



MOSAIC Gospel Project

Volume 3, Unit 8, Lesson 1: Crossing the Jordan

Bible Passage: Joshua 1-4

Personal Preparation

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thank God for leading his people across the Jordan and for miraculously saving us through Christ. Pray that the individuals would know God's power and grace in sending Jesus to save us.

Memory Verse

Begin the class by sharing the new memory verse for the unit.

Deuteronomy 31:8

"Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord will personally go ahead of you. He will be with you; he will neither fail you nor abandon you."

Points of Emphasis

1. God held back the Jordan River for his people to cross.
2. We can glorify God by loving him and obeying him.

Activity #1

Guide the group to begin working on the activity sheet. Feel free to allow them to continue working as you teach the lesson.

Video

We've talked about God's people in the wilderness. They had a chance to enter the promised land, but they did not trust God. As a result, they were stuck wandering for 40 years—long enough that all the people who refused to trust God had died! Their children were grown-ups now, and they were finally ready to enter the promised land. All that stood in their way was the Jordan River. Our story today is called "Crossing the Jordan."

Play the video for the lesson titled "Crossing the Jordan."

Bible Lesson

This story reminds me a little bit of the time God parted the Red Sea for the people of Israel to cross. I think that's on purpose. You see, at this point in the history of Israel, most of the people who were alive when God parted the Red Sea had died. The people who left Egypt and wandered the wilderness had changed a lot, and this new group—the children and the grandchildren of those who were slaves—were learning to trust God. God held back the Jordan River for his people to cross and gave the next generation a miraculous water crossing.

That's why it was so important for the 12 men from the 12 tribes to pick 12 stones to make a memorial. God didn't want his people to forget his power or his love for them. He wanted them to know him and glorify him. How can we glorify God? Any ideas? [Allow responses.] Those are some really good answers. We can glorify God by loving him and obeying him. Say that with me: We can glorify God by loving him and obeying him. God deserves our love and obedience because he is powerful and good. When we love him and obey him, it glorifies him.

Activity #2

Lead the group to finish the rest of the activity sheet. Review the new memory verse with

the individuals, and help them begin to learn it. Encourage them to put the verse together using the Velcro pictures.

Christ Connection

Joshua was an amazing leader. He believed God's promise that God would be with him always, no matter where he went. God went ahead of Joshua and the Israelites into the promised land. He showed his power to them so they would trust in him. When Jesus came to earth, he showed his power so people would trust in him and be saved from sin. Just like Joshua trusted God's plan, we can trust Jesus to save us.

Review Questions

(Optional: Play the Questions from Kids (QFK) video to continue the discussion on crossing the Jordan River. Today's episode asks if God expects us to tell people about Jesus.)

Group A

Early Learner

Encourage the individuals to point to the pictures provided or to draw in order to answer these questions.

- 1. Who told Joshua to be strong and courageous?** God
- 2. Who stopped the flow of the Jordan River?** God
- 3. What did the Israelites use to build a memorial to help them remember what God had done?** 12 stones

Group B

- 1. What did God tell Joshua as he became the new leader of the Israelites?** Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid.
- 2. How did God help the people cross the Jordan?** God stopped the flow of water so that it piled up on one side.
- 3. What did Joshua do to remember the amazing thing God had done for his people?** He instructed men from the 12 tribes to take 12 stones from the middle of the riverbed and set them up as a memorial.
- 4. Why do you think God helped his people cross the Jordan?** Most of the people who

had seen God’s amazing miracles in Egypt and at the Red Sea had died. God helped them cross the Jordan River in an amazing way to demonstrate his power to them and strengthen their faith in him.

5. **Why do you think God wanted the people to have the stones to remember what he did for them?** God proves his faithfulness again and again, but people tend to forget and walk into sin. God wanted them to have a reminder that he is good and trustworthy.
6. **God told Joshua to be strong and courageous and to obey his commands. What commands do Christians need strength and courage to obey?** Discuss the different commands Jesus talks about, such as loving God, loving people, and sharing the Gospel.

Group C

1. **How do you think Joshua and the Israelites felt as they entered the promised land?** 40 years earlier, Joshua was one of the spies who scouted out the promised land, but the Israelites refused to go in. Prompt the individuals to consider how they might feel entering a place they’ve never been and how they feel when someone powerful and loving accompanies them. Point out that God went before his people.
2. **What did the Israelites do to remember what God had done for them? How can we remember what Jesus has done for us?** Lead the individuals to retell how the Israelites carried 12 stones from the river bed and set them up as a reminder that the Lord is mighty. Invite the individuals to share ideas for remembering Jesus. Point out that believers celebrate the Lord’s Supper as one way of remembering Jesus.
3. **How can we trust God and move forward even when we feel afraid?** Help the individuals identify faith as a necessary means of trusting God in the face of fear. Explain that the Bible says faith is a gift from God, and learning about God through his Word can strengthen our faith. When we see how God has been faithful in the past, we can trust him with our future.

Group D

Advanced Learner

1. **What does this story teach us about God?** God held back the Jordan River for his people to cross. As soon as their feet touched the water, the river stopped flowing. Not before they stepped, but when they stepped into the river. One way God received glory through this miracle was by the priests loving and obeying him! God deserves glory, and we can glorify God by loving him and obeying him.
2. **What was the importance of the memorial stones?** A memorial helps people remember a person or something that happened. The people would see the stones and remember that God helped them cross the river. In the future, children would see the stones and ask, “Why are these rocks here?” The people could tell their children that God stopped the water, and everyone would know that God is mighty.
3. **Does God expect every believer to tell others about Jesus?**
4. **How can you tell others what Jesus has done?**

Prayer

God, thank you for leading your people into the land you promised. We can see your faithfulness clearly in Old Testament stories, and we know that you are still faithful to us today. Help us to trust you and give you glory by loving and obeying you. Amen.

