

Faith to Get Your Feet Wet

God's People Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1-17; 4:1-7 NIV

Bible Lesson & Activities for Children



THE **SUNDAY SCHOOL** STORE

Walk Right in!



Life is full of unknown developments that force us to lean on the Lord and trust Him for guidance in all things. We are often called to obey God without knowing the eventual outcome of circumstances, having faith that He is with us and will help us. This lesson reminds children of those principles while telling the story of Joshua and the Israelites crossing the Jordan. Use activities and conversation to highlight the importance of trust and explain God's constant steadfastness.

God is with us always! We often fail to understand His will and ways, but we can be assured that He has good plans for us. The Ark of the Covenant reminded Israelites of God's presence and faithfulness, and He provided for them. Today, we know that Jesus allows us to be in the presence of the Father, and that He goes with us no matter what. We can trust and obey, knowing He will supply our needs and bless our lives.

Passage: Joshua 3:1-17; 4:1-7

Target Audience: Kindergarten-6th grade

Materials Needed: Construction paper; decorative supplies; glue; markers or crayons; tape; scissors; box/container; paper plates; stones or rocks; popsicle sticks; Bibles.

More Resources Online

- Watch the [video demonstration of the object lesson](#).
- Watch the [video example for the craft projects](#).
- Watch the [video Bible story "Joshua and the Israelites Cross the Jordan"](#) from Saddleback Kids Club
- Watch the [video Bible story "Joshua Crosses the Jordan"](#) from Crossroads Kids
- For more free illustrations, visit [Christian Clip Arts](#) and [Ministry-To-Children](#)

Object Lesson (5 minutes)

Greet children and select a volunteer helper...

Hello, children of God!

To start off today, I need a volunteer. Can someone help me? Okay, great. Now, I'm just going to put this blindfold on you... *place a blindfold carefully on the helper, making sure he/she cannot see. Provide several directions involving movement.* I want you to follow some instructions. First, hop up and down on one leg. Pretty good! Now I want you to jump three times. Okay, now let me spin you in circles a few times. Now please take four steps to the right. Okay, now take four steps to the left. Great. Now, I have a bowl in front of you. *Bring out the water bowl with a small toy prize in the bottom.* I want you to place your hand in this bowl and see what you find inside. Have the child reach into the water to retrieve the toy. Assist with guidance if necessary. Great! You can take off your blindfold and check out your prize now. Thank you for helping!

What was challenging about this? You couldn't see, so that made things pretty difficult. You had to trust me to lead you safely, and not just run you into a wall or something. And you had to dip your hand into something without knowing what you would find there. In the end, this led to something good, but it took a little courage and faith for you to listen and obey my words without knowing what the final outcome would be.

This reminds me of our faith lives sometimes. God promises to care and provide for us, but there are a lot of times when we need to obey Him and we don't know where His instructions will lead. This makes me think of a lot of Biblical figures, too. One of these was Joshua. Joshua was the commander of Israel after Moses, and he was a man of great faith. God called him to lead the people into the promised land and conquer. When the

Israelites were getting ready to go in, they encountered some obstacles. One of these was the Jordan River. The Jordan River was too far to wade or swim across, and there were no bridges. It was the flood season, so the river was extra full. But God had a plan!

God told Joshua to get the people ready and to bring the Ark of the Covenant, which represented His presence. The priests were to carry the Ark and walk into the River. They had to trust God that those instructions would work. They gathered together, not certain what would happen, but knowing that God was with them. They headed for the riverbank and walked in...and before they knew it, they were walking on dry land! Just like the Israelites crossing the Red Sea with Moses a few years before, the priests were standing in the middle of a river, with the water swept away. Everyone passed through and walked on dry land to reach the other side. Then God told Joshua to have the people take stones, one for each tribe, and pile them up near the river as an altar to always remember what God had done. They did, stacking twelve stones in celebration and memory of God's leading.

Through faith, Joshua obeyed God and led the people safely. Sometimes in our lives we have to trust that God is with us, even when it means "getting our feet wet" or not understanding what the outcome might be. We should listen for God as we read His word, spend time with His people, and pray. Sometimes we step out in faith and don't know what is coming. But we do know that the Lord is always with us. He promises never to leave us and always to love us, provide for us, and take care of us. We can have faith that He is faithful!

Prayer: (Invite the children to repeat each line)

Dear God,

Thank you for leading us and being with us.

Thank you for your blessings and promises.

Help us to trust in you

Even when we don't know exactly what's coming next.

Thank you for your love.

We love you, God!

In Jesus name, Amen!

Game & Activities Suggestions (10 minutes)



This passage involves faith, trust, obedience, and a remarkable river crossing! Involve students as they learn about God’s presence and power. To get students thinking and ready to learn, consider an activity opener along these lines:

- **River Rock Relay:** Consider the altar–construction process with a fun relay game. Invite students to race across a playing field, pick up one rock at a time, and return to their team to build an “altar” out of rocks or stones. Add to the fun by encouraging kids to name something they are thankful for as they build.
- **Follow the leader:** Take students on a bit of a scavenger hunt, with an unknown destination. Walk them through clues to walk to different places, guiding them without sharing the final outcome of their hunt. Explain how God is present and guiding in our lives, even though we don’t know final outcomes.
- **Keepsake show and tell:** Prior to class, invite students to bring in favorite pictures or memory items, and talk about what makes them special. Join the discussion by bringing in some of your own items, as well.
- **Science “magic”:** prepare to discuss the river crossing with some tricks that seem to defy nature. Place a card over a cup of water and flip to demonstrate how the suction holds the water back, just as God held back the waters. Or try the “pepper trick”: sprinkle pepper over water, and place a drop of dish soap on your finger to separate the pepper as the water was separated.
- **Blindfolded obedience:** have children pair up (or just select one at a time if younger), and place a blindfold on one of the partners. The “seeing-eye” partner will walk the blindfolded one through instructions or guide them to an activity. Describe the similarity between trusting a partner and trusting God to lead us through life’s challenges.

Explain to students that the lesson will focus on how God’s people followed His instructions without knowing exactly what would happen. Afterwards, they remembered God’s goodness and faithfulness. In the same way, we are called to faithful obedience, and should always recall God’s mighty works!

Main Bible Teaching (15 minutes)



This passage is a fun one to act out, with the crossing of the river and setting up of the altar. Encourage students to interact with the story as it is read, bringing it to life. You could also describe details for younger students to comprehend. Or have older kids take turns reading through verses, and then act it out on their own.

Joshua 3:1-6 NIV *Early in the morning Joshua and all the Israelites set out from Shittim and went to the Jordan, where they camped before crossing over. (2) After three days the officers went throughout the camp, (3) giving orders to the people: "When you see the ark of the covenant of the Lord your God, and the Levitical priests carrying it, you are to move out from your positions and follow it. (4) Then you will know which way to go, since you have never been this way before. But keep a distance of about two thousand cubits between you and the ark; do not go near it." (5) Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the LORD will do amazing things among you." (6) Joshua said to the priests, "Take up the ark of the covenant and pass on ahead of the people." So they took it up and went ahead of them.*

Provide a bit of context to start: explain that these events took place right before the Israelites entered the Promised Land. God had provided for them throughout their desert wanderings, and now the time had come to enter their new home! But first, there were some obstacles, including crossing the Jordan River. The river was wide and very full of water, seemingly impossible to pass. But God had a plan.

God instructed the people to bring the Ark of the Covenant and prepare to see God at work. The Ark represented the presence of the Lord, and only certain people could handle it or even be near it. Joshua gave instructions from God to the people, although they didn't know exactly what God would do.

Ask: Have you ever received strange instructions from someone? How do you know if you can trust them?

Joshua 3:7-13 NIV *And the Lord said to Joshua, "Today I will begin to exalt you in the eyes of all Israel, so they may know that I am with you as I was with Moses. (8) Tell the priests who carry the ark of the covenant: 'When you reach the edge of the Jordan's waters, go and stand in the river.'" (9) Joshua said to the Israelites, "Come here and listen to the words of the Lord your God. (10) This is how you will know that the living God is among you and that he will certainly drive out before you the Canaanites, Hittites, Hivites, Perizzites, Girgashites, Amorites and Jebusites. (11) See, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth will go into the Jordan ahead of you. (12) Now then, choose twelve men from the tribes of Israel, one from each tribe. (13) And as soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord—the Lord of all the earth—set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up in a heap."*

Joshua promised that things would be okay...He instructed the people to go out with the Ark, and get their feet wet! They were to enter the river, and the water would be stacked up on itself to allow them through. Joshua reminded the people that God was in charge and that God would be with them and protect them, no matter what. They just had to trust.

Ask: How do you know that God is amazing and always in control?

Joshua 3:14-17 NIV So when the people broke camp to cross the Jordan, the priests carrying the ark of the covenant went ahead of them. (15) Now the Jordan is at flood stage all during harvest. Yet as soon as the priests who carried the ark reached the Jordan and their feet touched the water's edge, (16) the water from upstream stopped flowing. It piled up in a heap a great distance away, at a town called Adam in the vicinity of Zarethan, while the water flowing down to the Sea of the Arabah (that is, the Dead Sea) was completely cut off. So the people crossed over opposite Jericho. (17) The priests who carried the ark of the covenant of the LORD stopped in the middle of the Jordan and stood on dry ground, while all Israel passed by until the whole nation had completed the crossing on dry ground.

Ask: Can you think of any other times in the Bible when God made nature change?

God did not fail His people. Just as Joshua had said, as soon as the priests got into the water, the river stood up "in a heap" and rose away from them! The people were able to pass over onto dry land. They were in the middle of a river, just walking on dry land! The whole nation was able to get across. After this, Joshua had further instructions for the people, to remind them that it was important to look back on the events that had just taken place, and tell others about them.

Joshua 4:1-7 NIV When the whole nation had finished crossing the Jordan, the LORD said to Joshua, (2) "Choose twelve men from among the people, one from each tribe, (3) and tell them to take up twelve stones from the middle of the Jordan, from right where the priests are standing, and carry them over with you and put them down at the place where you stay tonight." (4) So Joshua called together the twelve men he had appointed from the Israelites, one from each tribe, (5) and said to them, "Go over before the ark of the LORD your God into the middle of the Jordan. Each of you is to take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the

tribes of the Israelites, (6) to serve as a sign among you. In the future, when your children ask you, 'What do these stones mean?' (7) tell them that the flow of the Jordan was cut off before the ark of the covenant of the Lord. When it crossed the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. These stones are to be a memorial to the people of Israel forever."

Twelve men from the people came forward, one for each of the tribes of Israel. They each chose a stone, and they put them together to build a special memorial. The stones were to remind them of what God had done. They could re-visit the area and tell their children the mighty works of His hands, and how He had parted the water for them. The stones were a special symbol of remembrance for them.

Ask: What kinds of things do you have that remind you of special events or people? Are there any ways that we have memorials, plaques, or recognition of what Jesus has done?

Remind students of the powerful things God does in this story. The people of Israel trusted that, just as promised, He would always be with them and provide for them. God gave them instructions to follow, and they obeyed them, even without being certain what God was doing. In the same way, we can have faith and honor the Lord's directions, even if we aren't sure what will happen in our lives. We can be certain that He is with us. He gave us Jesus to bring us into fellowship with Him, and no matter what happens, He will always love and lead us, and never leave us. We can have faith in Him, and whether we use rocks or journals or our lives, we recall His amazing work in and through us!

Close with prayer, thanking God for leading and asking for His help to follow, trust, and obey His word.

Craft Activities (15 minutes)

The Jordan River crossing reminded the Israelites that God is faithful to His promises and will always be with us. The story holds the same message for us, encouraging trust and obedience for our Lord. These crafts recall the events of Joshua 3-4 in creative and memorable ways. A “Stones of Remembrance Plate” recounts the altar made by the Israelites after the river crossing. An “Ark of the Covenant Box” emphasizes God’s presence and doubles as a prayer or coin collection vessel. Let’s get crafty!

Craft one: "Stones of Remembrance Plate"

You will need:

- Paper plate(s)
- Markers or crayons
- Rocks/stones
- Glue or tape
- Construction paper/cardstock
- Scissors
- Stickers, permanent markers, puffy paint, etc. (optional)



Procedure:

1. Prepare the paper plate with verses and captions.
2. If desired, glue a blue "river" onto the plate to resemble water.
3. Decorate stones with permanent markers, puffy paint, or other decorations. Add words that recount God's love and faithfulness.
4. Attach twelve (or fewer) stones to the plate with glue or tape. Display to remember the story of Joshua and the Jordan River, and to consider God's mighty works and attributes.



Craft Two: “Ark of the Covenant Box”

You will need:

- Empty box of some sort (tissue, shoebox, etc.)
- Crayons or markers
- Glue or tape
- Scissors
- Construction paper or cardstock
- Extra decorations (pipe cleaners, streamers, etc.)



Procedure:

1. Decorate the box or container with paper and other decorations.
2. Add Sticks on the side to resemble poles, if desired.
3. Attach verses and captions along with elements to look like the Ark of the Covenant.
4. Use the finished product as a collection box for offerings, prayers, or other items, or simply display the replica as a reminder of the story and God’s presence!



Joshua 3:5 NIV

Joshua told the people, "Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do amazing things among you."





Word Search Puzzle

Jordan - Joshua - Israel - Command - Lord - Moses

Priests - Covenant - Water - Ark - Jericho - Canaanites

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

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Joshua 3:1-17; 4:1-7. Written by [Kristin Highley](#)

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Word Search Answers

