

Crossing the Jordan

Session Title: Crossing the Jordan

Bible Passage: Joshua 1–4

Story Point: God held back the Jordan River for His people to cross.

Key Passage: Deuteronomy 31:8

Big Picture Question: How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

Parent Devotional

Only one geographical barrier separated the Israelites from the promised land of Canaan: the Jordan River. When the Israelites arrived, the Jordan River was flooded due to spring rains and snowmelt. Any other time, the river would have been manageable, but crossing the swollen river would have been as daunting as crossing the Red Sea. (See Josh. 4:23.)

The Israelites had mourned Moses' death for 30 days (Deut. 34:8), but now this new generation looked to Joshua to lead them into the promised land. God had chosen Joshua and promised to be with him. Joshua prepared the people to cross the Jordan River, and they agreed to obey him as they obeyed Moses.

God gave Joshua a promise and a command. First, He promised to go before them and drive out all the people of the land. Then God commanded him to tell the priests to carry the ark of the Lord (a symbol of God's powerful presence) into the waters of the Jordan. Then the waters of the river would be cut off from flowing, and the waters coming down from above would stand in one heap. When this happened, all of Israel would know that God was with Joshua.

All of the people passed over on dry ground. Joshua set up 12 memorial stones as a reminder of God's faithfulness in bringing Israel safely across the Jordan into the promised land.

The Israelites could do nothing apart from God. He was with them, and He was going to fight for them. In John 15:5, Jesus said, "You can do nothing without me."

As you teach kids this week, emphasize that God was still at work with His people. He was going to do even bigger things for the Israelites—saving them from their enemies and one day sending them a Savior. The cross is our reminder of what Jesus has done for us: a miraculous saving we could never do for ourselves.

Memory Verse:

Deuteronomy 31:8

8 It is the Lord who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed."

PRESCHOOL BIBLE STORY

Crossing the Jordan

Joshua 1–4

Joshua was the new leader of Israel. He had led the Israelites to the edge of the Jordan River. God had promised Abraham that his descendants would live in Canaan (KAY nuhn). The only thing keeping the Israelites from the land God promised to them was the Jordan River. They had to cross the river.

Joshua said to all the people, “Get ready. Tomorrow we are going to cross the river.” The river was deep and wide. The Israelites needed help crossing the river. God was going to help them.

God gave Joshua and the other leaders special instructions for crossing the river. They did everything God told them to do. Some of the men carried the ark of God ahead of the people. The ark reminded them that God was with them.

The men carrying the ark walked to the edge of the river. 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.”

The people watched. The men carrying the ark took a step into the river. God made the water stop! So all of the Israelites crossed the river safely on dry ground.

God told Joshua, “Tell the people to pick up 12 stones from the middle of the river where the men are standing with the ark. They should carry the stones with them and put them down where they spend the night tonight.”

God had a plan for the stones. He wanted them to be a memorial. A memorial is something that helps people remember a person or something that happened. 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, “What are these stones?” The people could tell their children that God stopped the water so they could cross the river.

The Israelites did exactly what God told them to do. They picked up 12 stones and made a memorial.

The men with the ark crossed the river, and the water began to flow again. The river was wide and deep like it was before. At last, God’s people were in the promised land!

Christ Connection: God was with Joshua and the Israelites as they went 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.