



The Israelites Cross the Jordan River

Joshua 3:1–4:24

First- and second-graders crave individual attention and like to be recognized for their achievements. Use this lesson to show kids that God deserves to be recognized and remembered for his achievements, too.



► **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 thank God for the things he’s done for them.

LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
1 Getting Started	“Thank You” Cheers <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Remember what people have done, and create cheers to thank them.	Bible	
2 Bible Exploration	Crossing the Jordan <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Experience what happened in the Bible by carrying the “ark” and walking across the “Jordan River.”	Bible; CD player; 12 brown, gray, or black construction paper rocks, plus 1 for each additional child; masking tape; chair Teacher Pack: CD	Place 2 lines of masking tape about 4 feet apart in the middle of the room to represent the Jordan River.
	In Remembrance <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Make an “altar” as the Israelites did, and learn the Key Verse song.	Bible, CD player, paper rocks from the “Crossing the Jordan” activity, 1 copy per child of the lyrics page (at the end of the lesson) Teacher Pack: CD	

Bold text within the lesson is spoken text.





LESSON	WHAT CHILDREN DO	SUPPLIES	EASY PREP
<p>3</p> <p>Weaving Faith Into Life</p>	<p>What God Has Done for Me <i>(about 15 min.)</i> Create memory books to remember what God has done for them and to thank God.</p>	My Bible Fun, several pairs of scissors, crayons	Tear out the Lesson 12 pages from each My Bible Fun student book.
<p>4</p> <p>Lasting Impressions</p>	<p>Daily Challenges <i>(about 5 min.)</i> Choose a Daily Challenge to apply God's Word.</p>	My Bible Fun, pens	
	<p>Weaving Faith at Home <i>(about 2 min.)</i> Talk about how to share what they learned with their families.</p>		

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.



“Thank You” Cheers Supplies

Bible

1 GETTING STARTED

“Thank You” Cheers

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■

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

Gather everyone together.

Put kids in four groups, and say: **Let’s play a cheering game. First I’ll name a person. Then you’ll have three minutes in your group to think of something special about that person—something that person would be remembered for—and to create a cheer with that special thing.** You may want to help kids. For example, for “George Washington” a group could cheer, “Two! Four! Six! Eight! Washington we appreciate! Why? ‘Cause he was the first president. Thanks, Washington!”

Tell kids to start by making a cheer for their parents. Allow time, and then continue the same process for one other person and God.

Say: **God deserves our cheers more than anyone else. And the Bible tells us a good reason for that.** Open your Bible to 1 Chronicles 16:8, and show it to kids. Then read aloud the Key Verse: **“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done.”** Have the children repeat the verse with you several times: **“Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done” (1 Chronicles 16:8).**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What are some things you can thank God for?
- Why would you want to remember what he’s done for you?
- How can you cheer for God this week?

Say: **When we cheer for God, it’s a way for us to show that we ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE.** He deserves our cheers and praise more than anyone. God does so many wonderful things for us. Today we’ll hear about a wonderful thing God did for the Israelites, and we’ll hear how the Israelites thanked and remembered him.



2

BIBLE
EXPLORATION

Crossing the Jordan

What You'll Do

Open your Bible to Joshua 3, and show kids the passage. Say: **In the Bible today, we'll hear how the Israelites were traveling in the desert and God did a great thing for them. We'll learn that it's important for us to ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE for others and for us.**

Let kids help you crumple brown, gray, or black construction paper to make paper "rocks." You'll need at least 12 rocks, plus one for each additional child you have above 12.

Have children gather around you at one end of the room.

Say: **Remember, the Israelites were still traveling in the desert. When we travel, we have to take lots of things with us. Name some things you take with you when you go on a trip.** Pause as kids call out their answers.

Say: **The Israelites had to carry all their things with them as they traveled. They had some very important things to carry, too—like the ark of the covenant. The ark wasn't like Noah's ark. It was more like a trunk, and inside the ark the people carried the tablets on which God had written the Ten Commandments.**

Place a Bible on a chair, and explain that the Bible will represent the tablets and the chair will represent the ark. Place the 12 (or more) paper rocks in the middle of the masking-tape river you prepared ahead of time.

Say: **One day as the Israelites were traveling, they came to a river called the Jordan River. This masking tape will be our Jordan River. The Jordan River was a very big river, and it was very full of water. In fact, the Bible tells us that the Jordan River was at flood stage when the Israelites went to cross it. The water would be way, way over your head.** Ask the kids to reach their hands above their heads and imagine a river flowing far above their heads. Then have kids gather near the tape lines.

Play "Rushing Water" (track 18 on the CD). Tell the children that they, the Israelites, need to get to the other side of the room but the big Jordan River is right in the middle of the room, stretching the whole way across. Ask the children to discuss how they think they should get to the other side of the room.

Say: **Thanks for those ideas. God had a very good way for the Israelites to cross the river. Here's what happened. God told Joshua, the leader of the Israelites, to have the priests carry the ark to the edge of the river.**



Crossing the Jordan Supplies

- Bible
- CD player
- 12 brown, gray, or black construction paper rocks, plus 1 for each additional child
- masking tape
- chair
- Teacher Pack**
- CD: "Rushing Water" (track 18)

Crossing the Jordan Easy Prep

Place 2 lines of masking tape about 4 feet apart in the middle of the room to represent the Jordan River.





Invite two children to carry the “ark” to the edge of the “river.” Then have them pretend to dip their feet in the water. When they do, turn off the CD.

Say: **When the priests who were carrying the ark touched the water, the river stopped flowing. Then all the Israelites were able to cross the river on dry land!** Have the children carrying the ark go to the middle of the river and stand while all the other children cross to the other side of the room.

Say: **Then God told Joshua to have one person from each family take a large rock out of the river.** Have kids each pick up a rock from the river. Then have the children carrying the ark join the rest of the kids.

When all the children are out of the river, play “Rushing Water” (track 18 on the CD) again. Say: **When the priests came out of the river, the water started flowing again! The Jordan River was just as big and wide as it had been before.**

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- What do you think about how God made the huge river stop so the Israelites could cross?
- Tell about a time God did something great in your life or someone else’s.
- Why do you want to remember that and what God did for the Israelites?

Say: **We ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE** for us and for people we read about in the Bible. When we learn what God has done, it reminds us that God can and does do wonderful things for us, too. The Israelites knew it was important to remember what God did for them. Let’s find out what they did with those rocks they carried out of the Jordan River.

In Remembrance

In Remembrance Supplies

Bible
CD player
paper rocks from the
“Crossing the Jordan”
activity
1 copy per child of the
lyrics page (at the end
of the lesson)
Teacher Pack
CD: “Give Thanks”
(1 Chronicles 16:8)
(track 17)

What You’ll Do ■■■■■■


Ensure each child has a paper rock. Say: **The Israelites used these rocks to help them remember what God did for them when he made the Jordan River stop. Let’s review our Key Verse: “Give thanks to the Lord, call on his name; make known among the nations what he has done” (1 Chronicles 16:8).** Have kids repeat the verse with you.

Say: **In Bible times, people piled rocks together to mark very special places. Then when other people saw the pile of rocks, they’d know something amazing had happened there. Listen to what the Bible says.** Read aloud Joshua 4:8-9.

Say: **Let’s pile our rocks together just as the Israelites did.** Have kids pile the rocks. Then say: **Let’s tell God we remember as we sing our Key Verse song.**



Distribute copies of the lyrics page, play “Give Thanks” (1 Chronicles 16:8) (track 17 on the CD), and lead children in singing as they hold hands and walk around the pile of rocks.

 **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.

Read aloud Joshua 4:21-24.

Talk With Kids 

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- **What do you think of how the Israelites thanked God and remembered what he had done?**
- **What ways do you show God you remember things he’s done for you?**

Say: **The Israelites wanted everyone who came after them to remember what God had done for them that day. Our Bible Point tells us that we also ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE for us. We don’t have to make a pile of rocks, but we can do other things like pray or sing.** Let the children take the rocks home at the end of your meeting time.





What God Has Done for Me Supplies

My Bible Fun
several pairs of scissors
crayons

What God Has Done for Me Easy Prep

Tear out the Lesson 12
pages from each My
Bible Fun student book.

Daily Challenges Supplies

My Bible Fun
pens

3 WEAVING FAITH INTO LIFE

What God Has Done for Me

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **We've learned what God did for the Israelites and how the Israelites remembered God. Now let's make something to help us remember what God's done for us.**

Give each child a Lesson 12 My Bible Fun page, and point out the "Memory Book" section. Set out the supplies, and lead kids in following the directions in that section to cut out their Memory Books and fold them. Then give kids time to color the different sections on the memory books. For example, on the last page, kids could draw a heart to show that they can love God, or kids could draw someone praying or singing.

Let kids take time sharing what they drew on their memory books.

Talk With Kids ■■■■

Lead children in this discussion.

Ask:

- Why is it important that we remember what God has done?
- How can we thank God for what he has done this week?

Say: **It's important for us to remember what God did for the Israelites. But one of the most important things we always remember that God did for us is that God sent his Son, Jesus, to save us from our sins. Jesus died on the cross so we could live forever with him and God in heaven! This week let's ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE.**

4 LASTING IMPRESSIONS

Daily Challenges

What You'll Do ■■■■■■

Say: **Let's think about how we can ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE.**

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

- Create a thank-you card for God, listing all the things God has done for you.
- At dinnertime, lead your family members in a prayer, and have everyone at the table say one thing God has done for them that they're thankful for.
- When someone praises you for something you do, thank the person, and then remember God by sharing how thankful you are God gave you the skill or talent to be able to do that thing.



Make sure you choose a Daily Challenge as well, and tell 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: **God made a river stop flowing for the Israelites, and he's done many other things for us and for the people we love. Let's ► REMEMBER WHAT GOD HAS DONE 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 how we remember what God has done for us. Kids can also do the activities in the "HomeConnect" section of their My Bible Fun pages with their families.

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

Take a couple of minutes to pray with your kids, thanking God for things he's done for you. Have kids stand in a circle, and invite the children to briefly thank God one by one. Let them continue thanking God for things, moving around the circle, until they run out of ideas. Pray: **God, we want to remember what you've done for us so we never forget how much you love us. We love you, too, God, and we thank you for all you do. In Jesus' name, amen.**

**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!

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