

Unit 7: Back to the Land

Unit Description: When the next generation of God's people, led by Joshua, returned back to the land of Canaan, God reminded them of His promises and that all of His words are true. Joshua and the Israelites would need to remember God's Word, trust it, and live in obedience to it if they were to conquer the land.

Big Picture Question: What is the Bible? The Bible is God's Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.



SESSION 1: God Encouraged Joshua Joshua 1



SESSION 2: God Stopped the Jordan River Joshua 3–4



SESSION 3: The Bible Helps Us Live for God 2 Timothy 3



UNIT 7 | SESSION 1

GOD ENCOURAGED JOSHUA

JOSHUA 1

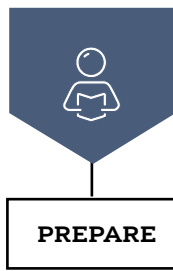
KEY PASSAGE: Your word is a lamp for my feet
and a light on my path. Psalm 119:105 CSB

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the Bible? The Bible is God's Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God's kingdom.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

We often think that fear is the absence of courage, and to some degree, it is. However, true courage is not someone who is free of fear. Courage comes to us most often, and especially when we are young, from the presence of another. In C. S. Lewis' *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, Lucy, the young heroine of Lewis' stories, was on a boat that went into the dark night of a cave where their worst fears were realized.

Going into the cave, they all were afraid. Inside the cave, their fears were realized. They were in the middle of the night and without hope, and Lucy (whose name means "light") asked Aslan to send help.

Aslan (the Christ figure in Lewis' work) answered by sending his light into their darkness and his word to her heart. He said, "Courage, dear heart."

The gospel tells us that our greatest enemy, sin, and our greatest fear, death, has no hold on us—not because of courage that rises up from within us, but from courage that came from outside of us. Jesus came from outside of us and said to us through His life, death, and resurrection, "Courage, dear heart."

The promise of peace, true rest that Moses and now Joshua sought, was not conditional on what they saw in front of them. It was

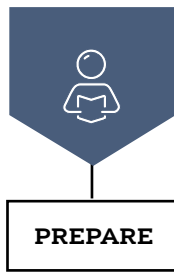
based on the character of God. The promise God gave to Joshua was the promise of His presence in the middle of the dark night. This promise is true for us and is experienced in the person and work of Christ.

As you prepare to teach, take a moment to allow the Person of God's Spirit to whisper to your heart what God's Word proclaims to be true—no matter how difficult your week or dark your night. You are loved, you are cared for, you are not alone. Christ is with you. Christ has gone before you; Christ is interceding for you.

Remember the words God gave Joshua: "Haven't I commanded you: be strong and courageous? Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go" (Josh. 1:9). What a promise. What a Savior.

PEOPLE TO KNOW

Joshua: one of the 12 Israelites spies appointed by Moses to scout the land of Canaan; chosen by God as Moses' successor to lead the Israelites to the promised land



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

Activity Page

- ☐ "Secret Message" activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ tennis balls or stress balls

Session Starter (Option 2)

- ☐ dry erase board or large sheet of paper
- ☐ dry erase marker
- ☐ dice



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ "God Encouraged Joshua" video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ "Unit 7, Session 1" questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ "Annie Armstrong Biography" missions video

Key Passage Activity

- ☐ Key Passage Poster
- ☐ "A Light On My Path (Psalm 119:105)" song
- ☐ worship song of your choice (optional)



LOVE

Review & Bible Skills

- ☐ Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- ☐ world map

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ stationery

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ "Wild Wanderings" activity page



LIVE



WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

SAY “Have you ever been afraid? What are some things you are afraid of? In today’s Bible story, a man named Joshua had a good reason to be afraid, but was he? Let’s find out.”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Secret Message” on the activity page. Kids should find and circle the words in the list. Then, they can start in the top left corner and copy the leftover letters into the blanks to reveal a hidden message.

SAY “What do you think it means to be courageous? [Allow kids to respond.] It takes courage to do something you know is difficult or dangerous. That’s why God’s message to Joshua was ‘Be courageous.’ Joshua had a task ahead of him that was both difficult and dangerous.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: GRIP TEST



Challenge kids to see how strong their grip is. Lead them through the following steps:

1. Put a tennis ball or stress ball in the palm of your hand.
2. Squeeze the ball using your fingers but not your thumb.
3. Clench as tight as you can and then release your grip.
4. Repeat this as many times as you can; try for at least 10!

SAY “Great job! Do you think it is important for a leader to be physically strong? Why or why not? Being strong also means being able to persevere, or continue to do something difficult. Did you feel like giving up while squeezing the ball? Today, we will hear how God told Joshua to be strong. Joshua needed to persevere because leading the Israelites would not be easy.”

☐ OPTION 2: EVERYDAY COURAGE

Before the session, write the numbers 1–6 on a dry erase board. Next to each number, list a location or time at which a kid might need to be courageous (at home, at school, in the car, alone, with friends, at night).

Invite the kids to take turns rolling a dice. Read the corresponding location or time and prompt kids to discuss how they might need to be courageous in that situation. For example, a kid might need to have courage to stand up to someone being unkind at school. Remind kids that they can always ask an adult for help. They can pray and ask God to give them courage.

SAY “We don’t always feel brave or courageous, but we can ask God to help us. In the Bible story we will hear today, Joshua was about to lead the Israelites into the promised land. God encouraged Joshua and told him to be courageous. I can’t wait to tell you more.”





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

INTRODUCE the Bible Story

1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

SAY “Hello, everyone! I’m [your name], and I’m so glad to be with you today to tell you about how God is working out His plan to rescue sinners. We find these stories in the Bible, God’s Word. The Bible is full of stories that all fit together to show God’s greatness and our need for a Savior. We can’t see God with our eyes, but He reveals Himself to us through His Word so we can know Him and His Son, Jesus. Let’s get started.”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “Have you ever heard people talk about the ‘big picture’? What do you think that means? [Pause for kids to respond.] Keeping the ‘big picture’ in mind means looking at or thinking of the whole story instead of just the details. In each of the Bible stories we will hear, we’ll think beyond the details of the story to the way God is working out His greater plan through it.

Our big picture question is, **What is the Bible?** I know what you’re thinking: ‘I already know what the Bible is; it’s a book!’ Yes, but the Bible is more than just a book! **The Bible is God’s Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.** Let’s say our big picture question and answer together: **What is the Bible? The Bible is God’s Word that tell us what is true about God and ourselves.**”

3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

SAY “Remember that God rescued the Israelites from Egypt where they had been slaves for hundreds of years. After they refused to enter the land God promised to give them, the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years. Finally, a new generation was ready to enter the promised land.

Moses wasn’t going to lead the people into the promised land. Why? [Point out ‘Moses Disobeyed God’ and remind kids that when Moses disobeyed God’s instructions, God told him he would not be allowed to go into the land.]

After Moses died, God chose a new leader—Joshua—to lead the Israelites. We’ve heard about Joshua before. Do you remember what he did? [Point to ‘The People Didn’t Go into the Land’ and remind kids that Joshua was one of the twelve spies who scouted out the land. Joshua and Caleb trusted God to give them the land, but the other spies were too afraid.]

Leading the Israelites was a big job, and I bet Joshua was fearful. Let’s hear how God encouraged Joshua by giving him a wonderful promise.”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Joshua 1. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Encouraged Joshua.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

GOD ENCOURAGED JOSHUA

“**God’s people were near the land of Canaan** (KAY nuhn). This was the promised land, the place God said Abraham’s descendants would one day live. **The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. The older generation had died. Moses, their leader, had died too, and now it was time for the remaining people to go into the land.**

God chose Joshua to be the new leader of Israel. It was a big job, but God encouraged Joshua. He promised to give Joshua success in the land. God said, “No one will be able to stand against you as long as you live. **I will be with you**, just as I was with Moses. I will not leave you or abandon you.”

Then God said, **“Be strong and courageous.”** God wanted Joshua to lead the people into the land because He had promised it to His people. God said, “Be strong and very courageous to obey everything Moses taught you. Study, remember, and obey the commands written in the book of instruction. If you do this, you will be successful in whatever you do.”

God encouraged Joshua again: **“Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, will be with you wherever you go.”**

So Joshua sent a message throughout the Israelites’ camp: **“Get ready! We are going to cross the Jordan River and take this land. God is giving it to us, just like He promised.”**

The Israelites agreed and got ready. **“We will do everything you have commanded us,”** they told Joshua. **“We will go everywhere you send us. We will obey you like we obeyed Moses. We trust that God will be with you like He was with Moses.”**

Christ Connection: God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God’s kingdom. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Sketch a diagram: Draw a river on a dry erase board or large sheet of paper. Add stick figures on one side of the river. Label the area on the other side *Promised Land*.

Use hand motions: Perform a hand motion each time you say a key word from the Bible story. Consider searching online for the sign language motion to use with the words *encourage*, *strong*, and *courageous*.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ That was a great story! Did anyone notice what Joshua’s job was before God called him to take over Moses’ job? Open your Bible to Joshua 1. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Josh. 1:1.]

That’s right; he was Moses’ assistant! Isn’t it cool that He prepared Joshua by having Moses train him? God knows everything. [Choose volunteers to read aloud Josh. 1:3,5,7,17.] God gave some big promises to Joshua. He wanted Joshua to remember His faithfulness to Moses in leading the people so that he would be encouraged for his new job.

One more thing: God gave Joshua a reason not to be afraid. What was it? [Choose a volunteer to read Josh. 1:5,9.] God said He would be with Joshua. How do you think that helped Joshua not be afraid? Even if Joshua felt afraid, knowing that God was with him helped him obey God’s commands and do the right thing. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. If you trust in Jesus as your LORD and Savior, you can be sure that He will always be with you and will lead you through His Word. Because He is always with you, you can talk to Him through prayer any time. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the Gospel Plan Poster to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 7, Session 1” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. What should you do if someone points out a mistake you made?
2. How can you use your words to encourage and build others up?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

SAY “ God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as the Israelites moved into the promised land. Whether God calls us to a new place or wants us to stay where we are, we can be on mission for God.

Annie Armstrong spent her life helping support missions work all over the world by organizing the Women’s Missionary Union, a group for women who wanted to support missionaries and help the gospel go everywhere. Annie cared for people in her area by helping provide for their needs and telling them about Jesus. She also wrote many letters asking other Christians to help missionaries. Listen closely to this video and see if you can hear how many letters Annie wrote. ”

Play the missions video. Ask the kids to recall how many letters Annie wrote. (18,000 in a year) Pray and ask God to bless missionaries and those who support their work.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Show the key passage poster. Lead kids in reading aloud Psalm 119:105 together.

SAY “Our key passage says that God’s Word is a lamp and a light. That’s interesting. Why do people use lamps and lights? [Pause for kids to respond.] So what do you think it means that God’s Word is a lamp and a light? [Allow kids to respond.] God’s Word shows us the way we should go. It helps us live for God. Let’s work on memorizing Psalm 119:105.”

Write the key passage on the dry erase board. Prompt kids to read the key passage aloud. Then, erase one word and challenge kids to say the key passage, saying the missing word from memory. Continue erasing one word at a time until kids say the verse from memory.

Lead kids to sing “A Light On My Path (Psalm 119:105).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

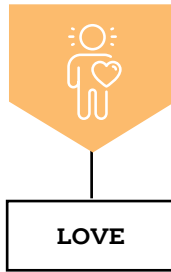
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

SAY “Lord, You are good and You care for us. Help us be courageous to follow You. Give us opportunities to encourage others and share Your love with the world. Amen.”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God by Applying the Story

1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Joshua 1. Explain that when God encouraged Joshua, the Israelites were gathered at the Jordan River (F6). Joshua would lead the Israelites into the promised land of Canaan (F4).

Consider comparing the map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Israel, Lebanon, Palestine, northwest Jordan, and western Syria.)

Choose a volunteer to read aloud Joshua 1:1-2.

SAY “God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God’s kingdom.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Do you think Joshua had a good reason to be afraid and discouraged? Why?”

Point out that Joshua had been with the Israelites all through the wilderness. He saw how rebellious they could be. Now he was supposed to be the leader to take the new generation of Israelites to a place where they had never been. Prompt kids to discuss how they would feel taking on a task like that.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 15:13.)

SAY “Why do you think God commanded Joshua to be both strong and courageous?”

Prompt kids to consider what a leader would be like if he were strong but not courageous. Point out that being strong wouldn’t mean much if you give up every time you are afraid! What would a leader be like if he were courageous but not very strong? If you were not able to physically take on the enemy, you would be in trouble. God knows everything; He knew what kind of leader Joshua needed to be.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Josh. 1:6-7,9.)

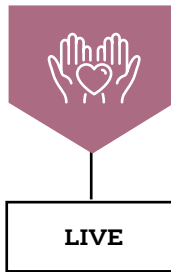
SAY “When you are afraid or discouraged, how do you know Jesus is with you?”

Explain that when Jesus was on earth, He told His followers that when He left He would send them another Helper, the Holy Spirit. Tell kids that Jesus gives His followers the Holy Spirit to dwell in them forever. Point out that when we are afraid or discouraged, we can trust the Holy Spirit to take our prayers to God, who knows and provides exactly what we need. God’s children are never alone.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read John 14:16-17,26.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: ENCOURAGE GIVING



Brainstorm with the kids some reasons missionaries need the support of churches.

SAY “God encouraged Joshua as he prepared to lead the Israelites into the promised land. Annie Armstrong’s letters encouraged people to give generously and live on mission for God. Let’s spend some time writing our own encouraging letters to help the gospel reach all people.”

Give each kid paper, an envelope, and a pencil. Encourage kids to write a letter to explain or draw a picture to represent why Christians should support missions. Suggest they begin their letters with the greeting “Dear Christian.”

Invite the kids to deliver the letters to their families or create a bulletin board in the church that features the letters as a way to encourage giving.

☐ OPTION 2: FOCUSED FLAMINGOS



Instruct the kids to stand. Make sure they have enough room to move around. Challenge kids to balance on one leg for one minute without dropping their raised leg. Guide them to focus on one point in the room as they hold as still as possible. Play additional rounds with further instructions:

- Stand on one leg and raise one hand.
- Stand on one leg and touch your nose.
- Stand on one leg and flap your arms.

SAY “God knew that leading the Israelites would be difficult for Joshua, so He told Joshua to focus on obeying God’s commands. To know God and walk with Him, we need to focus on the Bible. **What is the Bible? The Bible is God’s Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.** This week, challenge yourself to read some or all of Joshua 1.”

2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray that kids would seek to know God through Jesus, His Son. Ask God to give them strength and courage to face everyday challenges. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Wild Wanderings” on the activity page.



JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



Unit 7 • Session 1

GOD ENCOURAGED JOSHUA

Joshua 1

WHAT IS THE BIBLE? THE BIBLE IS GOD'S WORD THAT TELLS US WHAT IS TRUE ABOUT GOD AND OURSELVES.

God's people were near the land of Canaan. The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. The older generation had died. Moses, their leader, had died too, and now it was time for the remaining people to go into the land.

God chose Joshua to be the new leader of Israel. It was a big job, but God encouraged Joshua. He promised to give Joshua success in the land. God said, "I will be with you."

Then God said, "Be strong and courageous."

God encouraged Joshua again: "Be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid or discouraged, for I, the LORD your God, will be with you wherever you go."

So Joshua sent a message throughout the Israelites' camp: "Get ready! We are going to cross the Jordan River and take this land. God is giving it to us, just like He promised."

The Israelites agreed and got ready. "We will do everything you have commanded us," they told Joshua. "We will go everywhere you send us. We will obey you like we obeyed Moses. We trust that God will be with you like He was with Moses."

Christ Connection: God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God's kingdom.

Secret Message | Find and circle the words in the list. Then start in the top left corner and copy the leftover letters into the blanks to reveal a hidden message.

B E C O S F A E V A R B U R R
 A G E E O N E U S N N O Y U I
 M L S B X M H A G X C O O D V
 U O G I F C A U R E C D W I E
 M K O L W S D K G E L B I B R
 S U C Y X E J A Z T N R S G F
 S C R W S A R D Z G E X N B O
 W C A E T U O A U H S O J D C
 V X R R O G L G T H R D J L U
 L T I C E Z C K X T Y I O U S
 E E N Y A D C H S W A G C V C
 H E A S V V T D J P M M J X J
 F T G D W D J L Z Y W B V X Y
 V U X U E C P W E I C Y E B O
 G S S P C R C E F I V D I C J

Wild Wanderings | Complete the maze to get the Israelites to the promised land.

EGYPT

PROMISED LAND

ANXIOUS
 BIBLE
 BRAVE
 DESERT
 ENCOURAGE
 FEAR
 FOCUS
 GOD
 JOSHUA
 LEADER
 MOSES
 OBEY
 RIVER
 SCARED
 STRONG

□ □

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

NAME: _____



the **GOSPEL** PROJECT

God Encouraged Joshua

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- Moses died and God chose Joshua to be the next leader of the Israelites.
- Leading God's people was not easy. The people often dishonored God.
- God told Joshua to be strong and courageous.
- God reminded Joshua of the wonderful things He had done, and encouraged Joshua to obey Him.

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God encouraged Joshua and promised to be with him as he led the Israelites into the promised land, where they would be victorious and find rest. We have victory over sin and rest for our souls in Jesus, who is with us always and leads us into the promised land of God's kingdom.

KEY PASSAGE: Psalm 119:105

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

What is the Bible? The Bible is God's Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.

