

Crossing the Jordan River: Joshua Leads the Israelites into the Promised Land

Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Olympia, WA

From River Community Church Prairieville, Louisiana

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Construction Workshop:

Scripture: Joshua 1-6 and 23-24 This workshop focuses on chapter 2.

Memory Verse: Joshua 24:14-15 (NIV)

“As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”

Bonus Verse: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Ephesians 6:10 (NIV)

PURPOSE: The children will hear the story of Rahab helping the Israelite spies. They will take a look at those things in our lives that “block” our relationship with God. They will “build” a representative wall with these things and knock it down.

Teacher preparation in advance:

- Read the scripture passages and lesson plan and attend the Bible Study,...
- Prepare a closing prayer.
- Learn to retell the story in your own words (sample story included in this lesson plan).
- Learn the memory verse.
- Confer with the Shepherd on age level adjustments needed each week (those included in the lesson plan and your own). Consider the “Stretchers” you can use, especially with the youngest children.
- The design of this workshop is very intentional. The activities and discussion questions for this workshop were designed to meet the goals of the entire rotation. While we feel it is important to follow the serendipitous leading of the Holy Spirit, please do not change the lesson plan without consulting a Design Team member.
- Check out the room before your first Sunday workshop so that you know where everything is located.

Set-up:

Supply List

- Small cardboard boxes from Office Depot or blocks from the Preschool.
- 3x5 index cards - scrap paper will work great for this opening activity
- tape - painter's tape for attaching scrap paper to preschool blocks
- Scrap wood
- Wood Glue
- Permanent Markers
- Pencils
- Bibles

PRESENTATION:

OPEN:

Welcome and Introductions:

Greet the children and introduce yourself. Wear your name-tag. (Remember, you are interacting with a different group of students each week who may not know you.) Make sure the children are wearing name-tags.

Explain the purpose of this workshop: Today you will hear the story of the spies and Rahab who helped God's people into the Promised Land and then you will have an opportunity to help build and knock down a wall.

Scripture/Bible Story:

To understand today's story, we first need to take a look at some things that are challenges for us. Ask the children to write or share with the class things they find challenging in their lives or that "block" our relationship with God. This might be a subject at school, or something at home or during play, or the many things that tempt us. (Jealousy, anger, not obeying mom or dad, math, etc....) All these "things" tend to add up and build a wall. List at least one thing per student and teacher/shepherd on an index card and attach it to a block. Have the children build a wall with these blocks. If your wall isn't very high - ask for more "things" and write each down on an index card taped to a box. The wall can be as large as you have time for.

(It's important for teachers and shepherds to write on cards too, to show the children that we too have a tendency to allow things in life to block our relationship with God as well.)

But!! God can break through any barriers that are built between us and God.

Just like we each have our own challenges that can seem like a wall to us, the Israelites had to face a big wall too. Tell us what you remember about the Israelites? Who were they? (The people of God.) Where did they come from? (Joseph brought them into Egypt. After 400 years, they became slaves. Moses lead them out of Egypt. They wandered in the wilderness for 40 years before entering the Promised Land.)

Can anyone tell us why they wandered in the wilderness for 40 years? Let's take a look at Numbers 13. Read Numbers 13:1-3, 18-20, 23, 27, 30-31; 14:1-4, 6-8, 11, 30, 34. (For younger children relay the story to them.)

Tell them, after Moses died, Joshua was in command. Again, spies were sent into the Promised Land. Joshua asked them to check out the city of Jericho so they went in to the home of Rahab.

Tell the story: [Retell the story in your own words, emphasizing that the story comes from the Bible; holding your Bible while you tell is a reminder to the children that they are hearing God's word. A sample retelling is attached. Make sure your retelling includes: the Ark of the Covenant, stopping of the Jordan River, the Remember stones, the spies (include how Rahab hid them and helped them escape and how her family was kept safe... have the children look up and read Joshua 2:24 - their report given to Joshua, the marching around Jericho, and then the fall of Jericho.]

[Encourage the children to use their Bibles in looking up verses. For example, "Our story about Joshua is in the book of Joshua. It is in the Old Testament and follows the five books of Moses (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy). Our passage is in the third chapter; look for the big bold numbers that indicate chapters. The smaller numbers at the beginning of sentences in the chapters are verse numbers." We restate information about Bible organization in each workshop to be sensitive to visitors and new children in the class who may not have any knowledge of the Bible. We never want a child to feel like they do not belong because they do not know this information before they come to class.]

Application:

Let the children each select 12 pieces of scrap wood. Have them glue the pieces together using wood glue to form a wall. On each piece of wood, have them write one word from the memory Bible verse. (There are 11 words. The 12th piece is for "Joshua 24:14-15.) On the other side, they can write another Bible verse, or some of the things that tend to "block" their relationship with God.

These walls can go home with the children to help them remember that our strength comes from God and knowing God's word, the Bible. God will help us over or around or through any wall that we may face.

REFLECT:

Pulling it all together (closing discussion):

- How did the first set of spies' report differ from the second set of spies?
- Who were the two spies for Moses that showed faith in God? (Caleb and Joshua)
- How does the wall of Jericho relate to the wall in our own lives?
- Have the children march around the wall they built at the start of class and knock it down!

Review the memory verse. Talk about what it means. Talk about times God can help him/her be strong (especially older children).

This is meant to be a time of reflection and introspection. Talking, thinking and writing about faith helps clarify lessons. Children may draw pictures relating to today's scripture or memory verse, list highlights of the day's activities, or rephrase the memory verse.

Closing prayer:

In chapter 24, Joshua speaks to the people and urges them to remain faithful to God in all things. Joshua 24:14-15 reminds us that we, too, must decide whom we will serve. Read this from the Bible to the children.
'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

Lord, help us to be faithful to you in all things. Give us the strength and wisdom to trust you, even when the way is difficult or unusual. Help us to be mindful of your leadership, of your presence, of your strength that gives us courage to do what is right. Help us to serve you and do your will in all things. Amen.

Tidy and Dismissal:

Ask children to help tidy the room. Give any specific instructions for clearing the workshop room. Please store supplies for this workshop in the back kitchen. Thank you for leading this great lesson!!