

# May 10 Elementary

**Bible Passage:** Crossing the Jordan / Joshua 1–4

**Story Point:** God held back the Jordan River for His people to cross.

**Memory Verse:** “It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed” Deuteronomy 31:8 ESV

**Big Picture Question:** How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.

**Christ Connection:** *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.*

**HAPPY MOTHER’S DAY TO ALL THE MOMS AND GRANDMAS!**

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## \* **BIBLE STUDY TIPS FOR PARENTS:**

Parents- here’s a preview of what we’ll be studying in the Fall as church ☺

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 your child/children 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.

### **\*STORY:**

**SAY** • Here's our starting question for today, ***How can we glorify God?*** Then I repeat it to myself a few times to make sure it sinks in. Say it with me: ***How can we glorify God?*** Great job! We will answer this today!

The people of God had wandered around the wilderness with Moses. But Moses died and Joshua became the leader. God gave the Israelites the big task of conquering the promised land. The first thing they had to do was cross the Jordan River. That was no small feat! Let's hear more!

***Use the Bible storytelling tips below to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video, or both!***

#### **Crossing the Jordan: Joshua 1–4**

God had promised Abraham that his descendants would live in Canaan (KAY nuhn). **After wandering in the wilderness for 40 years, it was time for the remaining people to enter Canaan.** Moses was dead, and **God chose Joshua to be the new leader of Israel.** God told Joshua, **"Be strong and courageous."**

**Now the only thing keeping the Israelites from the land God promised to them was the Jordan River.** The river was deep and wide. **The Israelites could never get across on their own. But God was going to help them.**

God told Joshua and the other leaders what to do. The leaders obeyed God. **The priests carried the ark of God ahead of the people to the edge of the river.** The ark reminded them that God was with them. **The rest of the Israelites followed behind the ark.**

Joshua said, "Listen. God is going to do something great. When these men carry the ark of God into the river, God will stop the water in the river. Then you will know God is with us."

The people watched. **The priests carrying the ark took a step into the river. God made the water stop! The priests stood on dry ground in the middle of the river, and all of the Israelites crossed safely on dry ground.**

**God told Joshua, “Tell the people to take 12 stones from the middle of the river where the priests are standing with the ark. They should carry the stones with them and put them down where they spend the night tonight.”**

**God wanted the stones to be a memorial.** A *memorial* is something that 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**, when children saw the stones and said, “Why are these rocks here?” The **people could tell their children that God stopped the water, and everyone would know that God is mighty.**

**The Israelites did exactly what God told them to do.** They picked up 12 huge stones and made a memorial. **The priests with the ark crossed the river, and the water began to flow again.** The river was deep and wide like it had been before. **At last, God’s people were in the promised land!**

**SAY** • Joshua told the priests to carry the ark into the water. The Bible tells us in Joshua 3:15 that the river was at flood stage. They could have been carried off in the current! But those priests loved God and obeyed Him. Did you notice that God didn’t do the miracle until they stepped in the water? **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. One way God received glory through this miracle was by the priests loving and obeying Him!

That’s how I found the answer to my big picture question: ***How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.*** Let’s say it one more time together. ***How can we glorify God? We can glorify God by loving Him and obeying Him.*** What was true for the Israelites is true for us today. When we love and obey God, He can receive glory no matter where we are!

### **\*Christ Connection:**

***Christ Connection: 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.***

**SAY** • Joshua was an amazing leader. He believed God’s promise that God would be with him always, no matter where he went. (Joshua 1:9) 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.

### **\*GOSPEL PLAN:**

*(Included in the Activity Pages)*

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means “good

news.” It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

**God rules.** Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

**We sinned.** Tell kids that 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.** Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that 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 and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

**Jesus gives.** Share with kids that 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.** Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He’s already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

### **\*PRAYER**

**SAY** • Lord, thank You that Your plan is always good even when we don’t understand it. You will work out the details in ways we could never imagine. Help us to be willing to take the first step of faith and then give You the glory. Amen.

### **\*KEY PASSAGE / MEMORY VERSE:**

**“It is the LORD who goes before you. He will be with you; he will not leave you or forsake you. Do not fear or be dismayed” Deuteronomy 31:8 ESV**

**SAY** • Moses had spent 40 years in the wilderness with the Israelites. As the children grew into adults, he got to know them. He knew that even though they experienced the consequences of disobeying God, they would not always be faithful to Him.

We disobey God when we trust in ourselves instead of trusting in Him. But as our key passage shows, God’s ways are better than our ways. Life works best when we trust God and obey Him.

### **\*DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

#### **COMPREHENSION:**

- What did God tell Joshua as he became the new leader of the Israelites? (*Be strong and courageous, do not be afraid; Josh. 1:9*)
- What did the Israelites need to cross to enter the promised land? (*Jordan River, Josh. 3:1*)
- How did God help the people cross the Jordan? (*God stopped the flow of the water so that it piled up on one side, Josh. 3:16*)
- What happened when the men carrying the ark of God stepped into the river? (*The river stopped flowing, Josh. 3:15-16*)
- What did Joshua do to remember the amazing thing God had done for His people? (*He instructed men from the twelve tribes to take 12 stones from the middle of the riverbed and set them up as a memorial, Josh. 4:3-7*)

### YOUNGER:

Open your Bible to Joshua 1. Help them use the table of contents to find Joshua 1–4. Explain that Joshua is not part of the Law. It is the first book in the Old Testament division called History. Joshua tells the history of the Israelites as they moved into and conquered the promised land. Review the other books in this division. (Judges–Esther)

Ask the following questions and discuss:

- Why do you think God helped His people cross the Jordan? *Guide kids to discuss the fact that 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.*
- Why do you think God wanted the people to have the stones to remember what He did for them? *Guide kids to discuss the fact that 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.*
- 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, sharing the gospel, and so forth.*

**Say • God held back the Jordan River for His people to cross.** He is good and provides for His people. We see that very clearly in the way He sent Jesus for us.

### OLDER:

Open your Bibles to Joshua 1. Remind kids that today's Bible story comes from Joshua 1–4. Explain that the Book of Joshua is the first book of Old Testament History. It tells the stories of the Israelites as Joshua led them into the promised land.

**Say •** The Israelites were once again at the Jordan River and had to cross it to enter the land of Canaan. [*Point to the Jordan River (E6–H6) on the Old Testament Kingdoms Map.*] **God held back the Jordan River for His people to cross.**

Read Joshua 1:6-7 together. Ask the following questions and discuss:

- How do you think Joshua and the Israelites felt as they entered the promised land? *Guide kids to recall that 40 years earlier, Joshua was one of the spies who scouted out the*

*promised land but the Israelites refused to go in. Prompt kids 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. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Josh. 1:5.)*

- What did the Israelites do to remember what God had done for them? How can we remember what Jesus has done for us? *Lead kids 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 kids to share ideas for remembering Jesus. Point out that believers celebrate the Lord's Supper as one way of remembering Jesus. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Tim. 2:8.)*
- How can we trust God and move forward even when we feel afraid? *Help kids 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. (Option: Choose a kid to read 2 Chron. 20:12.)*

## **\*ACTIVITIES:**

### **1. ACTIVITY PAGE & COLORING PAGE**

Invite kids to complete the "Crazy Crossing" activity page. Instruct kids to find and circle the parts of the picture that don't belong.

**Say** • A lot of those silly additions obviously did not belong in the picture. But would you believe that the heap of water at one side where the river stopped flowing actually *does* belong in the picture? Pretty cool, huh? Today we will hear about a time God stopped a river from flowing so His people could cross it.

### **2. MEMORY ROCKS**

**Say** • **God held back the Jordan River for His people to cross.** God instructed 12 men to carry large rocks out of the riverbed and build a memorial. The purpose of the memorial was to remind them and future generations about the miracle God performed so they could enter the promised land.

When we get discouraged, it's easy to forget what God has done for us. By looking at those rocks, God gave His people an easy way to remember! Today we're going to make our own memory rocks memorial to remind us what God has done in our own lives. Collect 12 rocks/stones outside if the weather allows.

As a family take turns sharing a time when God provided for you/your family or to share something you are thankful to God for. Create a rock memorial together. This is a reminder of God's faithfulness to your family.

### **3. MOTHER'S DAY ACTIVITY PAGES**

**Happy Mother's Day to all of our Moms and Grandmas!**

We've included some fun activity pages/cards the kids can do to celebrate mom/grandma!