

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.

Explain: It is difficult to stop a trickle; however, God stopped the whole Jordan River at its peak while it was overflowing. It is amazing what God is willing to do for His people.

LESSON TIME!

Have you ever taken some time to look at old picture albums? They bring back a lot of memories, don't they? In our lesson, today, God will have Joshua, the new leader of Israel, set up an memorial for the people and their children to remind them of His mighty power and greatness. Just like a picture album, the people will look back on this memorial and remember God's faithfulness.

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 said He would establish respect in the hearts of the people for Joshua's leadership; they would know that He was with him just as He was with Moses. God then told Joshua to have the priests take the ark of the covenant, a golden box with the Ten Commandments inside, to the Jordan River.

God would demonstrate His mighty power and faithfulness. His present miraculous intervention would assure them of His future miraculous intervention when they would face the inhabitants of the land--"the Canaanites and the Hittites and the Hivites and the Perizzites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Jebusites."

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.

Note, the priests were the first to step into the water. They did not step onto dry ground; they stepped into water. God could have dried up the river before the priests stepped into it; but instead, God wanted them to take a step in faith that God would surely do as He had promised, despite the circumstances.

Sometimes God will ask us to do things that require us to get our feet wet, to step out and trust Him despite the threatening circumstances we face. God promises He will never leave us or forsake us (Hebrews 13:5). **May we remember God's faithfulness to us.**

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 did exactly what He promised to do!

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 would tell them about His miraculous power: "We walked across the Jordan on dry ground."

May we remember God's faithfulness to us. Perhaps your parents have relayed to you their many accounts of God's faithfulness through difficulties and seeming impossibilities. It is good to remind each other that God *has been* and *will be* faithful to us.

Have you witnessed God's answers to your own prayers? Consider keeping a journal, a written-record, of God's faithfulness to you. Encourage and build faith in others by sharing with them the many times God has been faithful to you.

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 can also include prayers that have not been answered yet and complete their book as their prayers are answered.

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 fulfilled His promise to bring 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 keep it! **May we remember God's 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 of God's miracle--bringing His people across the Jordan on dry ground, just as He had brought them through the Red Sea when they escaped from Egypt.

God is faithful. He has kept and will keep His promises. He can work great miracles on our behalf. May we remember His mighty works in our own lives and encourage ourselves and others to believe God in our present difficult circumstances as well as any difficulty we may encounter in the future. Our God is mighty and able. He will not fail. **May we remember God's 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.