



Session 11



CROSSING AND REJOICING

Joshua 3-4

Joshua assembled the Israelites and brought them to the edge of the Jordan River. Joshua laid out before the people the plan he had received from God. For nearly 450 years since Jacob and his sons packed up and moved to Egypt, the land God promised to Abraham had been inhabited by other nations. In God's timing, Joshua told the people to consecrate themselves because the next day God would do amazing things.

Joshua called attention to the ark of the covenant. The ark would play a vital role in future events. The ark was constructed while Israel was wandering in the wilderness. It symbolized the presence of Yahweh with the people. Rules existed for reverence to the ark. God instructed only the priests to carry the ark, and they were to carry it using two special poles. Joshua told the people they would see the ark, and when the priests' feet touched the water, the water would stand up in a heap, allowing the people to cross on dry ground.

It seems odd that Joshua's instructions had nothing to do with military preparedness. The nation needed spiritual preparedness. Battle would come later, but the task ahead could only be accomplished by God. The Jordan River at this time would have been overflowing its banks. The river would have been impassible, and without divine intervention, the people would have to remain on the other side. Joshua encouraged the people to remember the things God had done and rely on Him to sustain them.

When preparations had been completed, the priests took the ark and went toward the river. As soon as the priests' feet touched the water, the water stopped flowing and the ground in the riverbed dried up. Joshua directed each tribe to choose a representative from their tribe to gather a large stone from the center of the riverbed. These men carried their stones out of the riverbed. At evening after everyone had crossed, Joshua commanded that the stones be set up as a reminder of God's provision and blessing on that day. God intended for these stones to always remind the people of His grace and goodness.

SESSION FOCUS

TEXT TRUTH

God is strong and mighty.

BIBLE STORY

Joshua 3–4

BIBLE VERSE

Joshua 4:24

CHRIST IN CONTEXT

Joshua's leadership of God's people to the promised land and a time of rest is a glimpse of Jesus, our king, who leads us to our eternal inheritance and rest.

BIBLE SKILLS: Preschoolers will . . .

- Begin to understand that people wrote God's words in the Bible.
- Help open the Bible to a Bible book.



CONNECT WITH FAMILIES

Provide these weekly resources to help families explore the Bible together.

- Explore the Bible at Home (Printable: Music & Print Extras)
- Preschool Activity Page
- Preschool Family Card

MISSIONS ACTIVITY: CUT PAPER SNOWFLAKES



Tools: Bible, copy paper (enough for each child to make several snowflakes), children's safety scissors, pictures of snow scenes (check magazines, postcards, online for snow images), tape or yarn

- Guide preschoolers to fold sheets of copy paper four or more times. Show them how to cut small notches. After making several cuts, tell children to unfold their papers to see snowflakes.
- Tape or hang the snowflakes around the room. Talk about snow in your area; or mention places where snow falls often. (If possible show some pictures of snow scenes.)
- Tell children that many ski resort missionaries go to the ski mountains every day to teach, sing, and explain the Bible to people.
- Say: "The missionaries ski with the people in the area and enjoy the beautiful snow. Often being with the people and getting to know them is a way for the missionaries to tell the people about Jesus."

LEADER TIP!

Include this special missions-focused activity in addition to preschoolers' Bible Explorations.

TEXT TRUTH

God is strong and mighty.

BIBLE STORY

The People Cross the River
Joshua 3–4

BIBLE VERSE

May all the people know that
God is mighty.
Joshua 4:24

THE PEOPLE CROSS THE RIVER

Joshua 3–4

Joshua and the people got ready to travel to the new land God had chosen for them. Now they were at the Jordan River. The people stopped to camp for three days.

The leaders in the camp gave the people instructions for crossing the river. Then Joshua told the people to be ready to see the wonderful things God would do.

Joshua said to the people, “Listen to the words of God. You will know He is near and He will help you cross the river.”

When it was time, priests carried the ark that held the Ten Commandments. When the priests reached the edge of the water, God made the water become still. Then God made the ground dry so the priests, then all the rest of the people, could walk across the river to the other side.

After all the people were safely across, God told Joshua to choose twelve men and tell them to get twelve large stones from the river. The men were to take the stones to the camp that night.

Joshua obeyed, and the men took the stones to the camp and set them down. Joshua also set up twelve stones. The stones were to help the people remember God is mighty.

When everything was done as God said, Joshua, the people, and the priests crossed to the land. Then God made the water in the river flow again.

Everyone knew that God helped Joshua know what to do. The people knew God was with them and helped them.

LEADER TIP

You choose! Are your preschoolers ready to learn memory verses? Decide which wording of the session Bible verse you want to use with your group.

BIBLE VERSE

From the Bible text:

May all the peoples know the LORD is mighty. Joshua 4:24

Paraphrase:

May all the people know that God is mighty. Joshua 4:24



CIRCLE TIME (10-15 MINUTES, DEPENDING ON YOUR AGE GROUP)

GATHER

- Call children to Circle Time. Play a song and encourage children to twirl and sway as they move to their chairs.
- When everyone is in the circle, call on each child to stand and flex his muscles in front of the mirror. Say: “How strong you are!”
- Continue: “Although our bodies are strong, today we will hear about Someone who is much, much stronger. He is mighty.”

HEAR THE BIBLE STORY

- Review: “God’s people were camped by the Jordan River and the land God promised to them was across the river on the other side. The people had a problem. How would they get across?”
- Ask children for their ideas. Then reply: “Good thinking. But God had a better way. It would show His power and might.”
- Open the Bible to Joshua 3 and tell the Bible story with excitement and suspense.
- Give the Story Picture to a child and ask her to tell something she remembers from the story. Direct the child to pass the picture to the next friend to tell something from the story.
- Ask children: “Who is strong and mighty?” Answer by reading the words on today’s Add-on and attaching it to the Text Truth Clothesline.

PRACTICE BIBLE SKILLS

- Place Bible Match Cards in the gift bag. Tell each child to get a card and find the friend who has the matching card. Say: “The Bibles look different, but all of them are true. The words in all of the Bibles are God’s words. People wrote the words God told them to write.”
- Open your Bible to the Verse Marker and read today’s verse. Then read the verse from a device.
- Remark: “Even when we read a Bible verse on a tablet or a phone, the words are still God’s words.”

PRAY

- Ask God to help all people know He is strong and mighty.

TOOLS

- Bible
- Music & Print Extras
- nonbreakable stand-up mirror
- gift bag
- tablet or smartphone with a Bible app

PACK ITEMS

- 11 Story Picture: The People Cross the River
- 16 Bible Verse Markers
- 17 Text Truth Clothesline
- 18 Clothesline Add-ons
- 35 Bible Match Cards

EXPLORATION STATIONS (45-60 MINUTES)

TEXT TRUTH

God is strong and mighty.

BIBLE STORY

The People Cross the River
Joshua 3-4

BIBLE VERSE

May all the people know that
God is mighty.
Joshua 4:24

PACK ITEMS

11 Story Picture: The People
Cross the River
16 Bible Verse Markers

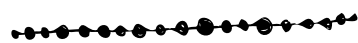
LEADER TIP!

Prepare paper bag “rocks”
ahead of time. Print the
words of the Text Truth on
the bags, one word per bag.
Leave some bags blank.

Stuff the bags with
newspaper, then fold and tape
the tops closed.

Set up at least three stations to provide choices of multisensory activities and movement for busy preschoolers. Use the Bible in every exploration.

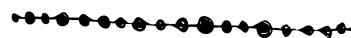
BUILD A BRIDGE



Tools: Bible, Preschool Family Card, blocks, craft sticks, paint stir sticks, cardboard pieces, toy vehicles, pictures of bridges and rivers (view online images if needed)

- Show children the pictures of bridges and rivers. Suggest that boys and girls use the craft materials to construct a bridge.
- Offer children tips for building. Say: “Try making two stacks of blocks, laying a stick across the top, and using the cardboard for ramps.”
- Children can test a bridge’s strength by driving toy cars over the bridge.
- Look at the picture on the Family Card. Say: “God made the water stop so the people could walk across on dry ground.”
- Say: “The people learned God is strong and mighty.”

ARRANGE WORD “ROCKS”



Tools: Bible, lunch-size brown paper bags, newspaper, tape, marker

- Make 12 to 15 paper bag “rocks.” (See Leader Tip.)
- Tape two parallel lines about two feet apart on the floor. Lay the “rocks” at one end of the lines.
- Direct a child to pick up a “rock” and place it between the lines. Choose another child to follow with the next “rock,” making sure the “rocks” are side by side with the words facing up.
- When all the “rocks” are in place, guide preschoolers to arrange the “rocks” in order to form the Text Truth.

MOVE FIGURES ACROSS THE WATER

Tools: Bible, plastic cloth, clear plastic shallow bin, several towels, plastic people figures, Story Picture: The People Cross the River

- Use the cloth to cover the floor under a table. Spread towels on the table and place the bin on the towels. Fill the bin with some water.
- Show the Story Picture. Say: “The people had to cross the river, but they had a problem. What happened then? God pushed the water back so the people could walk on dry ground!”
- Say: “Let’s see if we can push water back so people can walk and not get wet.”
- Tell two children to try to hold water back while a third child moves a figure across the water in the bin.
- Say: “We can’t do it! Only God can. God is mighty and strong.”

SEARCH FOR THE VERSE

Tools: Bible, poster board, marker, colored index cards

- Print the Bible verse and reference on the poster board. Next, print individual words of the verse on the index cards, one word per card. (Write the Scripture reference on a card.)
- Make two or three sets of cards, each set in a different color.
- Place sets of cards around the room. Tell children to search for word cards. When all the cards are found, lead children to match the words on the cards to those on the poster.
- Open the Bible to Joshua 4:24. Read the verse. Say: “You found all the words to the verse. Let’s say it together.”
- Tell the Bible story, emphasizing that God is strong and mighty.

MAKE A COLOR COLLAGE

Tools: Bible; blue, green, and brown paper scraps; copy paper; child’s safety scissors; glue sticks; Activity Page

- Attach a long piece of paper to the wall. Invite children to make a color collage.
- Say: “The paper colors remind me of being outdoors at a river. The Israelites crossed the river into the land God promised them.”
- As children work on the color collage, open the Bible to Joshua 3 and tell the Bible story. Emphasize that God helped the people cross into the land.
- Show children the picture on the Activity Page. Point to the priests, the ark, the trumpet player.
- Help a child find Joshua 4:24 in the Bible. Say the Bible verse with the children.

LEADER TIP!

Sing this song to the tune “Are You Sleeping?”:
*God is mighty; God is mighty.
 God is strong; God is strong.
 Yes, our God is mighty; Yes,
 our God is mighty. God is strong, He is strong.*