

Crossing The Jordan River

Joshua 3-4

MEMORY VERSE

JOSHUA 4:23,24

"For the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over, that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A pitcher of water, a large bowl and a large towel.

As many 8 1/2 "x 11" sheets of white paper and construction paper as the number of children in your class.

Construction paper, enough for your entire class.

ATTENTION GRABBER!

Water Pouring

Bring a pitcher of water and a large bowl and a large towel.

Show how you will pour the water into the bowl. Just pour a trickle of water into the bowl. Then ask for volunteers to come try to stop the small trickle of water coming out of the pitcher. The children can try all kinds of ways of doing it, but it won't be able to be done.

Explain to the children that they could not stop even a trickle, while God stopped the whole Jordan River at its peak while it was overflowing. It is pretty amazing what God is willing to do for His people.

LESSON TIME!

In our lesson today, we find that Joshua is still a new leader over Israel and God is going to do something great in his life and the lives of His people. He is going to show how great He is by causing a river to stop flowing and causing the ground to dry up! But it would require faith (trusting in Him) to do it.

Have you ever taken some time to look at old picture albums? They bring back a lot of memories, don't they? God will also have Joshua and the people do something very important that will forever be a reminder to the people and their children of God's greatness. Just like a picture album the people could look back on this memorial and remember God's greatness in their lives.

It is important to pass on lessons about the Lord to younger people. Maybe your parents have passed on to you stories of God's faithfulness in their lives. And how we learn more about God is to listen to what God has done in other people's lives. This helps us to always remember how faithful God is to us. **God wants us to remember His faithfulness to us.**

JOSHUA 3:6-10

Then Joshua spoke to the priests, saying, "Take up the ark of the covenant and cross over before the people." So they took up the ark of the covenant and went before the people.

And the LORD said to Joshua, "This day I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you.

"You shall command the priests who bear the ark of the covenant, saying, 'When you have come to the edge of the water of the Jordan, you shall stand in the Jordan.'"

So Joshua said to the children of Israel, "Come here, and hear the words of the LORD your God."

And Joshua said, "By this you shall know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail drive out from before you the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites:

The Israelites had come to the Jordan River and needed to cross it to enter into the land God had promised to give them. God told Joshua, who took Moses' place when he died, that He would cause the Israelites to respect Him as they did Moses. God then told Joshua to have the priests take the ark of the covenant, which was a golden box with the Ten Commandments inside, to the Jordan River.

The priests were the first to step into the water. Sometimes God will ask us to do things that are hard to trust Him in. God wanted the priests to take the first step and then He would bless their faith. God didn't dry up the river and then tell them to go. He told them to go first and then He did what He promised.

Sometimes, God may ask us to do something for Him that will require us to trust in Him. But he will require us to trust in Him. We might even be a little bit afraid to step out, but He promises to be always be with us no matter what. **God wants us to remember His faithfulness to us.**

JOSHUA 3:14-17

So it was, when the people set out from their camp to cross over the Jordan, with the priests bearing the ark of the covenant before the people,

and as those who bore the ark came to the Jordan, and the feet of the priests who bore the ark dipped

in the edge of the water (for the Jordan overflows all its banks during the whole time of harvest),

that the waters which came down from upstream stood still, and rose in a heap very far away at Adam, the city that is beside Zaretan. So the waters that went down into the Sea of the Arabah, the Salt Sea, failed, and were cut off; and the people crossed over opposite Jericho.

Then the priests who bore the ark of the covenant of the LORD stood firm on dry ground in the midst of the Jordan; and all Israel crossed over on dry ground, until all the people had crossed completely over the Jordan.

As the people headed into the water, the river was held back by God so that the Israelites could walk through on dry ground. God was faithful and did exactly what He promised to do. God took great care of His people and He still does that for us today. Whenever we need Him He will always be there for us. **God wants us to remember His faithfulness to us.**

JOSHUA 4:1-7

And it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over the Jordan, that the LORD spoke to Joshua, saying:

"Take for yourselves twelve men from the people, one man from every tribe,

"and command them, saying, 'Take for yourselves twelve stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the place where the priests' feet stood firm. You shall carry them over with you and leave them in the lodging place where you lodge tonight.'"

Then Joshua called the twelve men whom he had appointed from the children of Israel, one man from every tribe;

and Joshua said to them: "Cross over before the ark of the LORD your God into the midst of the Jordan, and each one of you take up a stone on his shoulder, according to the number of the tribes of the children of Israel,

"that this may be a sign among you when your children ask in time to come, saying, 'What do these stones mean to you?'

"Then you shall answer them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the ark of the covenant of the LORD; when it crossed over the Jordan, the waters of the Jordan were cut off. And these stones shall be for a memorial to the children of Israel forever."

God had the Israelites take 12 stones, one for each tribe, from the Jordan River bed. God knew that someday their children would ask about the stones and the Israelites could tell of the miracle of walking across the Jordan on dry ground.

God wants us to remember His faithfulness to us. So that means that whenever we have an opportunity we should take time to share with others how faithful God is to us. Sometimes your parents may share with you times in their lives when God was faithful to them. They may even write things down in a book to keep as a remembrance of everything that God has done for them. We should listen because this is how God teaches us.

Memory Book

Cut one sheet of 8 1/2 "x 11" paper in half to form two 8 1/2 "x 5 1/2" pieces. Fold them in half and insert one inside the other like a little book. You can also have the children cut out a piece of construction paper the same size for a "book cover." Staple the spine with the open part of the staples inside the book. The book could have a title such as "God's Faithfulness to Me."

Help the kids remember prayers that God has answered and ways He has provided for them. They could also include prayers that have not been answered yet, so they could put the answers in later.

JOSHUA 4:11-14

Then it came to pass, when all the people had completely crossed over, that the ark of the LORD and the priests crossed over in the presence of the people.

And the men of Reuben, the men of Gad, and half the tribe of Manasseh crossed over armed before the children of Israel, as Moses had spoken to them.

About forty thousand prepared for war crossed over before the LORD for battle, to the plains of Jericho.

On that day the LORD exalted Joshua in the sight of all Israel; and they feared him, as they had feared Moses, all the days of his life.

God completed His promise of bringing the Israelites across the Jordan River and into the promised land safely. And 40,000 men were prepared for war against Jericho. When God makes a promise, He will always do it. It is important for us to always remember that. **God wants us to remember His faithfulness to us.**

JOSHUA 4:20-24

And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up in Gilgal.

Then he spoke to the children of Israel, saying: "When your children ask their fathers in time to come, saying, 'What are these stones?'

"then you shall let your children know, saying, 'Israel crossed over this Jordan on dry land';

"for the LORD your God dried up the waters of the Jordan before you until you had crossed over, as the LORD your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up before us until we had crossed over,

"that all the peoples of the earth may know the hand of the LORD, that it is mighty, that you may fear the LORD your God forever."

Joshua set up the 12 stones as a memorial, so that all people would know that God had brought His people through on dry ground. Just as He had brought them through the Red Sea when they escaped from Egypt.

When God promises us something, He will do it, even when it looks impossible. God promised the Israelites a new land and brought them through the Jordan River when it looked like they could not cross.

God also wants us to remember the miracles He has done in our lives and teach younger people about them. Just like the Israelites would tell their children about crossing the Jordan when they asked about the stones, we can encourage and build faith in our children when they ask us questions. We also will trust in God

more when we tell others what He has done in our lives. **God wants us to remember His faithfulness to us.**

The Hand of the Lord

Trace your hand onto construction paper before class. You will need as many sheets as the number of children in your class.

Let the kids cut it out and write the memory verse on it.

Tell how the hand of the Lord is mighty and what that may mean in their lives. Ask the children for examples of the “mighty hand of the Lord” in their lives.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to remember God’s faithfulness in their lives. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.