people crossed the river, God told Joshua to pick up 12 big rocks from the middle of the river. He wanted the people to remember this special day when God helped them. These rocks would help them remember what God did for them.

MAKE ROCKS

Place paper bags, newspapers, and tape on the floor. Open the paper bags. Demonstrate how to crumple the newspapers and stuff them into the paper bags to make pretend rocks. Invite preschoolers to assist you with stuffing the bags and taping them closed. Encourage preschoolers to arrange the rocks and build a pile with them.

SAY God's people needed to cross the Jordan River to enter the land God promised them.

JOSHUA LED THE PEOPLE. When the priests entered the water with the ark, the water stopped. The people crossed the river on dry land. God told Joshua to pick up 12 big rocks from the middle of the river. The rocks would help the people remember how amazing God is and all that He had done for them.

LIVE 🥮



LIVE for God out of love

10 PAINT WITH WATERCOLORS

Place paper, watercolors, paintbrushes, and small cups of water on the table. Assist preschoolers with placing an art smock over their clothing. Invite preschoolers to dip their paintbrushes into the water and paint with the watercolor paints. Encourage preschoolers to place a key passage phrase label on their finished artwork.

SAY Wou used water and watercolors to paint your picture. That reminds me of the water in the Jordan River. **JOSHUA LED GOD'S PEOPLE.** God's people crossed the river on dry land. Our key passage says, 'Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty.' Only the Lord is strong and mighty enough to make the water stop so that the people could cross on dry ground.

2 MISSIONS ACTIVITY



Point to the country of Pakistan on a world map. Mention that more than 230 million people live in Pakistan, but very few are followers of Jesus. Show the "Overview of South Asia" missions video.

SAY 66 This area is home to many people who do not believe in the one true God and His Son, Jesus. In South Asia, Pakistani Christians need to be brave to invite their friends to church and to tell them about Jesus so more people in Pakistan can hear the good news about God's Son. [Lead a prayer.]

3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an Allergy Alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ Connection.

SAY *** Like God helped Joshua and the Israelites, He also sent Jesus to help us. Jesus showed His power so we can trust Him and live with Him forever.

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute Big Picture Cards for Families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

OCCUNT TO 12

Invite preschoolers to count to 12 as you gather for group time. Tell children that God told Joshua to pick up 12 rocks from the middle of the river as the people crossed the dry land.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open the Bible to Joshua 1; 3–4. Use the summarized points below to talk about the Bible story.

CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

- God promised to help Joshua. God said, "I will be with you. I will never leave you. Be strong and brave."
- Joshua told the Israelites, "We are going across the river! God is giving us a special land." Everyone said, "We will do what you say, Joshua!"
- •On the other side of the Jordan River was the land of Canaan. Joshua told everyone to watch. The priests stepped into the river with the ark, and the water stopped! The people walked across on dry ground.
- •God told Joshua to pick up 12 big rocks from the middle of the river. He wanted the people to remember how amazing God is.

SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow":

Who is the King of Glory? Who is the King of Glory? Who is the King of Glory? The LORD, strong and mighty.

SAY THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the Key Passage Phrase Marker at Psalm 24:8. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage. Encourage preschoolers to clap out the syllables of the key passage phrase as you say it together several times.

5 PRAY

Pray, praising God for all the amazing things He has done for us.



BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 MAKE THE LETTER J WITH PLAY DOUGH



Place play dough on the table for preschoolers to explore. Demonstrate how to roll the play dough into a long rope or snake shape. Encourage preschoolers to curve the play dough rope to create the letter]. Comment that the letter] is the first letter in Joshua and Jesus' names.

SAY Sou made the letter J with your play dough. Joshua's name begins with the letter J. Joshua LED GOD'S PEOPLE. God promised to help Joshua. He said, 'I will be with you. I will never leave you. Be strong and brave.' Jesus also begins with the letter J. Like God helped Joshua and the Israelites, He also sent Jesus to help us. Jesus showed His power so we can trust Him and live with Him forever.

TRANSFER POM-POMS

Place the pom-poms, tongs, and muffin pan on the table. Invite preschoolers to use the tongs to transfer the pom-poms from the table to the muffin pan. Encourage preschoolers to count how many pom-poms fit in the muffin pan.

SAY You counted 12 pom-poms. God told Joshua to pick up 12 rocks from the middle of the river. The people had crossed the river on dry land after the priests carried the ark into the water. The rocks would help the people remember how amazing God is.

1 PLAY WITH VEHICLES

Place vehicles, blocks, and painter's tape on the floor. Demonstrate how to use the painter's tape and blocks to create roads for the vehicles to travel on and obstacles for the vehicles to navigate around. Encourage preschoolers to assist you in creating a path for the vehicles to follow.

SAY We travel in vehicles like these when we come to church or go to places like the grocery store. God's people walked or rode animals when they needed to travel somewhere. God had promised His people a special land. **JOSHUA LED GOD'S PEOPLE.** The people needed to cross the Jordan River to get to the land. God did something only He could do! When the priests stepped into the river with the ark, the water stopped. The people walked across the river on dry ground.

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church's security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.