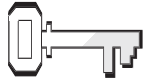


Crossing the Runaway River



References

Joshua 3; 4; 5:1;
Patriarchs and Prophets,
pp. 481-486



Memory Verse

“The Lord will do amazing things among you”
(Joshua 3:5).

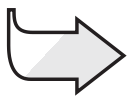


Objectives

The children will:
Know that God gives us leaders to help us do great things for Him.

Feel blessed that they have Christian leaders.

Respond by cooperating with the leaders God has given them.



The Message

God gives us leaders to help us do great things for Him.

Monthly Theme

We encourage one another to follow Jesus.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

The Israelites are ready to enter the Promised Land, but before them lies the Jordan River, impassable in flood stage. God gives Joshua instructions to have the people follow the priests bearing the ark of the covenant into the river. As soon as the priest’s feet touch the water, the river upstream miraculously stops running, while the water downstream continues to flow away. The people cross on dry land and build a memorial to what God has done for them that day.

This is a lesson about community.

Just as Joshua directed the priests to lead the Israelite community into the waters of the Jordan and across to the other side, the church still needs and depends on godly leaders. The Lord gives us leaders to encourage and inspire us to do great things for Him and to help us remember the way God has led us in the past.

Teacher Enrichment

“At this time of the year—in the spring season—the melting snows of the mountains had so raised the Jordan that the river overflowed its banks, making it impossible to cross at the usual fording places” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 483).

“The influence of this miracle, both upon the Hebrews and upon their enemies, was of great importance. It was an assurance to Israel of God’s continued presence and protection—an evidence that He would work for them through Joshua as He had wrought through Moses. Such an assurance was needed to strengthen their hearts as they entered upon the conquest of the land—the stupendous task that had staggered the faith of their fathers forty years before” (*ibid.*, pp. 484, 485).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 1.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Crossing the River</i> B. <i>Who's the Leader?</i>	large paper, masking tape, Bible none
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	<i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> offering container none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	adult or teenager, Bible-times costumes, something to simulate the ark of the covenant (a box painted gold and glued to two dowels (also used in lesson 4), two pieces of blue fabric several yards long, clear nylon fishing line or other string Bible, mirror for each child (also used in lesson 5), Bibles, slips of paper
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>What Kind of Leader?</i>	wipe-off board and markers, or chalkboard and chalk, or flipchart and markers
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Respect Your Leaders!</i> B. <i>Leadership Badges</i>	paper, pencils heavy paper, art materials, scissors, glue

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Ask if they have something to share from the lesson study last week. Have them begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

You Need:

- masking tape
- piece of paper for each child (big enough for the child to step on)
- Bible

A. Crossing the River

Divide the class into groups of no more than six. Use masking tape to mark off on the floor the banks of an imaginary river. Make the river one pace wide for each child in the group. Thus, if there are six children, the river is six paces wide. (Large groups: Make the river long enough that several groups have space along the banks, or create more rivers.)

Give each student a piece of paper. Tell the students they are to cross the river without falling in. They are to imagine that their piece of paper, however, is a safe stepping-stone. Their job is to get everyone in their group and all the papers safely across the river. Give them no other instructions. Allow several minutes for them to figure out how to cross the river. If no group figures it out, demonstrate the solution. If one or more groups get across safely, ask them to demonstrate for others.

(To cross the river, one person in the group will need to collect the papers from everyone else in that group. That person will lay the papers down one at a time ahead of herself as stepping-stones as she crosses the river. The last person across will need to pick up each paper one at a time behind himself as he crosses.)

Debriefing

Ask: **When you first got the instructions, did you think I had asked you to do something impossible? What made it possible to cross the river?** (cooperation, working together, following the instructions of someone who knew how to do it) **Is there any way you could have crossed this river without a leader?** (no; yes; maybe) **Our Bible story today is about a time God's people had to cross a river when they thought it was impossible. They needed a leader too. Read aloud Joshua 3:5. That's our memory verse today. Can you say it with me? "The Lord will do amazing things among you" (Joshua 3:5). God wants to do amazing things among us, too, and He gives us leaders to help us. That's our message today:**



GOD GIVES US LEADERS TO HELP US DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM.

Say that with me.

B. Who's the Leader?

Have the class sit in a circle. Ask a volunteer to be the "guesser" and to step out of the room. While that person is out, assign one child to be the "leader." The leader will

lead the class in a series of simple actions, such as snapping their fingers, patting their heads, rubbing their tummies, scratching their ears, etc. The leader will change from action to action without saying a word, and the rest of the class will follow quickly. The guesser is to try to decide who the leader is. Have the class start on the first motion and bring the guesser in. Let the leader switch actions three or four times, or until the guesser guesses. Repeat several times with different leaders and guessers.

Debriefing

Ask the guessers: **Was it hard to figure out who the leader was? Why?** Ask the leaders: **Was it hard to be a good leader? Why?** Ask the followers: **Who was a good leader? Why? What makes a good leader? Today's message is:**



GOD GIVES US LEADERS TO HELP US DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any Time



Fellowship

Report the children's joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Give a special warm greeting to visitors and introduce each by name. Acknowledge birthdays or special events.



Suggested Songs

- "Trust and Obey" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 113)
- "The Journey of Life" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 122)
- "Right Now" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 123)
- "I Want to Be" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 124)



Mission

Say: **God does amazing things every day. Our mission stories are about some of the things God is doing.** Share a story from *Children's Mission*.



Offering

Say: **God can use our money to do great things for Him. Our mission offering goes to help others know about the God we serve and the amazing things He does.**

You Need:
• offering container



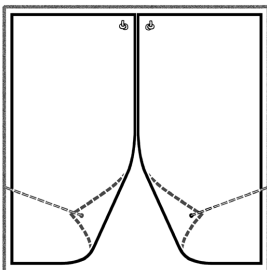
Prayer

Have the children divide into prayer bands. Ask them in their groups to share something amazing that God has done in their lives, then pray together and thank God. Thank God for the amazing things He has done for your students or the larger church family. Express thanks for church leaders and ask God to help us cooperate with them.

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- adult or teenager
- Bible-times costumes
- something to simulate the ark of the covenant
- two pieces of blue fabric several yards long
- clear nylon fishing line or other string



Experiencing the Story

Characters: One adult or teenager to play the part of Joshua. Four students to play the part of priests. The other students will be other Israelites.

Props: Something to simulate the ark of the covenant (a box painted gold and glued to two dowels).

Two pieces of blue fabric several yards long. Clear nylon fishing line or other string attached to one end of each piece of fabric and hidden underneath the fabric. The ends with the string attached need to meet in the middle. (See sketch.)

Setting the stage: Arrange the fabric so adult helpers can pull the ends of the string to make the Jordan River part at the appropriate time. Arrange the children on one side of your “river.”

Prompt the children to play their roles as “Joshua” speaks.

Read or tell the story.

My name is Joshua. (*Joshua stands in front of the class.*) I’m the new leader of the Israelites now that Moses has died. I was Moses’ helper for a long time, but I think some people are still wondering if God will be with us as much as He was when Moses was the leader.

Forty years ago God promised us He would lead us into Canaan. And now we’re nearly there. That’s the Promised Land, right over there. (*Joshua points to the other side of the river.*) But we have a problem. It’s spring. We’ve had a lot of rain lately, the days are getting warmer again, and the snow up in the mountains has started to melt. All that water is flowing into the Jordan River. The river is flooded,

and not just a little. Usually there are several places where it’s easy to cross, but right now it’s a raging torrent, and there’s no way to get to the other side.

Oh, wait a minute. (*Joshua puts a hand to his ear as if listening intently to something.*) God is telling me something. (*Joshua continues to listen and nod his head.*) Uh-huh. Yes. Uh-huh. Really? (*Surprised.*) Yes. Yes. Of course. (*Turns to crowd.*)

Listen carefully, friends. This is what the Lord has told me. He will do amazing things among us. This is what is going to happen. The priests are going to take the ark of the covenant and carry it on their shoulders. They will walk into the Jordan River. All of you are to follow. As soon as the priests’ feet touch the water, God says the waters of the Jordan will pile up like a wall. The priests will stand in the middle of the river with the ark while all of you cross to the other side. When you’re all across, then the priests will follow. Ready? Let’s go.

(*Have the priests carrying the “ark” lead the way to the river you’ve created. As soon as the priest’s feet get to the edge, have adult helpers pull the strings to pull the river back so the Israelites can cross on dry ground. Have the priests stand in the middle of the river while the others cross over, then have the priests follow the people. Once the priests are across, pull the strings to put the Jordan River back together.*)

Praise God! (*Joshua gestures exuberantly.*) Look at the miracle He performed for us! This is an amazing thing He has done. God is still with us, just as He was with Moses. And He will not abandon us now that we’re in the land He promised us. Praise the Lord!

Debriefing

Ask: **How do you think you would have felt walking on a path through**

the middle of the raging Jordan River? (scared, excited, thrilled, etc.) **Why did God have them cross when the Jordan was the most scary?** (It would be an even greater miracle.) **What lesson did you learn from today's story about following the leaders that God puts in charge?**
Remember . . .



GOD GIVES US LEADERS TO HELP US DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM.

Memory Verse

You Need:

- small mirror for each child
- Bible

Write the memory verse where all can see. (**"The Lord will do amazing things among you."**) Give each child a small mirror. Have them read the memory verse while they hold the mirror in front of their face. Ask them how long it will take before they can say the memory verse and look at their mouth in the mirror the whole time. Allow time for practice. Ask: **Among whom will the Lord do amazing things? Yes, with the person you see in your mirror!**

Bible Study

You Need:

- Bibles
- slips of paper

Write the following Bible texts on slips of paper. Distribute the papers to five volunteers. Ask the volunteers to read the texts when you call on them.

1. Exodus 3:1-4, 10

Ask: **Whom did God call to be the first leader of the Israelites?** (Moses)

2. Exodus 4:1

Ask: **What was Moses worried about?** (The people would not believe or listen to him.)

3. Exodus 4:2-5

Ask: **How did God respond to**

Moses' concern? (He worked a miracle with Moses' rod.)

4. Exodus 14:13, 21, 22

Ask: **What miracle did God work for the Israelites when they fled Egypt?**

(He parted the Red Sea so they could pass over on dry land.)

5. Exodus 14:31

Ask: **What was the result?** (The people respected God and trusted Him and Moses.)

Debriefing

Say: **Today's story took place 40 years after God led the Israelites out of Egypt. Everyone 20 years old or older when they left Egypt died in the wilderness. No one in camp was older than 59 years of age, except for Joshua and Caleb. Therefore, most people in the camp did not remember the parting of the Red Sea.**

What miracle did God work when they finally entered the Promised Land? Have someone find and read Joshua 3:15, 16. (He parted the waters once again.)

Ask: **Why do you think God worked such a similar miracle?** (Accept reasonable answers.) **What was the effect?** Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 4:14 aloud. Say: **God was showing the Israelites that Joshua was His chosen leader for Israel.**

Ask: **What was the effect on the surrounding nations?** Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 5:1. **Why did God put Israel under Joshua's leadership?** (Joshua had been faithful to God; Joshua had worked closely with Moses; Joshua had seen many amazing things that God had done.) **Who are your church leaders today?** (Accept answers.) **Why do we need leaders in our church?**

Remember . . .



GOD GIVES US LEADERS TO HELP US DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM.

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- a wipe-off board and markers or chalkboard and chalk or flipchart and markers

What Kind of Leader?

Say: **God gives us a lot of different kinds of leaders. In this game we're going to name some of them.**

For this game, you may want to play in teams, boys against girls, or one side of the room against the other. See which team can be the first to figure out which kind of leader is written on the board.

Draw one blank space for each letter in the word. Allow students to take turns guessing letters of the alphabet that might be in the words until they can figure out what the words are. Play the following words one at a time:

teachers
elders
Christian friends
Sabbath School teachers
pastors
parents
coaches

As an option, have children come forward one at a time and mime a leader at work. Have the other children guess what kind of leader they are.

Debriefing

Ask: **Can you share some examples of how a leader has helped you to do great things for God?** (Allow the children to share as time allows.) **How would you feel if you didn't have leaders in your life?** (Wouldn't know what to do next, would feel insecure, would not learn what I need to know, etc.) **How will you act toward your leaders?** (Will work along with them, will do my best to help, respect, and support them, etc.) **Why does God give us leaders? Our message tells us . . .**



GOD GIVES US LEADERS TO HELP US DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM.

4

Sharing the Lesson

A. Respect Your Leaders!

You Need:

- paper and pencils

Form groups of three or four. Give each group paper and a pencil. Make sure

each group has either a skilled writer or an adult helper. Each group is to list as many ways they can think of to show honor and respect to the leaders they named in the last activity. Allow time, then bring the groups together to compare lists.

Debriefing

Ask: **What ways to show honor and respect to your leaders did you list?** (Let each group share what they have.) **If you were a leader, would you appreciate these ideas?** (yes; no; maybe) **Why?** (I would feel supported; could help those I lead do more for God; etc.) **Think of a leader in our church. What will you do today to show honor and respect to that person?** Allow response time. Encourage children to follow through today. **Let's say our message together:**



GOD GIVES US LEADERS TO HELP US DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM.

B. Leadership Badges

Help the children make a list of all the leaders in your church. Have the children make a badge for each one. (If there are too many leaders and not many children, pick out some leaders.) Have the children write on their badge "Outstanding Leader for God."

You Need:

- heavy paper
- art materials
- scissors
- glue

Debriefing

Ask: **What does** [name of leader] **do?** Repeat for each leader who will receive a badge. Help the children understand the Leader's role. **What will you say when you give the leader their badge?** Allow practice time. **Other than giving them a badge, how can we show them respect?** Encourage each child to give their badge to a church leader when they leave Sabbath School. **Let's remember . . .**



GOD GIVES US LEADERS TO HELP US DO GREAT THINGS FOR HIM.

Closing

Pray specifically for the leaders in your church. Pray that your students will recognize that such leadership comes from God, and that they will do everything they can to cooperate with those leaders. Pray that the students in your class will grow up to become godly leaders for others.

Crossing the Runaway River

References

Joshua 3; 4; 5:1;
Patriarchs and
Prophets,
pp. 481-486

Memory Verse

“The Lord will do
amazing things
among you”
(Joshua 3:5).

The Message

God gives us
leaders to help us
do great things
for Him.

How do you feel when you wake up on a day when you know something exciting is going to happen? What if it's something you've never done before?

Joshua had told the people of Israel that today would be the day. Today the Lord would do something amazing.



What would it be? God had done amazing things for the Israelites. God had parted the Red Sea and led the people out of Egypt. He had provided manna every day that they were in the wilderness. It was amazing! Food every day without fail!

And then, not long ago, God led the Israelite army, and they had defeated those two kings, Sihon and Og.

Yes, God had done some amazing things. But those things had all happened when Moses had been leading. Moses was dead now, and Joshua was their new leader. *Was Joshua as good a leader as Moses? Would God still do amazing things for the Israelites?*

It had rained a lot lately, and the days were getting warmer. The melting snow in the mountains raced toward the river. The Jordan River was a muddy, angry torrent, high over its banks. Canaan, the Promised Land, was on the other side of it, and they'd been camped here for three days.

Joshua began instructing the Israelites. “The ark of the covenant will go into the Jordan ahead of you,” he was saying. “You are to move out from your positions and follow it.

“As soon as the priests who carry the ark of the Lord set foot in the Jordan, its waters flowing downstream will be cut off and stand up like a wall,” Joshua continued. “The priests will remain in the middle of the river while the entire Israelite camp crosses. Break camp now and get ready.”

Soon the order to line up was given.

Up ahead the priests were carrying the ark of the covenant. Moving forward, they were leading the entire Israelite camp straight toward the rushing, roaring river. The priests didn't hesitate for a moment as they stepped right into the rapids. As soon as their feet touched the water, it stopped. The water came to a complete halt, piling up, just as Joshua had said it would. The water downstream of the

priests kept flowing away from them. In a matter of seconds the water had disappeared around a bend. The priests moved to the middle of the river. A great shout went up from the Israelites. The line of people moved quickly to the riverbank. They began to pick their way across the rocky riverbed and up the other side.

The priests still stood in the middle of the riverbed, still holding the ark high. Finally the last of the Israelites stepped into the Promised Land. Then the priests crossed.

The instant the last priest cleared the banks, the waters broke loose. With a fearsome thunder they resumed their mighty journey.

It was over. As easily as that, their long journey was over. *There was no doubt that God was with Joshua just as He was with Moses. And God is still with good leaders today. Good leaders who bring people together to meet God's promise.*

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- If possible, walk near a river with your family. What would happen if you tried to walk across this river? Sit near the river and read your lesson.
- Read Joshua 3:5 together. Talk about some amazing things God has done for your family.
- Sing "Bless His Holy Name" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 9).

Sunday

- Together with your family, read Joshua 3.
- Fill a basin with water. Find five objects and see what floats. What sinks? Try to separate the water by blowing or with your hands.
- Teach your memory verse to your family. Try to put it to music. Then thank God for His blessings.

Monday

- Read Joshua 4–5:1 with your family. Who were the leaders in this story? ✓each one.
___ Joshua ___ God ___ priests
___ the 12 men who carried the rocks
- What would have happened if the Israelites had not followed their leaders? Thank God for the leaders He has sent into your life. Pray for them today.
- Sing "Trust and Obey" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 113).

Tuesday

- Read Joshua 3:16 for worship. Imagine that you are a spy watching as the Israelites cross the Jordan. Have your family help you write a report for the rulers of Jericho. Draw a picture to go with your report.
- Teach your memory verse to someone else.
- Sing "All Nations of the Earth" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 22).

Wednesday

- With your family, name three of your church

leaders today. Write their names here: _____

- Read Isaiah 8:20 together. How can you tell if leaders are from God? _____

- Would you like to be a leader for God? Ask Him to give you the courage, the wisdom, and the faith to do amazing things for Him.

- Sing your memory verse song with your family.

Thursday

- With your family, read your lesson story again. Then read Psalm 114:3, 5, 7.
- Fill a shallow box with some sand. Make the Jordan River with construction paper or foil. Place it in the middle of your scene. Cut the "river" in half and roll each half back a little to look like the Jordan with a dry path through the river. Put green trees, flowers, and other pretty things on the Canaan side of the river. Put four little priests in the middle of the river with a little gold-colored box for the ark. Add people crossing the river. (Use seeds or pebbles to represent them.) Write your memory verse on a little sign and put it near your scene. Save this for tomorrow.

Friday

- During family worship, use your Jordan sand scene to tell your family your lesson story.
- Ask each person to name something amazing God has done for them. Read Psalm 86:10 together.
- Write a thank-you letter to your pastor or another church leader. Tell why you appreciate his or her leadership.
- Say your memory verse together. Then sing "I Want to Be" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 124). Pray that God will help you become a leader for Him.