



Crossing the Jordan

Bible Passage: Joshua 1-4

Bottom Line: I glorify God by trusting and obeying Him.

Key Passage: ⁵ Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; ⁶ in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight. **Proverbs 3:5-6**

Big Picture Question: What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands.

Christ Connection: *God went ahead of Joshua and the Israelites into the promised land. He showed His power to them so they would trust in Him. When Jesus came to earth, He showed His power so people would believe in Him and be saved from sin.*

10 Minutes SOCIAL: SETTING THE TONE OF THE EXPERIENCE

Remember This

What You Need: dry erase board, dry erase marker and eraser, paper, tape

What You Do:

- Write a 10 digit number on a dry erase board. (example: 5553017838, you can use phone numbers)
- Guide kids to read the number aloud one time together.
- Then tape paper over the number to conceal it and challenge kids to say the number from memory.
- Uncover the number and allow them to read the number 2 more times.
- Cover the number.
- Ask volunteers to recite the number.
- Erase the number and write 5 random words.
- Invite kids to read the words once.
- Then cover them and challenge kids to recite the words.
- Uncover the words so kids can read them 2 more times.
- Cover the words and ask volunteers to recite them.
- Repeat as time allows.
- Ask kids to tell you the number you gave them earlier. And then the words.

What You Say "This is not a test, but it sure helps us see how fast we learn something right? Studies show that when you read something for the first time, you remember 10-25 percent of it. When you read it 2-3 times, you remember 90 percent of it. Repetition helps us remember! In our stories coming up we are going to look at the Israelites moving into the promised land. God is keeping His promises but the people are having a hard time remembering God's promise and following Him. Let's see what is going on today.

10 Minutes Worship: CELEBRATING WHAT GOD IS DOING

SONGS, OFFERING AND PRAYER

15 Minutes LARGE GROUP: COMMUNICATING GOD'S TRUTH IN ENGAGING WAYS

CONTEXT

Only one geographical barrier separated the Israelites from the promised land of Canaan: the Jordan River. When the Israelites arrived, the Jordan River was flooded due to spring rains and snowmelt. Any other time, the river would have been manageable, but crossing the swollen river would have been as daunting as crossing the Red Sea. (See Josh. 4:23.)

The Israelites had mourned Moses' death for 30 days (Deut. 34:8), but now this new generation looked to Joshua to lead them into the promised land. God had chosen Joshua and promised to be with him. Joshua prepared the people to cross the Jordan River, and they agreed to obey him as they obeyed Moses.

God gave Joshua a promise and a command. First, He promised to go before them and drive out all the people of the land. Then God commanded him to tell the priests to carry the ark of the LORD (a symbol of God's powerful presence) into the



waters of the Jordan. Then the waters of the river would be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above would stand in one heap. When this happened, all of Israel would know that God was with Joshua.

All of the people passed over on dry ground. Joshua set up 12 memorial stones as a reminder of God's faithfulness in bringing Israel safely across the Jordan into the promised land.

The Israelites could do nothing apart from God. He was with them, and He was going to fight for them. In John 15:5, Jesus said, "You can do nothing without me."

As you teach kids this week, emphasize that God was still at work with His people. He was going to do even bigger things for the Israelites—saving them from their enemies and one day sending them a Savior. The cross is our reminder of what Jesus has done for us: a miraculous saving we could never do for ourselves.

TEACHING FOCUS (Joshua 1-4)

For the next few weeks we are going to be learning about God's people as they moved into and conquered the land God promised them. We've talked about God's people in the wilderness. They had a chance to enter the promised land, but they did not trust God. As a result, they were stuck wandering for 40 years—long enough that all the people who refused to trust God had died! Their children were grown-ups now, and they were finally ready to enter the promised land. All that stood in their way was the Jordan River. Our story today is called "Crossing the Jordan."

*This story reminds me a little bit of the time God parted the Red Sea for the people of Israel to cross. I think that's on purpose. You see, at this point in the history of Israel, most of the people who were alive when God parted the Red Sea had died. The people who left Egypt and wandered the wilderness had changed a lot, and this new group—the children and grandchildren of those who were slaves—were learning to trust God. **God held back the Jordan River for His people to cross and gave the next generation a miraculous water crossing.***

*That's why it was so important for the twelve men from the twelve tribes to pick twelve stones to make a memorial. God didn't want His people to forget His power or His love for them. He wanted them to know Him and glorify Him. That brings us to the big picture question: **How can we glorify God?** Any ideas? [Allow responses.] Those are some really good answers. **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.** Say that with me: **We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.** God deserves our love and obedience because He is powerful and good. When we love Him and obey Him, it glorifies Him.*

TODAY'S TAKEAWAYS

- **God showed his power to Israel so that they would trust Him.**
- **He asked them to make a memorial because He wanted to make sure they never forget that He is powerful and can always be trusted.**
- **BL: I glorify God by trusting and obeying Him.**
- When God does something for me, I should never forget it so that I will always trust Him.

25 Minutes SMALL GROUPS: CREATING A SAFE PLACE TO CONNECT

Discussion Questions:

1. What did Moses tell the people in his farewell? (Be strong and courageous. God will go ahead. What did God tell Joshua as he became the new leader of the Israelites? (Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid; Josh. 1:9)
2. How did God help the people cross the Jordan? (God stopped the flow of the water so that it piled up on one side, Josh. 3:16)
3. What did Joshua do to remember the amazing thing God had done for His people? (He instructed men from the twelve tribes to take 12 stones from the middle of the riverbed and set them up as a memorial, Josh. 4:3-7)
4. Why do you think God helped His people cross the Jordan? Guide kids to discuss the fact that most of the people who had seen God's amazing miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea had died. God helped them cross the Jordan River in an amazing way to demonstrate His power to them and strengthen their faith in Him.
5. Why do you think God wanted the people to have the stones to remember what He did for



them? Guide kids to discuss the fact that God proves His faithfulness again and again, but people tend to forget and walk into sin. God wanted them to have a reminder that He is good and trustworthy.

God told Joshua to be strong and courageous and to obey His commands. What commands do Christians need strength and courage to obey? Discuss the different commands Jesus talks about, such as loving God, loving people, sharing the gospel, and so forth

Activity: Stones of Remembrance

What You Need: Cross pendant, air dry clay, stir sticks (1 Per kid), necklace cord, tape, sharpie

What You Do:

- Kids are going to get one cross, a piece of necklace cord, a stir stick, and a small piece of air dry clay.
- They will string the cross of the cord.
- Then they will use the clay to form a stone around the drinking straw. They will need 12 small stones.
- If the stones dry enough before kids leave they can string it on their necklace.
- If not leave the stones on the straw and put in all in a zip top bag to send home.
- Kids can finish it all at home.

What You Say God held back the Jordan River for His people to cross. The stones that the Israelites took from the Jordan did not have special powers, but they were used to remind the people of something valuable: God was with them. He is always faithful to provide for His people. You can take your necklace home as a reminder that God is with you. If you don't want it, maybe you could share it with someone else and you could tell them about the stones God asked the Israelites to take from the Jordan to remind them God was with them. **BL- We glorify God by trusting and obeying Him.**

Activity: Memory Verse Activity

What You Need: Memory Verse Poster, Memory Verse Puzzle (printed and cut apart- 1 set per group)

What You Do:

- Review the Memory Verse as a group together out loud a few times.
- Lay the Memory Verse Puzzle on the floor/table face down.
- Take turns picking up a card at a time and putting the puzzle together.
- Keep going until all of the puzzle is together.
- Read the verse together one more time.

What You Say " Our memory verse reminds us that we need to trust God. He knows better than we do about everything! This passage warns us against trusting our own understanding. God leads us to righteousness in Jesus. Trusting in ourselves for righteousness is sin. God provided a way out of that sin, it is through believing in His Son, Jesus.

Pray and Dismiss:

What You Need: no supplies needed

What You Say: "God, thank You for leading Your people into the land You promised. We can see Your faithfulness clearly in Old Testament stories, and we know that You are faithful to us today. Help us to trust You and give You glory by loving and obeying You. Amen.

5 Minutes HOME: PROMPTING ACTION BEYOND THE EXPERIENCE

As adults arrive to pick up, encourage your kids to tell their parents about our Big Picture Questions. What does it mean to sin? To sin is to think, speak, or behave in any way that goes against God and His commands. **BL- I glorify God by trusting and obeying Him.**