

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 2

GOD STOPPED THE JORDAN RIVER

JOSHUA 3–4

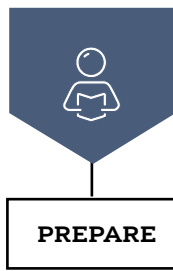
KEY PASSAGE: Your word is a lamp for my feet
and a light on my path. Psalm 119:105 CSB

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 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 trust in Him and be saved from sin.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



LEADER Bible Study

The children of Israel often gave in to worry and bitterness. Their attitude revealed deeper heart issues: their belief that God had failed to take care of them and would fail in the future. It was in the 40 years of wandering in the desert that God showed them over and over that He was worthy of their trust. Yet they still did not trust Him.

When God provided supernatural food for them to eat, they craved the food of Egypt. (Num. 11:4-6) When they first encountered the inhabitants of Canaan, they were filled with fear because they didn't trust that God would be with them. (Num. 13:33) God went out of His way to deliver His people, protect them, and provide for them. He showed He is all-powerful and trustworthy.

Read Moses' words in Deuteronomy 6:20-24. Moses implored the Israelites to remember what God had done and testify to their children of His faithfulness. God had brought them out of Egypt to keep His covenant with Abraham. He gave them instructions for their good.

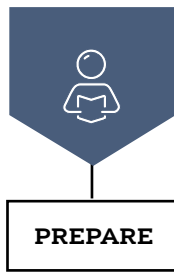
Meditate on Moses' proclamation: "We were slaves in Egypt, but God, by his grace, set us free." This truth is particularly helpful for us when we face difficulties and periods of anxiety. We can have peace in the present by looking backward in gratitude and forward

with hope. When we look back at our lives and the millions of ways God has provided and protected us, our hearts should be filled with gratitude. Based on God's character as revealed in Scripture and in our lives, we can look forward with hope, knowing that God, who has preserved us, will continue to do so until He comes to bring us home.

As you get ready to teach, prepare your heart by reminding yourself of God's faithfulness. Tell the kids in your group how God has shown Himself worthy of your trust. They too can put their hope in a God who never fails.

IDEAS TO CONSIDER

The purpose of miracles: The purpose of this miracle is to declare God's might to all the peoples of the earth and to encourage Israel to always fear the Lord. (Josh. 4:24)



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

- ☐ “Remembering Stones” activity page

Session Starter (Option 1)

- ☐ hula hoop



LEARN

Introduce the Session

- ☐ countdown video

Big Picture Question

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster

Review the Timeline

- ☐ Giant Timeline

Tell the Bible Story

- ☐ “God Stopped the Jordan River” video
- ☐ Bible Story Picture Poster

Questions from Kids

- ☐ “Unit 7, Session 2” questions from kids video

Missions Moment

- ☐ “Women in Missions” 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



LIVE

Activity Choice (Option 1)

- ☐ large sheets of paper or craft paper

Activity Choice (Option 2)

- ☐ Big Picture Question Poster
- ☐ smooth rocks or modeling clay
- ☐ toothpicks

Journal and Prayer

- ☐ Journal Page
- ☐ “The Right Rhymes” activity page



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 “Can you think of a time when something you really wanted seemed too hard to get or maybe you had to wait too long to get it? What was it? How did you feel as you waited?”

1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Remembering Stones” on the activity page.

SAY “What do you remember from the Bible that is true about God or people? [Invite kids to respond.] Thanks for sharing! Do you ever have trouble remembering something? Could any of you tell me what you ate for lunch nine days ago? Maybe not, but today, we will hear about something very important that happened and what the Israelites did to help people remember it.”

2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: HOOP DOWN



Instruct kids to stand in a circle and stretch their arms out in front of them with their index fingers extended. Place a hula hoop horizontally so that it rests on the tips of the kids' fingers. Tell kids that they must keep a fingertip on the hula hoop at all times, but they should not hook their finger around it or otherwise hold the hoop; the hoop must simply rest on the tips of their fingers.

Challenge kids to lower the hoop to the ground without dropping it. For an added challenge, do not allow kids to talk as they complete the challenge.

SAY “Was that difficult to do? Sometimes getting a whole team of people to work together can be challenging. Imagine trying to get thousands of people to work together. With God's help, that's what Joshua had to do. We'll hear more of Joshua's story today.”

☐ OPTION 2: TRUST THE LEADER

Before the session, write the following obstacles on separate sheets of paper: river, mountain, tall grass, low tree limbs, lions. Teach the following motions for each obstacle:

river—paddle a canoe

mountain—make a climbing motion

tall grass—sweep arms side to side

low limbs—walk while ducking down

lions—back up slowly with arms overhead

Choose a leader to stand at the front of the room, facing the group. Stand at the back of the room and hold up the signs one at a time in random order for the leader to see. The leader should shout out the obstacle and lead the group in the correct action. As time allows, play again with a new leader.

SAY “Which is more difficult: leading or following? Why? In today's Bible story, we'll hear about a time the Israelites needed to trust their leader in order to move forward.”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





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 get to tell you today about how God has worked out His plan to rescue sinners. We find the stories in the Bible, God’s Word. Do you have a Bible with you today? [Distribute Bibles to kids who need one.] All the stories fit together to show God’s greatness and our need for a Savior.

In fact, as we hear and study Bible stories, we will pay special attention to how God showed Himself to people. God gave us His Word so that we can know Him and His Son, Jesus. Let’s get started.”

2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

SAY “Last time, we heard our new big picture question: **What is the Bible?** How would you answer that question? [Pause for kids to respond.] This seems like a simple question, but the answer is an important truth to understand: **The Bible is God’s Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.** Maybe you’ve wondered, Is God like this? or, Is this really true about me? People have lots of different ideas about who God is and what is true about people. The Bible tells us the full truth.

Let’s say our big picture question and answer together: **What is the Bible? The Bible is God’s Word that tells 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 “In the first chapter of the Book of Joshua, we heard about Joshua—the new leader God chose to take Moses’ place over the Israelites. We also talked about what a big job it would be to lead so many people. As Joshua and a new generation of Israelites arrived at the edge of the promised land, they encountered a big obstacle. Something deep and wide stood in their way. Let’s see what God did.”



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

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

Open your Bible to Joshua 3–4. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Stopped the Jordan River.” Use the bold text to retell or review the story.

GOD STOPPED THE JORDAN RIVER

“ God had promised that Abraham’s descendants would live in Canaan (KAY nuhn). He would give them the land. **After wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, it was time for the remaining Israelites to enter the promised land. Now the only thing keeping the Israelites from their new home was the Jordan River.** The river was deep and wide. The Israelites could never get across on their own, but God was going to help them.

God told Joshua and the other leaders what to do. First, the priests carried the ark of God ahead to the edge of the river. The ark reminded the people that God was with them. **The rest of the Israelites followed behind the ark.**

Joshua said, “Listen. God is going to do something great. When these men carry the ark of God into the river, God will stop the water in the river. Then you will know God is with us.”

The people watched **as the priests carrying the ark took a step into the river. God made the water stop! The priests stood on dry ground** in the middle of the river, and **then all of the Israelites crossed safely** on dry ground.

God told Joshua, “Choose 12 men to take 12 stones from the middle of the river where the priests are standing. They should put them down in the place where you spend the night tonight.”

God wanted the stones to be a memorial. A memorial is something that helps people remember a person or event. **The people would see the stones and remember that God helped them cross the river.** In the future, when children saw the stones and said, “Why are these rocks here?” the people could tell their children that God stopped the water, and everyone would know that God is mighty.

The Israelites did exactly what God told them to do. They picked up 12 big stones to make a memorial. **Finally, the priests with the ark crossed the river, and the water began to flow again.** The river was deep and wide like it had been before. At last, **God’s people were in the promised land!**

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 trust in Him and be saved from sin. ”

STORYTELLING TIPS

Use sound effects:

As you tell the story, play sound effects of a running river and a chattering crowd of people.

Display props: Stack 12 stones in a pile on a table as you tell about the memorial the people created.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

SAY “ This story is incredible. So much for obstacles! Do you remember that long before today’s story, God had promised Abraham that his descendants would live in the land of Canaan? After wandering in the desert and getting a new leader to take them into the promised land, the new generation of Israelites faced a huge obstacle. Open your Bible to Joshua 3. What was it? Look at Joshua 3:15. **[Choose a volunteer to read the verse aloud.]** That’s right—the Jordan River!

God spoke to Joshua and told him exactly what to tell the people to do. Do you remember God’s instructions? First, the priests carrying the ark of God would go in front, and then the Israelites would follow. Next, the priests with the ark were supposed to step into the water. The Israelites obeyed, and God stopped the waters. Finally, the Israelites crossed the river on dry ground.

What did God command Joshua and the Israelites to do next? **[Choose a volunteer to read aloud Josh. 4:3.]** God told Joshua to set up a memorial. Does anybody know what the word memorial means? **[Pause for kids to respond.]** Yes, a memorial is something that reminds us of an event or a person. What would the stones remind the people of Israel and their children about? **[Pause for kids to respond.]** Correct! It would remind them of God’s power and His faithfulness; God always keeps His promises.

Where do we find God’s promises to us? In the Bible. **What is the Bible? The Bible is God’s Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.** Joshua trusted in God and obeyed Him. We can also trust God and obey His Word, the Bible. ”

3 CHRIST CONNECTION

SAY “ God showed His power to Joshua and the Israelites so that they would trust Him. When Jesus came to earth, He showed His power so that people would trust Him and be saved from sin. ”

(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 2” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Why is it important to remember God?
2. What can you do to remember God?

5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Remind kids about Annie Armstrong’s work in missions.

SAY “ After God helped His people enter the promised land, He commanded them to set up a memorial to remember the miracle. Today, we want to remember Annie Armstrong, whom God used to support missionaries. Women like Annie have been important to missions for a very long time!



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

| Many women have given their whole lives to sharing the gospel with people all over the world. ”
Play the missions video.

| **SAY** ” I’m thankful for the bravery of those women who answered God’s call to missions. Men, women, and children can all be a part of the things God is doing around the world. ”

Pray and thank God for women in missions. Ask Him to bless their work. Also pray for missionaries your church supports.

6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

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

| **SAY** ” Our key passage explains why we need God’s Word. It compares God’s Word to something we need in order to live; what is it? That’s right—light! ”

Assign each kid one or more words from the key passage. Instruct each kid to make up a hand motion for his assigned word(s). Then, beginning with the first word, lead kids to demonstrate their hand motions in order.

Emphasize that kids should pay careful attention so they can say and perform hand motions for the whole key passage. Lead kids to sing “A Light on My Path (Psalm 119:105).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

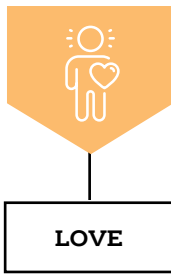
7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning to Love.

| **SAY** ” Lord, thank You for showing Yourself and Your power to us through Your Word. Put Your Words in our hearts so we can remember Your promises and trust in You at all times—even when we face big obstacles. We love You. 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 3. Point out that the Israelites were gathered at the Jordan River (F6). Joshua led 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 3:5.

SAY “God performed wonders among His people. 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 trust in Him and be saved from sin.”

2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

SAY “Do you know of any other important events that happened at the Jordan River?”

Explain that the Jordan River is mentioned in the Bible over 180 times. It is the main river in Israel. The prophet Elijah told Naaman the leper to go and wash in the river. Naaman obeyed and was cured of his leprosy. John the Baptist baptized people in the Jordan River. He baptized Jesus in the river. Encourage kids to remember today’s story when they hear other stories about the Jordan River in the future.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Mark 1:5.)

SAY “Do you ever find it difficult to obey God’s Word? Why?”

Invite kids to share their thoughts. Suggest that some of the Israelites, and maybe even the priests carrying the ark, might have wondered about God’s commands. But God always knows what is best for His people. Obeying God’s Word no matter how we feel shows that we love Him and that we really believe that He knows what is best for us.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 8:28.)

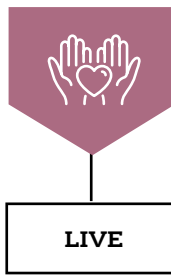
SAY “Can you think of a time you felt nervous about going somewhere new? How can remembering thinking about God help you when you feel afraid?”

Encourage kids that God sent the ark of God for the Israelites to follow, and He goes before us when we follow Him. When we follow Jesus, we can trust that His Word—like a light and a lamp on a path—will lead and guide us as we read it and do what it says.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 119:105.)

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





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE the Mission

1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

☐ OPTION 1: SMALL WOMAN, BIG FAITH



Before class, hang a large sheet of paper on the wall vertically and mark a height of 4'3". Label the mark Lottie Moon. Let kids stand next to the mark to see how they compare. Consider marking their heights or let them take turns tracing an outline of their bodies. Remind kids that Lottie Moon was a brave missionary who lived and worked in China for almost 40 years.

SAY “ Lottie Moon was an important woman in missions. She was a missionary to China. Just as the Israelites had to rely on God to help them cross into the promised land, Lottie had to rely on God in her ministry. Lottie was shorter than average, but she had big faith in God! She trusted Him and obeyed His call to become one of the first women missionaries in China. Thankfully, the size of your faith doesn't have to do with your size, age, or gender. Lottie Moon obeyed God to share the gospel, and we can do the same thing. ”

☐ OPTION 2: MEMORIAL STONES



Give each kid a lump of play dough or modeling clay. Instruct kids to shape the clay into a smooth oval. Provide toothpicks for kids to etch words or simple drawings into the clay that describe something they know to be true about God. Kids may draw from today's story or another Bible story they remember.

Invite kids to share what they wrote or drew. Gather the clay creations and display them in the room like memorial stones, reminding kids who God is and what He has done.

SAY “ We can know God because He has given us the Bible. **What is the Bible? The Bible is God's Word that tells us what is true about God and ourselves.** In the Bible, we see God's power in His miracles and in the work of His Son, Jesus, to save sinners. ”

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.

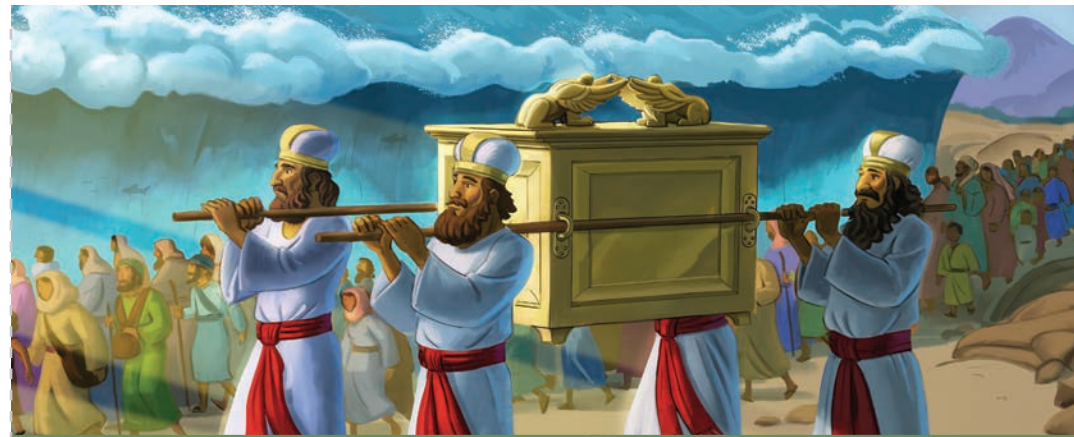
- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story 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, thanking God for always going before us and never leaving us. Ask Him to help kids trust Him as they read and obey His Word. As time allows, lead kids to complete “The Right Rhymes” 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 2

GOD STOPPED THE JORDAN RIVER

Joshua 3-4

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

After wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, it was time for the remaining Israelites to enter the promised land. The only thing keeping the Israelites from their new home was the Jordan River.

God told Joshua and the other leaders what to do. The priests carried the ark of God ahead to the edge of the river. The rest of the Israelites followed behind the ark.

Joshua said, "When these men carry the ark of God into the river, God will stop the water in the river. Then you will know God is with us."

As the priests carrying the ark took a step into the river, God made the water stop! The priests stood on dry ground. Then all of the Israelites crossed safely.

God told Joshua, "Choose 12 men to take 12 stones from the river. They should put them down where you spend the night tonight."

God wanted the stones to be a memorial. The people would see the stones and remember that God helped them cross the river.

The Israelites did exactly what God told them to do. Finally, the priests with the ark crossed the river, and the water began to flow again. God's people were in the promised land!

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 trust in Him and be saved from sin.

Remembering Stones | On each stone, write something you remember from the Bible that is true about God or people.



The Right Rhymes | Replace each underlined word with a word that rhymes to correct the sentences.



God went ahead of Joshua and the Israelites into the
promised band. He showed His tower to them so they would
crust in Him. When Jesus came to birth, He showed His
shower so people would dust in Him and be waved from tin.

NAME: _____



the **GOSPEL** PROJECT

God Stopped the Jordan River

BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- God's people were finally ready to enter the land.
- The Jordan River was flooded, but the people needed to cross it to enter the land.
- God told the priests to carry the ark into the river.
- God stopped the river's flow so the Israelites could cross on dry land.
- The Israelites used stones from the river to make a memorial that would help them remember God.

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 trust in Him and be saved from sin.

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.

