



OLDER KIDS

Explore the Bible.



JOSHUA



JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH

Leader Guide > Winter 2016-17

Tony Evans, General Editor



LifeWay | **Kids**

QUARTER OVERVIEW

WINTER 2016-17

JOSHUA

God gave Moses' successor, Joshua, the task of leading the Israelites to possess the land God had given to them. Kids will learn of God's charge to Joshua, the fall of the city of Jericho, a day where the sun stood still, the release of the tribes following the conquest, and the people agreeing to follow God's covenant. A Christmas lesson will also be featured in this study.

JOSHUA, JUDGES, RUTH

The Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth record the early history of Israel as they move into the promised land. These stories detail Israel's conquest of the land and their subsequent fall into a vicious pattern of abandonment of God and return. Ruth's story is included as well as a study for Christmas.

JUDGES

The people of Israel fell into a pattern of sin and, when confronted with their sin, returned to God. God graciously sent judges to provide for the people in their time of need.

RUTH

Ruth's story of redemption is an example of how God sent His Son, Jesus, to be our redeemer. Kids will learn of Ruth's commitment to her mother-in-law and her marriage to Boaz. This study of Ruth is built on an understanding of God's great value for humanity and life.

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EXPLORE THE BIBLE: OLDER KIDS LEADER GUIDE

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We believe that the Bible has God for its author; salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter and that all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy.

To review LifeWay's doctrinal guideline, please visit www.lifeway.com/doctrinalguideline.

This study of Joshua, Judges, & Ruth was written by Mark Browning. Mark teaches in the children's and drama ministries at First Baptist Raytown in Raytown, Missouri.

AT A GLANCE

SESSION	SUGGESTED FOR THE WEEK OF	CORE PASSAGE	TEXT TRUTH
1	Dec. 4	Joshua 1:1-9	We can have courage because God is always with us.
2	Dec. 11	Joshua 6:12-25	When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.
3	Dec. 18	Joshua 10:6-14	God protected His people.
4	Dec. 25	Luke 1:26-38	Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God through the prophets.
5	Jan. 1	Joshua 22:1-8	God always keeps His promises in His perfect time.
6	Jan. 8	Joshua 24:14-28	We should be completely devoted to God.
7	Jan. 15	Proverbs 24:10-12*; Mark 10:46-49	Jesus commanded His followers to value all lives.
8	Jan. 22	Judges 2:11-19	The consequence of sin is that our world and our relationship with God are broken.
9	Jan. 29	Judges 4:4-10,12-16	We should trust God when He gives us a command to obey.
10	Feb. 5	Judges 6:11-16,25-31	Believers grow in their faith by being obedient to God.
11	Feb. 12	Judges 16:4-6,13-20	Sin separates us from God and His good plan for our lives.
12	Feb. 19	Ruth 1:6-18	God can use anything—good or bad—to accomplish His good plans for us.
13	Feb. 26	Ruth 3:8-13; 4:13-17	God is always working to accomplish His redeeming purposes.

	BIBLE STORY	MEMORY VERSE
	Crossing the Jordan River (<i>Joshua 3-4</i>)	Joshua 1:5
	The Fall of Jericho (<i>Joshua 2; 6:1-25</i>)	Joshua 4:24
	The Day the Sun Stood Still (<i>Joshua 10:1-14</i>)	Joshua 1:7
	The Birth of Jesus (<i>Luke 2:1-20</i>)	Luke 1:32-33
	Caleb's Inheritance (<i>Joshua 14:6-15</i>)	Joshua 22:5
	Israel's History (<i>Joshua 24:1-28</i>)	Joshua 24:15
	Jesus Cared for People (<i>Mark 5:24-34; 8:22-26; 10:13-16,46-52</i>)	Philippians 2:3
	Othniel, Ehud, Shamgar (<i>Judges 3:7-31</i>)	Judges 2:18
	Deborah and Barak (<i>Judges 4-5</i>)	Judges 5:3
	Gideon (<i>Judges 6-8</i>)	Judges 6:16
	Samson (<i>Judges 13-16</i>)	Romans 6:23
	Ruth and Naomi (<i>Ruth 1-2</i>)	Ruth 1:16
	Boaz, the Family Redeemer (<i>Ruth 2-4</i>)	Psalms 92:4

GET TO KNOW YOUR LEADER GUIDE

The weekly session plan is your tool for leading great Bible explorations. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

CORE PASSAGE BIBLE STUDY FOR LEADERS

Section 1
JOSHUA COMMISSIONED

Joshua 1:1-9

Joshua appears several times in other biblical texts. In Exodus 17, Joshua led Israel's army against the Amalekites, a foe the Israelites also would face in later generations. Joshua wanted for Moses to be the first of Moses' sons with whom Moses' God lived (Ex. 24:13) and was present when Moses came down the mountain (Ex. 33:7). Joshua kept watch by the tent in which Moses spoke with God face-to-face (Ex. 33:11). Under Moses' direction, Joshua was one of the twelve spies who spied on the land of Israel (Num. 13:8-16). Moses commissioned Joshua as Israel's new leader (Num. 27:18-21).

Joshua 1 records God's commissioning of Joshua following Moses' death. God spoke to Joshua and encouraged him to see his right on the task that lay ahead. Such a commissioning would require Joshua to be strong and courageous on every level as he stepped into the new challenge God had given him. God also instructed Joshua to follow His Word carefully and to meditate on that Word every step of the way as he led the Israelites into the promised land. God previously used Moses to commission Him as God's Word to Israel. God now wanted Joshua to be the Word to Israel as God's people would follow His words as they applied to the next generation. God promised to be with Joshua wherever Joshua would go.

The final aspect of Joshua's commissioning included his securing the support of God's people. Joshua approached the tribes of Judah, Gad, and Manasse, and asked for their support. In the days of Moses, these tribes had requested to settle east of the Jordan River (Num. 32:1-6). Moses required them to help the other tribes conquer the land of Canaan on the west side of the Jordan, and the tribes agreed they would (Num. 32:16-32). The tribes remembered their commitment to Moses and assured Joshua they would help him win in every way. Joshua 1 thus records God's commissioning of Joshua and the people's affirmation of that commission.

Session 1: Joshua Commissioned 5

QUICK LOOK AT THE SESSION

OVERVIEW

SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Joshua 1:1-9
CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 3-4
FAMILY MEMORIAL VERSE: Joshua 1:5
TEXT TRUTH: We can have courage because God is always with us.

GET STARTED TOOLS

- Savoyard Stones
- Saverio Stone
- Saverio Stone, Savoyard Stone, permanent markers

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping by Ribbles
- Family Circle
- Title Alignment Map
- Prayer Book
- Examine the Text: Ribbles

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: Bible, Explorer Guides, new
- Move: Inset paper, markers, "Question" (unbound CD)
- Make a 4-by-4-inch piece of newspaper
- Paper, glue, small stones, markers, magnet tape
- Examine: Bible, paper, magnet tape, markers, Bible map or atlas

GET STARTED TOOLS

- The Bible Story: Bible, Savoyard Stone, Explorer Guide, "The Truth Story" and "Connection Statements" (Printer Book), "Circle of the Bible" (Poster)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on a screen, video
- Memory Verse: "Joshua 1:5" (Printer Book), unbound, marker
- Prayer song

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of unbound CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

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POINTS TO MAKE AND THE BIBLE STORY

CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 3-4

After Moses died, God chose a new leader for His people, God Israel. Joshua led His people into the promised land. It was a big job, but God promised to be with Joshua and to help him.

Joshua gathered all of the people at the edge of the Jordan River. Joshua told all of the people to get ready to follow the ark of the covenant. He told the priests to carry it to the east of the river and to stand in the water.

"Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, 'All the priests to carry the ark of the covenant to the Jordan River. At the river, they should stand in the water.'"

This was the time of the year that the Jordan River was full of water. It had so much water that it overflowed and spilled out over the edges.

Joshua prepared the people with special instructions. He picked one man from every tribe of Israel.

Joshua said, "When the ark of the covenant carrying the ark enters the Jordan River, the water will stop and stand up in a mass.

And that is what happened. While the priests stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed, all of the Israelites crossed on dry ground to the other side of the river.

After they all crossed, Joshua sent the 12 men to each get a stone from the middle of the riverbed. Joshua called to the priests, 'Come up from the Jordan.' As soon as the priests were on solid ground, the waters of the Jordan flowed again to the normal.

Joshua stacked the stones together and made a memorial. The stones were a reminder of how God stopped the Jordan River so His people could walk into the land He had promised them so long ago.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT

The Book of Joshua is a record of God's chosen people to His people, God. As a part of His covenant, He promised to be with His people. Joshua led the people into the promised land and a time of rest.

Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, an everlasting rest.

CONNECTION STATEMENT

God led Joshua to have courage because God would be with him.

KEY CONNECTIONS TO JOSHUA

- CORE PASSAGE:** Joshua 1:1-9
- God told Joshua not to be afraid.
 - God is always with His people.
 - God commissioned the people to obey His Law. He would bless them greatly when they obeyed.

Session 1: Joshua Commissioned 7

GET STARTED

TOOLS:

- Savoyard Stones, marker, Saverio Stone, permanent markers

GET STARTED (20 MINUTES)

SAVOYARD STONES

- Display a Savoyard Stone—something that someone might purchase on a vacation, such as a shirt from a destination. Allow the kids to share some of the other things that people buy on trips. Ask the group, "Do you think people buy things like this on vacations?" Point out that one of the reasons for buying something is to remember the place where they have been. Explain that the Savoyard Stone actually means "to remember" in French.
- Discuss the group to search the room and for each participant to locate one of the stones that you distributed before class. These stones can be actual stones or a cut-out substituted from cardboard or foam. There should be five stones prepared that the number of participants you expect. When they each return with a stone, ask them what makes this particular stone "their" stone. Point out that they like the memory you have stored. This stone is theirs because they chose it. This stone person would then take their stone home to the stones and place them in a pile. Point out that if people years from now find this collection of stones, they will know who was in the group on this particular day. Ask that one who is impressed with how they have done with them in this particular day, but explain that in today's Bible story we will encounter an event that everyone who participated in it would always want to remember.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bible, Explorer Guides, new

SMALL GROUP (20 MINUTES)

EMPLOYER'S GUIDE

Invite the kids to open their Explorer Guide to the "Joshua Commissioned" page.

Invite the group to open their Bible and read Joshua 1:1-9. Discuss what the passage was all about having courage in our lives. Invite kids to complete "What's in a Name?" Invite kids to share some of the places they named.

Ask kids to read about "What's in a Name?" Invite a second volunteer to read about today's story in the Jordan River. Guide the boys and girls to locate the Jordan River on the "Country of the Bible" map.

Guide boys and girls to complete "Stones of Courage." Encourage kids to share as many ideas as they can.

PRAYER TIME

Allow the kids to share prayer requests, especially for situations in which they need strength and courage. Invite members of the group to pray for others as their requests are made. Close the prayer time by asking God to give a spirit of boldness to each kid.

ACTIVITIES

Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

RIVER RUN

Each boy and girl will be making "river questions from the story. Once the question has been completed, it will be returned to the other side of the river. If a boy answers the question correctly, they will be allowed to keep the "river" and continue to ask a question. If a boy answers the question incorrectly, they will return the "river" to the other side of the river. If a boy answers the question incorrectly, they will return the "river" to the other side of the river. If a boy answers the question incorrectly, they will return the "river" to the other side of the river. If a boy answers the question incorrectly, they will return the "river" to the other side of the river.

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SMALL GROUP

REMEMBRANCE STONE

Ask: 4-by-4-inch piece of newspaper, paper, glue, small stones, markers, magnet tape

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Use a screen, download the Explore the Bible Kids Family App.
- Use the activity located "Explorer Fun" on the app.

FOLLOW THE MAP

Take Bible, map, large paper, markers, Bible map or atlas

- Allow the group a few minutes to summarize the Bible story. Explain that you would like to see them to create a map to illustrate the story of how God led Joshua and the people into the promised land. Invite the group to create a map to illustrate the story of how God led Joshua and the people into the promised land. Invite the group to create a map to illustrate the story of how God led Joshua and the people into the promised land.

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GET THE SESSION STARTED.

LEAD KIDS THROUGH BIBLE STUDY.

USE THE ACTIVITIES TO APPLY THE TEXT TRUTH.

Check out page 109 for more information about your Leader Guide!

JOSHUA COMMISSIONED



Joshua 1:1-9

Joshua appears several times in other biblical texts. In Exodus 17, Joshua led Israel's army against the Amalekites, a foe the Israelites also would face in later generations. Joshua waited for Moses at the foot of Mount Sinai while Moses received God's laws (*Ex. 24:13*) and was present when Moses came down the mountain (*Ex. 32:17*). Joshua kept watch by the tent in which Moses spoke with God face-to-face (*Ex. 33:11*). Under Moses' direction, Joshua was one of the twelve spies who spied out the land of Israel (*Num. 13:8,16*). Moses commissioned Joshua as Israel's next leader (*Num. 27:18-23*).

Joshua 1 records God's commissioning of Joshua following Moses' death. God spoke to Joshua and encouraged him to set his sights on the task that lay ahead. Such a commissioning would require Joshua to be strong and courageous on every level as he stepped into the new challenge God had given him. God also instructed Joshua to follow His Word carefully and to meditate on that Word every step of the way as he led the Israelites into the promised land. God previously used Moses to communicate His inspired Word to Israel. God now wanted Joshua to live by that Word so God's people would believe His words still applied to the next generation. God promised to be with Joshua wherever Joshua would go.

The final aspect of Joshua's commissioning included his securing the support of God's people. Joshua approached the tribes of Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh, and asked for their support. Earlier, in the days of Moses, these tribes had requested to settle east of the Jordan River (*Num. 32:1-5*). Moses required them to help the other tribes conquer the land of Canaan on the west side of the Jordan, and the tribes agreed they would (*Num. 32:16-19*). The tribes remembered their commitment to Moses and assured Joshua they would obey his voice in every way. Joshua 1 thus records God's commissioning of Joshua and the people's ratification of that commission.

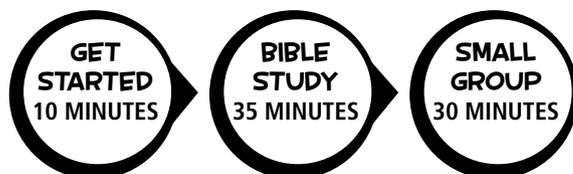
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Joshua 1:1-9

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 3-4

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Joshua 1:5

TEXT TRUTH: We can have courage because God is always with us.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- Souvenir Stones: *souvenir item, stones (real or cutouts), permanent markers*

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: *Bibles, Family Cards, "Tribe Allotment Map" (Poster Pack)*
- Examine the Text: *Bibles*

- The Bible Story: *Bibles, stones from Get Started, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Joshua" (Books of the Bible Posters)*
- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse: *"Joshua 1:5" (Poster Pack), cardboard, marker*
- Prayer: *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move: *brown paper, marker, "Review Questions" (enhanced CD)*
- Make: *4-by-4-inch pieces of heavyweight paper, glue, small stones, markers, magnet strips*
- Examine: *Bibles, maps, large paper, markers, Bible map or atlases*

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

CROSSING THE JORDAN RIVER

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 3–4

After Moses died, God chose a new leader for His people. God chose Joshua to lead His people into the promised land. It was a big job, but God promised to be with Joshua and to help him.

Joshua gathered all of the people at the edge of the Jordan River. Joshua told all of the people to get ready to follow the ark of the covenant. He told the priests to carry the ark of the covenant ahead of the people.

Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, “Tell the priests to carry the ark of the covenant to the Jordan River. At the river, they should stand in the water.”

This was the time of the year that the Jordan River was full of water. It had so much water that it overflowed and spilled out over the edges.

Joshua prepared the people with special instructions. He picked one man from every tribe of Israel.

Joshua said, “When the feet of the priests carrying the ark enter the Jordan River, the water will stop and stand up in a mass.”

And that is what happened. While the priests stood on dry ground in the middle of the riverbed, all of the Israelites crossed on dry ground to the other side of the river.

After they all crossed, Joshua sent the 12 men to each get a stone from the middle of the riverbed. Joshua called to the priests, “Come up from the Jordan.” As soon as the priests were on solid ground, the waters of the Jordan flowed again like normal.

Joshua stacked the stones together and made a memorial. The stones were a reminder of how God stopped the Jordan River so His people could walk into the land He had promised them so long ago.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Joshua is a reminder of God’s divine provision for His people. God, as a part of His covenant relationship with the Israelites, chose Joshua to lead the people to enter the promised land and a time of rest. Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, and an everlasting rest.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

God told Joshua to have courage because God would be with him.

KEY CONNECTIONS TO JOSHUA

CORE PASSAGE: Joshua 1:1-9

- God told Joshua not to be afraid.
- God is always with His people.
- God commanded the people to obey His law. He would bless them greatly when they obeyed.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Souvenir Stones: souvenir item, stones (real or cutouts), permanent markers

SOUVENIR STONES

- Display a souvenir item—something that someone might purchase on a vacation, such as a t-shirt from a destination. Allow the kids to share some of the other things that people buy on trips. Ask the group: “Why do you think people buy things like this on vacation?” Point out that one of the reasons for buying souvenirs is to remember the place where they have been. Explain that the word “souvenir” actually means “to remember” in French.
- Direct the group to search the room and for each participant to locate one of the stones that you distributed before class. These stones can be actual stones or a cut-out fashioned from cardboard or foam. There should be a few more prepared than the number of participants you expect. When they each return with a stone, ask them what makes this particular stone “their” stone. Point out that just like the souvenir you showed, this stone is theirs because they chose it. This stone proves and reminds them that they were here.
- Invite the kids to write their names on the stones and place them in a pile. Point out that if people years from now find this collection of stones, they will know who was in the group on this particular day. Agree that no one will be impressed with the fact that they were here on this particular day, but explain that in today’s Bible story, we will encounter an event that everyone who participated in it would always want to remember.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Welcome the kids to group time, assembling them on one side of the room. Invite them to locate Joshua in their Bibles.
- Ask them whether Joshua is located in the Old or New Testament. (*Old Testament*) Ask the boys to discover which book precedes Joshua (*Deuteronomy*) and the girls to find which follows it. (*Judges*) Point out that Joshua is a very important book because it marks the time in Israel's history when they moved into their homeland.
- Allow someone to read Joshua 1:1-3. Remind them that Moses led the twelve tribes out of slavery in Egypt, and explain that Joshua led them after Moses to go to their new home.
- Point out on the map that the twelve tribes of Israel were camped on the east side of the Jordan River and that God had promised to give them the land on the west side of the river. Allow a volunteer to locate Jericho on the map and explain that Israel was camped just east of that.
- Distribute the Family Cards. Explain that this is a picture of the Jordan River. In today's Bible story, Joshua must lead the people across the flooded Jordan River into the promised land.
- Ask the kids if they believe Joshua might have been worried to lead his people into war or across a flooded river. Ask someone to read Joshua 1:6. Emphasize the two things that God told Joshua to do. (*Be strong; take courage.*)

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Ask the group to form pairs and to read Joshua 1:1-9 to each other, alternating readers with each verse. Direct them to count the number of times that Joshua is told to be strong and courageous.
- After allowing them some time to read, ask for a report. Agree that there are three repetitions of these words. Draw their attention to the second half of verse 9. Point out that not being frightened or dismayed is essentially the same, and thus a fourth repetition.
- Ask: "Why do you think God repeated that instruction so many times?"

THE BIBLE STORY

- Direct the group to turn to Joshua 3. Explain that Israel was still on the east side of the river and that the river was at flood stage. The side everyone is assembled is the "east side" of the river. Indicate the other side of the room as the "west side" of the river and the area in between as "the river." Make sure the "stones" are lying in the "river" part of the room.
- Explain that Joshua instructed the people to cross the river, following the priests who carried the ark of the covenant. Move the group toward the "river," stopping before you reach the middle. Ask someone to read Joshua 3:15-17 aloud. Explain that the water stopped flowing from

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards, "Tribe Allotment Map" (Poster Pack)
- Examine the Text: Bibles
- The Bible Story: Bibles, stones from Get Started, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Joshua" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Joshua 1:5" (Poster Pack), cardboard, marker
- Prayer: none

PREPARATION:

- Write the words of the memory verse on "stones" cut from cardboard.

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

upstream and instead piled up and waited.

- Allow the group to cross the river to the other side of the room. Ask: “Do you think you would remember something like that happening? Do you think God would want the people to remember this forever?” Ask someone to read Joshua 4:2-3.
- Explain that God wanted the twelve tribes to take a “souvenir” from the river to remember what He had done. Direct the kids to go back into the river and retrieve their stones, placing them on the western bank of the river.
- Read Joshua 4:20-23, making it clear that these stones were to remind the nation of the great thing God had done.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and “Connection Statement.” You may choose to display the two near the “Joshua” poster.

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 1” video.
- Ask the boys and girls: “What did Joel learn about courage? What did the Israelites learn about fear and courage? Who is on our side?”

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the “Joshua 1:5” poster. Ask the group to repeat the verse together.
- Randomly place the cardboard stones with the words of the verse on the floor.
- Instruct the group to arrange the stones in their proper order as quickly as possible. Allow them to refer to the poster once before removing it.
- Time the group once, and then challenge them to beat their time on a second attempt. Each time the verse is assembled, require them to read it aloud.
- Emphasize that just as the stones from the river reminded Israel of what God had done for them, memorizing God’s Word can help us remember what He has done and will do for us.

PRAYER

- Lead the kids in a prayer, asking God to help them remember the things that He has done in their lives. Ask God to give them strength and courage in the challenges that lie ahead.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Instruct the kids to open their Explorer Guides to the “Joshua Commissioned” page.
- Invite the group to open their Bibles and briefly review Joshua 1:1-9. Discuss what this passage tells us about having courage in our lives.
- Invite kids to complete “Where is God with Me?” Allow kids to share some of the places they named.
- Ask a kid to read aloud “What’s in a Name?” Invite a second volunteer to read about today’s object in “The Jordan River.” Guide the boys and girls to locate the Jordan River on the “Journey of the Spies” Map.”
- Guide boys and girls to complete “Stones of Gratitude.” Encourage kids to share as time allows.

PRAYER TIME

- Allow the kids to share prayer requests, especially for situations in which they need strength and courage.
- Invite members of the group to pray for others as these requests are made. Close the prayer time by asking God to give a spirit of boldness to each kid.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.

RIVER RUN

Tools: brown paper, marker, “Review Questions” (enhanced CD)

- Create twelve or more “rocks” by wadding up pieces of brown paper. Inside of each rock, write a number *one, three, or five*. If you create twelve rocks, make six 1’s, four 3’s, and two 5’s. These numbers should not be visible from the outside of the rock. Place the pile of rocks in the middle of the room and designate it as the river area.
- **Form teams of two or three. Explain that you will be asking review questions from the story. Once the question has been completely read, a team can volunteer to answer the question. Teams may confer briefly on an answer.**
- **If a team answers the question correctly, they will be allowed to run to the “river” and retrieve a rock.**
- **If the team answers the question incorrectly, they must return one of their rocks. If they have no rocks, they must sit out the next question.**
- **When the rocks, questions, or time have been exhausted, direct the teams to open their rocks and discover the numbers inside. Add up the numbers to determine a winning team.**
- **Remind the teams that God will always be with them in all parts of their lives. Review the Text Truth: **We can have courage because God is always with us.****



REMEMBRANCE STONE



Tools: 4-by-4-inch pieces of heavyweight paper, glue, small stones, markers, magnet strips

- Ask: “Does anyone know the phrase, ‘Between a rock and a hard place?’” Explain that this is a saying for a difficult, no-win situation. Give an example of such a situation that the kids will understand.
- Invite the group to reflect on today’s story and the task ahead for Joshua and Israel. Ask them what parts of the work ahead might have made the Israelites believe they were “between a rock and a hard place.” Explain that the reason God instructed the twelve tribes to take rocks from the middle of the dried-up Jordan River was to remind them of what God had done for them in a difficult situation.
- Direct individuals to look up the following verses in their Bibles: Psalm 18:2, Psalm 18:31, Psalm 62:7. Allow each volunteer to read her verse in turn. Emphasize that God is as reliable as a rock.
- Distribute the materials. Invite the kids to glue one of the rocks onto a piece of heavyweight paper. Read the scriptures again and guide the group to select one of these verses and write it onto the card. Instruct them to complete the activity by gluing a magnet strip onto the back of the card.
- Challenge the kids to place this remembrance stone in their lockers, on a refrigerator, or elsewhere to help them remember the good things God has done for them and the promise of good things to come.
- Review the Text Truth: **We can have courage because God is always with us.**

FOLLOW THE MAP



Tools: Bibles, maps, large paper, markers, Bible maps or atlases

- Allow the group a few moments to summarize the Bible story. Explain that you would like to invite them to look more closely at one aspect of the story—the places where it happened.
- Ask half of the kids to locate Joshua 3 in their Bibles, while the other half locate Joshua 4. Ask each team to read its chapter, paying close attention to any mentions of locations. Direct them to make a note of place names as well as more generic locations in the story, such as “in the middle of the river.” Allow them to use Bible maps or atlases to locate particular place names.
- Place the large sheet of paper in the middle of a table and invite the two teams to assist you in creating a map to illustrate the story of Israel crossing the Jordan River. After adding Jericho, the river, Gilgal, and the others to the paper, draw a line indicating the path of the people, adding notes for the various activities.
- Emphasize the places where the people might have experienced fear on that day. Remind the kids that they can always take courage when they trust in God. Review the Text Truth: **We can have courage because God is always with us.**

Tip: Save the map to use again in Session 4.



Session 2

JERICHO FALLS



FOR THE
LEADER

Joshua 6:12-25

Today's session focuses on God's people as Joshua led them against the city of Jericho. God's battle plan was unusual, but as Joshua and the people followed it, they saw God bring an astounding victory. The walls of Jericho fell, and the people took the city.

Joshua 2 records how Joshua secretly sent two men to spy out Jericho as God's people prepared to cross into the promised land. The men hid in the home of Rahab. The king of Jericho received word of the spies' coming and ordered Rahab to turn them over, but Rahab told the king the men already had escaped.

Rahab met secretly with the spies and confessed her faith in Israel's God. She then struck a deal to save her life; she had saved the spies' lives, and now they would save hers, along with her family's.

Later, in Chapter 6, God gave Joshua unusual battle instructions to defeat Jericho. The people were to march around the city each day, and on the seventh day, the people would shout as the priests blew the ram's horns, and the wall would collapse. The people followed Joshua's directive. Each day for six days, they circled the city once with the priests blowing the ram's horns. On the seventh day, the people marched around the city seven times, the priests blew the ram's horns, and Joshua instructed the people to shout, because the Lord had given them the city. The wall fell, and Israel achieved the victory.

The Israelites spared Rahab's family in accordance with the spies' promise. They then destroyed the city and deposited the valuables in the treasury of the Lord.

Israel's battle against Jericho should encourage kids today as they seek to do God's will. Guide kids to know that we should trust God and obey Him. Remind the boys and girls you teach that when we truly trust God we will obey God completely. Joshua and the Israelites trusted God for the victory. Rejoice! Be assured that God takes care of people who trust and follow Him.

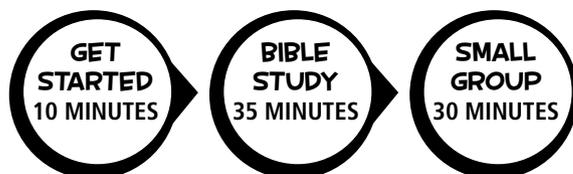
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Joshua 6:12-25

CONNECTION PASSAGES: Joshua 2; 6:1-25

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Joshua 4:24

TEXT TRUTH: When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- Wall Smashers: *index cards, marker*

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: *Bibles, Family Cards, "Tribe Allotment Map" (Poster Pack)*
- Examine the Text: *Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase markers*

- The Bible Story: *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Joshua" (Books of the Bible Posters)*
- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse: *"Joshua 4:24" (Poster Pack)*
- Prayer: *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move: *paper cups, markers*
- Examine: *index cards, markers*
- Explore: *various items that people assume will work but could fail, such as a cell phone*

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

THE FALL OF JERICHO

CONNECTION PASSAGES: Joshua 2; 6:1-25

God had promised His people the land of Canaan, but other people lived in the land. The other people did not love God or honor Him. They worshiped false gods.

The people of Israel prepared to battle the city of Jericho. Joshua sent two spies to the city. A woman named Rahab hid the spies and protected them from being found. The men promised Rahab that she and everyone in her house would be saved if she tied a scarlet cord to her window.

Rahab helped the men escape the city and tied the scarlet cord to her window. The spies hurried back to Joshua and reported that God would give them the victory.

Jericho was a strong city with a big wall. No one was entering the city or leaving the city because they were scared of the Israelites. God told Joshua, "March around the city one time for six days. On the seventh day, march around the city seven times. The priests will blow their trumpets and the people will shout. Then the wall will collapse."

Joshua summoned the people. The soldiers lined up. Seven priests with seven trumpets stood behind the soldiers. More priests followed them, carrying the ark of the covenant. Joshua told the people not to say a word until he said, "Shout!" They marched around the city once and returned to camp. The next day they did the same thing. They marched around the city once and returned to camp. On the third day, fourth day, fifth day, and sixth day, they marched around the city once and returned to camp.

Finally, the seventh day arrived. At dawn, they began to march. Once around the city. Twice around the city. They marched around the city 7 times. After the seventh time, the priests blew the trumpets and this time Joshua yelled, "Shout! God has given you the city." The people shouted, the trumpets blew, and the walls of Jericho fell down.

Joshua sent the two spies to Rahab's house and rescued all of the people in her home. From then on, Rahab lived with the Israelites. God had helped the Israelites defeat the city of Jericho.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Joshua is a reminder of God's divine provision for His people. God, as a part of His covenant relationship with the Israelites, chose Joshua to lead the people to enter the promised land and a time of rest. Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, and an everlasting rest.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

God gave His people victory over Jericho after they trusted and obeyed Him.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO JOSHUA

CORE PASSAGE:

Joshua 6:12-25

- God defeated the city of Jericho.
- The Israelites obeyed God.
- Because she honored God, Rahab was rescued.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Wall Smashers: index cards, marker

PREPARATION:

- Create 2 sets numbered from 1 to half the size of the group

WALL SMASHERS

- Arrange the group into two equal teams. An adult may fill in to even out the teams.
- Give each member of Team A a card with a number. The numbers should range from 1 to the number of players on the team. Do the same for Team B.
- Instruct the two teams to form two lines facing each other, creating two “walls.” The numbers should be hidden and randomly arranged along the line.
- Allow each member of Team A to walk across and select a player from Team B. Direct the players to display their numbers. If the number from the player on Team A matches the number of the Team B player she selected, Team A scores a point. Total up the points scored.
- Reset the lines and redistribute the numbers. Repeat the process, allowing Team B to select players from Team A.
- After the first round, if one team scored more than the other, allow them to eliminate the corresponding number of players from the other team. For example, if Team A scores 3 and Team B scores 2, one Team B player would be eliminated.
- Play succeeding rounds as before. When the teams are uneven, then two players from the larger team can select the same player from the smaller team.
- Continue the process until one team’s wall (*each player*) is eliminated or time is exhausted.
- Explain that in ancient days, the siege of a walled city often took a great deal of time and effort. Point out that by trusting in God completely, the army of Israel experienced a much less difficult way to defeat a strong city.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Welcome the kids to group time. Ask if anyone recalls what book they studied in the previous lesson. (*Joshua*)
- Remind them that Joshua is located in the Old Testament between Deuteronomy and Judges. Ask if anyone remembers what river the people of Israel crossed over in last week's lesson. (*Jordan*) Invite the kids to locate Joshua in their Bibles. Remind the group that the twelve tribes of Israel are now on the west side of the Jordan River and ready to take over the land God promised to them.
- Allow a volunteer to read Joshua 6:1 and discover what powerful city was the first obstacle to Israel taking their new homeland. (*Jericho*) Use the "Tribal Allotment Map" to show the location of Jericho.
- Ask the kids how you could defeat an entire city. Point out that like many ancient cities, Jericho was surrounded by thick and tall walls. Explain that attacking a walled city would take a very long time or cost a great many lives, or possibly both.
- Distribute the Family Cards, drawing attention to the ruins of Jericho pictured there. Explain that today's story in Joshua 6 explains how Jericho went from a strong, walled city, to ruins that archaeologists study today—without any of Israel's army dying.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct the kids to locate and read Joshua 6:12-16. Ask the kids to make note of every use of the number seven in this passage of instructions. Allow a volunteer to write the instances of seven on a board. Invite them to speculate on why God wanted so many sevens to be in this passage. Remind the kids that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. Invite the group to consider what God would want the people to remember with the sevens.
- Direct the group to read Joshua 6:20-21. Allow them to briefly discuss anything surprising in this account.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Point out that the story of Jericho's fall does not begin with the army marching around the city for seven days. Invite the kids to turn in their Bibles to Joshua 2. Explain that Joshua dispatched two spies to scout out the area of Jericho and those spies found refuge in the home of Rahab.
- Ask the kids to gather into three groups to answer questions about Rahab. Assign the groups these passages and questions:
 - ▶ Joshua 2:2-7
 - ▷ What did Rahab do for the spies? How did she do it?
 - ▶ Joshua 2:8-11
 - ▷ Why did Rahab hide the spies? What did she believe about God?
 - ▶ Joshua 2:12-20

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards, "Tribal Allotment Map" (Poster Pack)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase markers
- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Text Truth" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Joshua" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Joshua 4:24" (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

- ▷ What did Rahab ask in return for hiding them? How did she help them escape?
- Direct the kids to turn forward to Joshua 6 again. Remind them that Joshua instructed the Israelites to destroy Jericho. Ask them what they believe that meant for Rahab. Ask someone to read Joshua 6:23-25. Explain that because she trusted in God, Rahab was spared and became an ancestor of King David and, eventually, Jesus.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and “Connection Statement” near the “Joshua” poster. Invite the kids to say the Text Truth with you: **When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.** Ask kids to identify how Joshua and the Israelites obeyed this Text Truth.

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 2” video.
- Allow the kids to share their thoughts about how tall the walls of Jericho would have seemed to an Israelite standing at the bottom of them. Briefly discuss what Kaileigh learned about trusting and obeying God completely.

MEMORY VERSE

- Arrange the group in a circle. Display the “Joshua 4:24” poster. Ask the group to repeat the verse together several times.
- Set the poster aside and move to the center of the circle. Explain that you will point to someone in the circle and that person should say the first word in the verse. Direct the next person to the left to say the second word. If anyone says the wrong word or hesitates too long, allow the next person to start over again and reverse directions.
- Guide the girls and boys to recite the verse, one word at a time, until they can do so smoothly.
- Explain that the beginning word in Joshua 4:24 refers to the stones from the Jordan River that were discussed in the previous lesson. Emphasize that God provided those stones as a reminder that He could be trusted.

PRAYER

- Lead the kids in a prayer, asking God to help them trust Him completely so they can obey Him in every part of their lives.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Instruct the kids to open their Explorer Guides to the “Jericho Falls” page.
- Direct the kids to open their Bibles and briefly review Joshua 6:12-25. Discuss what they have learned in their study of this story, especially what this passage tells us about trusting God completely. Invite kids to complete the “Word Search” as they review.
- Guide kids to complete “Crumbling Wall” and allow them to talk openly about their answers.
- Invite kids to read about today’s object, “Jericho,” and “What is a Tel?”
- Lead kids to examine the “Word to Know” and locate it in the Bible.

PRAYER TIME

- Ask the kids to share situations when they find it hard or easy to trust God. Briefly discuss those answers.
- Ask volunteers to offer prayers regarding the difficult times to trust God.
- Close the prayer time by asking God to help the kids learn to trust Him more and more each day.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.

NO-TOUCH RUINS

Tools: paper cups, markers

- Remind the kids of the Text Truth from today’s story: **When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.**
- Distribute the cups and markers to the kids. Ask them to name some situations in which they have to show trust in something or someone. Point out that this trust does not have to be in God. As each participant names a situation, guide him to write a short version of that situation on a cup and place it in the middle of the group. Clarify each trust situation as it is added to the collection of cups.
- When you have assembled a large and diverse set of situations, invite the kids to use the “trust cups” to build a structure. Remind the kids that the people of Israel did not have to even touch the walls of Jericho to turn them into ruins. Allow them to make a ruin of their cup structure without touching it. This will probably involve blowing on it, but allow them to be creative.
- Point out that **when we truly trust God, we obey God completely.** Suggest that when we fail to trust God, our lives can wind up, like the walls of Jericho, as a bit of a ruin.





TRUST IN ORDER

Tools: index cards, markers

- Remind the kids of the way in which Joshua instructed the people to defeat the city of Jericho. Ask who the average Israelite would have had to trust to walk around that city each day for a week. Point out that they would at least have to trust Joshua and God. Ask: “Who would they have to trust more? Joshua or God?” Agree that if they did not trust God, then trusting Joshua would be foolish.
- Explain that, in life, many people, places, and things ask us to trust them. Write the name of a local restaurant on a card. Ask: “If I eat here, what sort of trust am I showing?” (*The food will be good. They won’t poison me.*)
- Invite the kids to use the cards and markers to write as many people, places, and things as they can imagine that ask for our trust. Encourage them to include both the very trustworthy and the not-so-trustworthy. Create the first card by writing *God*.
- Challenge the kids to put the resulting cards in order from the most trustworthy (*God*) to the least trustworthy. Allow them to include some silly items, but encourage them to spend the bulk of the time considering serious items. Discuss whatever differences of opinion the kids have.
- Review the Text Truth: **When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.** Point out that trusting God often means trusting the leaders and authorities that God places in our lives. Challenge the kids to live a life of trusting obedience this week.



FAILURES

Tools: various items that people assume will work but could fail, such as a cell phone

- Remind the group of the manner in which Joshua directed the people of Israel to defeat the city of Jericho. Ask them what could have gone wrong with this plan. Suggest that on the seventh day, the walls might have simply not fallen. Ask: “Do you think every person among the Israelites completely trusted that God would bring them victory that day?”
- Display a phone or other object. Ask what a phone can be used for. Ask how a phone can fail. Allow the kids to list the various ways that a phone could let its user down.
- Share the other objects you brought (*or take the group on a walk to such objects*). Invite the kids to consider what we trust this object to do and how that object could fail. Ask if anyone has ever experienced this sort of object failing. Continue this process through a series of objects.
- Point out that even though we know cell phones and other objects can fail, we expect them not to fail. We trust these objects and rely on them, becoming frustrated when they let us down.
- Emphasize that even though God has never failed and will not in the future, many Christians do not seem to trust Him as fully as they do their phones. Review the Text Truth: **When we truly trust God, we obey God completely.** Challenge the kids to consider the ways that they can demonstrate their trust by obeying God in the coming week.



Session

3



THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL

Joshua 10:6-14

Today's study opens in Joshua 9 where the inhabitants of Gibeon heard what Joshua had accomplished at Jericho and Ai, and devised a plan to convince the Israelites they lived in a distant country. Their delegation approached the Israelites at Gilgal and convinced them of this deception, and Joshua and the people made a treaty with them. Three days later, the Israelites realized the Gibeonites were their neighbors, and found themselves caught in the deception. They determined they would enslave the Gibeonites rather than kill them.

In today's core passage a coalition of southern kings joined together to attack Gibeon when they discovered the Gibeonites had made peace with Israel. The Gibeonites immediately sent word to Joshua, who rallied Israel's armies to assist them in defeating the southern coalition. During this battle, Joshua prayed and asked God to have the sun stand still, and the Lord honored his request. Joshua then led his army in a conquest of Canaan's southern cities.

Joshua 11:1-23 introduces a coalition of northern kings led by Jabin, king of Hazor, who amassed an army to fight Joshua. Once again, the Lord brought victory. Joshua conquered the remaining major northern cities, and Israel thereby achieved effective control of Canaan. Joshua 12:1-24 provides a summary statement regarding the 31 kings the Israelite army conquered.

We need to remember the same God who led Joshua also leads us, and He remains in control of this world. God is more than able to accomplish His purposes and answer our prayers (*Eph. 3:20*). He will keep His commitments to us (*2 Cor. 1:20*), just as He expects us to keep our commitments to Him. God protects and answers the prayers of His people.

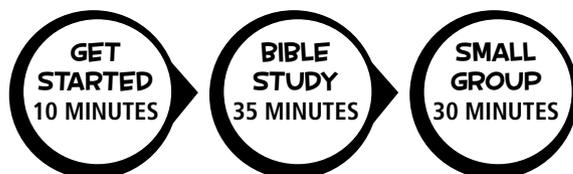
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Joshua 10:6-14

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 10:1-14

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Joshua 1:7

TEXT TRUTH: God protected His people.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- Freeze!:** *various items to perform physical challenges, music*

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In:** *Bibles, Family Cards*
- The Bible Story:** *Bibles, "Story Markers" (enhanced CD)*

- Examine the Text:** *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Joshua" (Books of the Bible Posters)*
- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse:** *"Joshua 4:24" (Poster Pack)*
- Prayer:** *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *Bibles*
- Examine:** *sticky notes, marker, "Sunny Prayers Signs" (enhanced CD)*
- Make:** *large sheet of paper, flashlights, markers, Bible*

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THE DAY THE SUN STOOD STILL

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 10:1-14

Joshua and the Israelites defeated the people at Jericho by following God's instructions. When the people of Gibeon heard what happened at Jericho, they came up with a plan to trick the Israelites. They lied to Joshua about where they were from. Joshua agreed to make a treaty with the people of Gibeon.

Later, the king of Jerusalem heard about the treaty the Israelites made with the people of Gibeon. He was worried. Gibeon was a large city with warriors. So the king of Jerusalem sent word to the kings of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lachish, and Eglon. The five kings agreed to attack Gibeon.

The five kings attacked Gibeon. The men of Gibeon sent a message to Joshua asking for help. Joshua and the Israelite army traveled to Gilgal. God gave Joshua a special message, "Do not be afraid. I will give you the victory."

Joshua and his men marched all night from Gilgal and surprised the armies of the 5 kings. The Lord caused the men in the other armies to be confused and Israel defeated them. Then as the other armies tried to flee, God sent hail to stop them.

On that day, Joshua prayed to God, "Please let the sun and the moon stand still." And that is what happened. God heard Joshua's prayer and answered it. God fought for the Israelites.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Joshua is a reminder of God's divine provision for His people. God, as a part of His covenant relationship with the Israelites, chose Joshua to lead the people to enter the promised land and a time of rest. Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, and an everlasting rest.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

God answered Joshua's prayers and fought for Israel to give them the victory.

KEY CONNECTIONS TO JOSHUA

CORE PASSAGE: Joshua 10:6-14

- The Israelites made a bad decision.
- God helped the Israelites when they needed Him.
- God heard and answered Joshua's prayer.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Freeze!: various items to perform physical challenges, music

FREEZE!

- Arrange a number of stations in a circle around an open area. The number of stations should be roughly equal to the number of kids you expect. Stations should include some simple physical activity that the person in that spot can perform. Examples could include sitting on the floor or on a chair, jumping to touch something, lifting something, bouncing a ball, placing items in a box, stacking cups, and so forth.
- Explain the requirements of each station briefly. Arrange the kids around the circle. Instruct them to move from station to station when the music begins playing and to perform the task at each station as they come to it. Explain that they must stop all movement when the music stops.
- Start playing some music. Allow the participants a chance to move through several stations. Stop the music for a few seconds. Begin the music again, emphasizing that when the music stops again, any motion at all will result in that person being eliminated from the game.
- Stop the music again, watching for motion. Explain that, for example, if a person was jumping when the music stopped, gravity is no excuse for motion. If a player is left in an awkward position, feel free to slightly lengthen the pause in the music.
- Ask those eliminated to have a seat and assist in watching for movement. Restart the music and continue the process until only one player remains.
- Allow the players a moment to reflect on the game, explaining what made this activity so difficult. Point out that sometimes remaining completely still is the most difficult thing we can do.
- Note that today's Bible story does not deal with people remaining still, but something much more difficult to control: the sun.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Welcome the kids to group time. Remind the kids that the last two Bible studies have been drawn from Joshua. Ask if anyone remembers what city God helped the Israelites defeat in last week's study. (*Jericho*)
- Ask what book division Joshua is in. (*History*) Point out that this book describes the early years of Israel's history as they moved in to the land that God had promised them years earlier.
- Direct the boys and girls to open their Bibles to Joshua 10. Remind them that Joshua is located between Deuteronomy and Judges in the Old Testament. Ask a volunteer to read the heading they find at the beginning of this chapter. (*"The Day the Sun Stood Still" or similar heading*) Explain that these headings are provided by the people who publish Bibles. They are not part of God's inspired Word, but they are provided to be helpful for us.
- Distribute the Family Cards, drawing attention to the Amarna letter pictured there. Explain that while Joshua describes the conquest of the land from the point of view of God and the Israelites, the people who lived there at the time probably saw things differently. Point out that this letter tells of an outside group, the Hapiru, taking over the land. Some scholars believe the Hapiru were actually the Israelites or parts of the tribes of Israel.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Place the "Story Markers" signs in various places around the room. Invite the kids to gather at the sign reading "The Alliance." Ask the group to look up Joshua 10 in their Bibles. Point out the many difficult names and places in the first verses. Explain that after seeing what Joshua had done in Jericho and the city of Ai, a group of kings came together to fight against him. Point out that they did not attack Joshua and the Israelites, but instead attacked Gibeon, a town that had made peace with Joshua.
- Guide everyone to move to "The Call for Help" marker. Ask someone to read Joshua 10:6. Point out that five kings had banded together, fielding a powerful army.
- Move the group to "The Response to the Call" sign, where someone should read Joshua 10:7-8.
- Ask the group to go to "The Larger Response" sign and read Joshua 10:9-11. Ask the kids to share what credit Joshua deserves for the victory and what credit should go to God. Allow them to share their rationale.
- Point out that although the Israelites fought bravely, their victory came about because God gave them a larger response than they could manage alone. Note that God had one more response to help seal the victory.

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Story Markers" (enhanced CD)
- Examine the Text: Bibles, "Text Truth" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Joshua" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Joshua 4:24" (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Point out that the only thing keeping Joshua's army from having a total victory was the possibility of the sun going down and people getting away.
- Read Joshua's prayer and the result in Joshua 10:12-15. Invite the kids to create reporter questions (*who, what, where, why, when, how*) for this event. Ask the kids to share their questions as others attempt to answer them.
- Emphasize that in such a miraculous event, we cannot always answer every question, but we can trust that God will give His people help.
- Introduce the "Text Truth Strip" and "Connection Statement" and display them next to the "Joshua" poster. Read the Text Truth aloud with the boys and girls: **God protected His people.**

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the "Session 3" video.
- Ask: "What facts did Joel share about the sun? What did he tell us about events that happened in Joshua's life?"
- Ask the kids to share what they learned about God protecting His people.

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the "Joshua 4:24" poster. Ask the group to repeat the verse together several times.
- Divide the group into several smaller teams. Challenge them to devise motions that will help someone to remember this verse. Allow the teams a couple of minutes to consider their motions before inviting them to share the verse and motions with the entire group.
- Determine the best motions, attempting to draw something from each group and lead the kids in repeating the verse with those motions.
- Remind the kids that even though God gave this command to Joshua in a time of war, it can be a source of strength for any of us at any point in life.

PRAYER

- Ask the kids to suggest situations in which they might desire God's protection. Ask volunteers to share a brief prayer for specific requests of protection. Conclude the prayer by asking God's protection on everyone in the group.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Guide the kids to open their Explorer Guides to “The Day the Sun Stood Still” page.
- Allow the group to locate Joshua 10:6-14 in their Bibles. Review the story and briefly discuss what this story should mean to us in our lives today. As you review invite kids to complete “Tricky Statements.” (1. *False: gas not lava*; 2. *False: a star not moon*; 3. *True*; 4. *True*; 5. *False: heat not cold*; 6. *True*; 7. *True*)
- Select a kid to read aloud “What is Hail?” Invite kids to share how God used hail in today’s Bible story.
- Review today’s object by asking a volunteer to read about the “Amarna Letters.” Choose another kid to read the “Word to Know.”
- Guide kids to quietly complete “Prayer Time.”

PRAYER TIME

- Invite the kids to share prayer requests. Ask them to think of times when God’s people would need protection.
- Close in prayer, asking God to give the kids confidence in His protection.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.

STAND STILL

Tools: Bibles

- Ask the kids to remember what unique event happened in today’s story. Point out that some scientists claim that this could not have happened. Suggest that if God is capable of creating the entire universe out of nothing, He can surely stop the sun and moon.
- Point out that you cannot stop the sun, but you can hopefully stop the group. Direct the kids to listen to today’s story being read. Instruct them to move constantly, but to freeze when they hear the name of a person or group of people, or any noun or pronoun that refers to people (*example: he or his men*). Explain that each player will receive three strikes and then must sit down.
- Read Joshua 10:1-14, pausing each time a “person word” is encountered. If anyone continues moving when you pause, give that person a strike. If a player has accumulated three strikes, instruct that person to sit and help you watch the others. Continue through the story. If all but one kid is eliminated, allow all the players to rejoin.
- Remind the group that God may not make the sun stand still for us, but He does give His people the things that they need each day.
- Review the Text Truth: **God protected His people.**





SUNNY PRAYERS

Tools: sticky notes, marker, “Sunny Prayers Signs” (enhanced CD)

- Remind the group of the miraculous event that happened in today’s story. Ask them why they believe the sun stood still. Allow a volunteer to read Joshua 10:12. Repeat the previous question. Point out that when Joshua asked for something amazing, God granted it.
- Emphasize that God does not grant every miraculous prayer request. Our prayers need to be in agreement with God’s will for God to grant them.
- Invite the kids to write a collection of prayer requests on the sticky notes. After they have accumulated several each, direct attention to the four “Sunny Prayer Signs.” Our prayer requests can fall into at least four categories. Provide a request of your own to exemplify each category.
- Explain that a “Sun Stopper” prayer asks for something miraculous. A “Sun Rising” prayer asks for something less miraculous but new. A “Sun Shining” prayer asks for something to continue, while a “Total Eclipse” prayer might not be miraculous, but is probably not in God’s will.
- Challenge the kids to sort their assembled prayer requests. Discuss their decisions.
- Review the Text Truth: **God protected His people.** Remind the kids that Joshua had such a strong relationship with God that he knew that he could ask for a miracle. Challenge them to develop that sort of relationship with God.



SHADOWY REMINDER

Tools: large sheet of paper, flashlights, markers, Bible

- Ask the kids to consider what the shadows did (*or didn’t do*) when the sun stood still. Suggest that just like Joshua had the confidence to ask God for something, we should have that sort of confidence in prayer as well.
- Invite a volunteer to read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. Repeat verse 17. Ask the kids to consider what it means to pray without ceasing or stopping.
- Place the paper on a central table or hard floor. Provide the flashlights. Direct the kids to use the flashlights to create shadows of their hands and spell out the words *Pray without ceasing* on the paper. Allow one person to direct the light, one to pose a hand or hands, and one to trace the shadow on the paper.
- When the poster is complete, add the Scripture reference to it and display it in the room.
- Review the Text Truth: **God protected His people.** Remind the kids that God provided what Joshua and his people needed during that battle. Ask: “Did the Israelites have to do anything?” (*Yes, they had to keep fighting.*) Suggest that this poster should remind us to keep praying for God’s protection, but also to be obedient to do His will.



Session

4



CHRISTMAS

Luke 1:26-38

The angel Gabriel visited Zechariah, a priest in Jerusalem (*Luke 1:5-25*). Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth were old and had no children. However, Gabriel told Zechariah that Elizabeth would bear him a son—John. John would be filled with the Holy Spirit and accomplish great things.

Gabriel then visited a virgin named Mary in Nazareth and told her she had found favor with God. Mary would bear God's Son! The Lord would give His Son the throne of His father David, and His kingdom would last forever. The angel also shared the news of Elizabeth's pregnancy, and Mary humbly surrendered to the Lord's plan.

Mary departed for Judea to visit Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby leaped inside her, and Elizabeth blessed Mary. Mary praised God.

Luke 2 shares that a Roman decree required all people to register in their hometowns. Joseph traveled with Mary to Bethlehem because he hailed from King David's line. Mary gave birth to Jesus while they were there.

That night, an angel appeared to nearby shepherds with glorious news. A Savior was born in Bethlehem! Following the announcement, the shepherds left the fields to find Mary, Joseph, and the baby. The shepherds reported to everyone what they had seen, and all were amazed.

At Christmas, we celebrate God's sending His Son as the Savior of the world. Today, God continues to accomplish His sovereign purpose, and often He does that through believers who are willing to yield their lives to Christ no matter what the cost. We can trust God to keep His promises as we confidently follow Him.

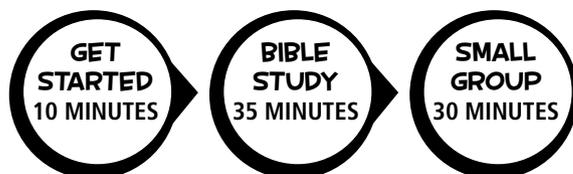
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Luke 1:26-38

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Luke 2:1-20

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Luke 1:32-33

TEXT TRUTH: Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God through the prophets.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- Special Delivery:** *cups, table tennis balls, tape*

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In:** *Bibles, Family Cards, "Tribal Allotment Map" (Poster Pack)*
- Examine the Text:** *Bibles*
- The Bible Story:** *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Luke" (Books of the Bible Posters)*

- Play the Video:** *Explore the Bible on Location video*

- Memory Verse:** *"Luke 1:32-33" (Poster Pack)*

- Prayer:** *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides:** *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move:** *"Who's Where Signs" (enhanced CD), nametags, marker*

- Make:** *blank cards, various craft supplies*
- Examine:** *"Map" from Session 1 Examine activity, printed maps, Bible atlas, notecards, marker, tape, "Review Questions" (enhanced CD)*

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Luke 2:1-20

The ruler Caesar Augustus sent a decree to the entire empire. He wanted all of the people to register. Everyone had to travel to their hometown to be registered.

Joseph lived in Nazareth but was from Bethlehem, the city of David. He was a descendant of King David. So Joseph traveled to Bethlehem with Mary. Mary was pregnant. While in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth. The lodging place was full, so Mary gave birth and wrapped her firstborn Son in cloth and laid Him in a feeding trough or manger.

At the same time, shepherds were nearby watching over their flocks of sheep during the night. Suddenly, an angel appeared. The glory of the Lord shone around them and the shepherds were terrified. The angel said, “Don’t be afraid. I have good news for you that will bring people great joy. Today in the city of David, a Savior, Messiah the Lord, was born for you! As a sign to you, you will find the baby wrapped snugly in cloth and lying in a feeding trough.”

Then a multitude of heavenly host appeared with the angel and they praised God, saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace on earth to the people He favors!”

The angels left and the shepherds said, “Let’s hurry to Bethlehem. We need to see what the Lord has told us.”

The shepherds hurried and they found Mary, Joseph, and the baby lying in the feeding trough.

After seeing them, the shepherds reported the entire message they were told about the baby. Everyone who heard it was amazed at what the shepherds said. Mary treasured the things she heard in her heart and she thought deeply about them. The shepherds returned to their fields, praising God for everything they had seen and heard.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Luke gives a detailed description of the life of Jesus. Jesus was described as the Son of Man who came to save all people—Jews and Gentiles. Because Jesus was fully human, He was tempted and suffered like we do. Luke showed that Jesus cares for people and can understand when we face hard times.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

God sent Jesus to earth to rescue people from their sin.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO LUKE

CORE PASSAGE:

Luke 1:26-38

- Jesus fulfilled the promises made by the prophets.
- Jesus came to redeem people from sin.
- Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Special Delivery: cups, table tennis balls, tape

PREPARATION:

- Create a tape line on each side of the room.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

- Divide the group into teams of three or four. Each team should include a sender, a catcher, and two guides. (*The sender can double as a guide on a team of three.*) Each sender should be given a table tennis ball. Each catcher should be given a cup. Any girls in skirts or physically limited kids might be best assigned as senders or catchers.
- Arrange the largest area possible to allow for a great deal of movement. Place all of the senders behind a line on one side of the area with all of the catchers behind a line on the opposite side.
- Explain that the goal of the game is for the sender to roll the ball into the catcher's cup. Emphasize that neither the sender nor the catcher may cross the line and move toward the other.
- Allow the guides to follow the ball on its course toward the cup and guide it in any way they can, but they cannot touch the ball with their body or any object. (*Most likely, they will blow on the ball.*)
- The catcher may move the cup to receive the ball, as long as he does not bring the cup across the line.
- Allow all of the teams to start at a signal. Recognize the first, second, and third teams to finish.
- Repeat the game as time and interest allow.
- Ask the kids what made this process difficult. Point out that you could have made it even more difficult with obstacles or more restrictive rules.
- Emphasize that when God promises to deliver something that promise will always be kept. Explain that today's lesson shows that God did not just decide one day to send Jesus, but instead planned for it and promised it over hundreds of years.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Welcome the kids to group time. Explain that this week you will be interrupting the lessons from Joshua to look at the Christmas story. Ask which testament the lesson today must be from if it contains the story of Jesus' birth. (*New Testament*)
- Ask if anyone can name the four gospels. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*) Point out that while all four of those books provide a biography of Jesus, not all of them contain every event. Explain that only two, Matthew and Luke, go into any detail about the Christmas story.
- Invite the boys and girls to open their Bibles to Luke 2. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Luke 2:4-7. Point out that Joseph and Mary had traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem.
- Distribute the Family Cards, drawing attention to the photo of Bethlehem. Point out that Bethlehem, in the days of Jesus, was a fairly small town just a few miles from Jerusalem. Allow someone to point out Bethlehem on the "Tribal Allotment Map," showing it in relation to Jerusalem and to Jericho.
- Ask: "Does it really matter that Jesus was born in Bethlehem? Couldn't He have been just as great if He had been born somewhere else?" Explain that while Jesus could have been born somewhere else, there is a good reason why He had to be born in Bethlehem, as we will discover soon.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Point out that the Christmas story does not begin in Bethlehem, but in Nazareth when an angel announced that the Messiah would be born. Ask the kids to locate Luke 1:26-29. Read it aloud.
- Form two groups. Direct the groups to read Luke 1:30-38 together and to gather information about two Bible people. Ask the first group to explain what they learn in these verses about Mary, while the other group should explain what they learn about Jesus.
- Allow the groups to share their findings with each other.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Direct the girls and boys to turn in their Bibles to Luke 2. Assign one group to think as if they were Mary, the second group to consider the thoughts of Joseph, and the third group to attempt to think like the shepherds.
- Read Luke 2:1-3, then ask someone from the second group to read Luke 2:4-5. Ask each of the three groups what their people (*Joseph, Mary, and Shepherds*) thought about this. Point out that in some cases, a group will have no opinion, such as the shepherds in this case. Ask someone from the first group to read Luke 2:6-7 and allow the groups to share their thoughts again.
- Continue this process for Luke 2:8-12, Luke 2:13-15, and Luke 2:16-20.

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards, "Tribal Allotment Map" (Poster Pack)
- Examine the Text: Bibles
- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Luke" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Luke 1:32-33" (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

- Note that all of the groups involved were amazed, confused, or frightened at various points in this story. Suggest that the only ones who did not feel this way were the angels. Allow the kids to reflect on why this might be.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and “Connection Statement” near the “Luke” poster. Invite a volunteer to read the Text Truth aloud: **Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God through the prophets.**

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 4” video.
- Allow the kids to share anything they learned about Jesus, His birth, or God’s promise of Him from the video.

MEMORY VERSE

- Arrange the girls and boys into two lines facing each other. Position yourself with the “Luke 1:32-33” poster so that everyone can see it. Ask the group to repeat the verse together several times.
- Direct the line to your right to read the first half of verse 32 (*up to the word “high” or “highest”*) with the line to your left completing the verse. Then ask the line to the right to read the first half of verse 33 (*to “forever”*) with the left line finishing it. Ask everyone to repeat the Scripture reference.
- After allowing them to read in this manner a couple of times, reverse the assignments and continue.
- Emphasize that when these verses speak of “He,” they refer to Jesus.

PRAYER

- Lead the group in a prayer, thanking God for the Christmas season and for the reason for our joy in this time: Jesus. Ask that God will bless every home represented in the group in the coming week.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Instruct the kids to open their Explorer Guides to the “Christmas” page.
- Direct the group to open their Bibles to Luke 1:26-38, reviewing that passage with the Luke 2 account in mind. Challenge kids to complete “Fill It In.” Encourage kids to use their Bibles to locate answers they do not know. Guide kids to “Finish the Picture.”
- Review today’s object, “Bethlehem Today.”
- Invite volunteers to read aloud “Who Was Augustus?” and “What Is a Census?”
- Help boys and girls locate the “Word to Know” in their own Bibles.

PRAYER TIME

- Invite the kids to mention prayer requests.
- Voice a prayer for each of the kids by name, asking God to bless them with the true importance of Jesus’ birth in the next week.
- Close the prayer time by asking God to bless each home in its Christmas observance.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.

WHO’S WHERE

Tools: “Who’s Where Signs” (enhanced CD), name tags, marker

- Place the “Who’s Where Signs” around the area. Prepare name tags for Joseph, Mary, Jesus, angels and shepherds. Depending on the size of your group you could add name tags for Caesar Augustus and Quirinius.

- Ask the kids to imagine a typical nativity scene. Point out that these scenes will show everybody in the same place at the same time. Remind them, from today’s story, that the Christmas story involves a good deal of movement for the people involved.
- Distribute name tags. Read Luke 2:1-3. Ask where each of the people would have likely been at this time and direct them to go to that sign. Continue by reading Luke 2:4-7. Invite the people to move to the appropriate sign. Read Luke 2:8-9. Allow the angels to head to the shepherd sign. Continue reading Luke 2:8-15 and allow people to move.
- Conclude the reading with Luke 2:16-20. Make note of where everyone finishes the story.
- Review the Text Truth: **Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God through the prophets.**



BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENT



Tools: blank cards, various craft supplies

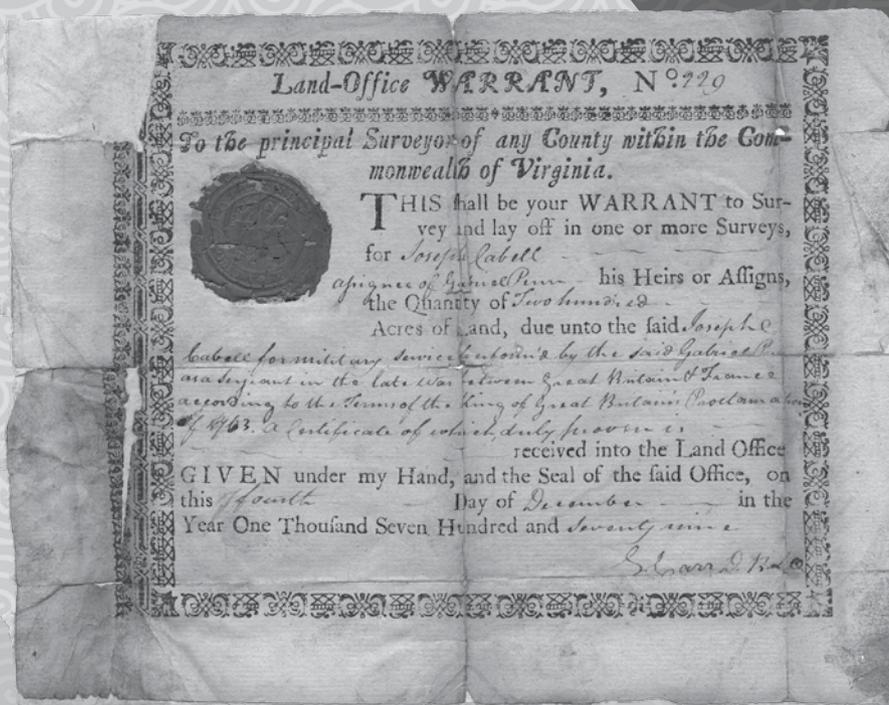
- Point out that most people, when they have a baby in their family, believe their baby is the cutest, most wonderful baby on earth.
- Ask the group to consider some of the things people do when a baby is about to be born and after it is born. What do the baby's parents do to get ready? What does the rest of the family do? What do friends and neighbors do? Allow the kids to discuss their own experiences with new arrivals.
- Invite the kids to consider what they might have brought to a baby shower for Jesus.
- Explain that sometimes people will send out a birth announcement—cards with the details of the new baby to family and friends. Point out some of the things people might want to know about a new baby when it is born.
- Distribute the blank cards and invite the kids to create a birth announcement for Jesus. Emphasize that since Jesus was a baby, they will want to include the sort of details that would be common on any birth announcement. Add that because Jesus is also God, this fact should be reflected on the card.
- Suggest that the kids look over Luke 1:32-33 and 2:10-14 to understand what made this baby different from any others born in Bethlehem at that time. Remind the kids that Christmas is a time to focus on the arrival of the most special baby, God's Savior.
- Review the Text Truth: **Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God through the prophets.**

CHRISTMAS PLACES



Tools: "Map" from Session 1 Examine activity, printed maps, Bible atlas, notecards, marker, tape, "Review Questions" (enhanced CD)

- Ask the kids to briefly share any Christmas plans they have for the upcoming days (*or in the previous days*). Will they be going somewhere? Did anyone travel to share the season with them?
- Remind the kids of the object for this week, the photograph of Bethlehem. Ask them to name any other places that were mentioned in today's story. Ask them to use the notecards to create map labels for Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Nazareth.
- Use the map created in the Session 1 Examine activity or another map showing the Jordan River, Jericho, and other Joshua-related sites.
- Point out that the birth of Jesus happened over a thousand years after the events in the life of Joshua that have provided the previous three lessons, but that this birth took place in the same region of the world.
- Invite the kids to use the printed maps to place the map labels in their appropriate spots. Demonstrate that all of these events took place within just a few miles of each other. Emphasize that all of the events that took place during the lifetime of Joshua were part of God's plan to eventually bring Jesus into the world. Point out that even from before Joshua's time, God had promised to send Jesus as a Messiah and Savior.
- Invite kids to form two teams and use the "Review Questions" to play a review game. Keep the competition light and encourage kids to work together to answer the questions.
- Review the Text Truth: **Jesus is the Savior and Messiah, born in Bethlehem, as promised by God through the prophets.**



Session 5



TRIBES RECEIVE THEIR LAND

Joshua 22:1-8

Joshua 21:43-45 completes the section of the Book of Joshua that describes Israel's conquest and allotment of the land. It points to the Lord as the ultimate reason for Israel's conquest. God gave His people the land He had sworn to their ancestors centuries earlier (*Gen. 12:7; 26:3-4; 28:13*). God was the power behind the Israelites' victories and the reason none of the Israelites' enemies were able to stand against Joshua. Most of all, not a single promise God had made His people failed; "everything was fulfilled" (*Josh. 21:45*). God had worked His purpose with perfect faithfulness, just as He does in our lives today.

The Lord commanded Joshua to apportion the land of Canaan (*Josh. 13:1-7*). As the allotment of Canaan began, Caleb, who along with Joshua was a faithful spy when Israel spied out the land, requested the hill country of Hebron. Caleb received the portion and subdued the area.

Joshua 22:1-34 tells us Joshua dismissed the Reubenites, Gadites, and the half-tribe of Manasseh to claim their eastern inheritance. As they journeyed home, however, these tribes built an altar along the Jordan, an action the other tribes viewed with concern. A delegation set out to determine if the eastern tribes had built the altar in violation of the Law of Moses. Fortunately, the eastern tribes replied that they had only built it for memorial purposes as a reminder of their common faith with their relatives in Canaan. The western delegation returned home and shared the good news with their respective tribes.

Typically when we are young, God calls us to smaller tasks than He does when we are older and more mature in our faith. Nonetheless, whether the task is large or small, God expects faithful obedience to His commands and pursuit of His purposes for our lives. When we are faithful in God's tasks, we can trust Him and know that He will always keep all the promises He has made.

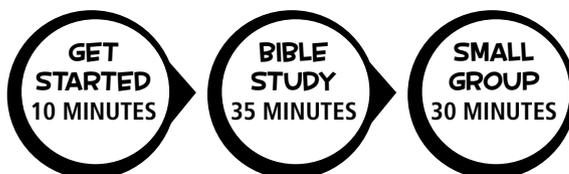
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Joshua 22:1-8

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 14:6-15

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Joshua 22:5

TEXT TRUTH: God always keeps His promises in His perfect time.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- All Sorts: “All Sorts Corner Signs” and “All Sorts Topics” (enhanced CD)

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: *Bibles, Family Cards*
- Examine the Text: *Bibles, “Tribes Slips” (enhanced CD)*

- The Bible Story: *Bibles, “Tribes Slips” (enhanced CD), blue paper, tape, “Text Truth Strips” and “Connection Statements” (Poster Pack), “Joshua” (Books of the Bible Posters)*
- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse: *“Joshua 22:5” (Poster Pack), index cards, marker*
- Prayer: *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move: *“Promises Statements” (enhanced CD), sticky notes, marker*
- Make: *paper, pens, “Land Grant” (DVD-ROM)*
- Examine: *home magazines, paper, pens*

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CALEB'S INHERITANCE

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 14:6-15

When Caleb was 40 years old, Moses sent Joshua, Caleb, and 10 other men to spy in the promised land. They came back and gave a report about all they had seen. The 10 men told the Israelites that they would be defeated if they entered the promised land. Joshua and Caleb tried to explain that God would be with the people. If the people obeyed God, God would give them the land and help them defeat their enemies.

Sadly, the people did not listen to Caleb and Joshua. As a consequence of their sin, the people wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. All of the people who disobeyed God would die during the 40 years and never be able to enter the promised land. But God made a special promise to Joshua and Caleb. They would live and they would be allowed to enter the promised land one day. That day had finally come.

The Israelites, led by Joshua, had entered the promised land and fought many battles. God helped them conquer the land, and now was the time for the people to learn which part of the land they should live in.

Joshua called all of the people together and began to tell them where their families could go and build homes. When it was Caleb's turn to hear his part of the inheritance from God, Caleb reminded Joshua of the special promise God had made.

Caleb said, "The other spies caused the people to be afraid. I remained loyal to God. Moses told me that I would have an inheritance because I was loyal to God."

Caleb continued his story, "God has kept me alive the last 45 years. I am 85 years old, but I am as strong today as I was when Moses sent me to spy on the land."

Caleb asked Joshua to give him the hill country God had promised him. And Caleb promised to trust God to help him defeat any enemies in the land.

Joshua blessed Caleb and gave him the land called Hebron as his inheritance. Caleb was rewarded for his faithful obedience to God.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Joshua is a reminder of God's divine provision for His people. God, as a part of His covenant relationship with the Israelites, chose Joshua to lead the people to enter the promised land and a time of rest. Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, and an everlasting rest.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

Caleb's faithful obedience to God was rewarded.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO JOSHUA

CORE PASSAGE:

Joshua 22:1-8

- God rewarded Caleb.
- Caleb did what was right, even when everyone else did not.
- God always keeps His promises.
- Caleb was faithful to God.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- All Sorts: “All Sorts Corner Signs” and “All Sorts Topics” (enhanced CD)

ALL SORTS

- Place four “All Sorts Corner Signs” in different areas of the room.
- Instruct all the kids to assemble in the middle of the room. Explain that you will be reading a series of experiences. Direct the kids to react to each of these experiences by moving to the corner that best describes their reaction to that experience. Point out the four signs.
- Perform an example round. Say, “If I said, ‘Have you ever . . . flown in an airplane?’ which sign would best describe you?” Allow the kids to move to their corners. If anyone seems to give a surprising response, ask them to share briefly.
- Read through a series of experiences. You can use the list provided on the enhanced CD or create your own, based on the experiences and interests of your group and your area. For example, you might ask if they have ever been to a sporting event for a particular nearby school or for a great rival.
- As the kids move in response to each experience, take a moment to allow volunteers to share particularly interesting examples of this experience. Direct the kids to move back to the center of the room after each round.
- Point out that in all of these cases, everyone had a place to go. Explain that today’s story shares how God provided a place for each of the tribes of Israel to call home.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Welcome the kids to group time, seating them in four separate but close areas. Ask if anyone remembers what book of the Bible was being studied before the Christmas lesson the previous week. (*Joshua*) Remind them that in Joshua, the people of Israel are moving into and conquering the land that God had promised to give them. Explain that this week, rather than battles, they will be seeing how the people received their inheritance.
- Ask in which division the Book of Joshua is. (*History*) Point out that this book describes the early years of Israel's history as they moved in to the land that God had promised them years earlier.
- Direct the kids to open their Bibles to Joshua 22. Ask someone to read Joshua 22:1-4. Explain that the three tribes mentioned here had taken land on the east side of the Jordan River, but had been required to help the other tribes conquer their land on the west side.
- Distribute the Family Cards, drawing attention to the land grant pictured there. Point out that this land grant was from the earliest days of the United States. The recipient was given land to farm and develop because of his service in the American Revolution.
- Help the kids to recognize that Joshua, on God's behalf, granted land to the tribes of Israel as a reward for their faithfulness in the previous years, but the people of Israel had an obligation: to continue to obey God.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Distribute the "Tribes Slips." Direct the kids to return to Joshua 22 in their Bibles and read the three tribe names in the first verse. Ask if anyone knows who these people were. Ask a volunteer to read 1 Chronicles 2:1-2 to learn the names of twelve sons of Israel or Jacob. Ask the kids to note which two names in that list did not have a slip (*Levi and Joseph*) and which two slips were not on the list (*Manasseh and Ephraim*). Explain that God had promised, through Moses, to give each of the tribes part of the promised land.
- Allow someone to read Joshua 18:7 to discover why the Levites were left out. Ask someone to share Genesis 48:1 to discover why Joseph seems to have been left out.
- Explain that the Levites lived in the cities throughout the land so they could lead God's people to know and worship God. Joseph's two sons—Ephraim and Manasseh—were "adopted" by Joseph's father, Jacob. Joseph's inheritance was split into two tribes named after his two sons.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Attach a strip of blue paper to the wall to represent the Jordan River. Ask the girls and boys to read off the names of the tribes on the strips. Allow them to identify the three tribes mentioned in Joshua 22. Attach the

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- Examine the Text: Bibles, "Tribes Slips" (enhanced CD)
- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Tribes Slips" (enhanced CD), blue paper, tape, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Joshua 22:5" (Poster Pack), index cards, marker
- Prayer: none

PREPARATION

- Print *l, w, k, r, s*, on individual index cards.

OPTIONS:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide. Invite kids to examine the "Tribe Allotment Map" (*Poster Pack*) to see the land area given to each tribe.

Gad and Reuben strips to the wall, to the right (*east*) of a line, indicating the Jordan River. Point out that only half of the tribe of Manasseh took land on the east of the river. Cut the Manasseh strip in half and attach it to the wall.

- Guide the rest of the group to attach their strips to the left (*west*) of the Jordan River. Point out that the three tribes mentioned in Joshua 22 had asked Moses, years earlier, to take their inheritance to the east. Moses agreed, but insisted that those tribes should help the others conquer the rest of the land. Point out that God kept all of His promises just as those three tribes kept their promises.
- Ask the group to turn back a few pages to Joshua 14. Briefly relate the specifics of how Caleb received his inheritance after waiting 45 years for the promise to be fulfilled.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and “Connection Statement” by the “Joshua” poster. Invite boys and girls to read the Text Truth with you: **God always keeps His promises in His perfect time.**

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 5” video.
- Ask: “What did Kaileigh learn about how the settlers claimed land and lived? Who claimed land in our Bible story today? Why did Caleb receive land?”

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the “Joshua 22:5” poster. Prepare the poster by underlining the verbs (*love, walk, keep, remain, serve*). Ask the group to repeat the verse, counting the verbs as they proceed.
- Set the poster aside and remind the kids of the five verbs. Display index cards with the initial letters of those verbs (*l, w, k, r, s*). Display the first card and ask what verb it represents. (*love*) Continue through the other cards.
- Challenge the group to repeat the verse using the cards as a memory aid, reciting each phrase as the corresponding letter is displayed.
- Explain that this verse is a tremendous guide for life, but also a difficult one to live up to.

PRAYER

- Lead the kids in a prayer that asks God to assist them in performing the tasks from Joshua 22:5. Briefly pray through each of the five verbs or tasks contained there, attempting to explain that task in a way the group will understand.

TIP:
Adjust the activity to fit your translation.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Instruct the kids to open their Explorer Guides to the “Tribes Receive Their Land” page.
- Ask the group to locate Joshua 22:1-8 in their Bibles and review the story. Help kids complete “The Twelve Tribes” to review the names of the tribes. Direct boys and girls to examine the map outlining the land each tribe received.
- Help girls and boys locate today’s “Word to Know” in their Bibles.
- Invite a child to read about today’s object, the land grant. Direct kids to the picture of Hebron to see what the land Caleb requested looks like today.
- Ask kids to quietly complete “Think About It.”

PRAYER TIME

- Ask the kids to mention some prayer requests.
- Lead the kids in a prayer. Conclude the prayer time by emphasizing that God always keeps His promises. Ask God to help each person in the group to trust that God’s promises are true.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.

STANDING ON THE PROMISES

Tools: “Promises Statements” (enhanced CD), sticky notes, marker

- Arrange a row of chairs numbering several more than there are kids in the group. Place a sticky note on each chair with a number, starting with number one on the left and continuing sequentially. Direct the kids to seats. Leave the two lowest numbered seats empty and other empty chairs randomly in the middle. If possible, direct the more Bible-savvy kids toward the higher-numbered seats.

- Ask the kids how they feel when someone makes a promise but then does not keep the promise. Invite them to share a situation when they made a promise that they could not or would not keep.
- Invite them to remember the promise that was important in today’s lesson.
- Explain that you will be reading a series of statements. Instruct them to stand up if they believe this to be a promise that God made in the Bible, and to remain seated if they believe this not to be a promise God made.
- After reading a statement, note which kids are standing, indicating that they believe this to be a promise from God. Those who answer correctly should move to the next lower-numbered seat. Those who answer incorrectly should move to the next higher-numbered seat. If there is not anywhere to move, they should remain in place.
- Conclude by emphasizing that **God always keeps His promises in His perfect time.**



THE LAND GRANT



Tools: paper, pens, "Land Grant" (DVD-ROM)

- Ask the kids to recall the object for today's lesson. Invite them to study the image of the land grant. Point out that this document was a legal agreement giving land from one person to another.
- Suggest that in order to create a land grant, there have to be several things true. Allow the kids to suggest things that need to be true for anything to be given or granted from one person to another. If they do not suggest these two important facts, give examples to illustrate them, such as: "Why can't I give you the church building? I don't own it. It's not mine to give." "Why can't I give you my brain? I do own it, but it is not something that I can give away." Emphasize that once given, something remains given. "Why can't I get back what I gave you for Christmas? I gave it away, so I have no right to it anymore."
- Remind them that the land grant was given as a reward for services that were rendered during a war. Point out that some gifts are a repayment of some sort, but God's gifts are typically just given out of love.
- Invite the kids to create documents granting something that they own and could give away to God. Emphasize that they should think carefully about this matter since this must be a gift that could not be revoked.
- Remind the kids that the land grant was signed by the giver. Suggest that they think carefully before signing the grant they have created. Remind them that even though we can be very bad about keeping promises to God, **God always keeps His promises in His perfect time.**

THE DREAM HOME



Tools: home magazines, paper, pens

- Invite the group to think a bit about what their dream home would look like. Allow them to draw out or list the items that would make their dream home truly amazing. Go around the group and allow each of the kids to suggest three things that they need to have in their dream home.
- After they have suggested the sort of things that you would expect them to mention, ask a few questions that they will be unlikely to consider. What sort of neighbors will this house have? Will there be people next door who want to hurt you? Will there be a lot of work to do before you can move into your house or will it be ready to go? Do you want to wait a long time before you get your dream home or do you want it soon?
- Ask a volunteer to read Joshua 14:6-15. Direct the rest of the group to make notes about Caleb receiving his dream home. Ask how many of the things that were important in the group's plans were even mentioned in what Caleb said.
- Point out that Caleb was ready to take a home that would require him to drive out enemies and do a great deal of work, after he had waited 45 years to receive it.
- Emphasize that God always keeps His promises, but He does not promise us all of the luxuries that we sometimes believe we deserve. Review the Text Truth: **God always keeps His promises in His perfect time.**



Session

6



THE COVENANT RENEWED

Joshua 24:14-28

Joshua assembled all the tribes of Israel to Shechem and reviewed Israel's history for them beginning in Joshua 24:1. Their ancestors had lived in a different land and worshiped other gods. However, God in His grace had brought Abraham to Canaan and blessed him with Isaac. Jacob's family was in Egypt, but under the leadership of Moses and Aaron, God brought the people out of Egypt and rescued them from the Egyptian army.

Joshua goes on to describe God's faithfulness to His people in the wilderness. When the people crossed the Jordan, God provided victory at every turn. He gave the Israelites a land for which they had not labored, and He gave it to them totally by grace.

Joshua encouraged the people to serve the Lord faithfully, and told them that he and his house would serve the Lord. When the people responded that they also would serve God, Joshua warned them of the serious nature of their commitment. The people heeded Joshua's words, and Joshua established a covenant with them at Shechem that day.

Joshua died at the age of 110 and was buried. Joshua had served Israel well, and left a lasting legacy. The text also records the burial of Joseph's bones, which the Israelites had brought up from Egypt, and the burial of Eleazar, son of Aaron.

Believers today need to hold one another accountable for remaining faithful to God. Our faithfulness to God grows through reflection, evaluation, and renewed commitment. As we consider what God has done in our lives, may we find the grace we need to confirm our commitment to Him for the present and the future.

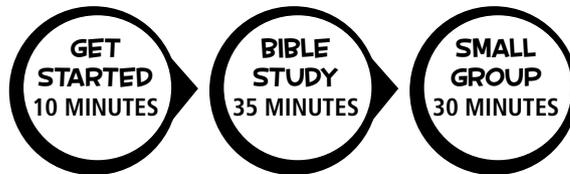
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Joshua 24:14-28

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 24:1-28

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Joshua 24:15

TEXT TRUTH: We should be completely devoted to God.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- Whose Point Is It Anyway?: seven plastic cups, scrap paper, tape

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- Examine the Text: Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase markers

- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Joshua" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Joshua 24:15" (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens
- Move: synthetic rope, bandana, tape
- Make: heavyweight paper, pens, drawing supplies
- Examine: Bibles, concordances, "Fact Checking Joshua" (enhanced CD)

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

ISRAEL'S HISTORY

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Joshua 24:1-28

Joshua's time of leading the Israelites was coming to an end. Joshua called all of the people together. He needed to teach them one more time about loving and obeying God. Joshua had a message from God for the people.

Joshua began to remind the people of all of the things God had done for them. "Long ago, God chose Abraham and led him to the land of Canaan. God gave Abraham children and grandchildren. Jacob and his sons later traveled to Egypt."

Eventually the people had become slaves. So God sent Moses and Aaron to rescue His people. God sent plagues on Egypt until Pharaoh agreed to let the people go. Then God parted the Red Sea so the people could walk across on dry land. God protected the people from Pharaoh's army. The Israelites lived in the wilderness for many, many years.

Joshua continued the story, "Later, God brought you to the promised land. The Amorites fought you, but God helped you defeat them. A man named Balaam tried to curse you. But God protected you and Balaam blessed you instead. When you crossed the Jordan River, you came to Jericho."

Now Jericho had been a large city with a huge wall around it. Joshua shared God's message, "The people of Jericho and many other peoples fought against you, but God helped you defeat them."

God told the people, "I gave you a land that you did not work to get. I gave you cities that you did not build. You are eating from plants that you did not plant. Therefore, worship only the Lord."

God told the people to get rid of any idols and worship only Him—the one true God.

Then Joshua said, "Choose today whom you will worship. Will you worship the false gods? My house will worship the Lord."

The people all agreed to worship only God. "We will worship the Lord, because He is our God."

Joshua warned the people that God was a holy God. God is a jealous God. He cannot allow His people to worship anything other than Him.

The people again agreed to worship only God. The people made a covenant with God and Joshua wrote it down. He also set up a large stone under an oak tree next to the tabernacle to remind the people of their promise.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Joshua is a reminder of God's divine provision for His people. God, as a part of His covenant relationship with the Israelites, chose Joshua to lead the people to enter the promised land and a time of rest. Through Jesus, God has established a new covenant of grace and forgiveness of sin through faith. Jesus will one day lead His people into their inheritance, an eternity with God, and an everlasting rest.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

Joshua told the people they must choose to love and worship God alone.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO JOSHUA

CORE PASSAGE:

Joshua 24:14-28

- Israel needed to be reminded of all God had done for them.
- We have to choose each day who we will worship and obey.
- God is holy.
- God is a jealous God. He is the one true God and requires that people worship only Him.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Whose Point Is It Anyway?: seven plastic cups, scrap paper, tape

PREPARATION:

- Create a tape line on the floor.

WHOSE POINT IS IT ANYWAY?

- Place a group of seven plastic cups on the floor a few feet from a line. The cups should be arranged so that there is a central one surrounded by six others. All of the surrounding cups should be touching the central one.
- Divide the group into two teams. Give each member of each team a piece of scrap paper. Instruct the kids to wad the paper into a tight ball.
- Explain that each team can toss their paper wads into the group of cups to score points. Explain that any wad going into the central cup will score five points for the team, but a wad that goes into one of the surrounding cups will score ten points for the other team.
- Allow each team to take a practice round to see how difficult the task is. Do not keep score in this round, but allow them to keep score themselves if they choose.
- Point out that each team can choose to toss none, some, or all of their paper wads in the actual game. Say: “Remember, the goal of this game is to score as many points as possible.”
- Play the game, allowing each team to throw (*or not throw*) their paper wads. Alternate players from one team to the other. Keep score as you progress.
- When everyone has participated (*or passed*), remind them that the goal of the game was to score as many points as possible. Explain that you did not say that their goal was simply to score points for their team but “as many points as possible.” Add the two teams’ scores together.
- Ask: “If you did not participate, could that number have been higher?”
- Explain that in today’s lesson, we see that when we live our lives on behalf of God, we not only win for Him but for ourselves as well.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Greet the kids as they come to group time. Remind the group that for the last several weeks, the lessons have come from the Book of Joshua. Ask them what the tribes of Israel received in last week's lesson. (*land*) Point out that with the conquest mostly completed, the time had come for the twelve tribes to settle down to the job of living in their new home.
- Point out that Joshua had been serving as leader for roughly twenty to thirty years and had been an assistant to Moses through the forty years spent in the wilderness. We learn in Joshua 24 that Joshua died at the age of 110.
- Direct the boys and girls to open their Bibles to Joshua 24. Point out that just before he died, Joshua wanted one last opportunity to speak with the people he had led. Ask someone to read Joshua 24:1.
- Distribute the Family Cards. Explain that some people believe this stone could be the stone that Joshua placed under the tree at the end of today's Bible story. Emphasize that Joshua did not want all of his hard work in serving God and His people to be washed away after his death.
- Point out that Joshua spent his entire life, up until the very end apparently, serving God. Suggest that we should be just as devoted to God starting today and continuing until the end of our lives.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Ask the kids to open their Bibles to Joshua 24:14-15. Point out that Joshua is speaking to the entire nation toward the end of his life. Direct the group to listen as you read these verses, standing up when they hear a verb—something that Joshua is telling the Israelites to do.
- Write all of the verbs on the board. (*Notice that there are verbs in these verses that are not instructions to Israel.*) Ask the kids to explain what each of these verbs (*examples: fear, worship, get rid, and choose*) tell the Israelites to do.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Ask the kids to imagine that they are Joshua. At the age of 110, they will have served Moses for 40 years and led the nation for thirty or so years by themselves. Impress upon them that after all those years of service, they would want one last chance to speak to the people to make sure all of that work was not in vain. Suggest that Joshua 24 represents just such a last chance.
- Allow the group to scan Joshua 24:1-5, making note of familiar names they see. Ask the kids to share the names noted there. Point out that in this passage, Joshua is reviewing the history of his people. Note that in Joshua 24:8-13, he reviews the more recent history—events that most of the people listening would remember.
- Remind the kids of the passage they just studied, Joshua 24:14-15.

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- Examine the Text: Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase markers
- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Joshua" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Joshua 24:15" (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

Explain that Joshua is saying, “Since God has done all these good things for you, you should do this.”

- Ask the girls and boys to read Joshua 24:16 aloud together to discover the people’s response.
- Briefly summarize the remainder of the chapter as Joshua warns the people of the bad things that will happen if they fail to follow his instructions and instead worship other gods.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and “Connection Statement” near the “Joshua” poster. Invite a child to read aloud the Text Truth: **We should be completely devoted to God.**

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 6” video.
- Discuss: “Name one thing that happened to Joel when he was distracted by playing video games.” (*Pause for responses.*) “What are some things that distract us? How can these things distract us from God?” Give the kids a moment to discuss their thoughts freely.

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the “Joshua 24:15” poster. Ask the kids to recite the verse in the most unemotional manner they can. Point out that when Joshua said these words, he was anything but unemotional.
- Ask for a volunteer to play Joshua and deliver this line in the way they think he might have said it, with the rest of the group playing the people of Israel. Each time a “Joshua” recites the line, direct the complete group to repeat it. Continue, allowing others to play Joshua as time or volunteers allow.
- Remind the kids that we always have a choice of who to worship, and that we will always worship someone or something.

PRAYER

- Lead in a prayer, recognizing the sort of false gods that the kids in your group might face: possessions, popularity, selfishness, and so on. Ask God to help them to see that He is real and the only One worthy of our worship.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Instruct the kids to open their Explorer Guides to the “Covenant Renewed” page.
- Ask the group to locate Joshua 24:14-28 in their Bibles and review what Joshua said to the nation in that passage. Emphasize the role of total devotion to God. Help boys and girls review Israel’s history by using their Bibles to complete the “Timeline Matching.”
- Review today’s object, “The Standing Stone” and direct kids to examine the picture of Shechem’s ruins.
- Invite kids to locate the “Word to Know” in their Bibles. Then challenge them to complete “Write It and Remember” to help memorize today’s memory verse.

PRAYER TIME

- Allow the kids a few moments to write prayer needs on slips of paper.
- Draw out several of the prayer requests and ask someone to lift each of those needs up to God. Conclude the prayer time by emphasizing that God knows the unchosen prayer requests, and even ones that were not written down.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.

TUG OF DEVOTION

Tools: synthetic rope, bandana, tape

- Prepare the area by stretching the rope out straight. Tie the bandana to the center of the rope. Place lines of tape on the floor five feet on either side of the bandana.

- Ask the kids if any of them can repeat today’s verse, Joshua 24:15. Allow anyone willing to attempt it. Note that the people of Joshua’s time were pulled to worship various false gods other than the one true God.
- Invite the group to brainstorm some of the different forces that pull them away from having complete devotion to God. Start out this activity by volunteering something that sometimes draws your attention away from God. Ask them to share the various things that pull on their attention and draw them from God.
- Form two teams. Instruct them to line up along the rope, one team on one end, one team on the other. Guide them to engage in a tug-of-war contest. When one team pulls the bandana across the tape line, that team wins. The competition should remain friendly at all times.
- When one team wins, select one player from each and trade them. As these players are selected, ask one player to name something that keeps her from complete devotion to God. Ask the other player to name something he can do to be more totally devoted to God.
- Continue playing the game as time allows. Conclude by reminding the kids to resist the things that pull them away from complete devotion.



DEDICATION PLAQUE



Tools: heavyweight paper, pens, drawing supplies

- Ask the kids if they have ever seen a plaque on a building that recognizes the person to whom the building is dedicated. If possible, mention a local example where a building, a school, a room, or a park is dedicated to someone. Point out that these dedications do not mean that the person named is the only person who may use the place. For example, a baseball field named for someone will probably never be used by that someone.
- Point out that some things are dedicated for the benefit of a particular person or group and for a particular use. Name some familiar places that the kids would know. Ask them to whom these places should be dedicated and for what purposes. For example, their school should probably be dedicated to the students who attend there for the purpose of learning.
- Distribute the heavyweight paper. Invite the kids to create a dedication plaque for their bedroom or another room in their home. Point out that this home has been provided in order to allow them to live out their dedication to God. Suggest that while a bedroom is for the use of a particular person, it should be dedicated to the purposes of God. (*Examples: read the Bible, pray, memorize verses, love others, obey the Bible, and so on.*) Encourage them to create their dedication plaque to reflect the uses that would show complete devotion to God.
- Encourage the kids to take this plaque home and use it to remind themselves of the Text Truth: **We should be completely devoted to God.**

FACT CHECKING JOSHUA



Tools: Bibles, concordances, "Fact Checking Joshua" (enhanced CD)

- Ask the kids to briefly summarize anything they remember from the previous lessons drawn from Joshua's life. Point out that in today's lesson, Joshua is a very old man at 110. Remind them that Joshua has been through a great deal with his people and that he is now trying to ensure that they do not fall away from their devotion to God.
- Direct the kids to locate Joshua 24 in their Bibles. Distribute the "Fact Checking Joshua" items to pairs of kids. Ask them to read through Joshua 24:1-11 to ensure that their particular statements are actually there. Then ask them to confirm that these things are actually to be found elsewhere in the Bible. Assist the teams in confirming the statements using a concordance or other tools.
- Allow the teams to share their findings and confirm that, indeed, the words that God spoke through Joshua were true. Briefly discuss their findings.
- Review the Text Truth: **We should be completely devoted to God.**
- Remind the group that God's trustworthy nature is one of several reasons that we should be completely devoted to Him.



Session 7



GOD VALUES HUMANITY

Proverbs 24:10-12*; Mark 10:46-49

Today's session challenges us to be advocates on behalf of others who face great challenges. Believers must promote social justice, knowing that all people reflect God's image and that God values every person regardless of any limitation. As you study this session, prayerfully consider how you and your church might take action in one of these vital areas.

Mark 10 records that Jesus traveled to Judea, where crowds came to hear Him. The Pharisees tried to trap Jesus with a question about divorce, but Jesus affirmed God's design for lifelong marriage. Jesus also affirmed the value of children by taking them in His arms and blessing them. Jesus challenged a rich young ruler to give all he had to the poor and to come follow Jesus—a price the young man was unwilling to pay. Jesus warned it would be hard for rich people to inherit the kingdom of God. Jesus assured His disciples that God would bless their faithfulness, and also again predicted His death.

Jesus and His disciples arrived at Jericho, a city approximately 17 miles northeast of Jerusalem. Jericho was a town in the Jordan Valley near the place where travelers began their ascent to Jerusalem. As Jesus and His disciples journeyed through Jericho, Jesus met Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, who implored Jesus to have mercy on him. Perhaps many onlookers thought Bartimaeus had sinned, and that is why he was forced to sit by the road to beg for food or money from people who passed by. The crowd rebuked Bartimaeus, but Jesus called to the blind man and gave him sight.

Who do you know who needs a friend or an advocate? Does your circle of influence include people society has forgotten? How can you make a difference? While as believers, our highest priority should be to know Christ deeply and to make Him known (*Phil. 3:10; Matt. 28:18-20*), God's standards call us to do what we can to make our world a better place as well.

SESSION FOCUS

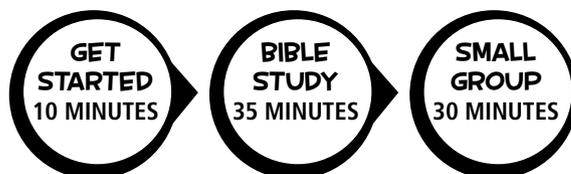
CORE PASSAGE: Proverbs 24:10-12*; Mark 10:46-49

CONNECTION PASSAGES: Mark 5:24-34; 8:22-26; 10:13-16,46-52

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Proverbs 24:10

ADDITIONAL MEMORY VERSE: Philippians 2:3

TEXT TRUTH: Jesus commanded His followers to value all lives.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- Guess Who: *none*

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: *Bibles, Family Cards*
- Examine the Text: *Bibles, "Bible Story Names" (enhanced CD)*
- The Bible Story: *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Mark" (Books of the Bible Posters)*

- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*

- Memory Verse: *"Philippians 2:3" (Poster Pack), whiteboard, dry-erase marker*
- Prayer: *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move: *none*
- Examine: *"Can't Stand That" (enhanced CD)*
- Make: *various craft supplies*

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

JESUS CARED FOR PEOPLE

CONNECTION PASSAGES: Mark 5:24-34; 8:22-26; 10:13-16,46-52

Jesus was not what the religious leaders thought He would be like. Jesus often took time and cared for people that other people ignored.

One day Jesus was walking through a crowd of people. A sick woman was there. She had been sick for 12 years. She had spent all of her money going to doctors, but instead of getting better, she was worse.

She had heard about Jesus. She walked up behind Jesus and touched His robe. She believed that if she did that, she would be healed. The second she touched Jesus' robe, she was healed!

Jesus knew that He had healed someone. He stopped and asked the crowd, "Who touched me?" The woman told Jesus the truth. Jesus said, "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace. You are healed."

Another time, Jesus and His disciples were in Bethsaida. A blind man was brought to Jesus. People begged Jesus to touch the man. Jesus took the man by the hand and led him out of the village. Jesus spit on the man's eyes and put His hands on him. He asked the man, "Do you see anything?" The man could see people, but they looked like trees that were walking. Again Jesus put His hands on the man's eyes. The man now saw clearly.

Later, when Jesus was teaching, people began to bring little children to Him. The disciples scolded the people for doing this. When Jesus heard the disciples, He was upset! He told them, "Let the children come to Me. Do not stop them." Jesus gathered the children in His arms and blessed them.

Jesus and His disciples were leaving Jericho one day with a large crowd. Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the road. When he heard that Jesus was coming, he began to cry out, "Son of David, Jesus have mercy on me!" Many of the people told Bartimaeus to keep quiet, but he cried out more, "Have mercy on me, Son of David!"

Jesus stopped and said, "Call him."

So they called Bartimaeus and said to him, "Have courage! Get up. Jesus is calling for you." Bartimaeus threw off his coat, jumped up, and came to Jesus.

Jesus said, "What do you want from Me?"

Bartimaeus answered, "Rabbi, I want to see!"

Jesus told him, "Go your way. Your faith has healed you." Immediately, Bartimaeus could see and began to follow Jesus.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Mark draws the reader into the life of Jesus. As Jesus performed miracles and taught His followers, we see that Jesus was clearly the Son of God and Son of Man. Because of His unique nature, Jesus lived a sinless life before dying on the cross to rescue His people from sin.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

Jesus loved people, even people that others ignored or disliked.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO MARK

CORE PASSAGE:

Proverbs 24:10-12*;

Mark 10:46-49

- Jesus healed, spent time with, and loved people—even people that others ignored or didn't care about.
- God loves and cares for people.
- We should love and care for people, too.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Guess Who: none

GUESS WHO

- Arrange the group in chairs. Ask for a volunteer who will play a guessing game. Remove the guesser from the room and then assign one of the remaining kids as the subject. Remind the rest of the group not to give any indication of who is the subject.
- Bring the guesser back into the room. Explain that the guesser will be given a certain number of questions in order to determine which of the kids is the subject. The number of questions should be half as many as the number of possible subjects. *(If you have a very large group, a smaller number of questions would be better. For example, with twenty participants, six or seven questions should provide a good challenge.)*
- Instruct all of the players to stand. Allow the guesser to ask a yes or no question. Answer the question, and allow the guesser to point to those players who have been eliminated. For example, if the question is “Is the subject a boy?” receives a “yes” answer, the guesser would have all the girls sit down.
- Continue until the guesser either runs out of questions or identifies the subject.
- Play again as time allows.
- Conclude the activity by asking everyone to stand. Ask: “Is the subject loved by God?” Look over the group and announce that since we are all loved by God, nobody should sit down.
- Say: “We will learn about some people who discovered God loved and cared for them. How do you know God loves and cares for you?” Allow kids to share their thoughts for a few minutes.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Welcome the kids to group time. Invite them to play a new game of Guess Who? Tell them that you are thinking of a Bible person. Tell them that this person was male, was completely devoted to God throughout His life, and encouraged people to follow God. Tell them that while this person might sound like Joshua, He is actually someone from the New Testament. Point out that the name *Jesus* is actually a form of the name *Joshua*. Ask someone to name the four books of the New Testament that tell of the life of Jesus. (*Matthew, Mark, Luke, John*)
- Distribute the Family Cards and point out the image of the kids. Point out that during His life Jesus showed His concern for all sorts of people, including kids. Explain that since they have finished their tour of the Book of Joshua, today's lesson will consider something different.
- Direct the kids to open their Bibles to Mark 10. Allow a volunteer to read aloud Mark 10:46-47. Point out that Bartimaeus believed that Jesus would care about somebody poor and blind, and could do something to help him.
- Emphasize that the stories from Mark in today's lesson will give a sampling of the care that Jesus has, not just for kids and blind beggars, but for everyone.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Ask the kids to explain what a pronoun is. Remind them that a pronoun is a word, like "he," "I," "you," or "it," that fills in for another word.
- Place the "Bible Story Names" on the wall.
- Ask the kids to locate Mark 10:46. Explain that you will read a brief story from Mark, pausing for each pronoun. Direct the kids to point to the name that is indicated by each pronoun. Explain that since Bible translations vary, the words, including the pronouns, may differ but that the meaning in all Bibles will be the same.
- Read through the story (*Mark 10:46-52*), clarifying each pronoun.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Ask the group to quickly name as many stories about Jesus as they can. After listening to their suggestions, agree that no one can name all of those stories from memory. Point out that in John's gospel we learn that all the books in the world would not hold the things Jesus did and said (*John 21:25*).
- Note that today's lesson will look at three accounts from Mark's gospel, all of which show that Jesus cared about people. Ask: "What did Jesus do in the passage we just read?" (*Heal a blind man.*) Allow the kids to explain how that healing shows that Jesus cares for all people.
- Form three teams. Assign the first team to read Mark 5:24-34, the second team to read Mark 8:22-26, and the third team Mark 10:13-16.

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- Examine the Text: Bibles, "Bible Story Names" (enhanced CD)
- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Mark" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Philippians 2:3" (Poster Pack), whiteboard, dry-erase marker
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

Direct the teams to answer these questions:

- ▶ What sort of person did Jesus demonstrate that He did care about that many people do not care about?
 - ▶ What did Jesus do for this person?
 - ▶ What can we learn about Jesus from this story?
 - ▶ What can we learn about the people around us?
- Allow the group to spend a moment reflecting on the list of previous stories. Ask: “What other sorts of people does Jesus show concern for?”
 - After kids share, introduce the “Text Truth Strip” and “Connection Statement” and attach them near the “Mark” poster. Review the Text Truth together: **Jesus commanded His followers to value all lives.**

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 7” video.
- Ask: “What are some of the ways Christians have shown that they care about others? What are some ways that Jesus showed He cared about others? How can you value other people?”
- Ask the kids to reflect on the video and its message about valuing all life. Give them a moment to share their thoughts.

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the “Philippians 2:3” poster. After the group has read the verse together, ask them to name any words here that are not entirely clear.
- Set aside the poster and write the verse on a whiteboard. Ask the kids to read the verse one time from there. Allow a volunteer to erase one word and lead the group in reciting it again. Continue erasing one word at a time and repeating the verse until the group is doing it from memory.
- Point out that putting other people first, and considering them more important than ourselves, is difficult for adults as well as kids. Invite the kids to share how they can practice the verse this week.

PRAYER

- Invite the kids to think of a person whom they struggle to respect or consider highly. Explain that you have such a person in mind as well. Lead the group in prayer, asking God to improve all of your abilities to live humble lives, considering others as more important, just as Jesus did.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Direct the kids to locate the “God Values Humanity” page in their Explorer Guides.
- Instruct them to open their Bibles to Mark 10:46-49, reviewing the story contained there. Help kids continue to review today’s Bible story by filling in the blanks in the “Loving Others Crossword.”
- Select a volunteer to read aloud of the symbol of First Aid. Ask another kid to read about “Hippocrates of Cos.”
- Invite kids to locate the “Word to Know” in the Bible and review how it is connected to today’s Bible story.
- Allow kids to take turns to reading about “Bible Times Children.” Remind kids of today’s Text Truth. Help kids apply today’s Text Truth by completing “Think and Pray.”

PRAYER TIME

- Guide the boys and girls in a time of silent prayer, requesting that they pray for the person they mentioned in “Think and Pray.”
- Close the prayer time by asking that God help everyone in the group to have a greater respect and concern for all other people.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

CROSSWORD ANSWERS:

- 1) Bartimaeus
- 2) Eyes
- 3) Trees
- 4) Children
- 5) Robe
- 6) Years
- 7) Scolded

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.

ALL TOGETHER

Tools: none

- Allow the kids to take a moment to reflect on what they learned about Jesus and His attitude toward people from today’s lesson.
- Direct the group to stand in the middle of the room. Say: “I want everyone under the age of 15 to stand over here, and everyone over that age to stand over there,” indicating opposite sides of the room. When you have gone to one side of the room, face the rest of the group on the other. Ask them what God would say about either group or both groups. Let them share ideas.
- Explain that you will now direct them to divide again using a different fact. Then allow them to share how God sees each group. This should be a positive activity. Remind kids that unkind or rude remarks are not allowed.
- Divide the group along these lines: boys/girls, certain ages, where they go to school, whether they like sports, whether they are musically talented, and so on. Avoid dividing lines that are apt to provoke an awkward situation. For each division, consider how people can recognize how God will value both sides of the group.
- Bring the group back to the center of the room and remind them that **Jesus commanded His followers to value all lives**. Assure them that Jesus loves them and you do too.



CAN'T STAND THAT



Tools: "Can't Stand That" (enhanced CD)

- Remind the group that in the stories from Mark that we shared in today's lesson, we learned that Jesus wants us to value all other people just like He did. **Jesus commanded His followers to value all lives.** Point out that it would probably be easier to value other people if we all saw things in exactly the same way. Ask the kids to consider some of the ways that people see things differently.
- Explain that you would like to explore the differences in this group a little bit. Tell them that you will be naming something and will ask them whether they love that, can't stand that, or don't really feel strongly one way or the other. Tell them to vote by giving a thumbs up to what they like, a thumbs down to what they dislike, and an outstretched hand to what they don't care about.
- Read through the items on the "Can't Stand That," pausing to allow the kids to vote on each one. Be ready to pause and drill down on any topics that seem complicated. For example, someone may like mushrooms on pizza but not in any other way. Some may like certain sci-fi movies, but not others. Feel free to add your own topics, selecting particular items that might be more topical to the group. Allow volunteers to suggest other categories.
- Conclude the activity by pointing out that no two people at the table voted in exactly the same way on every single item. Suggest that sometimes people let silly things divide them when God wants us to value each other, even when we don't want the same toppings on our pizza.

WHO I AM



Tools: various craft supplies

- Remind the group that Jesus values all people, as demonstrated in the stories from Mark in today's lesson. Point out that Jesus had a variety of people who followed Him and that today, Christians come in every shape and size and live on every continent.
- Ask the group to reflect on your church. Is everyone in the church exactly the same? Point out some of the ways that people differ.
- Suggest that God must have had a plan to create both the local church and the larger, universal church from such a wide range of people. Explain that you'd like to demonstrate your own individuality by completing the statement, "Jesus values me and I love _____" filling in the blank with one or more words.
- Give each participant a selection of the various craft supplies. Instruct them to use all of these things in order to express who they are. Give them several minutes to create their projects. Remind them that they must use all of the items given directly to them. Place other items, such as scissors, tape, glue, and so on in the center of the table.
- After allowing the kids to create their projects, give them a moment to explain what they have created. Point out that some of them did not like doing this project at all, but remind them that God created His people in various ways, and we should respect and value the crafty and the uncrafty alike.
- Review the Text Truth: **Jesus commanded His followers to value all lives.**



Session

8



THE CYCLE OF REBELLION

Judges 2:11-19

Following Joshua's death, the Israelites began a downward spiraling pattern of abandoning worship of Yahweh to participating in idol worship. The absence of strong spiritual leadership resulted in the decline of Israel's commitment to Yahweh's covenant. Joshua and the elders who outlived him had seen the Lord's great work wrought on Israel's behalf (*Judges 2:7-10a*). The succeeding generation, however, had not seen or experienced the work Yahweh had done on Israel's behalf, nor did they know the Lord (*2:10b*).

This week's session passage is part of the Prologue section of Judges. In this Prologue, the writer emphasized the positive impact of Joshua's faithful leadership upon the people of Israel as they settled into the promised land. The writer emphasized how the Lord left certain nations within the newly acquired land to test the Israelites (*Judg. 3:1-4*). The Prologue is important because it sets the stage for understanding the rebellion cycle into which Israel was drawn. Israel failed to fully take possession of the land or drive out its inhabitants. Thus, over time, the Israelites intermingled with the indigenous population, resulting in the assimilation of their lifestyles and idolatrous religions.

Because of Israel's apostasy, God removed His protection from the people, allowing them to suffer at the hands of others. God frustrated the Israelites' efforts to fight for themselves. Throughout their history, the people were reminded the Lord disciplines the one He loves in the same way a father disciplines the son in whom He delights (*Prov. 3:12*). God alone is worthy of worship. Believers who turn their back on God should prepare for His discipline. God provides relief from His discipline through repentance and a return to Him.

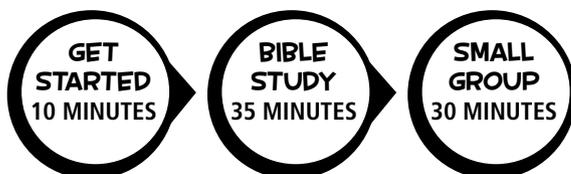
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Judges 2:11-19

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Judges 3:7-31

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Judges 2:18

TEXT TRUTH: The consequence of sin is that our world and our relationship with God are broken.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- Don't Break the Chain:
none

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: *Bibles, Family Cards*
- Examine the Text: *Bibles*
- The Bible Story: *"The Cycle Steps" and "Early Judge Questions" (enhanced CD), "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Judges" (Books of the Bible Posters), tape*

- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse: *"Judges 2:18" (Poster Pack)*
- Prayer: *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Examine: *bicycle, paper, markers, "Cycle Graphic" (DVD-ROM)*
- Explore: *Bibles, papers, pens*
- Move: *playground ball, plastic cups, paper, markers, tape*

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

OTHNIEL, EHUD, SHAMGAR

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Judges 3:7-31

The Israelites sinned. They forgot God. Instead of worshiping and loving God, they worshiped and loved false idols that their neighbors worshiped. God was upset. So He allowed the king of Aram to capture the Israelites. The Israelites served the king for 8 years.

The Israelites prayed to God and asked Him for help. They were sorry for their sin (and the trouble it caused them). God chose Othniel, the son of Caleb's youngest brother, to be a deliverer or judge. God helped Othniel defeat the king of Aram, and Israel had peace for 40 years.

Then, the Israelites sinned. They forgot God. They worshiped false idols. This time, God let the king of Moab have power over the Israelites. For 18 years, the people served Eglon, the king of Moab.

The Israelites prayed to God and asked for help. God chose Ehud, a left-handed man from the tribe of Benjamin to be the new deliverer or judge. Ehud made a plan. The Israelites had to send money to Eglon. Ehud hid a sword under his clothes and took the money to the king, Eglon. Ehud told Eglon that he had a secret message for him. The king made all of the other people leave the room. Then Ehud walked closer to Eglon. "I have a message from God for you." Eglon stood up and Ehud grabbed his hidden sword and killed Eglon. Ehud escaped and led the Israelites to defeat the Moabites in a battle. Israel had peace for 80 years.

Once again, Israel needed a deliverer. This time God chose a man named Shamgar to deliver the Israelites from the Philistines.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Judges highlights the consequences of sin and our need for a Savior. The judges were temporary deliverers rescuing the Israelites from their enemies. Jesus is the sinless deliverer, who through His death on the cross and resurrection, has defeated our enemy, Satan.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

The Israelites chose to sin and break their covenant with God.

DEFINITION:

- Judge/Deliverer: A military leader who helped deliver the people from an enemy. They would also help decide legal cases for the Israelites.

KEY CONNECTIONS TO JUDGES

CORE PASSAGE: Judges 2:11-19

- Over and over again, the Israelites sinned and asked God for help to rescue them from their enemies. Over and over again, God faithfully chose a deliverer to rescue His people, until one day when He sent Jesus to deliver us from our sin—once and for all.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Don't Break the Chain: none

DON'T BREAK THE CHAIN

- Perform this activity in the largest open area available. Assemble the group in the area.
- Explain that you would like to challenge them to form a human chain of everyone in the group. Point out that you will be leading the chain. Within a count of five you will be required to take the hand of another person in the room. This person will then have until a count of five to take the hand of another.
- Direct the group to continue this process, with no one letting go of hands until everyone in the group is linked for a count of five.
- Lead the group in the actual activity. Take the hand of someone nearby and then begin counting loudly. Encourage the entire group to count in unison.
- As the chain grows longer, lead it around the room in ways that make maintaining the chain difficult.
- If the chain is broken, restart the activity. After a couple of failed attempts, you might want to enlist a participant to replace you as leader. You could then offer to be the last person in the chain.
- Continue the activity until time runs out or the group manages to create a complete chain.
- Point out that it is often easier to let go and break the chain than to keep it together. Explain that for humans, keeping our connection to God is very difficult and that sin, even the smallest sin, will break that chain.
- Say: "The Israelites struggled to obey God. Today we will learn about times when the Israelites sinned again and again."
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Guide the kids to group time and greet them. Remind the group that for several weeks they have been studying the Book of Joshua. Ask what book of the Old Testament comes after Joshua. (*Judges*) Point out that Judges, like Joshua, is a book of history and is located between Joshua and Ruth.
- Remind the kids that one of the very last things Joshua did during his life was to challenge the people of Israel to renew their covenant with God, erecting a stone to remind them of their obligations to God. Ask the kids how they think that turned out after Joshua died.
- Ask the girls and boys to open their Bibles to Judges 2. Ask someone to read Judges 2:10. Explain that this verse means that everyone who was alive during Joshua's time died, but their children and grandchildren came along. Then allow a volunteer to read Judges 2:11-13. Ask the group: "What did the people of Israel do wrong?" (*They worshiped other gods.*) "And how did God respond?" (*He was angry.*)
- Distribute the Family Cards and point out the cycle graphic. Point out that many things in nature occur in cycles: water circulates, the seasons change. Explain that throughout the Book of Judges we will see another cycle. This cycle is not one that God created, but that sinful man created. Challenge the kids to identify that cycle as today's session proceeds.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct the kids to locate Judges 2 in their Bibles. Ask volunteers to read the following verses in order: Judges 2:11,14,16,19.
- Explain that this passage describes Israel's cycle of rebellion. Ask the Judges 2:11 reader to share that verse. Point out that next verses tell about what happened. Read 2:12-13 and then say: "Stop! And then what happened?" Point to the next reader (*verse 14*). Read 2:15 and again say: "Stop! Then what happened?" Point to the next reader to read Judges 2:16. Again say: "Stop!" and point to the final reader to read Judges 2:19. Explain that this passage of Judges provides an outline for what happened for many years in Israel after Joshua's death.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Distribute "The Cycle Steps." Ask the six people holding those signs to stand in front of the group, not in the proper order. Direct the group to arrange the signs in the proper order. When they have established the proper order, attach the signs in order on the wall.
- Direct the kids to turn in their Bibles to Judges 3. Explain that some of the judges span several chapters, but others have very little written about them. Note that in today's chapter, three judges are presented.

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- Examine the Text: Bibles
- The Bible Story: "The Cycle" and "Early Judge Questions" (enhanced CD), "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Judges" (Books of the Bible Posters), tape
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Judges 2:18" (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

- Suggest that you engage in a boys versus girls project. Ask the girls to learn about Othniel (3:7-11) while the boys learn about Ehud (3:14-23, 28-30). Agree that since there are three judges, you will handle the third yourself.
- Instruct the two groups to read their assigned passages and answer the “Early Judge Questions.” After allowing the groups to answer the questions, ask them to share their findings. Answer the same questions for Shamgar in Judges 3:31.
- Point out that even though Israel continued to sin over and over, God never abandoned them or went back on His promises to them.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and “Connection Statement” near the “Judges” poster. Read the Text Truth aloud: **The consequence of sin is that our world and our relationship with God are broken.**

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 8” video.
- Ask: “What type of circle or cycle did the Israelites go through? What does sin do to our relationship with God? Who did God send to help the Israelites?”

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the “Judges 2:18” poster. Allow the group to read the verse once together.
- Divide the group into two teams, arranging them in two lines facing each other. With the poster held so that the second team can read it, read the first part of the verse aloud to the first team.
- Direct the first team to repeat the verse back to you together, emphasizing that they must do so perfectly. Invite the second team to shout out “Wrong!” if they hear any mistakes.
- Reverse the assignments and ask the second team to repeat the second part in the verse.
- Emphasize that sin has real and important consequences in our lives, just as our simple errors in repeating the verse had real but unimportant consequences. Invite the two teams to read the verse to each other one last time.

PRAYER

- Lead the group in a prayer in which you ask God to open the eyes of all involved to understand the presence and consequences of sin in our lives. Thank God for providing a healing from that sin through Jesus.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Direct the kids to locate the “Cycle of Rebellion” page in their Explorer Guides.
- Direct the kids to locate Judges 2:11-19 in their Bibles. Ask them to remember and explain the cycle of rebellion described in today’s lesson. Point kids to the “Cycle of Sin” object.
- Invite the boys and girls to number the sentences in the correct order in “Sequence.” (Answers: 2, 7, 4, 6, 1, 3, 5) Challenge kids to complete “Copy It.”
- Help the kids to locate today’s “Word to Know.”

PRAYER TIME

- Ask the kids to silently think about one area of sin that they feel worst about in their own lives.
- Invite the kids to enter into a time of silent prayer, requesting that they pray for help in dealing with the sinful behaviors in their lives.
- Conclude the prayer time by thanking God for providing forgiveness through Jesus and asking that He help each of the kids deal with their particular sins.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.



THE BICYCLE CYCLE

Tools: bicycle, paper, markers, “Cycle Graphic” (DVD-ROM)

- Ask the group to remember what the object for the day was. (*Cycle of Rebellion*) Allow a volunteer to explain what that cycle involved. Point out that when you thought about the cycle of rebellion, you couldn’t help but think about this bicycle.
- Direct the kids to gather around the bike. Ask them how a bicycle works. Point out that when the pedals are turned, the chain is pulled around a sprocket. Demonstrate how the chain runs back to another sprocket attached to the rear wheel. When the chain moves, the wheel turns. If all goes well, a person pedaling a bicycle will keep the wheels turning and get where she needs to go.
- Point out that things can go wrong with a bicycle. Allow volunteers to share ideas or experiences about a bike not working properly. Allow the kids to consider what would happen if the chain were to break. Ask them what happens if the chain comes off either the front or rear sprocket.
- Explain that when a bicycle breaks, the experience is something like when sin enters into our lives. Point out that sin separates us from God and keeps us from going where God wants us to go.
- Invite the kids to draw a picture of a bicycle of their own design as a reminder of this week’s Bible study. Encourage kids to print the Text Truth on their page as you review it: **The consequence of sin is that our world and our relationship with God are broken.**



WHAT IS SIN?

Tools: Bibles, papers, pens

- Remind the group that the object for today's lesson was the cycle of rebellion. Help them to reconstruct the steps in that cycle. Emphasize that the main force that kept the cycle of rebellion turning in the days of the judges and that keeps it alive today is sin. Ask the kids to offer their definitions of sin. Explain that you'd like to look at another Bible passage to understand better what sin is so that we can avoid it and its effects.
- Direct the kids to turn in their Bibles to Psalm 51. Read Psalm 51:1-5, asking the group to make a note of the times that sin is mentioned. Ask them if there are any words that seem to mean the same thing as sin. Allow the kids to make a list of things that they learn about sin from these verses.
- Read Psalm 51:6-9. As you read, ask the group to pay attention to things that seem to be the opposite of sin. If God desires integrity, then is sin probably the opposite of that? Add to the inventory of facts they have learned about sin.
- Continue reading with Psalm 51:10-13. Ask the group if they can see the cycle of rebellion discussed here. Allow them to share what they learn about how we can turn from our sin in these verses.
- Emphasize that the cycle of rebellion is something that will happen to all Christians at various times. Point out that sin is always a negative thing that separates us from God, but God is always faithful to forgive our sins and restore our relationship with Him.
- Review the Text Truth: **The consequence of sin is that our world and our relationship with God are broken.**



STAYING FOCUSED

Tools: playground ball, plastic cups, paper, markers, tape

- Write the instructions for each station on a piece of paper. Tape each paper in one corner or spot of the room. Place any needed supplies at each station.
- In today's game, kids must take turns completing 4 specific actions. Form two groups and explain each station to the boys and girls.
 - 1) Walk backwards for 20 steps.
 - 2) Do 10 jumping jacks.
 - 3) Bounce the ball 5 times.
 - 4) Build a cup pyramid and take it down.
- Explain that while each member of the team is completing the relay, members of the opposite team may try to distract them. (*Don't allow any touching or physical interference.*) Distractions may be made verbally, or the team may try to perform actions to distract them.
- After each team has completed the tasks, gather everyone together to discuss the following questions: "Did you stay focused on the task? Did you get distracted?"
- Continue: "In today's Bible story, we learned about the Israelites and the cycle they experienced. Why do you think the Israelites forgot God and worshiped false idols? Do you ever forget God? Do you ever make something else more important than God?" Allow kids to think about their daily lives and the distractions that take their attention from God.
- Review the Text Truth: **The consequence of sin is that our world and our relationship with God are broken.**
- Invite the kids to brainstorm how they can remember the Text Truth and stay focused on God in the coming week.



Session 9



DEBORAH AND BARAK

Judges 4:4-10,12-16

In this week's session we are studying Israel's predicament as the fledgling nation faced the superior forces of King Jabin of Hazor and his general Sisera. Judges 4 identifies that the strength of Jabin's army centered on his 900 iron chariots. Jabin's subjection of the Israelites was described as a harsh oppression lasting 20 years. What would become of Israel against such insurmountable odds? How would God's people throw off the shackles of their oppressors and live in freedom to serve Him? This session is summarized in the statement, God restores His people to freedom using faithful and willing servants.

Deborah lived and judged in the territory of Ephraim, located northwest of the Dead Sea. Deborah is identified as a woman, a prophetess, a wife, and a judge, indeed Israel's only female judge. Identifying Deborah as a woman might be nothing more than a reminder most judges were men. The name *Deborah*, literally means "one judging." The Hebrew participle derives from the verb *shaphat*, meaning "to decide" or "to get justice." Deborah's role was to discern the will of the Lord by praying and studying the Law of Moses.

When Israel sinned, God's wrath was kindled against the people, resulting in the Lord handing them over to an oppressing nation. The oppressor vexing Israel in Deborah's day was a significant Canaanite army centered in Hazor, a major fortified city, under the reign of King Jabin. Sisera, Jabin's general, had a sizable army under his command.

Deborah reminded Barak of God's promise to hand Sisera over to Barak. Then Deborah directed Barak to move on, literally "arise" or "stand." Deborah based her directive on God's promise. She boldly claimed this is the day that the Lord has handed Sisera over to you, or "has set Sisera in your hand." God faithfully fulfilled His promise!

Like Deborah and Barak, we can trust God when He gives us a command to obey, and we can faithfully do the work God has chosen for us to do.

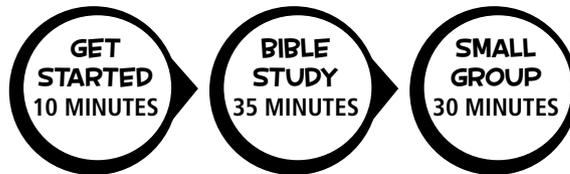
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Judges 4:4-10,12-16

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Judges 4-5

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Judges 5:3

TEXT TRUTH: We should trust God when He gives us a command to obey.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- Building Trust: 20 disposable cups of two colors, blindfolds

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- Examine the Text: Bibles

- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Judges" (Books of the Bible Posters)

- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video

- Memory Verse: "Judges 5:3" (Poster Pack)

- Prayer: none

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

- Move: none

- Explore: "Allergy Alert" (enhanced CD), marker, brown paper bags, individually wrapped candy, index cards

- Examine: Bibles, craft sticks, 3 different colored markers

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

DEBORAH AND BARAK

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Judges 4–5

Once again Israel sinned. They did not love and worship only God. God allowed Jabin, the king of Canaan, to rule over the people. The commander of Jabin’s army was named Sisera. Jabin had 900 iron chariots and he treated the Israelites badly for 20 years.

The Israelites called to God for help. At this time, Deborah was a prophetess and a judge in Israel. She would sit under a palm tree and the Israelites would come to her for help.

One day, Deborah sent for a man named Barak (BAY rak). Deborah asked Barak, “Didn’t God tell you to take soldiers to Mount Tabor and defeat Sisera?”

Barak told Deborah that he would go if she would also go.

Deborah agreed, but she told him, “You will not receive the honor for the battle. A woman will defeat Sisera.”

Barak gathered 10,000 soldiers. Barak and Deborah traveled with the soldiers to Mount Tabor. Sisera heard the news that Barak had gone to Mount Tabor. He gathered all 900 iron chariots and all of his soldiers. Deborah told Barak to take his men and go to the battle.

Suddenly, God caused Sisera, all of his chariots, and all of his soldiers to be confused. Sisera ran away from the battle. He traveled to the tent of a woman named Jael. Jael welcomed Sisera into the tent. She offered him milk to drink and hid him under a rug. Sisera fell asleep and Jael killed him.

Barak had been chasing Sisera and arrived at the tent to find that Sisera was dead. God had delivered the Israelites from Jabin and his army. Eventually, the Israelites completely defeated Jabin.

Deborah and Barak sang a song of praise to God for all that He had done. “May those who love God be like the rising sun in its strength,” they sang. There was peace in Israel for 40 years.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Judges highlights the consequences of sin and our need for a Savior. The judges were temporary deliverers rescuing the Israelites from their enemies. Jesus is the sinless deliverer, who through His death on the cross and resurrection, has defeated our enemy, Satan.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

God led Deborah and Barak to help the Israelites defeat their enemies.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO JUDGES

CORE PASSAGE:

Judges 4:4-10,12-16

- A woman defeated Sisera.
- God delivered His people from Jabin.
- Deborah encouraged Barak to obey God.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Building Trust: 20 disposable cups of two colors, blindfolds

BUILDING TRUST

- Place 20 disposable cups on a table. The cups should either be two different colors or the sets of 10 should be otherwise marked in some way. Place the cups on the table and mix the colors together. If you have a larger group, you can increase the number of cups and participants.
- Create two teams of two volunteers each. One member of each team will be the boss and the other the worker. The workers should be blindfolded. The bosses should be located at least a few feet from the table.
- At a start signal, the two bosses should give instructions to the two workers on how to obtain their assigned cups and begin building a cup pyramid. The pyramid should have a first row of four cups, a second row of three cups, and rows of two and one.
- Emphasize that the worker may not look at the cups, and the boss may not approach the table or touch the cups. Encourage those kids not participating in the game to make things difficult for the teams by adding to the general noise level in the room.
- The first team to successfully complete a pyramid wins. As time permits, allow other volunteers to take the place of the first volunteers.
- Point out that the bosses may not have given the best possible instructions. Explain that in today's Bible story we will see that God's instructions can always be trusted. Emphasize that **we should trust God when He gives us a command to obey.**
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Welcome the kids to group time. Ask the kids what book last week's lesson came from. (*Judges*) Remind them that much of the Book of Judges relates to a cycle of disobedience (*sin*), repentance, returning to God, and then more disobedience. Remind them that the judges who give this book its name were leaders, most of whom had an important role in the cycle of drawing people back to God.
- Ask what division Judges is in. (*History*) Remind them that this book covers the years between when Joshua led the people to conquer the land and the years of the kings. During these years the people tended to forget God until things got really bad. Then they would call out to God, who would send them a new leader. Suggest that God might have been watching and saying, "Here we go again."
- Direct the kids to open their Bibles to Judges 4. Ask a volunteer to read aloud Judges 4:1. Invite the boys and girls to imagine what God might have been thinking. (*Here we go again.*) Allow the volunteer to continue with the next verse. (*verse 2*) Point out that the Israelites might have been thinking the same thing as God had been. Allow them to share that aloud. (*Here we go again.*) Ask the volunteer to read the next verse (*Judges 4:3*).
- Distribute the Family Cards and point out the image of the palm tree. Invite the kids to speculate on what significance that palm tree might have. Challenge them to pay attention to the lesson to follow and discover why there is a palm tree on their card.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Remind the kids of the cycle of rebellion that Israel experienced through the Book of Judges. Ask them to silently read Judges 4:1-4 and answer these questions: "What did the Israelites do after Ehud died?" (*They did evil in God's sight*) "Who did God use to oppress the Israelites at this time?" (*Jabin, the king of Canaan*) "What did the Israelites do in response to this oppression?" (*They cried out to God*) "How long did God allow Jabin to oppress the Israelites?" (*20 years*)
- Point out that in the cycle of rebellion, God would raise up a judge or leader to deliver the people. Ask: "Who was the judge God provided this time?" (*Deborah*)

THE BIBLE STORY

- Direct the group to look at Judges 4:4 again. Assign half of the boys and girls to listen to this section and think about Deborah while half of them think about Barak. Ask each of the groups to sit together.
- Begin reading from Judges 4:4. After verse 5, ask the Deborah group to explain as much as they can about her.
- Read the next verse (*verse 6*) and ask the Barak group what they have

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- Examine the Text: Bibles
- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Judges" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Judges 5:3" (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

learned about him. Ask what job Barak seems to have. (*military leader*)

Ask the Deborah group what she seems to be thinking at this point.

- Continue reading through Judges 4:10 and then 4:12-16, pausing at each mention of Deborah or Barak. Ask the groups what their person seems to be feeling or thinking at this point.
- Invite the groups to provide a description of their assigned people. Ask them to give a show of hands for which person had more of these qualities: physical strength, faith, courage.
- Guide the kids to turn to Judges 5. Note that after the victory, Deborah and Barak sang this song of praise to God together. Ask the two groups to alternate verses as they read aloud Judges 5:2-5.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and “Connection Statement” near the “Judges” poster. Invite the girls and boys to read the Text Truth with you: **We should trust God when He gives us a command to obey.**

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 9” video.
- Ask: “What did Kaileigh learn about good leaders? How was Kayla a good leader? Who was a good leader in today’s Bible story?”
- Give the group a moment to reflect on the video and the challenge of trusting God’s directions for our lives.

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the “Judges 5:3” poster. Allow the group to read the verse once together. Point out that we often emphasize different words when we speak. Allow the group to read the second half of the verse several times, emphasizing each word in turn.
- After proceeding through all of the words, ask the group to consider which are the most important words in the verse. Allow them to read the entire verse using the emphasis that they believe makes the most sense.
- Point out that often in our lives, singing praise to God is not what we feel like doing, but we should do so to show our love and trust in God.

PRAYER

- Direct the kids to think of the best and worst things that have happened to them in the last year or so. With those things in their minds, lead the girls and boys in a prayer, acknowledging that we can praise God during the best and worst times. He will help us. Incorporate Judges 5:3 as you feel led.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Ask the kids to open their Explorer Guides to the “Deborah and Barak” page.
- Direct the kids to locate Judges 4:4-10,12-16 in their Bibles. Invite kids to consider whether each Bible person in “Sentence Recap” trusted God. Guide kids to write about each person in the space provided.
- Review the Text Truth and encourage kids to write their thoughts in “Being Obedient.”
- Invite three volunteers to each read aloud one of the names and meanings in “What Does That Name Mean?”
- Allow kids to examine today’s object, the palm tree, the picture of the Wadi Kishon, and the map of Deborah’s victory.

PRAYER TIME

- Invite the kids to share some times when it is difficult to follow God’s commands or the directions given by those they know God has appointed as authorities.
- Pray, thanking God for giving His clear directions and for allowing us to come directly to Him in prayer.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.

FOLLOWING LEADERS

Tools: none

- Invite the group to discuss briefly what makes someone a good leader. Ask them if it is possible to be a good leader without having the ability to be a good follower. Remind them that in today’s story, Barak, a good leader, was criticized for not being able to trust the command God had given to him.
- Arrange the group in a circle. Assign a number to each person in the circle. Explain that you will call out a number, assigning the person with that number to be the leader. That leader should then do some action and everyone else should, as quickly as possible, follow the leader’s example.
- Call out a number and observe as the group begins to follow the leader’s actions. When they have all joined in, call another number. Continue calling numbers as quickly as possible, always waiting until all the followers have joined in. Make sure to cover all the numbers, but repeat some of them as well.
- Close out the activity by explaining that it did not take much trust to follow these commands. Remind the kids that God’s commands might be more demanding, but God is infinitely more trustworthy. Emphasize the Text Truth: **We should trust God when He gives us a command to obey.**





GRAB BAG

Tools: "Allergy Alert" (enhanced CD), marker, brown paper bags, individually wrapped candy, index cards

- Prepare the brown paper bags by writing a number on each one and putting a few pieces of individually wrapped candy inside. Write the same numbers on index cards.
- Reflect on today's Bible story. Emphasize that following God's commands can seem challenging, but that we should always trust His commands enough to obey them.
- Ask the kids if they trust you. Point to the bags arranged on a table. Explain that some of the bags might have something good inside but others might have something not so good inside. List a number of things that the kids would not want to put their hand into: dirt, pudding, a raw egg, and so on.
- Explain that anyone willing to play the game will select a card and place their hand into the bag with the same number, take out whatever is in it, and hold it tightly in their hand for the next few minutes. Play the game, preserving for as long as possible the notion that some of the bags have something bad inside.
- Wrap up by pointing out that while you would not want to hurt them, God never wants to hurt them. God can be trusted and obeyed. He has the best plan for you—it's not always easy—but it is the best for you.
- Review the Text Truth: **We should trust God when He gives us a command to obey.**



STICKY SITUATIONS

Tools: Bibles, craft sticks, 3 different colored markers

- Prepare the craft sticks before class. Write the following Scripture references on sticks using one colored marker: *Proverbs 3:5-6, Proverbs 16:3, Psalm 56:3, Psalm 121:3, Matthew 6:25, Philippians 4:19*. Write the following locations on sticks using a different colored marker: *home, church, classroom, gym, cafeteria, friend's house, outside*. Write the following applications on sticks using a third colored marker: *being friendly, being helpful, being loyal, being respectful, being daring, being selfless*. If you expect more than six in the group, make duplicates of some sticks in each category.
- Point out that it is easy for us to say that we must trust God enough to obey His commands, but admit that it is harder in actual situations.
- Give each child in the group one stick from each category. Direct them to look up their assigned verse. Invite them to then create a situation in which they have to do the application on their stick in the location on their stick. Ask them to explain how their assigned verse can help that to be possible. Allow each participant to share their situation. Invite others to suggest how a different verse might apply here.
- Review the Text Truth: **We should trust God when He gives us a command to obey.**
- Conclude by admitting that obeying God is often difficult, but that by knowing and trusting His Word, that job can be easier.



Session 10



GIDEON

Judges 6:11-16,25-31

The study of the judges of God's people reveals the basic truth that every victory was won by the Lord. The judges were merely the human instruments through whom God worked on behalf of His people. Barak had refused to go into battle unless accompanied by Deborah. Deborah consented, but God won the victory for Barak and Deborah.

In today's study, we find a judge who viewed himself as the underdog. The people of Israel needed to be delivered from the oppression of the Midianites. However, God's chosen deliverer, Gideon, was not up to the task. He was timid and afraid. God molded Gideon, however, into a capable leader.

Gideon displayed a spirit of timidity and fear. When God commissioned him to fight the Midianites, Gideon wanted assurance from God. Gideon put out a fleece. Gideon asked God to cover the fleece with dew while the surrounding ground remained dry. God complied with Gideon's request. Yet, Gideon's timidity was not assuaged. So Gideon then asked God to reverse the process, allowing dew to appear on the ground but not on the fleece. God accepted Gideon's request and did as the man asked. The ensuing reduction of Gideon's army from 32,000 men down to 300 was God's way of training Gideon to rely on Him.

Did God's discipline and molding of Gideon succeed? We read in Judges 7:1-25 that Gideon delivered God's people from the hands of the Midianites with only 300 men. Gideon also was victorious over other Midianite rulers before his death. God worked through a timid leader to secure victory.

God often uses weak and imperfect people to bring about His purposes, knowing they will have a greater dependence upon Him. Believers grow in their faith by being obedient to God. God is more than capable of defending Himself and His followers.

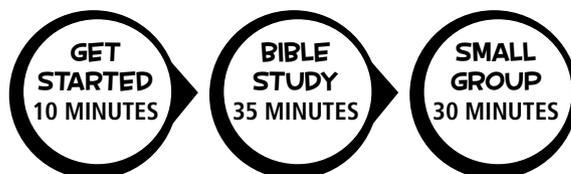
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Judges 6:11-16,25-31

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Judges 6–8

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Judges 6:16

TEXT TRUTH: Believers grow in their faith by being obedient to God.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- All Hands on Deck: buckets of water, pitchers, plastic sheeting (optional)

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: pitcher, Family Cards, Bibles
- Examine the Text: Bibles

- The Bible Story: Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase marker, “Text Truth Strips” and “Connection Statements” (Poster Pack), “Judges” (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: “Judges 6:16” (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens
- Examine: whiteboard, dry-erase markers
- Make: poster board, markers, scissors, craft supplies
- Move: scrap paper, pens, waste basket, “Review Questions” (enhanced CD), tape

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GIDEON

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Judges 6–8

Israel sinned—again. The people of Midian ruled the Israelites for 7 years. The Midianites were very mean to the Israelites. They would destroy any food the people planted. Israel had nothing to eat. The Israelites asked God for help.

God sent the Angel of the Lord to Gideon. Gideon was hiding from the Midianites so he could thresh wheat to make flour. Suddenly, the Angel of the Lord appeared and said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”

Gideon was confused. If God was with His people, why were they suffering? The Angel of the Lord told Gideon that God was sending Gideon to deliver His people from the Midianites.

Gideon wasn’t sure he could do it, but the Angel of the Lord told him again, “You will defeat Midian.” Eventually, Gideon built an altar to God and began to obey God’s commands.

God was with Gideon. Gideon blew a ram’s horn to call soldiers to come join him. He sent messengers throughout the land to gather more soldiers.

Gideon and the soldiers gathered and camped. But God had another message for Gideon, “You have too many people. Tell all of the ones who are afraid to go home.” God didn’t want Israel to think they defeated Midian. God wanted the people to understand that God would defeat Midian. So 22,000 people left and 10,000 stayed.

God said, “You still have too many people. Take them to the water for a test.” All of the men who lapped the water with their tongues were sent home. Only the ones who knelt down to drink were allowed to stay. Now Gideon had 300 soldiers. God again promised Gideon that He would defeat Midian.

God helped Gideon form a plan. The 300 men formed 3 groups, each with 100 men. Each man carried a trumpet in one hand. In the other hand, he had an empty pitcher with a torch inside it. The 3 groups spread out around the sleeping Midianite soldiers. Gideon and the men suddenly blew the trumpets. They broke the pitchers. They held their torches up and shouted, “A sword for the Lord and for Gideon.”

The other army of soldiers woke up and God caused them to start fighting each other. Others ran away. God had defeated the Midianites. The Israelites had peace for 40 years.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Judges highlights the consequences of sin and our need for a Savior. The judges were temporary deliverers rescuing the Israelites from their enemies. Jesus is the sinless deliverer, who through His death on the cross and resurrection, has defeated our enemy, Satan.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

Gideon wasn’t a perfect leader, but he depended on God for the victory.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO JUDGES

CORE PASSAGE:

Judges 6:11-16,25-31

- God is looking for obedient followers.
- God is all-powerful.
- God is always with His people, even during tough times.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- All Hands on Deck: buckets of water, pitchers, plastic sheeting (optional)

ALL HANDS ON DECK

- Prepare the area by placing buckets of water on one side of a room and pitchers on the other. If you cannot do this activity outside or in an area where some spilled water will not matter, spread some plastic on the floor.
- Form two teams. A larger group could have more teams with additional water containers. The ideal teams will range from five to seven participants.
- Instruct the teams to run a simple relay race. Emphasize that this activity is not a race in the sense that it will require them to move very quickly. Direct the first person in line to cup her hands together and pick up as much water as possible. Guide her to carry the water to her team's pitcher and then return to the starting point. When she touches the second person's hand, he should repeat the process. Remind the teams that they do not need to rush. The goal is to carry the most water, not to carry water the fastest.
- Allow the teams to go through the line twice (*or once if the teams are very large*) and then declare whichever team has the most water in the pitcher to be the winner.
- Ask the kids if they approached the contest differently knowing that they did not need to hurry. Allow them to reflect briefly on the most challenging aspect of this game.
- Explain that in today's Bible study, you will be looking at a time when people having water in their hands helped the people learn that God was going to give them a victory.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Hold one of the pitchers of water as you welcome the kids to group time. Ask the kids what book the last two weeks' Bible stories came from. (*Judges*) Remind them that *Judges* is a fairly sad book since it records a constant cycle of the people of Israel forgetting all about God, experiencing bad results, and then coming back to Him, only to fall away again.
- Ask the kids why they believe you are holding the water. After listening to their ideas, distribute the Family Cards. Draw the group's attention to the pitcher, torch, and trumpet in the illustration. Point out that the pitcher could relate to your water pitcher, but the one in the picture does not contain water.
- Direct the girls and boys to open their Bibles to *Judges* 6–8. Allow someone to read the headings describing who the key person is in this story. (*Gideon*) Point out that Gideon was the youngest member of the weakest family of a tribe that was being dominated by enemies. He was not a super hero, but an angel appeared to Gideon. Ask someone to read aloud *Judges* 6:12. Point out how silly it must have seemed to Gideon to be called a mighty warrior.
- Explain that God does not usually begin with the mightiest people. Instead, God takes ordinary people who are willing to obey and He helps them to grow and become mighty through obedience.
- Again, invite the group to speculate on why you are holding the water. Point out that the answer will become clear if they pay attention to the way in which God used Gideon to defeat the enemies of Israel.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Ask the kids to locate *Judges* 6 in their Bibles again. Form three groups and assign each group one of these Scripture passages: *Judges* 6:11-16, *Judges* 6:25-31, *Judges* 6:36-40.
- Point out that each of these passages contains an early account from Gideon's life, including the visit with the angel mentioned above. Ask each team to use their assigned passage to answer these questions about Gideon at this point in his life as a judge:
 - ▶ What did he do?
 - ▶ Who was with him?
 - ▶ How did he show faith in God?
 - ▶ How did he show a weak faith?
- Allow the groups to share their findings. Emphasize that as Gideon obeyed God, his faith continued to grow.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Remind the group of the oppressors whom Gideon was supposed to defeat. (*Judges* 6:16) Explain that Midian had a powerful and well

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: pitcher, Family Cards, Bibles
- Examine the Text: Bibles
- The Bible Story: Bibles, whiteboard, dry-erase marker, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack) and "Judges" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Judges 6:16" (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

organized army. Write the number 32,000 on the board. Point out that this is the number of soldiers that Gideon gathered to fight against the Midianites. Ask: “Is it normally better to have a bigger or smaller army?” Agree that bigger armies are usually better. Ask someone to read what God had to say about that in Judges 7:2. Explain that when Gideon allowed soldiers to go home, 22,000 of them left. Cross out 32,000 and write 10,000.

- Explain that God still thought the army was too big and had Gideon use the way people drank water to make it smaller. Cross out 10,000 and write 300. Ask the kids to speculate on why God would want a smaller army rather than a larger one.
- Form three groups, positioning them around the room. Cross out 300 and write 100 three times. Read aloud Judges 7:16-18. Review the battle plan with the girls and boys. Ask: “How do you think the battle went?” Allow a volunteer to read Judges 7:22-23. Allow the kids to explain the outcome of the battle. Point out that as Gideon obeyed by making the army smaller, his faith grew stronger.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and the “Connection Statement” near the “Judges” poster. Invite the girls and boys to read the Text Truth with you: **Believers grow in their faith by being obedient to God.**

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 10” video.
- Discuss: “Tell me something you learned about Sergeant York.” (*Pause for a response.*) “Tell me something you have learned about Gideon.” Allow the kids to share the truths they gleaned from this video.

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the “Judges 6:16” poster. Allow the group to read the verse once together.
- Arrange the group in a circle. Invite each of them to think of the most frightening, discouraging, or difficult thing they might face in the next week. Provide an example of your own. (*For example, “There is someone at work who is very difficult.”*) Ask the boys and girls to respond to this statement with Judges 6:16.
- Allow volunteers to share their difficulties, guiding the circle to respond with the memory verse.
- Remind the kids that whether they are facing a large and hostile army, or just the ordinary problems of life, God will always be with them.

PRAYER

- Lead the group in a prayer, mentioning some of the likely challenges they will face in their lives, in school, in family, in friendship, in activities, and so forth. Ask God to give each child in the group an assurance that He will always be with them.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Ask the kids to open their Explorer Guides to the “Gideon” page.
- Invite the kids to open their Bibles to Judges 6:11-16, 25-31. Ask them to answer each of the questions about today’s Bible story in the space provided.
- Invite kids to solve the puzzle in “Circle It.” Review today’s objects by selecting a kid to read aloud about the objects.
- Help kids locate the “Word to Know” in their Bibles.

PRAYER TIME

- Ask the kids to voice prayer requests, focusing on areas of life where it is difficult to trust in God.
- Ask for a volunteer to pray on behalf of the entire group, asking God to help them to grow through their continued and increasing trust in Him.
- When the prayer is finished, remind the kids that even though trusting in God’s direction is sometimes hard, doing so is the surest way for us to grow stronger and more capable.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Plus: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.



GROWTH CHARTS

Tools: whiteboard, dry-erase markers

□ Write three headings at the top of the board: *I used to only be able to*, *Now I can*, and *Someday I'll be able to*.

- Ask the group if they remember what the angel called Gideon when he met him. (*mighty warrior*) Remind them that Gideon did not seem much like a mighty warrior on that day. Emphasize that God often calls people who are not entirely ready to do great things and then helps them to grow as they show faith in Him.
- Direct the kids’ attention to the board. Point out to them that they have grown stronger and smarter over the years, but they are not yet done with that growing. Allow someone to read Matthew 2:52. Note that even Jesus grew stronger and wiser as He aged.
- Ask for volunteers to explain how they could fill in the blanks for various categories of development. Ask them about their ability to read from a few years ago compared to today. Ask them how they think they will change in the years to come. Repeat that process with other topics such as math, sports, or music.
- Draw the group into a discussion of emotional maturity. Ask them how they might have responded to an insult in the past as opposed to today. Allow them to suggest how they feel they should continue to mature.
- Point out that while mental and physical development are important, God wants His followers to develop spiritually. Remind kids of the Text Truth: **Believers grow in their faith by being obedient to God.** Ask the kids to consider how they have changed and need to change in the areas of prayer, obedience, faith, and other spiritual situations.

SHIELD OF FAITH



Tools: poster board, markers, scissors, craft supplies

- Remind the group that the angel in Judges 6 found Gideon hiding and called him a “mighty warrior.” Point out that fairly quickly, Gideon became not just a mighty warrior, but a leader of warriors. Emphasize that Gideon’s faith helped him serve God.
- Point out that warriors in Gideon’s day typically wore armor of some sort. Allow a volunteer to read Ephesians 6:16 to describe one part of Paul’s armor of God.
- Direct the group to create a “shield of faith” using the poster board and other supplies. Ask them to begin by creating four sections on their shield by drawing a vertical line and a horizontal line. Invite them to place an emblem in the top-left quadrant, representing who they used to be, and another emblem in the bottom-right quadrant, showing who they would like to become. For example, you could draw a mouse and a lion.
- Suggest that they place emblems in the remaining quadrants that represent tools to build up their faith. Urge them to place a cross in one of those quadrants and something specific to them in the other.
- Allow the kids to share the meaning behind their shields.
- Close out the session by reminding them that true faith is more powerful than any shield ever used. Review the Text Truth: **Believers grow in their faith by being obedient to God.**

GROWING CHANCES



Tools: scrap paper, pens, waste basket, “Review Questions” (enhanced CD), tape

- Point out to the group that they are not the same physically as they were a few years ago. Ask them if they have developed in their faith over those same years. Remind them that, like Gideon, they should grow in their faith by being obedient to God.
- Form two or three teams from the group. The groups need not be even. Give each team three pieces of scrap paper to begin.
- Direct the teams to listen as you read a series of questions. Emphasize that they should not blurt out an answer. Instead, direct them to confer quietly among themselves and then to write down an answer.
- Ask the first review question. Give the teams a moment to confer and record their answer. At the same time, allow them to reveal their answers. If a team gets the answer right, give them an additional piece of paper. If a team blurts out an answer or otherwise breaks the rules, take away a sheet.
- Continue through all of the questions, awarding paper along the way.
- Invite the teams to make paper wads from their paper and, from the same start line, attempt to toss their paper into the basket. Keep score as you go and recognize the winning team.
- Point out that just as the supply of paper grew with correct answers, a believer’s faith can grow with continued obedience to God. Emphasize the Text Truth: **Believers grow in their faith by being obedient to God.**



Session 11



SAMSON

Judges 16:4-6,13-20

Judges 13–16 introduces us to Samson, the last judge of Israel we will study in this series. The angel of the Lord consecrated Samson as a Nazirite from his “birth until the day of his death.” Numbers 6:1-21 describes the Nazirite vow and delineates three prohibitions. First, Nazirites were prohibited from consuming any product of the vine. Second, Nazirites were prohibited from cutting their hair. Finally, Nazirites were prohibited from touching any dead thing.

The Nazirite vow is one key aspect for understanding Samson’s life. Another key aspect is the role of the Holy Spirit in Samson’s life. Four times, the Spirit of the Lord was involved in Samson’s actions. First, the Spirit of the Lord began to direct Samson in the Camp of Dan (*Judg. 13:25*). Second, the Spirit of the Lord empowered Samson to kill a young lion with his bare hands (*14:6*). Third, the Spirit of the Lord “took control of him” and Samson went down to Ashkelon and killed 30 Philistine men, plundering them to settle a wager (*14:19*). Fourth, the Spirit of the Lord “took control of him” again, enabling Samson to kill 1,000 Philistines with the jawbone of a donkey (*15:14-15*).

Samson was an imperfect instrument. He compromised his devotion to the Lord by breaking his Nazirite vow. Samson sought the pleasure of women above all else. Yet, through the course of his shortened life, God was able to use Samson to deliver His people from Philistine oppression. Every time Samson sought revenge on the Philistines for personal grievances, God was judging the oppressors of His people.

Sin has a price. Samson’s life was characterized by a seemingly unending stream of sinful decisions. When we sin, we are separated from God and His good plan for our lives. Instead of sin, we should daily choose to rely on God, Who helps us do what He wants us to do.

SESSION FOCUS

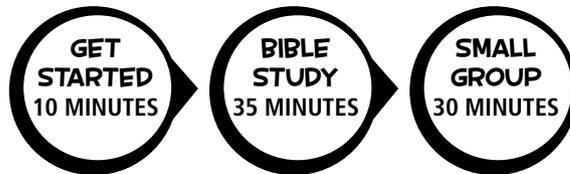
CORE PASSAGE: Judges 16:4-6,13-20

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Judges 13-16

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Judges 17:6

ADDITIONAL MEMORY VERSE: Romans 6:23

TEXT TRUTH: Sin separates us from God and His good plan for our lives.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- The Weight of Separation: *several identical heavy books, music*

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: *Bibles, Family Cards*
- Examine the Text: *Bibles*
- The Bible Story: *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Judges" (Books of the Bible Posters)*

- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse: *"Judges of Israel Chart" and "Romans 6:23" (Poster Pack), 2 pieces of paper, marker*
- Prayer: *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Examine: *coins*
- Make: *dowels, heavyweight paper, glue, markers, scissors, "The Gospel" (enhanced CD)*
- Explore: *Bibles*

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

SAMSON

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Judges 13–16

The Israelites sinned again. They were ruled by the Philistines for 40 years. One day God sent the Angel of the Lord to tell a woman that she would have a baby. The angel said, “Your child will begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines.” The Angel of the Lord gave special instructions about the baby including that no one should ever cut his hair.

The man and woman had a baby and named him Samson. He grew and God’s Spirit was with Samson. Now, Samson made some good choices and some bad choices, but God used Samson to defeat the Philistines. The Philistines really, really, really did not like Samson.

Samson fell in love with a woman named Delilah. The Philistines leaders visited Delilah and made a deal with her. If she could get Samson to tell where his great strength came from, each of the leaders would give her 1,100 pieces of silver.

Delilah began to beg Samson, “Please, tell me where your great strength comes from? How could someone make you helpless?”

Samson told Delilah, “If someone tie me up with seven fresh bowstrings that were not dried, I will become weak.”

The Philistines brought bowstrings to Delilah and she tied up Samson. The Philistine leaders waited while Delilah called, “Samson, the Philistines are here!” Samson woke up and broke the bowstrings. Delilah was upset that Samson lied to her. She begged him again to tell his secret. Samson lied to Delilah two more times. Each time when she called, “Samson, the Philistines are here,” Samson woke up and broke free.

Delilah was upset. Day after day Delilah begged Samson to tell the secret of his strength. Finally, Samson told her the truth, “My hair has never been cut. I am a Nazirite dedicated to God from my birth. If someone shaved my head, I would lose my great strength.”

Delilah realized that this time Samson had told her the truth. She sent a message to the Philistine leaders to come to her house. Samson fell asleep and Delilah had a man shave off Samson’s seven braids. She called out, “Samson, the Philistines are here.” Samson thought that he would escape again. He did not realize that his strength and God’s Spirit had left him. The Philistines captured Samson, blinded him, and made him work in their prison. But his hair began to grow again.

One day, the Philistines gathered in their temple to the false god Dagon. They called for Samson to be brought from prison to entertain them. Samson was led from the prison to the temple. He asked the young man to help him put his hands on the pillars supporting the temple so he could lean on them.

Samson prayed to God, “Please remember me and give me strength once again.” Samson grabbed the pillars and pushed with all of his strength. The temple fell down. Samson had been a judge for 20 years. God used Samson to begin to rescue Israel from the Philistines.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Judges highlights the consequences of sin and our need for a Savior. The judges were temporary deliverers rescuing the Israelites from their enemies. Jesus is the sinless deliverer, who through His death on the cross and resurrection, has defeated our enemy, Satan.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

Samson’s selfish, sinful choices had serious consequences.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO JUDGES

CORE PASSAGE:

Judges 16:4-6,13-20

- God uses imperfect people in His plan.
- Sin has consequences.
- Samson was selfish and sinned.
- God used Samson to defeat the Philistines.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- The Weight of Separation: several identical heavy books, music

THE WEIGHT OF SEPARATION

- Arrange the group in a circle. Ask for three volunteers who believe they are the strongest members of the group. Hand each of the volunteers a copy of the heaviest book you can locate. A hymnal would work well, but something heavier, such as a volume of an encyclopedia, would be even better.
- Ask the group to guess which of these three they believe will be able to hold the book for the longest time.
- Instruct the first volunteer to hold the book in his hand with his wrist against his torso. In other words, the book will barely be extended away from the body at all.
- Guide the second volunteer to hold the book in her hand with her elbow against her torso. Therefore, her forearm would be extended from the body.
- Direct the third volunteer to hold the book in his hand with his arm fully extended from the shoulder.
- Play a recorded song as the three volunteers hold their books in their assigned positions. If any of the three fails to keep the book in the proper position throughout the song, make note of how long the effort lasted.
- When the song concludes (*or when all three have given up*), ask the volunteers to describe how their task felt. Allow three other kids to attempt the fully extended version for thirty seconds to understand how difficult that assignment was.
- Point out that today's lesson will look at the effects of sin in our lives. Suggest that, like these books, sin is a sort of weight. Point out that sin separates us from God. Remind them that the further away from the body the book was, the more difficult it became. Emphasize that sin and separation from God make everything in life more difficult.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Welcome the kids to group time. Remind them that the last three lessons came from the Book of Judges. Ask them what books come immediately before and after Judges. (*Joshua and Ruth*) Ask them to share the discouraging cycle that seems to run throughout this book. (*The people fell away, experienced bad things, called out to God, received help, and then fell away again.*)
- Ask them if they believe this discouraging cycle will happen again. Emphasize that it will not only happen to the nation, but it will happen in a single person's life in today's lesson.
- Guide the kids to locate Judges 13 in their Bibles. Ask a volunteer to read Judges 13:1 to discover if the people indeed fell away again. Explain that the next verses describe a couple who were suffering from the Philistines and from not being able to have children. Point out that Judges 13:5 tells about the special child that God promised this couple. Allow someone to read that verse.
- Explain that the child promised by the angel would be Samson, and that Samson himself followed God and then fell away, separating himself from God through sin, before coming back to obedience. Distribute the Family Cards. Point out that the 1,100 silver coins will be important as Samson's story unfolds. Challenge them to discover the significance of those coins as the lesson progresses.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Remind the kids that Samson was another one of the judges that God provided for Israel, and the one about whom we know the most. Allow the kids to remember that God raised up judges after the people had wandered away from Him and done evil. Point out that Lord used the Philistines for 20 years to oppress Israel.
- Explain that Samson was born to a childless couple and God intended the boy, from birth, to be set apart to serve and deliver His people through his great strength.
- Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.
- Point out that throughout his life, Samson's great strength made him a mighty warrior, but he also did many foolish things without thinking first.
- Explain that Samson's downfall came when he again became foolishly involved with a woman. Allow the kids to share her name. (*Delilah*) Suggest that you should look closely at this part of the story.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct the kids to locate Judges 16:4-6. Allow someone to read this aloud. Ask about the motivations of the three characters: the leaders, Delilah, and Samson. What did each of them want?

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- Examine the Text: Bibles
- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Judges" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Judges of Israel Chart" and "Romans 6:23" (Poster Pack), 2 pieces of paper, marker
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

At an appropriate moment during the session, share the gospel using "The Gospel" (*enhanced CD*) as a guide.

- Ask someone to read Judges 16:13-19. Again explore the motivations of Samson and Delilah. Ask why Samson did not suspect her. Emphasize that Samson's hair was not magical hair, but was a sign of his obedience to God.
- Quickly summarize the remainder of Samson's life story, how the Philistines blinded and imprisoned him and how he destroyed the temple of their god, Dagon.
- Display the "Text Truth Strip" and "Connection Statement" near the "Judges" poster. Invite kids to read the Text Truth: **Sin separates us from God and His good plan for our lives.** Ask kids how the Text Truth applies to the life of Samson.

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the "Session 11" video.
- Ask: "What kind of leader was Joel? What kind of leader was Samson? What can we learn about sin from today's video?"

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the "Judges of Israel Chart." Invite the girls and boys to count the number of judges recorded in the Book of Judges. Ask: "Do you think the Israelites had a problem obeying God? Do we have a problem obeying God today?" Help the boys and girls understand that everyone has a problem with sin.
- Display the "Romans 6:23" poster. Place two signs, reading *wages* and *gift*, on opposite sides of the room.
- Instruct the group to move to the *wages* sign and read the first part of the verse in a very serious, somber tone. Then direct them to move to the *gift* sign to read the remainder of the verse in a joyful tone.
- Repeat this process a few times. Allow, but don't encourage, exaggerated tones in the reading.
- Explain that the joy of the gift in Jesus can only be understood when we recognize the deadly effects of sin on our lives.

PRAYER

- Lead the group in a prayer that causes them to think through Romans 6:23. Pray over the "wages" half of the verse and ask the kids to consider their own sin. Then pray through the "gift" half and invite the kids to silently pray their thanks for what that means in their lives.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Direct the kids to locate the “Samson” page in their Explorer Guides.
- Instruct them to open their Bibles to Judges 6:4-6,13-20. Invite them to share what they recall from the story especially as it relates to sin separating people from God.
- Ask a volunteer to read aloud the “Nazirite Vow” information. Help kids locate today’s “Word to Know” in their Bibles.
- Select a second volunteer to read about today’s object, “Silver Coins.” Invite a third kid to read about Zorah and Gaza.
- Challenge the boys and girls to complete “Temptation Matching.” Then direct everyone to quietly reflect on today’s study and complete “Confession Time.”

PRAYER TIME

- Ask the kids to share prayer requests. Ask for four volunteers to pray for particular shared requests and anything else they would like to include.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.



MINT CONDITION

Tools: coins

- Gather the group and ask them to give some examples of sin. Point out that sin is not just “breaking the rules,” but is doing anything that falls short of God’s standard for perfection. Agree that God’s standards are so demanding that there is no chance that a human will totally avoid sin. We would have to be (*and to have always been*) perfect.
- Ask the group to name some things that people like to collect. Ask them if they believe that a collector of baseball cards or comic books would rather have an absolutely perfect, mint condition item or one that looks like it has been shoved in a bag for years. Explain that the term that collectors use, *mint*, comes from the mint that makes coins and other money. When a coin comes out of the mint, its condition should be mint—pristine or as perfect as possible. Show the cleanest, most perfect coin you have.
- Give each of the kids one or more coins. Ask them to look closely at these coins and make note of whatever imperfections they see. Allow them to describe the ways in which these coins are not mint.
- Point out that non-mint coins seem to work just fine. You can spend them at stores or in machines. Explain that it is in the demanding eye of a collector that the flaws will stand out. Emphasize that God, as our creator, has every right to be demanding when it comes to our condition.
- Review the Text Truth: **Sin separates us from God and His good plan for our lives.**

ON TARGET



Tools: dowels, heavyweight paper, glue, markers, scissors, "The Gospel" (enhanced CD)

- Remind the group of the effects of sin in the life of Samson. Allow someone to share the memory verse, Romans 6:23. Explain that the word translated "sin" in the English version of this verse is the Greek word "hamartia," which means "to miss the mark." Point out that to avoid sin in God's eyes, humans are asked to shoot arrows at a target and always hit the bull's eye.
- Ask volunteers to locate and read aloud these verses regarding sin: Romans 3:23, Psalm 119:133, 1 John 1:8.
- Invite the kids to create an arrow to remind them of their desire to always be "on target" and avoid sin. Give each of them a dowel. Guide them to cut out an arrowhead and fletching (*feathers*) from the heavyweight paper. Direct the group to write one of the four "sin" verses shared in this activity or another one on the fletching. Assist them in gluing the fletching and arrowhead onto the dowel to complete the arrow.
- As the glue dries, review the four verses. After reading 1 John 1:8, share 1 John 1:9 to offer encouragement to the group.
- Conclude the activity by reminding the kids that God has good plans for our lives, but **sin separates us from God and His good plan for our lives**. Remind them that while God has extremely high standards for us, He provides the way to achieve those standards through faith in Jesus.
- Review "The Gospel" as time allows.

CONSIDERING COMMANDMENTS



Tools: Bibles

- Remind the group of the effects of sin in the life of Samson. Allow someone to share the memory verse, Romans 6:23. Emphasize that sin does not simply mean violating some rules, but failing to measure up to God's standards. Point out that the most familiar list of those standards are found in the Ten Commandments. (*Exodus 20:1-17*)
- Direct the kids to locate the Ten Commandments in their Bibles. Point out that the first four commandments have to do with our relationship with God. Note that these commandments are key to obeying the remaining commands, which we will focus on—the ones covering our relationship with other people.
- Form two teams, giving each team two commandments to consider. Give the first team the commandments in Exodus 20:12 and 15, while the second team should take the ones in Exodus 20:16-17. Direct the teams to paraphrase their commandments. As they share their paraphrases, discuss whether these words capture the true meaning.
- For each verse, ask the kids if they have ever violated that commandment and thus fallen short of God's glory. Lead a discussion demonstrating that virtually everyone has dishonored parents, stolen something, lied, or coveted something at some point.
- Emphasize that God has a great plan for each of us and that sin not only separates us from God, but interferes with that great plan.
- Review the Text Truth: **Sin separates us from God and His good plan for our lives**.



BETHLEHEM

MOAB

Session

12



RUTH FOLLOWS NAOMI

Ruth 1:6-18

The story of Ruth occurred during the time of the judges. No attempt is made to date the story precisely. The Book of Ruth presents a rather idyllic picture of life compared to the chaos and bloodshed so often found in the Book of Judges. In Judges, we read of short-sighted selfishness, frequent turmoil, and constant unfaithfulness. In Ruth, we read of persevering selflessness, steady tranquility, and complete devotion on Ruth's part toward Naomi. Whereas Judges focused upon leaders, the Book of Ruth focused on laypeople, namely, Naomi, Boaz, and Ruth, who lived out their faith during trying circumstances.

Ruth was from Moab, a perennial enemy of Judah. Yet, Elimelech migrated there with his wife Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, due to a famine in Bethlehem. Over the course of time, Elimelech died of an unstated cause and his two sons each married Moabite women. Mahlon married Ruth; Chilion married Orpah. Within a decade both men died of unspecified causes as well. Naomi decided to return home and urged her widowed daughters-in-law to return to their own homes and marry Moabite men. Orpah went home; Ruth stayed with Naomi.

The Book of Ruth contains two intriguing and important concepts. First, the practice of Levirate marriage, whereby a male kinsman of a deceased man married his widow and sired children with a view toward continuing his brother's line. Second, the concept of the kinsman redeemer, *go'el* in Hebrew, whereby ancestral land was redeemed and kept in the family. The two concepts are closely intertwined and masterfully displayed in Ruth.

God's plans sometimes involve enduring difficulties and making hard decisions. Believers can find comfort in difficulties through the relationships God places in their lives. Believers can remain confident God is worthy of our trust, even when we are facing difficulties in life, because we know that God can use anything—good or bad—to accomplish His good plans for us.

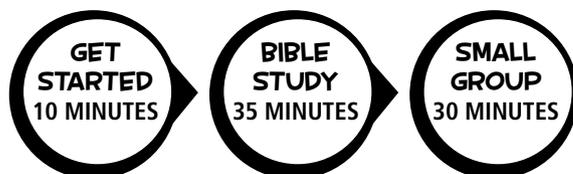
SESSION FOCUS

CORE PASSAGE: Ruth 1:6-18

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Ruth 1-2

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Ruth 1:16

TEXT TRUTH: God can use anything—good or bad—to accomplish His good plans for us.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- Best Laid Plans: *various printed materials, scissors, craft supplies*

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: *Bibles, Family Cards*
- Examine the Text: *Bibles*
- The Bible Story: *Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack), "Ruth" (Books of the Bible Posters)*

- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*

- Memory Verse: *"Ruth 1:16" (Poster Pack), "Ruth 1:16 Strips" (enhanced CD)*
- Prayer: *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Make: *paper, pens, "Random Rhymes" (enhanced CD)*
- Move: *various balls, marbles, beans, and other objects that roll; "Review Questions" (enhanced CD)*
- Examine: *road maps, pens, coins*

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RUTH AND NAOMI

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Ruth 1–2

During the time when Israel had judges, the land experienced a famine. A man named Elimelech left Bethlehem with his wife Naomi and their two sons. They traveled to the land of Moab to live for a while. While in Moab, Elimelech died and the two sons married women from Moab. After living in Moab for 10 years, Naomi's sons died.

Naomi heard that God had provided food for the people back in Judah, so she and her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, prepared to leave Moab. They began the trip to Bethlehem. Naomi encouraged both of her daughters-in-law to return to the home of their parents. "Go back to your mother's home. May the Lord show faithful love to you. May you find a new husband." Orpah and Ruth said that they wanted to go with Naomi, but Naomi told them it was better that they go home. They wept and Orpah agreed to go. Ruth clung to Naomi and said, "Where you go, I will go. Your people will be my people. Your God will be my God."

Naomi realized that she could not change Ruth's mind, so the two traveled to Bethlehem. When they arrived, the entire town became excited to see Naomi. But Naomi was sad, she thought that God was upset with her and that was why her husband and sons had died.

When Ruth and Naomi arrived in Bethlehem, it was time for the barley harvest to begin. Ruth offered to go to the fields and gather the grain left behind by the workers. She began to work in the field of a man named Boaz. Naomi was related to Boaz.

Boaz saw Ruth working in his field. He asked the workers about her. When he learned that she was working very hard to gather grain for Naomi, Boaz told Ruth to stay in the fields that he owned. She should stay close to his female workers and drink water from jars his workers filled.

Ruth asked, "Why are you being kind to me, even though I am not an Israelite?"

Boaz explained, "I have heard how you have cared for Naomi and left your people to be with her in a strange land. May you receive a reward from God, who is giving you refuge."

God was providing for Naomi and Ruth. God had a plan for them. He was going to use their bad times to bring something very good for them.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Ruth is a beautiful picture of redemption and grace. God extended grace through Ruth to Naomi and redeemed Ruth and Naomi through Boaz. While Boaz redeemed Naomi and Ruth's earthly inheritance, he could not redeem anyone from sin. God extended grace and redemption by sending His Son, Jesus, to be our Redeemer. He paid the price for our sin and secured our future with God.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

God was with Naomi and Ruth even when they experienced difficult times.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO RUTH

CORE PASSAGE: Ruth 1:6-18

- God loved and cared for Naomi and Ruth.
- God was not upset with Naomi.
- Our world is broken by sin, so sometimes bad things happen.
- God has a plan for us.
- We can always trust God.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- Best Laid Plans: various printed materials, scissors, craft supplies

BEST LAID PLANS

- Gather a collection of printed materials, placing them in the middle of the area.
- Divide the group into teams of four or five. Assign each of the teams a work area around the perimeter of the room.
- Explain that each team should privately create a set of combined plans for themselves. Each member of the team should contribute one part of the plan. Therefore, a team might combine the contributions of its members to say, “I plan to become a marine biologist, live in Alaska, get married, learn to speak Swahili, and become a missionary.”
- Direct the teams to take three minutes to use the printed items, scissors, and any other supplies they can locate to communicate those plans to the rest of the group. Emphasize that they cannot speak or write down any words. All communication must be done using already-existing words, images, or objects.
- After allowing the teams to work for three minutes, ask all of the other teams to look at the work the first team has done. Invite the other teams to guess what plans are represented here. Allow the first team to explain what plans they were attempting to communicate.
- Repeat the process for the remaining teams.
- Ask the kids what would have made this process easier. Suggest that if they could have simply spoken of their plans, that would have been a much simpler way to communicate.
- Explain that sometimes God does not give us the resources that would seem to work best for the plans He has, but that, as today’s lesson shows, **God can use anything—good or bad—to accomplish His good plans for us.**
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Gather the kids in a corner away from chairs as you welcome them to group time. Ask what book of the Bible has provided the last several lessons. (*Judges*) Explain that in today's lesson we find ourselves in another book that starts out discouraging but gets better over time. Ask if they can name this book that follows *Judges*. (*Ruth*)
- Guide the kids to locate *Ruth* 1 in their Bibles. Point out that it is a short book with only four chapters. Ask a volunteer to read *Ruth* 1:1. Ask what town this family left (*Bethlehem*) and where they moved. (*Moab*) Distribute the Family Cards and point out the map.
- Explain that in the next four verses, the man dies and his two sons, now married, also died, leaving three widows behind. Ask the kids if they agree this is a discouraging beginning to the Book of *Ruth*.
- Ask: "Why do you think we are gathered over here in this corner?" After entertaining some theories, explain that the three widows found themselves a long way from the land that God had promised to Israel. Point out that without any husbands to help them, these women were in a difficult situation. Suggest that God can take even that bad of a situation and do something truly amazing with it.
- Guide the group over to the chairs, explaining that the lesson will explore the return journey that the women took from *Moab* to *Bethlehem*, and the amazing plan God had in mind.

THE BIBLE STORY

- Point out, using *Ruth* 1:1, that although the Book of *Ruth* follows *Judges*, it actually was a smaller story that took place during *Judges*. Remind the group of the cycle of rebellion that marked *Judges*. Ask them to pay attention and see if that cycle continues in *Ruth*.
- Set the scene by asking the kids to sit and listen as you read *Ruth* 1:1-5. Instruct them to stand and say "Oh no!" every time they hear something in those verses that sounds like bad news. Read the verses, pausing at the obvious points. If someone interrupts at an unexpected time, allow her to explain. Otherwise, encourage everyone to agree on what the bad news is. Ask if *Elimelech* leaving his homeland to go to *Moab* was bad news. Remind the group that God had given Israel their land and could be trusted to provide for them there.
- Emphasize that, at this point in the story, the family consisted of three widows. With no way to support herself or her daughters-in-law, *Naomi* headed back to her homeland. Share what she said to the younger women in *Ruth* 1:8-9. Point out that one of them, *Orpah*, stayed in *Moab*. Ask why she may have made that choice. Emphasize that *Ruth* decided to go with *Naomi*. Speculate on her motive.

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- Examine the Text: Bibles
- The Bible Story: Bibles, "Text Truth Strips" and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack) and "Ruth" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Ruth 1:16" (Poster Pack), "Ruth 1:16 Strips" (enhanced CD)
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Direct the kids' attention to Ruth 1:16-17. Ask them to carefully read these verses to discover why Ruth was so devoted to Naomi. Allow them to share their ideas. Emphasize two portions of these verses.
- Ask them to look back to the last line of verse 16. Explain that the Moabite god was not the living God of Israel. Direct them to the name of God, "Yahweh," in verse 17. (*Note: Some translations say "LORD."*) Ask: "How would this Moabite woman have known about Yahweh?"
- Suggest that Ruth knew enough about the true God to believe that tough times with Naomi would be better than staying in Moab.
- Display the "Text Truth Strip" and "Connection Statement" near the "Ruth" poster. Read the Text Truth aloud: **God can use anything—good or bad—to accomplish His good plans for us.** Share that next week the group will learn the rest of Ruth and Naomi's story and discover what God's good plan for them was.

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the "Session 12" video.
- Discuss: "Tell me one thing Joel told us about Ruth." (*Pause for answers.*) "What do you learn about God from studying the lives of Ruth and Naomi?" (*If no one mentions it, remind kids of the Text Truth.*)

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the "Ruth 1:16" poster. Invite the group to read the verse together. Set the poster aside.
- Form small groups. If you have a small number of kids, form six teams (*or singles*). A larger group could have eight teams. Distribute the "Ruth 1:16 Strips."
- Invite the teams to assemble the verse in the proper order. When they believe they have established the correct order, allow them to read the verse.

PRAYER

- Guide the group in a prayer, acknowledging the difficulties and messiness of life and God's ability to use those apparently negative things to accomplish His will. Ask that God will help each person in the group to trust Him in all dealings, whether things seem to go well or badly.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Guide the kids to open their Explorer Guides and locate the page titled “Ruth Follows Naomi.”
- Instruct them to locate Ruth 1:6-18 in their Bibles. Ask them to share as many facts from the story of Ruth and Naomi as they can remember as they complete the “Review Crossword.”
- Invite kids to take turns reading about the “Field of Boaz,” “What is an Ephah?,” and today’s object—the map of the journey from Moab to Bethlehem.
- Lead kids to find today’s “Word to Know” in their Bible.
- Help kids apply today’s Text Truth by guiding boys and girls to record their thoughts to each of the “Caring Scenes” situations.

PRAYER TIME

- Lead the boys and girls in a prayer, asking God to help the kids realize that many of the apparently bad things that happen in their lives will be used by God for His purposes.
- Conclude the prayer by praying for each of the kids by name.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

- Explorer Guides: Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

CROSSWORD ANSWERS:

- 1) Field
- 2) Boaz
- 3) Naomi
- 4) Kind
- 5) Lord
- 6) Barley
- 7) Ruth
- 8) Gather
- 9) God
- 10) Bethlehem
- 11) Home
- 12) Famine
- 13) Upset
- 14) Orpah

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App. Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus.”

RANDOM RHYMES

Tools: paper, pens, “Random Rhymes” (enhanced CD)

- Allow the group to review the lesson briefly. Remind them that God has an amazing ability to take anything, whether good or bad, and use it for His purposes. Insist that this was true in Ruth’s life and it is true in ours as well.
- Explain that in honor of God’s ability to work with things that seem very random, you would like to challenge the group to do some work with random words. Ask them each to write down (a) something good they have from God, (b) an -ing verb (*like jumping*), and (c) a random object.
- Distribute the “Random Rhymes.” Guide the kids to fill in the three words that they wrote down in the corresponding lettered blanks. Allow them to make slight changes. For example, “pepperoni pizza” could be changed to “pizza” but not to “ice cream.” Challenge them to complete the outlined poem so that the even numbered lines rhyme.
- After allowing a few minutes for the kids to attempt to create their poems, let them share their progress with the rest of the group.
- Point out that writing a poem with assigned words is a very difficult task. Remind them that the random events of life that God uses to work out His purposes are far more complex and difficult. Review the Text Truth: **God can use anything—good or bad—to accomplish His good plans for us.**



AN AMAZING RACE



Tools: various balls, marbles, beans, and other objects that roll; “Review Questions” (enhanced CD)

- Request that the group review the lesson briefly. Remind them that God has an amazing ability to take anything, good or bad, and use it for His purposes. Insist that this was true in Ruth’s life and it is true in ours as well.
- Explain that you would like to reinforce God’s ability to make good results out of good or bad ingredients with a simple game. Display the various rolling items available for the kids to use. Do not explain how they will be asked to use them.
- Ask each of the “Review Questions,” one at a time. Call on the first in the group to raise a hand to answer. If that person answers correctly, allow him to select one of the items. Continue through the questions until everyone has selected a rolling item.
- Guide the group to place their items in a line on the floor. Explain that they must move their item across the room to a finish line but that they may not touch it with their hands. Do not mention it, but allow them to touch the item indirectly or with a non-hand part of the body.
- Allow the players to race their items across the line. As time and interest permit, engage in a rematch.
- Point out that the terms of the race were not particularly fair. Some items moved better than others. Remind the kids that while Naomi and Ruth’s life was not particularly fair, **God can use anything—good or bad—to accomplish His good plans for us.**

DETOURS



Tools: road maps, pens, coins

- Explain that just as Naomi’s life did not turn out the way she had intended it, with her husband and her sons dying prematurely, often times our lives take unexpected and unwelcome detours.
- Lay out the map (*or multiple copies of the same map*) for everyone to see. Form the group into teams of two or three. Explain that everyone will be engaging in a map race. Select two cities a considerable distance from each other. (*On a U.S. map, you might choose Los Angeles and New York.*) Ask the teams to plan how they would best travel from City A to City B.
- Instruct them to begin in City A and travel by their chosen route for several inches. (*The bigger the map, the farther they should go.*) Tell them to stop at the next state or large city.
- For each team, flip a coin. Require them to turn left for a “heads” and right for a “tails.” If they do not have the option to turn in the direction selected, they must turn around and travel back.
- Repeat this process, allowing each team to travel a prescribed distance, stop at an intersection, and await a coin flip. If the activity seems unlikely to yield a winner, feel free to change the rules somewhat.
- When the first team reaches City B, ask the others where they are.
- Point out that God does not always have us wind up in life in the place we expected. Remind them that **God can use anything—good or bad—to accomplish His good plans for us.**



RUTH AND BOAZ

Ruth 3:8-13; 4:13-17

In this week's session we are studying how God used Boaz, a "family redeemer," to bring both help and hope to Naomi and Ruth. In Ruth 1, when Ruth vowed to stay with Naomi, she had no idea what would become of the two of them. Naomi described her life as having been made bitter by the Lord. Like Naomi, Ruth was a widow with no visible prospects of support. Yet, Ruth put Naomi's welfare above her own, a sacrificial act of love that would factor into God's plan (2:10-12).

In last week's session, we introduced the customs of Levirate marriage and kinsman redeemer. Since both customs factor heavily in this week's session, additional explanation is needed. First, the law of the Levirate marriage was given by Moses on the plains of Moab as the children of Israel were about to enter the promised land (*Deut. 25:5-10*). The purpose of the law was to assure that a deceased man's name was remembered through offspring. Thus, in the case where a married man died childless, the Levirate marriage law instructed a brother to marry the deceased man's widow and raise up a son. This son would carry on the dead brother's family line.

Second, closely related to the Levirate law was the idea of a kinsman redeemer. The kinsman redeemer, or *go'el*, had two responsibilities in addition to fulfilling the Levirate marriage. The *go'el* was a blood avenger responsible for securing retribution against the perpetrator of murder of a family member. (*This responsibility does not appear in Ruth.*) The *go'el* was also responsible to assure the dead man's land stayed in the family.

Living with integrity leads to finding favor with God and others. Believers can face potential obstacles with confidence, knowing that God can use obstacles for His honor. God is always at work, making His redemptive plan known. We can count on God!

SESSION FOCUS

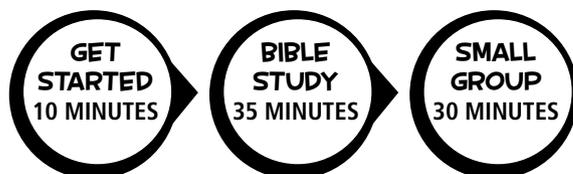
CORE PASSAGE: Ruth 3:8-13; 4:13-17

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Ruth 2-4

FAMILY MEMORY VERSE: Ruth 2:20

ADDITIONAL MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 92:4

TEXT TRUTH: God is always working to accomplish His redeeming purposes.



GET STARTED TOOLS

- No Weak Links: *Bibles, boxes of paper clips*

BIBLE STUDY TOOLS

- Jumping In: *Bibles, Family Cards*
- The Bible Story: *Bibles*
- Examine the Text: *“Odds and Ends” (enhanced CD); “Bible Places Now,” “Text Truth Strips,” and “Connection Statements” (Poster Pack); “Ruth” (Books of the Bible Posters)*

- Play the Video: *Explore the Bible on Location video*
- Memory Verse: *“Psalm 92:4” (Poster Pack)*
- Prayer: *none*

SMALL GROUP TOOLS

- Explorer Guides: *Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens*
- Move: *“Allergy Alert” and “Review Questions” (enhanced CD), paper cups, two different colors of dried beans*
- Examine: *index cards, pens*
- Build: *12 blocks, small sticky notes, pens*

NOTE: Downloadable versions of DVD items are available in the Digital Video Bundle. Downloadable versions of enhanced CD items are available in the Music and Print Extras Bundle. For free online training on how to lead a group, visit ministrygrid.com/web/explorethebible.

BOAZ, THE FAMILY REDEEMER

CONNECTION PASSAGE: Ruth 2–4

After Boaz saw Ruth working in the field, he was very kind to her. First, he told her to collect grain in his fields and to stay near his servants. She was allowed to have water from the jars that his workers filled. At lunch time, he shared food with her. Later, he ordered his workers to leave some good grain for Ruth to gather.

Ruth gathered 26 quarts of barley and took it to Naomi. Naomi asked where she had worked and Ruth told her about Boaz and his kindness. Naomi knew that Boaz was a relative; he was one of the family redeemers.

Naomi made a plan. She had Ruth wash and wear her best clothes. Then she sent Ruth to ask Boaz to be their family redeemer.

Ruth did as Naomi instructed. Boaz explained that yes he was a family redeemer, but there was a closer family redeemer. Boaz had to give the other man the option to redeem Ruth and Naomi. Boaz gave Ruth some barley and sent her back to Naomi.

Ruth told Naomi everything that had happened. Naomi responded, “He won’t rest until he resolves this today.”

Boaz went to the gate of the town to wait for the family redeemer. When the redeemer arrived, Boaz asked him to sit down along with 10 of the town’s elders. He told the man, “Naomi has returned home. She is selling a piece of land that belonged to her husband. I wanted to tell you so you could buy it back here in the presence of the elders. If you want to redeem it, do. If you do not, tell me and I will redeem it.”

The man responded, “I want to redeem it.”

Then Boaz added, “When you redeem the land from Naomi, you must marry Ruth from Moab.”

The redeemer changed his mind and told Boaz, “Take it, because I can’t redeem it.”

To make the deal official, the redeemer removed his sandal and told Boaz to buy the land.

Boaz immediately told the elders of the town that he was redeeming the land Naomi had and was marrying Ruth.

So Boaz married Ruth and they had a baby boy named Obed. The women of the town told Naomi, “Praise God. He has not left you without a family redeemer. God will renew you and sustain you.”

Naomi held baby Obed on her lap and helped care for him. God had not forgotten Naomi and her family. Later, Obed had a son named Jesse. Then Jesse had a son named David. David was a king of Israel and was a part of the family of Jesus.

CHRIST IN CONTEXT:

The Book of Ruth is a beautiful picture of redemption and grace. God extended grace through Ruth to Naomi and redeemed Ruth and Naomi through Boaz. While Boaz redeemed Naomi and Ruth’s earthly inheritance, he could not redeem anyone from sin. God extended grace and redemption by sending His Son, Jesus, to be our Redeemer. He paid the price for our sin and secured our future with God.

CONNECTION STATEMENT:

God blessed Naomi and Ruth with a family redeemer.



KEY CONNECTIONS TO RUTH

CORE PASSAGE:

Ruth 3:8-13; 4:13-17

- God’s plan is always working.
- God did not forget Naomi and Ruth.
- God cared for Naomi and Ruth and provided everything they needed.
- Boaz was a family redeemer.

DEFINITION:

A family redeemer was a relative who had special responsibilities when it came to his family members. He was responsible for buying the estate of a relative who might have sold it because of poverty. Also, if a husband died, the family redeemer would marry the widow to help carry on the man’s name and inheritance.

GET STARTED (10 MINUTES)

TOOLS:

- No Weak Links: Bibles, boxes of paper clips

NO WEAK LINKS

- Form teams of three or four. Supply each team with a Bible and a box of paper clips.
- Point out that the Bible contains sixty-six books and was written in two main languages by many different writers over a time span of at least 1,500 years. Emphasize that even though the Bible seems to be a lot of different pieces of writing going different directions, it always focuses on one message: God's plan to save people from sin.
- Challenge the teams to link together as many paper clips as they can in the time provided. Explain that they must make their paper-clip chain in the following manner: They must look up the first page of Genesis in the Bible you supply and call out "Genesis" in unison. They can then take a paper clip to represent Genesis.
- Explain that they will next locate the first page of the next book, call out its name, and add another paper clip, repeating this process until they have reached Revelation or time has expired.
- Answer any questions the teams have on the process and then start a timer. Allow them four minutes to complete their chains. If possible, enlist other adults to listen and ensure that they do not skip books or fail to locate the first page of books along the way.
- At the conclusion of the time, ask the teams to display their chains. Compare the lengths and ask them what book they reached before time expired.
- Point out that they could have made a longer chain if they had not needed to look up the Bible books. Suggest that although you distracted them from making their chains with that task, God is never distracted from His goal of redeeming people like us.
- Transition to Bible Study.

BIBLE STUDY (35 MINUTES)

JUMPING IN

- Welcome the kids to group time and display the longest of the paper-clip chains. Ask the group to name the book that provided last week's story. (*Ruth*) Allow them to share any portions of Ruth and Naomi's story that they recall from last week. Remind them that Ruth is a book that starts out discouraging but turns out very well.
- Guide the kids to locate Ruth in their Bibles. Remind them that Naomi and Ruth, both widows, had returned from Moab to Bethlehem. Emphasize that even when they arrived in the place where Naomi had been raised, they were still widows without any way to feed or protect themselves. Explain that even while these two women were struggling to survive, God was busy with His plan to provide redemption to all people.
- Remind the kids that after returning to Bethlehem, Naomi had sent Ruth to a field where men were harvesting, hoping to pick up a few pieces of grain that had been left behind. Distribute the Family Cards and point out the image of the threshing process. Explain briefly how threshers take harvest grain and separate the usable part of the grain from all of the stalks and other portions. Point out that even though this process is difficult and long, it produces something very good, just like the story of Ruth and Naomi.
- Explain that you would like to jump to the end of the story. In time, Boaz and Ruth were married and had a child, giving Naomi a grandchild. Direct the group to turn to Ruth 4:16 and ask someone to read 4:16-17.
- Explain that through God's careful planning, a widow became the great-grandmother of King David and an ancestor of Jesus. Say: "Now let's see how we got there."

THE BIBLE STORY

- Allow the group to recap the story of Ruth and Naomi from last week. Ask them: "Does this story, so far, seem to be another example of the cycle of rebellion that we saw in Judges?" No. Encourage them to note if that cycle makes an appearance today.
- Point out that, as widows without men to support them in that time, Ruth and Naomi were almost completely helpless. Explain that one way that widows could find food was to go into a field that was being harvested and to gather the few pieces of grain that the workers dropped. Share that Boaz had not only welcomed Ruth into his field, but told his workers to leave some extra grain lying around for her.
- Emphasize that Naomi understood that the only long-term hope that she and Ruth had for surviving was if Ruth found a husband. Briefly explain the idea of a family redeemer—someone who would be asked to marry a widow so that her deceased husband's line would not die out.
- Explain that Naomi knew that Boaz, as a relative, could marry Ruth and provide for both of the women.

TOOLS:

- Jumping In: Bibles, Family Cards
- The Bible Story: Bibles
- Examine the Text: "Odds and Ends" (enhanced CD); "Bible Places Now," Text Truth Strips," and "Connection Statements" (Poster Pack); "Ruth" (Books of the Bible Posters)
- Play the Video: Explore the Bible on Location video
- Memory Verse: "Psalm 92:4" (Poster Pack)
- Prayer: none

OPTION:

Tell the Bible story using the script provided as a guide.

EXAMINE THE TEXT

- Divide the group into two groups. Ask one of them to read Ruth 3:8-13 and the other to read Ruth 4:13-17.
- Distribute the “Odds and Ends” strips to the corresponding groups. Ask the groups to read their assigned passages and discover where the “Odds and Ends” terms fit in. Allow them to share with the rest of the kids what they have discovered.
- Display the “Text Truth Strip” and “Connection Statement” near the “Ruth” poster. Read the Text Truth together: **God is always working to accomplish His redeeming purposes.**
- Invite the boys and girls to examine the “Bible Places Now” poster. Ask kids to review some of the Bible stories they have learned the last 13 weeks. Allow kids to share how they have seen God working to accomplish His redeeming purposes in the Books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth.

PLAY THE VIDEO

- Show the “Session 13” video.
- Ask: “What did Kaileigh tell us about how people in the Bible harvested grain?” and “How was God working in the lives of Ruth and Naomi?”

MEMORY VERSE

- Display the “Psalm 92:4” poster. Invite the group to read the verse together.
- Arrange the boys and girls in four lines forming a square. Stand in the middle of the square. Face one of the lines and ask them to read the first line of the verse. Turn clockwise and allow them to read the second line. Pause and ask someone to share what God has done for them.
- Turn again and allow the third line to read the third line. Turn to the fourth line and, after they read the fourth line of the verse, ask them to name one of the works of God’s hands.
- Repeat this process, beginning with the second group so that the other groups are asked to provide examples.

PRAYER

- Arrange the kids in a circle. Begin a prayer in which you thank God for the many good things that He provides in our lives. Pause the prayer and ask the person to your right to share one blessing God has provided. Proceed around the circle. Help out those who struggle to suggest something and allow repetitions. When the circle is completed, conclude the prayer.

SMALL GROUP (30 MINUTES)

EXPLORER GUIDES

- Ask the kids to open their Explorer Guides and find the page titled “Ruth and Boaz.”
- Guide them to find Ruth 2–4 in their Bibles. Ask them to consider how God was working throughout this story.
- Lead girls and boys to locate today’s “Word to Know” in their Bibles.
- Ask for a volunteer to read aloud about today’s object, the “Threshing Floor” and guide kids to examine the “Winnowing Tools.” Guide kids to compare the threshing process to “Modern Farm Equipment.”
- Review the memory verse by challenging kids to solve the “Math Code.”
- Help kids think about the Bible stories they have learned from Joshua, Judges, and Ruth. Lead kids to “Write About It” in the space provided.

PRAYER TIME

- Ask the kids to enter into a time of silent prayer. Suggest that they use the time to thank God for working constantly for the redemption of people. Invite the kids to reflect on the steps that God took to bring them to faith in Jesus. Close the prayer by thanking God for providing the way to redemption through faith in Jesus.

ACTIVITIES

- Select one or more of the activities to complete as time allows.

TOOLS:

Bibles, Explorer Guides, pens

TECH CONNECT (OPTIONAL)

- Prior to class, download the Explore the Bible: Kids Family App.
- Use the activity labeled “Explorer Plus” on the app.

BEAN THRESHING

Tools: “Allergy Alert” and “Review Questions” (enhanced CD), paper cups, two different colors of dried beans

- Remind the kids of the object. Ask them to explain again how the threshing process worked and what it aimed to accomplish. Point out that threshing grain would be a great deal of hard and tedious work.
- Suggest that today the group can engage in some not-so-hard, not-so-tedious work. Provide each participant with a cup of the two types of beans, mixed together. Explain that, when time begins, they are to separate the two types of beans into two separate piles, and the first person to complete the task perfectly will be named the winner.
- Start the race. After a moment, say: “Stop!” Direct everyone to lift their hands from the beans. Ask the first of the review questions. Only when someone has answered it correctly should the sorting continue. Interrupt the sorting periodically in this manner. Be sure, as someone is about to win, to interrupt the work.
- After acknowledging the winner, take a moment to collect the beans.
- Emphasize that sorting out beans, just like threshing grain, would become very boring after a little while. Remind the kids that God engages in the constant work of redeeming lost people every minute of every day, and has been working on that since the creation of the universe. Review the Text Truth: **God is always working to accomplish His redeeming purposes.**



WHAT'S GOD DOING?



Tools: index cards, pens

- As the group gathers, hand each person three index cards. Ask him to write on the first something significant (*good or bad*) that has happened to him in the last month. On the second, he should write something significant that has happened to a member of his family, while on the third he can write something that has happened to a friend. Collect the cards and mix them. Create your own cards as well.
- Remind the group of how God worked to take a pair of widows from poverty and place them into the lineage of Jesus. Emphasize that God's work did not stop in the Bible, but continues in our lives today. Take your own cards and share something significant that has happened to you recently. Explain how you believe God is using that event to help you grow or to bring others to Christ. Do the same with the other two cards.
- Draw a random card and read it. Allow the writer to identify herself if desired, but do not insist. Discuss how God could be using this event in His continuing redeeming work.
- Proceed through as many cards as time allows. Conclude by emphasizing that God is always in control and always working.
- Review the Text Truth: **God is always working to accomplish His redeeming purposes.**

RUTH ON THE FAMILY TREE



Tools: 12 blocks, small sticky notes, pens

- Assemble the group and ask them to speculate on how Ruth might have felt about her life when she found herself as a poor widow in Bethlehem. Agree that Ruth probably did not think that anything very good or important would come from her life.
- Direct the kids to open their Bibles to Ruth 4:17. Ask a volunteer to read that verse. Choose four participants and give each of them one block. Ask one to write *Boaz and Ruth* on a sticky note, attaching it to the block. Direct others to place the other names (*other than Naomi*) from that verse onto blocks. Stack the four blocks up, with David on top.
- Guide the kids to note Ruth 4:18-22 and add blocks for the names from Perez to Salmon.
- Direct the group to turn to Matthew 1 and see that the list of names extends far beyond David. Ask them to count the number of generations between David and Jesus (*excluding those two, it is 26*). Place a block reading "26 generations" on top of David.
- Draw attention to the final name in the Matthew 1 list. Allow the group to create a "Jesus" block and put it on top.
- Ask: "Do you think that God knew what He was doing when Ruth met Boaz?" Demonstrate how important God's continuing work is by showing what happens when one of the lower blocks is pulled out.
- Wrap it up by noting that God's continuous work has led us to know and trust Jesus.
- Review the Text Truth: **God is always working to accomplish His redeeming purposes.**

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Each of these terms will help you as you delve into teaching *Explore the Bible: Kids*.

- **CORE PASSAGE**

The focal passage for all age groups.

- **TEXT TRUTH**

The main point of the Core Passage to communicate to children.

- **CONNECTION PASSAGE**

Related Scripture and story that connects to the Text Truth and Core Passage.

- **CONNECTION STATEMENT**

A statement connecting the Core and Connection Passages.

- **CHRIST IN CONTEXT**

The message of Jesus in a particular Bible book.

- **GENRE**

A specific form or type of writing or literature. Each form has rules or basic features. In the Bible, there are six genres: Law, History, Poetry and Wisdom, Prophecy, Gospel, and Letters.

- **CONTEXT**

The words or environment around what you are studying that help you understand what it means. Examples of types of context: historical context, cultural context.

- **ORIGINAL AUDIENCE**

The author of each Bible book wrote to a specific audience. The original audience is the first audience to receive the Bible book. All other readers, including today's readers, are not the original audience. The original audience is key to understanding the author's purpose for the Bible book or text.

- **CROSS-REFERENCING**

Examining a second (*third, fourth, and etc.*) biblical text to gain greater understanding of the first biblical text.

COMING NEXT QUARTER

SPRING 2017

MATTHEW -Since the end of the Book of Matthew deals primarily with the end of Jesus' life, girls and boys will dive deep into Jesus' sacrifice on the cross and the events which led up to and surrounded it.

DATE	CORE PASSAGE	CONNECTION PASSAGE	MEMORY VERSE
Mar. 5	Matthew 16:13-28	Matthew 16:13-16,20-25	Matthew 16:24
Mar. 12	Matthew 17:1-13	Matthew 17:1-13; Mark 9:2-13; Luke 9:28-36	Matthew 17:5
Mar. 19	Matthew 19:16-26	Matthew 19:16-26; Mark 10:17-30; Luke 18:18-30	Matthew 19:26
Mar. 26	Matthew 21:1-11	Matthew 21:1-17; Mark 11:1-11,15-18; Luke 19:28-40; John 12:12-19	Matthew 21:9
Apr. 2	Matthew 21:33-45	Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12	1 John 5:12
Apr. 9	Matthew 22:1-14	Matthew 22:1-14	Romans 10:13
Apr. 16	Matthew 28:1-15	Matthew 27:41-52; 28:1-15	Matthew 28:6
Apr. 23	Matthew 24:36-51	Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:1-8	Matthew 24:42
Apr. 30	Matthew 26:17-30	Matthew 26:17-30; John 13:1-15	Luke 22:19
May 7	Matthew 26:36-46	Matthew 26:36-46; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46	Matthew 26:39
May 14	Matthew 26:65-75	Matthew 26:31-35,69-75; Mark 14:66-72	Romans 3:23
May 21	John 21	John 21	John 3:16
May 28	Matthew 28:16-20	Luke 24:44-49; Acts 1:6-8	Matthew 28:19-20

TOOLS FOR DIGGING DEEP!

OLDER KIDS TOOL KIT

The resources you need to lead one class:

- One Older Kids Leader Guide
- One Older Kids Explorer Guide
- One pack Older Kids Family Cards
- One Older Kids Poster Pack
- One Kids Enhanced CD
- One Kids DVD

OLDER KIDS LEADER GUIDE

Helps older kids connect the Bible to present day

- Leader-friendly session plans for small- and large-group learning
- Activities to encourage kids to dig, explore, and discover the Bible

OLDER KIDS EXPLORER GUIDE

Engage older kids with a colorful, fact-filled magazine.

- Identifies each object that reminds kids of the Bible story and Text Truth
- Weekly pages with colorful illustrations, info-graphics, and photos
- Fun-to-do Bible-focused activities relate to the Bible content and application
- Send home at the end of the quarter for kids to keep

OLDER KIDS POSTER PACK

Filled with leader-friendly resources that make teaching easy

- Christ in Context poster(s)
- Text Truth statements
- Family Memory Verse posters (*ESV, HCSB, KJV, NIV*)
- Additional visual aids and resources

OLDER KIDS FAMILY CARDS

- Equip parents with discussion questions that relate to each session

KIDS ENHANCED CD

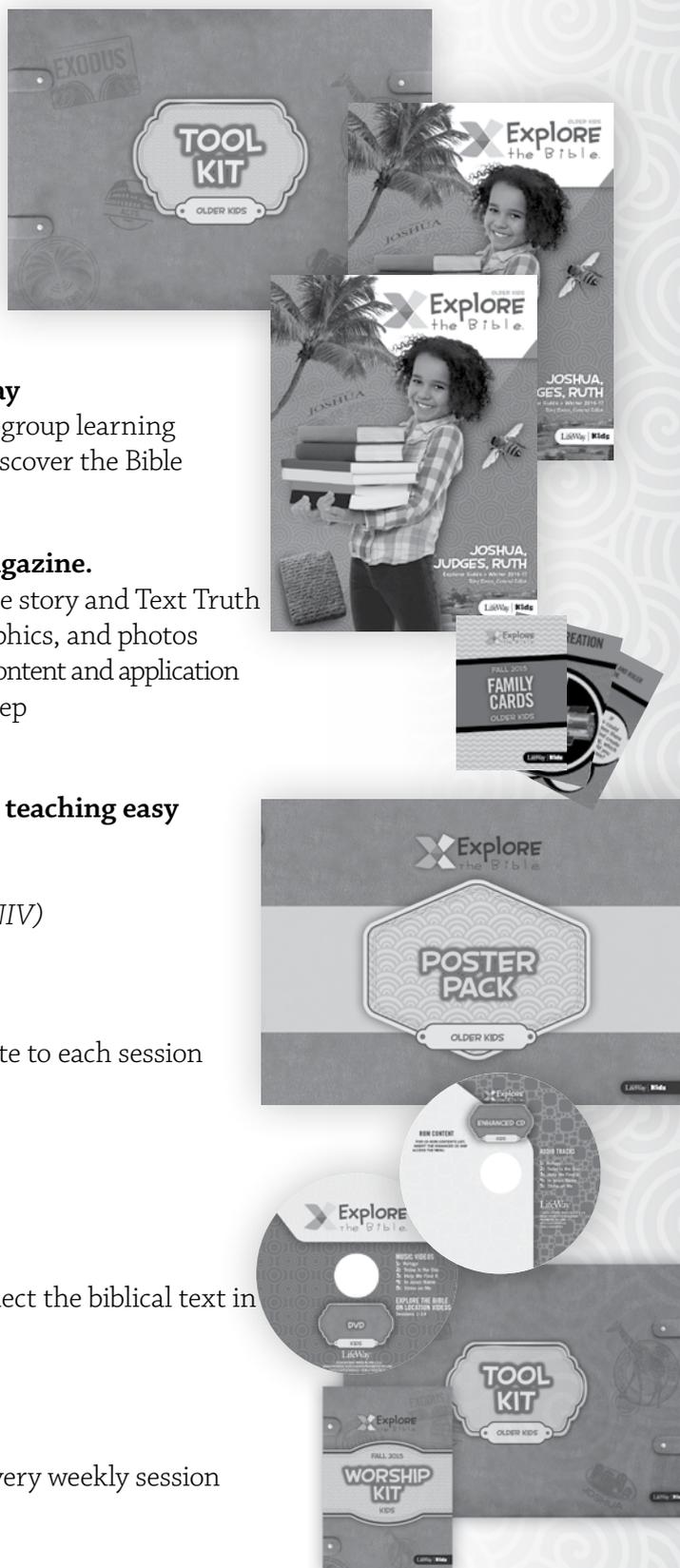
- Bible-related music
- Printable teacher tools and session helps

KIDS DVD

- Includes a video for each session to help kids connect the biblical text in the cultural and historical context of the session

KIDS TOOL KIT WITH WORSHIP

- Second-hour option
- Kid-friendly worship experience that reinforces every weekly session



THE GOSPEL

GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The word *gospel* means “good news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation.



GOD RULES. The Bible tells us God created everything, including you and me, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to recite Genesis 1:1 from memory or read it from his Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 and Colossians 1:16-17.



WE SINNED. Since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God (Romans 3:23). The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death (Romans 6:23).



GOD PROVIDED. Read John 3:16 aloud. God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read Ephesians 2:8-9.



JESUS GIVES. Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:18.



WE RESPOND. We can respond to Jesus. “The ABCs of Becoming a Christian” is a simple tool that helps us remember how to respond when prompted by the Holy Spirit to the gift Jesus offers.

ADMIT

Admit to God that you are a sinner. The first people God created chose to sin and disobey God. Ever since then, all people have chosen to sin and disobey (Romans 3:23). Tell God you messed up and you are sorry for doing your own thing and turning away from Him through your thoughts, words, and actions. Repent, turn away from your sin. (Acts 3:19; 1 John 1:9) *Repent* doesn't just mean turning from doing bad things to doing good things. It means turning from sin and even from your own good works and turning to Jesus, trusting only in Him to save you.

BELIEVE

Believe that Jesus is God's Son and receive God's gift of forgiveness from sin. You must believe that only Jesus can save you and you cannot save yourself from your sin problem—not even by praying to God, going to church, or reading your Bible. Your faith or your trust is only in Jesus and what He did for you through His life, death, and resurrection. (Acts 16:31; Acts 4:12; John 14:6; Ephesians 2:8-9)

CONFESS

Confess your faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. Tell God and tell others what you believe. If Jesus is your Savior, you are trusting only in Him to save you. Jesus is also Lord, which means He is in charge and calling the shots in your life. You can start following Him and doing what He says in the Bible. You are born again into a new life and look forward to being with God forever. (Romans 10:9-10,13)

HELP KIDS NAVIGATE THE BIBLE!



Explore the Bible: Books of the Bible Posters are a bright and colorful addition to any kids area! Kids will soak in interesting facts for each book, including author, audience, and purpose. Each book poster is color-coded according to the division of the Bible in which it belongs.

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EXPLORE THE BIBLE

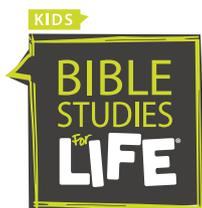
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Now you can choose the Bible translation that appears in your study!

CHECK OUT THESE ADDITIONAL STUDY OPTIONS TO MEET ALL OF YOUR PROGRAMMING NEEDS THROUGHOUT THE WEEK:



BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE: KIDS

Combine creative teaching elements and hands-on learning to teach kids Bible truth and give them specific ways to apply it to their lives. Age-specific content is based on the Levels of Biblical Learning and packaged in a way that helps you disciple kids and strengthen families.

biblestudiesforlife.com



WORSHIP FOR LIFE: KIDS

Solid biblical teaching, engaging worship, group games, and take-home family resources—all wrapped in a fun, energetic experience that your kids will love! Use it as a stand-alone large group program or hand-in-hand with

Bible Studies For Life: Kids.

lifeway.com/worshipforlife



THE GOSPEL PROJECT FOR KIDS

The entire gospel story like kids have never seen it before! Each week, through videos, music, activities and more, kids connect biblical events to God's ultimate plan of redemption through Christ.

gospelproject.com/kids

