



The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1–4:24

Third- and fourth-graders want to feel independent, and they are beginning to understand how God can be part of even the things they do independently. Kids this age need to feel autonomous but also cared for and protected. They're also in the midst of learning to connect thankfulness to the things others do for them. Use this lesson to help kids learn to remember and thank God for the things he's done for them.



► Bible Point


Remember what God has done.

Key Verse

"Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done" (1 Chronicles 16:8).


Weaving Faith Into Life

Kids will remember and thank God for the things he's done for them.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	Remember When? <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Tell about important dates and events in their own lives.		
2 Bible Exploration	Lights, Camera, Action! <i>(about 30 min.)</i> Create a "movie" about the Israelites crossing the Jordan River.	Bibles, scissors (several pairs), paper, pencils, set of car keys, water bottles with water, blue and brown construction paper, markers, tape, paper grocery bags, plastic bags Teacher Pack: "Into the Promised Land" poster, FaithWeaver NOW box 	Cut apart the pieces of the "Into the Promised Land" poster.

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
3 Weaving Faith Into Life	Say It With a Song <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Learn the Key Verse song, and write a prayer of thanks to God.	Bibles, Bible Truth Sleuth, CD player, pens, copies of the lyrics page (at the end of this lesson) Teacher Pack: CD	Tear out the Lesson 12 pages from each Bible Truth Sleuth student book.
	Picture This! <i>(about 10 min.)</i> Pose and pretend to take pictures of things God has done.		
4 Lasting Impressions	Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.	Bible Truth Sleuth	
	Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.		

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1–4:24

BIBLE BACKGROUND
FOR LEADERS



God Guides a Nation at the Jordan River

Parts of this event may seem like a rerun of the Israelites’ crossing of the Red Sea 40 years earlier. Remember, however, that apart from Joshua and Caleb, all of the people crossing the Jordan River were no older than children when Israel crossed the Red Sea. This totally new experience must have reminded them of the stories their parents had told them about the miracle of crossing the Red Sea.

Notice that the Jordan River was not just a trickling stream—it was at “flood stage.” In the area of Jericho, it would have been 10 to 12 feet deep and the current quite strong.

Israel Memorializes God’s Miracle

The Israelites built a stone memorial with the rocks taken from the center of the Jordan River. The memorial would remind people of the wonders God had done for the Israelites as they entered the Promised Land, and the 12 stones together would remind them of the 12 tribes joined together as one nation.

The last verse of today’s passage, Joshua 4:24, tells us why God dried up the Jordan for the people to cross: “so that all the peoples of the earth might know that the hand of the Lord is powerful and so that you might always fear the Lord your God.” God wanted his people to fear him—to give him the worship and service he deserved. Remembering what God had done would give them encouragement and faith when they faced the difficulties of conquering this new land.

The Jesus Connection

As we grow in relationship with Christ, we become more Christ-like. We can testify that we have been renewed and delivered from our different lives of the past.

Reread Joshua 4:24. Note the public display of power that God left as a reminder of his love and power. In times of darkness, it’s often helpful to rest in the truth of what we have experienced in the past. Encounters with our Savior remind us that he is with us. Write a prayer of thanks for the ways God has been present in your life. When you talk to God this week, start by thanking him for these great things, and add to the list as God continues to work in your life. You can write your prayer in the lines below.





1 GETTING STARTED

Remember When?

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Welcome kids warmly as they arrive, and ask them how their week went.

Say: **Today's Bible passage is about an important event that happened to the Israelites. But before we get to the Bible, let's talk about some important events that have happened to us!**

Have kids form pairs. Explain that you'll call out a series of questions. After each question, have partners tell each other their answers. When each pair has finished sharing after each question, they'll jump up and stand with their arms in the air. When all kids have answered each question, choose a child to share what his or her partner's answer to the question is.

Ask:

- What's an important date in your life? Why?
- Where did you go on your favorite vacation?
- What's the best birthday party you've ever had?
- Who was your favorite teacher? Why?
- What's the best Christmas present you've ever received?

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why do you remember certain events from your past, but not everything?
- When something amazing happens in your life, what do you want to do about it?

Say: **Like the events we just spoke about, we remember events that are important to us—events that affect our lives in some way. And when an important event happens, people often tell one another about it. Today's Bible passage is about an important event that happened to the nation of Israel. It happened a long time ago, but it's still important to us today to ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE.**





2 BIBLE
EXPLORATION

Lights, Camera, Action!

What You'll Do

Say: **Today's Bible passage comes from the third and fourth chapters of the book of Joshua.** Open your Bible to Joshua 3:1–4:24, and show kids the passage.

Say: **Today we're going to find out what God did when it was finally time for the Israelites to enter the Promised Land! But there was one small problem. Between the Israelites and the Promised Land ran the Jordan River—and the Jordan River was at flood stage.**

Today we'll make a movie about the crossing of the Jordan River. Have kids form four groups, and explain that each group will have a role in the movie production. Assign each group one of the following roles:

- Set Design Crew
- Acting Crew
- Sound Effects Crew
- Costume Crew

Have each group go to a separate corner of the room to prepare for its role. Set out the supplies, and give each group its piece of the poster. Have kids retrieve the supplies listed on their instructions. (The instructions and pictures on the poster are there to guide crews. But don't be surprised if crews come up with their own ideas for the movie. Activities that allow kids room for expression and creativity lead to learning that lasts!)

Explain that kids will have about 20 minutes to follow the instructions on the poster for their part in the movie. As kids work, circulate around the room to offer help as needed. Encourage kids to refer often to both the Bible and the poster instructions.

After 20 minutes (or sooner if kids seem ready), have groups assemble to begin the movie. Help everyone get in the right place for the movie to begin.

Explain that you'll slowly read aloud the Bible passage while crews act out their parts. The Acting Crew and Sound Effects Crew will be involved continuously. The Set Design Crew will move the river when the passage calls for it with the assistance of the Costume Crew.

When everyone is ready, slowly read aloud Joshua 3:14-17; Joshua 4:1-3; and Joshua 4:15-17. Pause to allow kids to perform their roles. After the movie, lead everyone in applause as each crew takes a bow.



Lights, Camera, Action! Supplies

- Bibles
- scissors (several pairs)
- paper
- pencils
- set of car keys
- water bottles with water
- blue and brown
- construction paper
- markers
- tape
- paper grocery bags
- plastic bags
- Teacher Pack**
- "Into the Promised Land" poster
- FaithWeaver NOW box

Lights, Camera, Action! Easy Prep

Cut apart the pieces of the "Into the Promised Land" poster.





Say It With a Song Supplies

Bibles
Bible Truth Sleuth
CD player
pens
copies of the lyrics page
(at the end of this
lesson)

Teacher Pack

CD: "Give Thanks"
(1 Chronicles 16:8)
(track 3)

Say It With a Song Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 12
pages from each Bible
Truth Sleuth student
book.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Have kids answer the following questions in their crews.

Ask:

- What was so important about Joshua and the 12 tribes building a monument after they crossed the river?
- Why is it important that we remember what God has done even if it didn't happen to us?

Say: **God made it clear that he wanted people to remember what he'd done for the Israelites when he helped them cross the Jordan River. Without his help, they would never have been able to get across that flooded river. And people *do* remember, because here we are reading about it thousands of years later! God is so awesome! We're making sure to ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE.**

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

Say It With a Song


What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Make sure each child has a Bible.

Say: **Our Key Verse today is 1 Chronicles 16:8.** Have kids find the verse in their Bibles and read the verse aloud with you: **"Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done" (1 Chronicles 16:8).** Repeat the Key Verse with kids a few times.

Say: **God constantly does amazing things for his people. We ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE so we can thank him and tell others about him. Let's do that right now with a Key Verse song.**

Distribute copies of the lyrics, and play "Give Thanks" (1 Chronicles 16:8) (track 3 on the CD). Lead kids in singing along with the CD.

 **Give thanks to the Lord;
Call on his name.
Make known among the nations what he has done.
Give thanks to the Lord;
Call on his name.
Make known among the nations what he has done.**

**Sing to him!
Sing praise to him.
Tell of his wonderful works.**



**Sing to him.
Sing praise to him.**

(Repeat from the beginning.)

**Give thanks to the Lord;
Call on his name.
Give thanks to the Lord;
Call on his name.**

**Give thanks to the Lord!
Give thanks to the Lord!
Give thanks to the Lord!
Give thanks to the Lord!**

“Give Thanks” (1 Chronicles 16:8) by Jay Stocker. © 2006 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

After the song, gather kids in a circle. Distribute pens and today’s Bible Truth Sleuth pages. Have kids turn to the “What God Has Done” activity.

Say: **Inside the stone, write a prayer to God to thank him for what he’s done.** Give kids a few minutes to write. When everyone has finished writing, ask kids to share what they’ve written with someone sitting near them.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What’s a good way for you to remember the amazing things God has done?**
- **How can it help us to remember the amazing things God does?**
- **Explain how you might be able to encourage someone else by helping him or her remember what God’s done.**

Say: **We can ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE in many ways. Whether we write down the amazing things and look at them again later or if we keep telling others about what God has done, it’s important that we don’t forget about those things. The Israelites remembered the great things God had done for them when they built an altar after crossing the Jordan River.**

Picture This!

What You’ll Do ■■■■

Have kids form pairs.

Say: **In your pairs, discuss some of the best things you can remember that God has done.** It’s okay if some kids are most comfortable mentioning things they’ve heard from





the Bible, and it's fine if some kids tell about their own experiences or things they've heard from other people. Allow about two minutes for kids to share.

Say: **In your pairs, choose one thing God has done that you most want to remember. Do a freeze-frame and pretend to have that moment photographed.** Have kids switch whose idea they're making a picture of after about a minute and a half.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- In what ways did it encourage you to hear your partner's accounts of God's awesomeness?
- How does that encourage you to share your God Sightings with others?
- What can you do to make sure you notice and remember the great things God does for you each day?

Say: **God's done amazing things for his people since the beginning of the earth. Some of the best things are written down in the Bible, such as when God helped the Israelites cross the Jordan River. We can read our Bibles to find encouragement and reminders that God is doing amazing things. We can also share our experiences with others and listen to what God has done in their lives, too. In every way, it's important for us to ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE.**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

Daily Challenges Supplies

Bible Truth Sleuth

What You'll Do ■■■■

Say: **Consider this week how you can ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE.**

Have kids find this week's Daily Challenges on their Bible Truth Sleuth pages and choose one to do this week. They can choose one or more of these three options:

- **Write down a list of your favorite things God has done. Include things he's done in your life. Interview other people who know God to ask them about their favorite things God has done, too. Share this with your family to encourage them.**
- **At dinnertime, lead your family members in a prayer and have everyone at the table say one thing God has done for him or her that he or she is thankful for.**
- **Write a song that tells about some things God has done. Share the song with a friend.**





Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell the kids what you chose. Kids will be more inclined to follow through on their commitments when they see you doing the same.

Talk With Kids

Lead kids in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What's a practical way you're going to do your Daily Challenge? Include a time, a place, and other ideas.**

Say: **Joshua and the Israelites knew it was important to ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE. So let's ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE in our lives as we follow through on our Daily Challenges.**

Weaving Faith at Home

Encourage kids to talk with their parents about the Daily Challenges they chose and what they learned about the things God has done. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their Bible Truth Sleuth pages with their families.

Talk to your Director about emailing the FREE FamilyConnect to all your church's families. Available at group.com/digital.

Have kids stand in a circle. Give kids one minute to think of something they're really glad to know God has done. Pray and thank God for the things he has done, and then go around the circle so children can each list the things they thought of.





Lyrics

Give Thanks (1 Chronicles 16:8)

Give thanks to the Lord;
 Call on his name.
 Make known among the nations what he has done.
 Give thanks to the Lord;
 Call on his name.
 Make known among the nations what he has done.

Sing to him!
 Sing praise to him.
 Tell of his wonderful works.
 Sing to him.
 Sing praise to him.

(Repeat from the beginning.)

Give thanks to the Lord;
 Call on his name.
 Give thanks to the Lord;
 Call on his name.

Give thanks to the Lord!
 Give thanks to the Lord!
 Give thanks to the Lord!
 Give thanks to the Lord!

"Give Thanks" (1 Chronicles 16:8) by Jay Stocker. © 2006 Group Publishing, Inc. All rights reserved.

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